

**Learning to See History:
A Content Analysis of the Affordances of Graphic Novels for High School
Teaching**

BY

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For Amy, and for Kathryn and Frances

Summary

Recent studies of graphic novels (book-length fiction or non-fiction narratives that employ the conventions of comic books to convey meaning) and multimodality have hinted that graphic novels (GNs) might offer a great deal of meaning-making potential to readers. Some studies have argued that graphic novels could be useful for English Language Learners (ELL) and struggling readers. Other studies have argued the opposite, pointing out that reading words and pictures together may require more effort on the part of the reader than text-only books. Some studies have offered analysis of graphic novels as literature, but there have been no studies that examine graphic novels in terms of what they could offer to a specific content area studied in high school.

To determine whether graphic novels might be useful for high school history teachers hoping to address discipline-specific reading techniques, this study examined 20 non-fiction historical graphic novels. The initial research question was: What opportunities, if any, do graphic novels afford for high school history teachers to teach contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration? During the analysis of the results, I broke that question into two analysis questions: 1. What does quantitative analysis reveal about opportunities for contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration across the graphic novels in the study? 2. What does the analysis of individual graphic novels across all categories reveal about opportunities for teaching high school history?

Quantitative content analysis revealed that the GNs studied provided opportunities for high school history students to engage in contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration (three areas identified by Wineburg as being important to discipline-specific reading within the history field). Opportunities for contextualization were more robust than those for sourcing or corroboration.

Qualitative multimodal case analysis of several graphic novels suggests specific ways in which GNs support contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration.

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--BBC

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Chapter I. Statement of the Research Question

“In the new landscapes of communication, with the dominance of the new media and with the ‘old’ media (the book for instance) being reshaped by the forms of the new media, the demands on readers, and the demands of reading will, if anything, be greater, and they will certainly be different. That constitutes the new agenda for thinking about reading.”

--Gunther Kress (2003, p. 167)

Kress talks about new developments in literacy leading to not only different ways of reading, but also greater demands. Traditional methods of teaching high school history (e.g. using a single textbook, rote memorization of dates and places, completing fill-in-the-blank worksheets to prove that one has read the assignment) place a relatively low demand on student readers and have little bearing on what reading history looks like in college or beyond. In the context of new media as Kress describes above, where many students spend their hours out of school learning through an online multimodal environment of images, spoken and written words, music, and interactivity, the conflict between traditional approaches and the way students expect to read and learn becomes monumental.

Expert/novice studies suggest that to engage students in history, we need to teach high school students to read using reading skills similar to what experts in the field use (for example, using primary sources to build a single mental narrative). Similarly, science students need to read in a way that questions assumptions, mathematics students need to work out the equations as they read, and so on. This approach, of teaching students to think and read the way experts in a particular field think and read, is called *Disciplinary Literacy Instruction* (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Damico, Baildon, Exter, & Guo, 2009/2010).

Elements of the Disciplinary Literacy Instruction approach in history instruction such as making meaning by carefully considering the *sources* of information, the *context* in which that information is presented, and how different eyewitnesses and documents *corroborate* facts and

interpretation) are included in the recent draft of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI). This set of standards, coordinated by the National Governors Association, and the Council of Chief State School Officers, includes in its standards for grades 6-12 history instruction requirements that students be able to “Evaluate authors’ differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the author and his or her claims, evidence and reasoning” (NGA & CCSSO, 2010, p. 55); “Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text and the causes that link those events, distinguish whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them” (NGA & CCSSO, 2010, p. 55); and “Evaluate an author’s premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other sources of evidence.” (NGA & CCSSO, 2010, p. 55). These three examples include the concepts of sourcing, contextualization and corroboration respectively. Disciplinary Learning Instruction, then, is not merely an interesting idea developed by researchers, but one that already has traction on the national and state levels.

Disciplinary Literacy Instruction for high school history is not without its challenging issues, however. Although reading primary sources is certainly more challenging, and often more engaging, such sources are usually written for a sophisticated audience in a particular time period and cultural context, and require not only advanced reading skills, but a preexisting knowledge of the context of that period to fully understand them. We cannot expect students to read like experts without a great deal of instruction.

To add to the challenge, in history studies, primary sources are often mono-modal, consisting of print only. Since Disciplinary Literacy Instruction approaches were first envisioned, schools and textbook companies have been slow to adopt multimodal ways of communicating. This may possibly be because graphic novels (GNs) add another layer to the complexity of comprehension. In Duke and Carlisle’s (2011) view of comprehension,

“...the listener/reader creates and adjusts a mental representation of the meaning of the text using multiple interacting factors – not only features of the text, its language, content, structure, purpose and features, but also the listener or reader – her existing knowledge base, views, purposes, processes, strategies, and skills, and the context in which the communication occurs.” (p. 200)

Now imagine that complexity doubled because, in addition to all of the elements for text, the reader must also consider the language, content, structure, purpose and features of the images. Fortunately, students tend to be interested in (and surprisingly experienced in) reading multi-modally. Unfortunately, simply adding more pictures to history text-books can't solve the problem.

What it means to read, as Kress states above, is changing. Today's adolescents read IM messages, on-line instructions to multi-player games, e-mail, Facebook, and Myspace, graphic novels, magazines, and series books (Beach & Bruce, 2002). And by and large, their parents and teachers seem to prefer that students read the same things in the same ways that the parents and teachers read when they were in school.

One type of reading that is growing rapidly is the graphic novel. GNs employ a way of bringing together images and pictures that has been in use for well over a hundred and fifty years, (Groensteen, 2007, p. 1) and possibly almost a thousand years (McCloud, 1993, p. 12). It began as a sequential telling of stories on cave walls and tapestries with words on banners flying from figures' mouths, evolved into single panel political cartoons, then comic strips, then comic books, and finally into longer, more fully developed stories, told through graphic novels. GNs use a meta-language of facial expressions, the shapes of word balloons and thought balloons, and such iconographic elements as speed lines, sweat drops, odor lines, and panel pacing to help readers understand the emotion, intent, and context central to comprehension of communications. The term graphic novel is something of a misnomer. GNs are neither exclusively graphic, nor are they necessarily novels –

the format includes fictional stories, informational texts, essays, reports, memoirs, biographies, and even philosophical treatises told using text and image through the conventions of a comic book.

The Meaning Making Power of Graphic Novels:

I taught high school English for ten years. One particular day I had poured my heart into trying to get a particular student to be engaged by Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. I had tried to get him to see that Hamlet's struggles with a dysfunctional set of parents, struggles with untrustworthy friends and a girlfriend with divided loyalties, and fears of questionable sanity were all parallel to what my student was going through as an adolescent. After trying as hard as I could, and seeing by the student's face that I had utterly failed to get him to connect with Hamlet's life at all, I was walking the hallways during break-time and overheard the same student passionately arguing with his friends about the meaning of a Neil Gaiman graphic novel he had just finished reading.

I had, of course, over my years as a teacher, countless disparaging remarks from teachers and parents about how students didn't see the value of reading, didn't engage with the material, were all a bunch of slackers, couldn't even speak English clearly, and so on. This incident got me thinking, though, that perhaps the problem has less to do with whether students are reading and writing, and more to do with how we define reading and writing, and how students are approaching both activities. If so, perhaps the meaning-making potential of graphic novels might offer useful tools to teachers as well.

Once only the province of twenty-something male readers interested in superheroes and sold exclusively in offbeat independent comic stores, GNs have become increasingly mainstream in the past decade. ICV2.com, an influential source for information on the business of pop culture products, recently reported that in 2008, despite the global economic downturn, US sales of graphic novels increased 5% from \$375 million in 2007 to \$395 million in 2008 (Graphic novel sales up in 2008, 2009). Look around the next time you walk into any of the major book retail stores. You'll

almost certainly find a specific section devoted to graphic novels, and it will likely be rather large. Likewise, public libraries now typically feature many shelves devoted to graphic novels, especially in their teen sections. In fact, librarians have been at the forefront on graphic novels in several ways. Their belief in the importance of GNs can be seen in professional publications for librarians like *Graphic Novels Now: Building, Managing, and Marketing a Dynamic Collection* (Goldsmith, 2005), *Graphic Novels in Your Media Center* (Lyga & Lyga, 2004), *The 101 Best Graphic Novels* (Weiner, 2005), and *Getting Graphic: Using Graphic Novels to Promote Literacy with Preteens and Teens* (Gorman, 2003), as well as numerous articles and even specific journal issues devoted to graphic novels, such as *The Booklist's* Graphic Novel issue once a year since 2003.

One might object, though, that comic books have been popular among schoolchildren since the early 1940s, and what is a graphic novel, after all, but an overgrown comic book. In fact, however, there are several important differences between the comic books that were the target of parental ire in the 40s, 50s, and 60s, and the GNs we are discussing now.

One of the first indications that graphic novels were anything more than overgrown comic books with pretensions was when *Maus*, a GN by Art Spiegelman, won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992 (Mui, 2004). Spiegelman's success led to a flurry of graphic novels targeted at adults, including Harvey Pekar's *American Splendor* and Daniel Clowes' *Ghost World*. Though these GNs found an audience among adolescents, the content was too sophisticated to use for a general school audience.

Slowly, GNs for adolescents began to appear and to develop an audience, but it wasn't until the 2000s that graphic novels began appearing in great numbers and the children's/adolescent literature world began to take critical notice as well. *American Born Chinese*, a GN by Gene Yang, was named the best young adult book of the year by the Young Adult Library Service (Kittner, 2008), won the 2007 Michael L. Printz Award, and was a finalist for the 2006 National Book Awards in the category of Young People's Literature; *To Dance: A Ballerina's Graphic Novel* (Siegel & Siegel, 2006)

was a Siebert Honor Book in 2007; graphic novel author Neil Gaiman and his *Sandman* series, as well as Jennifer and Matthew Holm's *Babymouse* are featured among the posters and bookmarks produced by the American Library Association. Jeff LeMire's three-volume Essex County series has won the ALA Alex Award and was nominated for two Eisner Awards. Recent bestselling series books include Jeff Smith's *Bone* graphic novels and Jeff Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, (2007) a sort of graphic novel/regular text hybrid.

As more and more GNs appear on recognized awards lists, the number of teachers interested in using them in the classroom increases. It would be one thing to say that, owing to graphic novels' growing popularity among adolescents, GNs might be a useful tool to bring into the classroom in order to engage students in literature. We are not, however, talking about a theoretical, future classroom tool. The fact is that GNs are being used in the schools already, on a state-wide level, on a system-wide level, and in individual classrooms.

The Maryland State Education Department is expanding a graphic novel-based high school literacy curriculum after a successful pilot program (Gootman, 2007). The Comic Book Project, founded by Columbia University Professor Michael Bitz, involved 900 programs across the country in 2008 and featured teachers using graphic novels in classrooms (Hudson, 2008). In addition, numerous anecdotal reports describe graphic novels in use in individual classrooms (Corbett, 2008; Kittner, 2008; Mui, 2004).

There are two reasons why GNs may be worth using more extensively in the high school classroom. First, GNs and the sequential system of storytelling that they use, may well prove to be a valuable way to support advanced reading skills like critical analysis and disciplinary understanding of texts. This area, reading within the disciplines, might particularly benefit. Graphic novels may be able to scaffold students to read and contextualize primary sources. Although reading graphic novels seems to require an additional set of skills that we are only beginning to identify, many

students seem to be able to pick up those skills without instruction. With the help of graphic novels as a scaffold, it may be easier to move students' critical disciplinary reading abilities within the context of history, from the basic level to the proficient level and from the proficient level to the advanced level of reading skills.

Second, because of their popularity with students, GNs may have the potential to bridge the gap between what students read in school and out of school – in so doing, help students see reading in school as something relevant and worthwhile. That sense of relevance may help GNs provide at least some part of a solution to the increasing achievement gap in reading. Finally, to return to the idea suggested in the introduction, studying GNs may provide a window to help us learn how students (and readers in general) make meaning multimodally (using multiple modes: in the case of GNs, text and images together. The term multimodal could also refer to websites that combine images and music, or stage performances that combine drama, poetry, and visual art, for example).

There is a need for what GNs seem to offer to the schools. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) classifies students into three levels of reading proficiency: basic, proficient, and advanced. The NAEP has consistently revealed a pattern in 17 year olds: a large percentage of students (regardless of ethnicity or socioeconomic status) are capable of basic ability. Once we look at the number of students who can be classified as advanced, however, the percentage drops to the single digits and stark differences between ethnicities and SEC status becomes apparent (Lee & Spratley, 2010). As a result we need to engage students in reading complex texts that interest them.

Many anecdotal studies have enthusiastically lauded the ability of graphic novels to engage readers. There has been little research, however, on what happens after the engagement. How can we best use graphic novels to reach specific disciplinary objectives?

The format of a graphic novel is a cultural tool, and as such, it has both “affordances” and “constraints,” to use the terms developed by Wertsch (1998, p. 13). These affordances and constraints allow us to carry out some tasks more efficiently in some ways, and less so in others. Barton and Levstik explain that, “In history education, then, we need to know not just what tools are available for students, but how those tools simultaneously enable and inhibit their activity” (2004, p. 10). This study examines the ways in which the format and content of graphic novels about historical subjects can enable and inhibit the activity of teaching history.

Research Question:

This study explores this research focus by looking at the following question:
 What opportunities, if any, do graphic novels afford for high school history teachers to teach contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration?

Though GNs have been the subject of serious study as literary works (primarily in Europe), as we will see in chapter 2, there has been relatively little research (though a lot of opinion) that considers them as educational tools, and virtually no research into the affordances that GNs might have for disciplinary literacy. This research focuses on laying a foundation in this area. My hypothesis (based on two pilot studies: Boerman-Cornell and Manderino 2007, Boerman-Cornell 2009a) is that GNs have unique potentials that can help high school students read history less as a collection of facts, and more as a thinking process – unique potentials such as those outlined by Wineburg (1991); Lee & Ashby (2000), and Shanahan & Shanahan (2008).

In order to investigate that, we need to start with the GNs themselves. It will be instructive to examine how the GN format, as a unique and close blending of images and words, allows students to read history in graphic novels in a way more compatible with the goals of disciplinary literacy instruction (for example, showing cultural background to a primary source, or embedding maps in the story so that students will have a clear purpose in reading them, or showing emotional

content through facial expressions of eyewitnesses giving their accounts). A deep content analysis, using heuristics provided by Wineburg, should be able to identify ways that graphic novels may support students as they contextualize, determine the veracity of sources, and look for corroboration between accounts, and also identify ways in which they offer little more than traditional format sources.

This research is a critical step for determining whether and how graphic novels can support disciplinary literacy instruction. Such a direction of research may prove invaluable as researchers consider how to best engage students in disciplinary reading and increase their levels of understanding and reading achievement.

Chapter II. Literature Review

The central question being investigated in this study relates most fundamentally to the realm of reading comprehension. This study asks if the affordances of graphic novels can contribute to disciplinary reading in history for adolescent readers. Thus, three areas of research are especially pertinent to consider in this review. First is work that examines models of reading comprehension for how readers build mental representations of text. Within the general area of reading comprehension, we also need to consider Disciplinary Literacy Instruction that examines issues related to the teaching of the text reading in the discipline, in this instance within the study of history. Because this study focuses on graphic novels, research related to multimodal reading constitutes a third relevant area.

How Readers Build Mental Representations of Text

Reading comprehension is an active and complex activity. Even defining it can be difficult. Raphael, Teale and Wengel (2011) define reading comprehension as "...making sense of what one reads" and say further that "Comprehension is complex." (p. 1) Duke and Carlisle (2011) argue that meaning does not reside in oral or written text itself, but rather that "The listener/reader creates and adjusts a mental representation of the meaning of the text... using multiple interacting factors including the text (its language content, structure, purposes, strategies and skills) and the context in which the communication occurs." (2011, p. 200) Pressley (2000) also speaks of the reader, "...processing many individual ideas in text (sometimes referred to as propositions) and how ideas are related to one another to by the text to construct a general understanding of the text's meaning..." (2000, p. 549) Reading researchers agree on the complexity of comprehension, and though they sometimes have different ways of describing the factors that feed into that complexity, they agree that there are many.

Duke and Carlisle (2011), for example, list five different mental tasks a reader must perform to comprehend: access the meaning of words in the text, process the syntax of clauses and sentences, relate clauses and sentences to one another to build local coherence, relate larger pieces of text to each other to build local coherence, and build a situation model of the text. Raphael, Teale, & Wengel (2011) list eight different mental tasks (predict, determine important information, summarize, make inferences, visualize, ask and answer questions, make connections, and monitor comprehension) but under those eight, they also list 39 selected comprehension skills a reader would also require. Pressley (2000) lists three word level tasks (decode, recall vocabulary meanings, and summarize), three tasks that occur above a word level (relate text to prior knowledge, schematic processing, and conscious controllable processing), and 12 tasks that mature readers engage in. Although such lists make clear the complexity of the reading comprehension task, they do not clearly address how reading comprehension might occur.

Kintsch has developed a series of models of how readers make meaning from text. This includes the Construction Integration (CI) Model (1998), the Predication Model (2008), and the Second Construction Integration Model (CI-II) (Kintsch & Mangalath, 2011). What all the models have in common is the notion that readers of a text build three different mental representations of a text: a representation of the verbatim text, a semantic representation describing the meaning of the text, and a situated representation of the context to which the text refers. As the reader reads, he or she formulates a list of propositions from the text. After one reads a complete sentence, the list of propositions becomes a network of propositions. If the text is coherent and the reader accepts the propositions, the nodes of that network connect to each other and to other networks in the mind. If the reader rejects the proposition (either because the readers understanding is adjusted by additional ideas in the text, or because the idea is in conflict with prior knowledge), then he or she must derive new propositions.

Kintsch and Van Dijk (1978) argue that text comprehension can be improved by instruction that helps readers use specific comprehension strategies. Although there are almost more comprehension strategies out there than one could count, for the purposes of this study, we focus on a set of strategies connected with the Disciplinary Reading Approach – and targeted specifically at developing comprehension in reading for high school history instruction. The next section in this literature review provides more research on that approach.

In order to determine, then, if graphic novels can help with reading comprehension, since there has been no research to date on using comprehension strategies with graphic novels, and since both disciplinary reading and a specific focus on contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration are supported by a strong research base (see the following section in this chapter), what is needed is for researchers to try these strategies out with high school students with graphic novels as the reading material.

However, graphic novels are not merely a different genre from text books and tradebooks; they are a different sort of book with what is arguably a different process necessary for meaning making. As the section of this literature review that focuses on multimodal meaning making will show, the complexity of comprehension referred to earlier doesn't merely double when we look at graphic novels using both verbal text and image to convey meaning, but, because meaning is created at the synergistic intersection of word and image, it is multiplicatively increased. Readers of graphic novels need to formulate propositions not only based on text (and all the complexity that comes with it) but also based on linked images, graphic novel formatting, and the interplay of text and image.

Though research into reading comprehension is broad and deep, there are still areas that have not been sufficiently explored. Duke and Carlisle (2011) talk about the need for further

research into, for example, visualization, that may certainly play a part in how readers make meaning from a medium that depends upon images. When we think of a textbook that includes photographs, for example, or a child's picture book with images and text on the same page, but often separated, there are two ways comprehension might be occurring. On the one hand, if a reader reads to visualize, then communicating in images might make comprehension easier by taking this out of the reader's hands. If, on the other hand, visualization is a less-common aspect of comprehension, then images add information that needs to be interpreted and integrated with the text, making the reading task more complicated than usual. McCloud (1993), however, asserts that graphic novels may be even more complicated than that. He argues that GN readers need to visualize not only what happens *in* each panel, but more importantly, what happens in the time *between* the panels. Because of the close integration of images and text in GNs (to make sense of a speech bubble in a GN, for example, readers have to be able to draw from the image information about who is speaking, who they are speaking to, and from their facial expression, what they are thinking – and they have to draw from the text what that person is saying) it seems most likely that reading GN puts a greater demand on integrating meaning-making from both modes. At present, however, we know little about how that works.

In a similar way, Duke and Carlisle (2011) speak of needing to know more about how on-line multimodal comprehension combines different modes. Although the GNs in this study are not on-line resources, as multimodal constructs they have much in common with web-pages and Facebook sites, including the lack of research into this area.

In order, then, to investigate whether GNs can be helpful for reading comprehension, we need to find out more about the affordances of GNs and how they work and then theorize about how GN readers formulate propositions and proposition networks in an integrated multimodal

context.. The following sections will further clarify the needs and gaps in the literature and how this dissertation can lay the groundwork for future comprehension research.

Disciplinary Literacy Instruction is supported by a substantial research base.

Expert-Novice studies reveal that Disciplinary Literacy Instruction could make high school history study more authentic and engaging.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Report found that two-thirds of secondary schools lack the reading skills necessary to succeed in school and that 70 percent of eighth graders perform at or below the basic level of reading comprehension. (Lee, Grigg, & Donahue, 2007). Though it is unclear whether these statistics indicate a lack of ability or a lack of engagement, it is clear that secondary literacy instruction is an area of need.

A great deal of recent research (Moje E. B., 2007; Rouet, Britt, Mason, & Perfetti, 1996; Rouet, Favart, Britt, & Perfetti, 1997; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; VanSledright & Kelly, 1998; Wineburg, 1991; Shanahan C. , 2004; Lundeberg, 1987; Greenleaf, et al., 2011) has looked at Disciplinary Literacy Instruction (though terms describing it vary). Much of this research has consisted of expert/novice studies, focusing on differences between the way experts in a given discipline and novices in a given discipline read. This research identifies a difference between the way high school students are taught to read in a given discipline and the way practitioners and experts in that field actually read. If students are taught to read with discipline-specific goals and strategies, not only will they learn more about that discipline, but also they will be more challenged by classroom activities. Unfortunately, content area instruction often consists of generic recommendations that do not take into account the way that practitioners of specific disciplines read and think about texts with discipline-specific characteristics (Moje E. B., 2008; Wilson, 2011). This

dissertation acknowledges that disciplinary reading always occurs within a specific context, and so focuses on one particular discipline: history.

Let's take a moment to contrast a Disciplinary Literacy Instruction approach with what all too frequently is going on in high schools right now. The study of history in high school too often forces students to rely on rote memory from a single source of information (Nystrand, Wu, Gamoron, Zeiser, & Long, 2001). Despite the fact that students as young as second and third grade can differentiate between pieces of historical evidence and understand perspective in historical accounts, most students engage in rote memory and lecture style learning in history classes (Lee & Ashby, 2005). Teachers often design questions to elicit single answer responses (Nystrand, et al., 2001). As Nystrand and his colleagues demonstrate by comparing history and English classes, social studies classes utilize the least amount of questions that elicit developed responses and encourage student dialogue. However, VanSledright (2002) demonstrates that when presented with multiple sources of information, students have the ability to discern sources and determine the reliability of those various sources when using multiple documents. The amount of evidence and accounts that students use in classes reflects the teachers' epistemological stance. Some teachers value an emphasis on the process of inquiry in historical study while other teachers focus on transmitting the information or substance of history to students.

Many teachers looking to build concept knowledge tend to ask specific answer questions in history that do not build on historical reasoning skills. Yet, the use of historical reading and thinking skills can build content knowledge (VanSledright & Kelly, 1998). Lee and Ashby (2000) demonstrate that students in third, fourth and fifth grades are able to utilize historical reasoning skills such as cause and effect, change over time, and multiple perspectives in order to construct historical meaning surrounding inquiry questions. Scaffolding is necessary to teach students these skills. Students have the ability to read and think like historians if scaffolding is provided (Britt &

Aglinskas, 2002; VanSledright & Kelly, 1998; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Students need to be aware of what types of historical reasoning skills to use and when to use them while conducting historical inquiry.

Beyond what students have shown they *can* do, there is also a great deal of agreement on what students *should* learn to do. Rouet, Favart, Britt, and Perfetti (1997) argue that "...skilled learning of history includes the ability to integrate, to complete, and to challenge the knowledge conveyed through multiple historical documents" (p. 88). When reading and/or writing for historical purposes, students need to read and create an analysis based on multiple sources in order to make sense of a historical event or social issue. Historians construct information by analyzing and synthesizing multiple sources and documents surrounding historical events (Rouet, Britt, Mason, & Perfetti, 1996). When working with multiple documents in history, students must employ history-specific strategies in order to "think like a historian" (Hynd-Shanahan, Holschuh, & Hubbard, 2004; Stahl, Hynd, Britton, McNish, & Bosquet, 1996; Wineburg, 1991). High school history students need to learn to read with a mental timeline, think critically about primary sources, infer cause and effect relationships, and construct their own synthesis of several different primary source readings of the same event.

These history-specific strategies include being able to contextualize, corroborate, and source across multiple texts (Wineburg 1991). A goal of history instruction should be for the learner to construct a well-articulated mental model of history, understanding the interconnections between various events and participants (Stahl, et al, 1996, p. 433). Contextualization, corroboration, and sourcing are means to reach this goal. *Contextualization* refers to the ability of the reader to place events and people in time and space (Wineburg, 1991). This requires the reader to go beyond the actual words stated in the document and requires extensive knowledge and experience of the historical subject matter (Britt & Aglinskas, 2002). Wineburg (1991) defines corroboration as

checking the details of texts against each other before accepting them as plausible or likely.

Corroboration entails employing intertextual links to check details in accounts against each other and determine validity in a historical argument. *Sourcing* involves understanding the document in terms of the opinions, positioning, and context of that author. Sourcing can also refer to the perceived “trustworthiness” of the document being utilized in historical inquiry.

Lee and Ashby, like Wineburg, suggest that procedural or second-order concepts are at least as important as substantive history. In other words, though it is important to know dates and places and names of important historical figures, students also need to figure out how to do history. Lee and Ashby (2000) identify several of these second-order concepts as: *evidence, explanation, change, and accounts*. (p. 199)

Wineburg’s heuristics provide a structure for Disciplinary Literacy instruction in history. If GNs use the intersection of word and image in a way that supports these elements of contextualization, corroboration, and sourcing, they would be useful tools for high school history teachers.

Some have questioned whether high school students are capable of contextualizing, corroborating, and sourcing.

Expert-novice studies (Rouet, Favart, Britt, & Perfetti, 1997; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008) show that experts can analyze historical sources, regardless of their familiarity, by employing historical concepts (sourcing, contextualization, corroboration, empathy, perspective, etc). Currently, though many high school history classes require students to use those skills while working with multiple texts, students' skills remain at the novice end of the continuum. Students are being asked to work with unfamiliar content with limited historical reading strategies.

While students may not read history like expert historians, they do begin to utilize historical reading skills that include time, change, empathy, evidence, and accounts (Lee & Ashby, 2005).

These historical reasoning skills are essential in conducting historical inquiry that utilizes the substance and content of history (Lee & Ashby, 2005). However, whether students can, for example, take a series of primary sources and evaluate those sources critically while constructing a single narrative out of them is another question. Britt and Sommer (2004) showed that college undergraduates could handle such a task.

Though students show potential, the task before them is formidable. The ways that students and teachers talk about history are less concrete than the language used to talk about subjects such as math or science. In addition, the substance or content of history is contentious and indeterminate due to different perceptions of concepts such as democracy, justice, rights, etc. (Lee & Ashby, 2000) Furthermore, many teachers employ epistemological stances that expect right answers instead of utilizing historical inquiry to create historical meaning across texts. Finally, thinking like a historian involves a quantum shift in the way one approaches a problem. Practicing history differs from other disciplinary literacies most distinctively in that historical understanding does not engage in problem solving in quite the same way other disciplines do. Wineburg (1991) explains that

“...historical understanding can be thought of beginning where problem solving in other domains ends.... Rather than arriving at a solution by maneuvering through a ‘problem space’ of preexisting templates, patterns, and moves. Historians may be said to dwell in an ‘explanation space’ in which they already possess the ‘solution’ but must reconstruct the goal and state of the world from it.” (p.74).

So, for example, historians might approach the American Civil War by starting with what happened – Southern states seceded from the union. With that conclusion clear, historians work backwards trying to determine what led up to that result. For students to learn to approach problem solving by beginning with the solution and then determining the problem runs counter to the ways

of thinking they are being taught in school, where getting to the correct solution quickly and efficiently is usually the whole point.

The study of history in high school too often forces students to rely on rote memory from a single source of information: the textbook. Teachers often design questions to elicit single answer, convergent responses. This pedagogical culture has an eventual effect on the way students think. VanSledright and Kelly (1998) demonstrate that although when presented with multiple sources of information, students can demonstrate an ability to discern sources and determine the reliability of various sources when using multiple sources of information, the amount of evidence and accounts that students use in their responses reflects the teachers' epistemological stance. Some teachers value the use of inquiry in historical study while most teachers focus on transmitting the substance of history to students.

"Thinking like a historian" does not mean training students to become historians. The practice of disciplinary inquiry refers to a continuum of historical thinking skills utilizing second order historical concepts (Lee & Ashby, 2000). The notion here is more to help students develop skills along that continuum in the direction of what historians do. Lee and Ashby define second order concepts, "that give shape to the discipline of history: time, change, empathy, cause, as well as evidence and accounts". These second order concepts provide a model to build the disciplinary practices of sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration.

The idea behind disciplinary reading theory is not necessarily a new one. The foundational idea behind liberal arts education is that, by reading widely, in a range of disciplines, the student learns different ways of thinking and different methods of understanding (Wegener, 1978). Disciplinary learning is based on the notion that different disciplines (language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and so on) are examples of "...distinguishable communities of practice, each with its own history of solving particular problems in particular ways according to particular

epistemologies” (Wilson, 2011, p. 436). Research over the last twenty years or so has built up a body of research including expert-novice studies that point out the differences between what experts and practitioners in a given field do when they read and what students do when they read the same field in school; and more recently, studies that examine whether and how students can be taught to read in ways that contribute to a larger disciplinary understanding.

Perhaps one way to think of Wineburg’s heuristic in terms of teaching history is not necessarily that we want students to be able to create meaning from primary texts the way historians do. We might expect that to be able to do so would a great deal of experience and practice. However, it is also reasonable to expect students to at least be able to learn to see the problems that historians deal with, and to be able to recognize the components that historians consider as they tackle those problems. Doing so might encourage critical thinking in other areas of life as well as preparing students for the demands of reading in a multimodal environment.

Wineburg (1991) acknowledges that,

“...experts and novices do not represent different stages on the same continuum because they are not drawn from the same population in the first place. In other words, the differences between students and historians may, in fact, be evident in certain cognitive activities but have their roots elsewhere. Thus any facile claim about the roots of these differences should be avoided. In the meantime, it can be said with some assurance that able high school students can know a lot of history but still have little idea of how historical knowledge is constructed” (p. 84).

It is my position that teaching students to read in a variety of different useful ways prepares them to understand a wider range of texts and messages and to approach those messages more critically.

Graphic Novels and Graphic Histories: A Word about terminology.

The term *graphic novel*, as explained earlier, is a generic term, referring to any book that uses the conventions of a comic book to convey meaning; even though many graphic novels are not novels at all, but non-fiction works. In discussing history, however, it is important to distinguish between nonfiction history texts and historical novels. Both types of books, it might be argued, try to express important aspects of the past. The former, however, tries to present history in such a way that it can be further investigated, tested, disputed, and argued. Novels, on the other hand, though they try to give the reader a sense of what it might have been like to live in that period, have a greater degree of falsifiability. That is to say, they may, by their nature, take more liberties with what is known and what is not known – speculating about not only motives, thoughts, feelings, and the nature of relationships, but also speculating about historical figures, clothing, objects, territory, and other details.

To keep this distinction clear, I have and will continue to use the generic term *Graphic Novel* to refer to any book-length work that uses the conventions of a comic book to tell a story or convey knowledge and information. I will also, however, use the more specific term, *graphic history* to refer to non-fiction historical works that use the conventions of a graphic novel.

Something more is needed – GNs may have potential to add layers of context.

Scaffolding is necessary to teach students these skills. Students have the ability to read and think like historians if scaffolding is provided (VanSledright, 2002; Lee & Ashby, 2005). Students need to be aware of what types of historical reasoning skills to utilize and when to utilize them while conducting historical inquiry.

From a Vygotskian perspective (Vygotsky, *Mind in society*, 1978; Vygotsky, *Thought and language*, 1986), this type of disciplinary thinking must be scaffolded. Vygotsky wrote of the best teaching occurring within what he called the Zone of Proximal Development, which simply refers to

the area of learning between what the child is already capable of doing alone and what they cannot do without assistance— the area where they can do something with help. The term scaffolding refers to the ways that teachers can provide that help.

While the multimodal comprehension process of reading GNs might prove complicated for students at first, historical graphic novels might provide one level of scaffolding for historical inquiry through the close connection of images and words.

Graphic histories may be able to provide, for example, additional context through images, while preserving the words of a primary text, or to embed charts, graphs, maps, and photographs within the narrative so that they are part of understanding the story, rather than standing alone in a box on a textbook page where they are easily missed by a student reading the text (Boerman-Cornell, 2009a; Boerman-Cornell & Manderino, Multimodal history and content area reading strategies: textual analyses of three graphic novels, 2007). Mayer (1997) conducted a meta-analysis of 24 studies and determined that when students viewed explanations in multimodal formats, they were able to find 75% more creative solutions to problem-solving transfer tests. Brunye, Taylor, and Rapp (2007) determined that multimedia presentations led to “overall learning advantages relative to single-format presentation, with an emphasis on both repetition and integrative working memory processes.” By scaffolding with graphic histories around historical concepts, students can achieve greater efficacy when synthesizing more traditional historical sources.

It is, however, incorrect to assume that students will naturally engage with graphic novels in a way that extends disciplinary ways of thinking. (Indeed, it is also incorrect to speak of GNs monolithically at all – there is a range of quality and usefulness within the format). Sourcing an image becomes much more difficult because the author of the source may not be explicitly stated so the source and perspective must be inferred by the “visual grammar” of the photograph, video, or political cartoon. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) That is, the reader must infer meanings through the

author's combined use of symbols, pictures, and words, without the benefit of knowing who produced them. Contextualization encounters the same difficulties due to lack of sourcing, yet the context may be inferred by the synergy between text and image, and the text's relationships to other texts, or possible intertextual links. Corroboration of visual sources, printed text sources and multimodal sources requires a new way of talking about texts and their interaction. This sounds perhaps overly challenging for high school students, but they have experience doing these things when they read GNs and other multimodal texts. It is not unreasonable to suggest that such skills might transfer (though no research has yet looked at that). Before such research can be conducted, though, we need to get the lay of the land and determine what potential scaffolding affordances are within graphic novels and how widespread such affordances are.

So rather than seeing GNs monolithically as a genre pronouncing their value for struggling or regular readers on that basis, researchers need to consider GNs as a format with a range of different genres, and consider the value of each graphic novel in light of the disciplinary context in which students are reading. To that end, we should consider whether, for example, GNs about history might not give us affordances with which to help students achieve the sort of reading skills Shanahan & Shanahan, Wineburg, Lee and Ashby, and VanSledright suggest we strive toward.

Multimodal research suggests that GNs have great potential for meaning-making

Recent developments in literacy theory called variously Multiliteracies (Cazden, et al., 1996); Hypermedia (Azevedo & Cromley, 2004); Hyperpedagogy (Dwight & Garrison, 2003) ; Hypermodality (Lemke, 2002); Multimodality (Walsh, 2006); Digital Literacies (Rhodes & Robnalt, 2004); Intermediality (Semali & Pailliotet, 1999) and New Literacies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003) have argued convincingly that we are not so much moving from a text-based society to a image-based society, but rather that, with the advent of the internet, our communication is occurring more and more at the intersection of two or more modalities (for example, image and word) (Jewitt &

Kress, 2003; Hull & Nelson, 2005). Lemke (2002) argues that, “it is not simply that we juxtapose image, text, and sound; we design multiple interconnections among them, both potential and explicit” (p. 300).

This study will specifically use the term multimodality, however. The term has gained wide use as referring to texts that use a combination of modes of communication (traditional text, image, film, sound, music, graphic novels, museum displays, websites, etc.) to make meaning (Iedema, 2003; Kress & Ogborn, *Subjectivity in the school curriculum*, 1998; Kress & van Leeuwen, *Reading images: The Grammar of visual design*, 1996). So although the idea of multimodality includes digital literacies, it is wider than that, including, for example, ways that we can read a drama, a dance, a musical performance, and also including children’s picture books, adolescent graphic novels, and discipline-specific high school and college textbooks that incorporate images into the text.

The field of multimodality has been around long enough to have a solid base of theory. The New London paper situated multimodal reading in terms of multiple linguistic and cultural contexts (Cazden, et al., 1996). The series of papers that followed tried to define what multimodality is, how it works, and how it ought to be studied. Lemke (2002) argues for an understanding of multimodality as being multiplicative of meaning – which is to say that the combination of the different meaning-carrying modes (written text and image, for example) is multiplicatively greater than the mere sum of their parts. Unsworth (2001) argues that in order to understand multimodal reading, we need a meta-language to describe how meaning-making occurs. Kress and Johnson (2003), argue in favor of a new approach to assessing student work based on new theoretical understandings of the way humans think alone and in the context of others. Iedema (2003) looks at the nature of multimodality in terms of what it can add or can’t add to the process of discourse analysis. Hull and Nelson (2005) attempt to define why and how multimodal texts have greater power to convey meaning. Michael Pressley’s literature review (1977) showed that images, in

connection to words, aid understanding and memory. He further showed that students could specifically use the meta-language of cartoons and comics to tell a story.

If adolescents, having been raised in a world of transition from a word-dominant world to one that is more deliberately multimodal, are on the cutting edge of this change, then this may be a clue as to the sudden popularity of graphic novels. Sipe (2008) argues that the term synergy,

“...is a good descriptor of text-picture or multimodal relationships in picturebooks, because all sign systems, together, produce an effect that is greater than the effect that either would produce alone, resulting in an aesthetic whole that is greater than the sum of its parts” (p. 23).

Multimodal texts, then, give readers access to much greater levels of meaning-making potential. Mayer (1997) concurs, but further argues that the potential is greater when the text is embedded within the pictures or vice versa.

“...adding verbal information... has a strong positive effect on problem-solving performance when the verbal information is coordinated with the visual information (i.e. placed next to it on the page...) but not when they are separated (i.e. the text and illustration are on different pages)” (p. 10).

This synergistic effect is even more exaggerated when considering GNs. What students are doing when they read graphic novels is not a matter of the pictures making it easier to read the story, but rather a matter of each page carrying the potential for students to make a multiplicity of meaning. Furthermore, the graphic novel blends image and text so closely, with the words appearing in the graphic itself rather than at the bottom as in picture books (or magazine ads), such that the synergy can be more that much more active. The two systems of meaning – image and text, can blend together in a way that is closer to seamless. Iedema (2003) refers to this as a, “blurring of the traditional boundaries between and roles allocated to language, image, page layout, document

design, and so on” (p. 33) Today’s adolescents are used to making meaning multimodally. GNs provide a way for them to use that ability to make meaning they have acquired.

The literacy skills demanded by a high school history course are both varied and complex. History, in particular, makes use of multiple modalities in order to construct meaning. In several cases, the multimodal forms of meaning-making that adolescents are using, such as film, pictures, and cartoons, also make use of historical content in their potential meaning-making. The studies referenced in the previous section argue that students must learn to negotiate this multitude of multimodal texts in order to build strong disciplinary knowledge in history. Therefore, researchers need to understand how students can come to integrate various multimodal sources to create historical meaning.

It is only recently that the field of literacy studies as a whole has acknowledged images as something that can be read, though individual researchers have been studying visual literacy for much of the past century at least. The subfield of graphic novels (and comic books) may provide an illustration. Literacy researchers have been studying comic books since the early 1940s. From 1941 to 1980 there were 18 studies that focused specifically on comic books (graphic novels had not yet developed at this point). These included correlation studies (Witty, Smith, & Coomer, 1942; Blakely, 1958; Swain, 1978); vocabulary studies (Hill, 1943; Mitchell, 1950); and qualitative examinations of themes in comic books (Frank, 1949). During that forty-year period, not a single study considered the notion that the images might be carrying meaning along with the written text. In all of them, the images were regarded as a distraction from the reading or, more often, the images were not regarded at all. In contrast, of the eleven graphic novel studies published since 2000, every one of them has looked at images as meaning carriers. (We will take a closer look at graphic novel research in the next section).

This weaving of image and text is, of course, not new. Children's literature has been communicating through image and text for centuries (going back at least to William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*.) The more multimodal blending of text and image has been happening in formats like comic books for nearly a hundred years. We need go back only twenty or thirty years, though, to see a time where, if the language of the Newbery Medal and Caldecott Medal websites are any indication, images and texts have traditionally been valued separately and that, if attitudes toward comic books are any indication, looking at the intersection of the two has generally not been valued at all. Clearly that has changed.

As mentioned before, Cazden et al (1996) argue that the world is becoming more intertextual. Any text that we read, then, exists in the context of a series of other texts. It is connected to those other texts through similar format choices, content connections, thematic connections, and so on. Graphic novels frequently make mention of other graphic novels, either through textual mention, or visual echo. In addition, many GNs began as a conventional book, were transformed into a graphic novel, and then sometimes from there into a movie. This intertextuality, however, has an active dimension for the reader as well. Through fan-fiction, websites, blogs, chat rooms, and multi-player games, readers can extend, parody, or alter the storyline, or even become a part of it.

Much of the research in multimodality has been in response to technological developments. Herrington and Knibb (1999) used a program to track the amount of time students spent on various elements of an on-line learning site. Schrader, Leu, Kinzer, Ataya, & Teale (2003) used a pre and post assessment, along with journal entries and interview data, to determine how well pre-service teachers could learn from a multimodal presentation of teaching concepts. Cassell (2004) examined how writing and oral language can combine through a technology called the Story Listening System (SLS) and whether such a system is helpful for teaching students to make meaning. Azvedo and

Cromley (2004) conducted an experimental study of 131 college freshmen to test the effectiveness of self-regulated learning with a hypermedia system.

Each of these studies adds to our understanding of how humans interact with specific applications of technology, that feeds our overall understanding. Having said that, the focus in these studies tends to be on the exciting capabilities of specific examples of new technology. Instead, researchers in multimodality might better look at what we have learned about the way students read multimodally, determine what skills will be useful to them, then look for the best way to teach those skills – making use of any and all appropriate technology -- but starting with the question of how we can teach our students to read multimodally.

Beach and Bruce (2002) point out that adolescents are increasingly and actively, "...engaged in ... participat[ing] in chat rooms, digital editing, zine production, interactive computer games, and hypertext/hypermedia productions" (p. 149). Graphic novels (and more and more conventional adolescent novels) offer ways for students to engage in these sorts of active connections in relation to what they are reading. For example, Heath and Bhagat (2005) describe an interactive graphic novel called *Beakman's World* that relies on input from young readers via email to provide direction to the science-based feature. Knobel and Lankshear (2002) mention a student zine in the form of a graphic novel – in this case, the interaction may primarily involve using graphic novels as a source for ideas of how best to utilize the format.

Researchers already know a great deal about what makes students want to read and what turns them off to reading. Ivey and Broaddus (2001) surveyed nearly 2,000 sixth-grade students and interviewed 31 of those students, then determined activities that seemed to engage students, including out-loud reading, independent reading, and quality and diversity of reading materials. They also determined that in school, students focused more on "the act of reading itself and personal reasons for reading rather than the social aspects" (p. 351). Guthrie and Davis (2003)

determined six classroom practices that increase engagement including “Using real world interactions to connect reading to student experiences” (p. 73) and giving students choices of materials and direct instruction of reading strategies. Yancey (2009) argues that colleges and universities currently have a culture that privileges traditional in-class learning in terms of both initial admissions and also the likelihood that the student will be successful throughout their college career. All three of these studies are exemplary of research that assumes that teaching literacy is a traditional activity involving books only and taught within the context of the classroom only.

In contrast, multimodal theory argues, in part, that communication in the 21st century requires students to make meaning from a combination of text (which we teach in school) and a variety of other modes (including images, music, embodiment, film, and so on). We seem to be on the cusp of a change in the way we approach multimodality in education. In a recent symposium at the Literacy Research Association Conference, two UIC colleagues and I argued that we need to stop approaching multimodality as a series of new and fun gadgets that we can add into our classes to make learning more fun or more relevant to today’s students, and begin considering how multimodal elements can help teachers achieve and extend their existing goals for their students (Boerman-Cornell, Manderino, & Kim, 2009). In order to do that, we need to know more about what affordances particular multimodal forms can provide specific disciplines with.

Research on comic books and graphic novels has laid the groundwork for investigating affordances for Disciplinary Literacy Instruction.

Extensive research on comic books has established their value for study and has laid the groundwork for graphic novel study. Though comic books and graphic novels use the same conventions (speech bubbles, narration boxes, panels to divide time, etc.), they are different from each other in several key ways (including length, range of subject matter and genre, and strength of stories and images -- generally because of the higher cost of publishing graphic novels, GNs tend to

weed out lesser writers and artists. There are relatively few research studies on graphic novels, even fewer on using GNs in schools, and none on using GNs in the context of disciplinary literacy.

Research on using graphic novels in schools tends to look overwhelmingly at using GNs to increase interest and very little at how they might help students learn particular concepts or content.

Comic book research, then, lays the groundwork for graphic novel study. From 1941 to the present, 41 studies focused on how children read comic books. The most overwhelming and consistent finding is that students are interested in reading comic books. Nine studies drew this conclusion from the forties through the sixties (Witty P. , 1941; Witty, Smith, & Coomer, Reading the comics in grades VII and VIII, 1942; McCarthy & Smith, 1943; Strang, Why children read the comics, 1943; DeLara, 1948; Sperzel, 1949; Malter, 1952; Witty P. A., 1954; Slover, 1959). Several more modern studies have reached the same conclusion (Arlin & Roth, 1978; Dorrell & Carroll, 1981; Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Ujue & Krashen, 1996; Bitz, 2004; Botzakis, 2009). Interest is a logical place to begin a study, so the number of studies that reach the same conclusion (some of them on the way to exploring other points) is hardly surprising. It is nonetheless important, however. Students' interest in reading in the comic book format persists to the present day. This high interest level on the part of students argues that graphic novels may be worthy of study if they generate similar levels of interest.

Less uniform in their conclusions were studies that looked at comics and vocabulary. Early studies, reacting perhaps to a strong anti-comic book position taken up by churches and anti-comic crusader Frederick Wertham, sought to prove or disprove the premise that reading comic books damages students' vocabulary growth. Several studies determined that comic books did not have a negative effect on vocabulary development (Hill, 1943; Reynolds, 1948; Sperzel, 1949; Blakely, 1958). Other studies found that comic books use advanced vocabulary (Mitchell, 1950) and that comic book readers are often high achievers in vocabulary tests (Hayes & Ahrens, 1988). These

studies argue that, at least on a prima facie basis, comic books have vocabulary that is worthwhile for students to read. On appearance, graphic novels have, if anything, more advanced vocabulary, but no studies have yet been undertaken to confirm this.

Several studies have looked at the question of the educative value of comic books. Witty (1941), again operating from a perspective that comics were either harmful (negative) or not harmful (neutral) (rather than considering the possibility that they might have positive effects) concluded that comics have no negative effects on students' abilities to read. Heisler (1948), in a correlational study, argued for a link between reading comic books and engaging in pop culture on the one hand, and high Stanford Achievement Test scores on the other. Arlin and Roth (1978) found a link between time-on-reading comics and growth in reading comprehension. Two different studies found evidence for increased comprehension ability among students who read comic books outside of school (Swain, 1979; Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988). Frank (1944) did a content analysis of comic books and argued that they have some valuable themes. Several studies used action research and determined that comic books provide a good source of creative possibilities in a variety of settings and contexts including college sociology courses (Hall & Lucal, 1999); an adolescent life skills course in South Africa (Kruger & Shariff, 2001); an adult AIDS awareness course in the Midwest (Barnett, 2004); a college course in feminist criticism (Moffatt & Norton, 2005); elementary and secondary language arts learning (McGinnis, 2007); and in secondary ELL classrooms (Ranker, 2007; Norton & Vanderheyden, 2004). Though each of these reports is only anecdotal, taken collectively, they seem to argue that GNs as well as comic books may have educative value. Heath and Bhagat (2005), writing in a handbook, reached the same conclusion after a review of the literature. Gibson, in *The Routledge Companion to Children's Literature* (2010) similarly concluded that GNs were worth analysis and study due to their multimodal nature.

Heath and Bhagat (2005) suggest that, far from dismissing graphic novels, researchers and practitioners ought to be looking more closely into their potential. In the contemporary research field, the value of graphic novels is still very much an unsettled question.

On the one hand, graphic novels seem to be gaining momentum as literacy objects worthy not only of study, but of incorporation into the curriculum as well. For the past five years, the Maryland State Department of Education has been expanding a program that includes graphic novels as part of the mandated school curriculum (Hudson, 2008). Conferences addressing the scholarship of the graphic novel, commonplace in Europe for decades, have now begun appearing in the United States (Hatfield, 2006). A swarm of new books have come on the market recently, including books looking at the history of comics and graphic novels (Hajdu, 2008; Nyberg, 1998; Barker, 1992); the scholarship of graphic novels (Carrier, 2000; Groensteen, 2007; Wolk, 2007); bibliographies of graphic novels (Pawuk, 2007; Rothschild, 1995; McTaggart, 2008; Goldsmith, 2005; Gorman, 2003; Weiner, 2005); and practitioner level books that help classroom teachers understand how graphic novels work and how to use them (McCloud, 1993; Carter, *Building literacy connections with graphic novels: Page by page, panel by panel*, 2007). Finally, comics and graphic novels are now given a chapter in *The Handbook of Research on Teaching Literacy through the Communicative Arts* (Heath & Bhagat, 2005).

Studies that specifically look at graphic novels have only begun to appear in journals recently. Baetens (2002) analyzed a Spanish graphic novel about Spanish imperialism in South America to see how different artists address different themes differently in the same story. Frey and Fisher (2004) showed that graphic novels could be used to teach writing skills in a urban environment. Hughes-Hassell and Rodge (2007) surveyed the leisure reading habits of urban adolescent students and reported a strong interest in graphic novels by that population (p. 28).

Connors (2010) looked at the semiotic resources that six high school students drew upon during a GN discussion group.

There has been some action research focused on graphic novels as well. Carter (2008) argues that the term graphic novel might best be considered a format rather than a genre, then details a classroom exercise that helps students realize that GNs include many genres. Smetana, Odelson, Burns, and Grisham (2009) report on using graphic novels to engage deaf students. Guzzetti (2009), in an as yet unpublished paper, used content analysis to look at comic books and graphic novels based on law enforcement forensics-science-based television shows (CSI, etc.). She looked at forensics-related vocabulary and science concepts that might support science instruction in high schools. Chun (2009) used the graphic novel *Maus* to teach critical literacies in the classroom. Chun's article is interesting in that it demonstrates how young the field is. Despite some of the advances in Graphic Novel Research in the last couple of years, Chun still presents GNs monolithically, as if what works in terms of teaching one GN will work for all GNs. He also looks almost exclusively at the text of *Maus* with little mention of the images or the way images and words come together in a graphic novel.

Each of these studies hints at how graphic novels might be a useful teaching tool in different contexts. Though Guzzetti (2009) looked at graphic novels and their possible use for science classes, no one has specifically looked the affordances specific graphic novels might provide for high school history classes. Rather, much of the research has looked at struggling readers across all curriculum (Bitz, 2004; Frey & Fisher, 2004; Morrison, Bryan, and Chilcoat, 2002), and reluctant readers (Ranker, 2007). There seems to be an assumption in much of this research that GNs represent a second or lesser choice in comparison with traditional format literature – and the GNs have value only as a way to reach readers who would otherwise be incapable or uninterested in reading (Connors, 2010).

Several practitioner-level books on how to use graphic novels in the classroom offer useful suggestions but little research. Carter (2007) and Vercaci (2007) both present a series of textual analyses of comic books and graphic novels with some suggestions of how they might be useful in a high school English classroom setting. McCloud (1993) uses a graphic novel format to explain how graphic novels and comic books work. Pawuk (2007) provides teachers with a genre guide and extensive list of graphic novels they might consider having available for their students. Monnin (2010) suggests strategies for an English language acquisition classroom.

The next step for graphic novel study, then, may well be to move outside of the exploration of its value as a literature text, to look at what potential GNs might have for disciplinary literacy.

Chapter III. Methodology

Theoretical Frame

This study focuses on the question of what GNs could offer high school teachers and students. In order to answer that, the study employs a modified content analysis approach. Monaghan and Hartman (2000) define content analysis in this way: “Here the text itself is the object of scrutiny. This approach takes as its data published works... and subjects them to a careful analysis that usually includes both quantitative and qualitative assessments” (p. 113). Babbie (1995) describes content analysis as a way for researchers to examine “...a class of social artifacts, typically written documents” (p. 306). He further argues that content analysis “...may be applied to virtually any form of communication” and “...is particularly well suited to the study of communications and to answering the classic question of communications research: ‘Who says what, to whom, why, and with what effect’” (p. 307).

Galda, Ash, and Cullinan (2000) distinguish between literary analyses and content analyses: “Literary analyses examine individual texts or genres to describe what authors do, looking, for example, at narrative patterns, character development, symbolism, intertextuality, or the function of the setting. These analyses may be historical accounts of changes in the field, may focus on one text or many, within or across genres, or may focus on the work of individual authors. Content analyses examine what texts are about, considering the content from a particular perspective such as sociohistorical, gender, culture, or thematic studies,” (p. 362).

This study might best be called a content analysis as it is considering a collection of 20 graphic histories from the perspective of whether they have the potential to help high school students engage in some of the element of disciplinary reading (as mentioned in the last chapter,

here we will use the term graphic novel to refer to all book-length works told using the conventions of a comic book – and the term graphic history (GH) to refer to non-fiction GNs that specifically address history)

Krippendorff (1980) describes content analysis as “Potentially,... one of the most important research techniques in the social sciences, it seeks to understand data not as a collection of physical events, but as symbolic phenomena and to approach their analysis unobtrusively.” (p. 7).

Krippendorff goes on to describe one of content analysis’s distinguishing features as “...transcend[ing] conventional notions of content as an object of concern... intricately linked to ... conceptions of symbolic phenomena” including, “...the awareness of the constraint that the choice of a medium imposes on human expression” and “...the awareness of the interpersonal dependencies, social relations, structure, and stratification surreptitiously created by the exchange of information” (p. 10). Because this study is trying to determine the viability of a new format, graphic novels, for teaching high school history, content analysis’s focus as a research tool on both the medium as well as the content in which that medium will be used, makes it a good choice.

Galda, Ash, and Cullinan (2000) however, point out that early quantitative analyses of children’s literature suffered from not considering the contexts in which the texts were operating. They report that more recent research has been able to use qualitative research methodologies to complement the quantitative side, such that recent content analyses are able to see broadly, using a counting approach, and deeply, using more naturalistic methods. Sipe (2008) argues that word/picture relationships are complex and interdependent. Both of these points argue that merely counting (for example) the number of times an opportunity is present for readers to engage in sourcing, is only part of the picture. This calls for a traditional content analysis approach to be supplemented with a more naturalistic case study approach.

This study examines both the content and the format in terms of multimodal theory and uses, so the method might be viewed as a hybrid of literary analysis and content analysis. White and Marsh (2006) distinguish between quantitative, qualitative, and mixed modes of frameworks for research. This study has qualities of both qualitative and quantitative frameworks; it resembles a quantitative framework in that it compares the number of times that opportunities for contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration are present, but it also includes close readings of 8 graphic history case studies.

Krippendorff (1980) argues that “Content analysis is an unobtrusive technique.” It avoids errors created by observation including errors resulting from, “the awareness of being observed or tested; the subject’s assumed or assigned role as interviewee or respondent; the influences of the measurement process on the subject; and experimenter-interviewer interaction effects on the subject” (p. 29). White and Marsh (2006) also point out that the specialized procedures of content analysis allow for replication of results by other researchers, particularly the quantitative aspects of a content analysis.

The particular content analysis employed in this study considers how graphic histories, using images and words, can contribute to student learning in Disciplinary Literacy Instruction. It examines ways that graphic histories, through their unique format, can provide additional contexts and additional ways of questioning the text. The study analyzes the content through the heuristics developed by Wineburg (1991). Content analysis helps make clear not only what types of scaffolding graphic histories can provide, but also how frequently that scaffolding is present, both in terms of frequency within a particular graphic history, and spread over the entire sample of GHs.

Methods Used

In order to get a broad look at what graphic histories could offer to high school history teaching. I considered 20 GHs to determine how they could help students understand what it

means to corroborate, source, and contextualize the history they are reading. The particular approach to content analysis used in this study, one informed by both disciplinary literacy learning theory and by multimodal theory, focuses on analyzing the way content is presented in the GH text and on the context in which that content would be used (in a high school history class).

Hsieh and Shannon (2005) list seven steps to content analysis, including, "...formulating the research questions to be answered, selecting the sample to be analyzed, defining the categories to be applied, outlining the coding process, implementing the coding process, determining trustworthiness, and analyzing the results of the coding process" (p. 1285).

Formulating the research questions to be answered

The research question for this study is: In what ways if any, could the content and format of graphic novels engage high school history students in Disciplinary Literacy Instruction? Within Disciplinary Literacy Instruction the focus is on the heuristics of Wineburg (1991).

Selecting the sample to be analyzed

Though graphic histories are growing in number and range with each passing year, when the sample was selected, the field of possible texts was small enough to be analyzed in its entirety. Thus, the sample for this study was a collection of all published graphic novels that fit the following four criteria.

Graphic novel: The text must be a book-length text that combines verbal text and images to tell a story using the conventions of a comic book, including but not limited to panels, speech bubbles, and narration boxes. This excludes comic books (including the extensive "Classic Comic Books" series) and picture books that use selective conventions of the comic book (for example, Shawn Tan's *The Arrival* (2007) uses panels that resemble a comic book, but no other conventions).

History content addressed: To be included, the graphic novel must address historical content appropriate for high school students. To identify graphic histories, a search was conducted

that included bibliographic publications (Rothschild, 1995; Pawuk, 2007; McTaggart, 2008; Goldsmith, 2005; Gorman, 2003; Weiner, 2005); Amazon.com searches for key words “Graphic Novel” and “History”; and Amazon recommendations based on searches for other history-based graphic novels. Colleagues and acquaintances also forwarded reviews, newspaper and magazine articles, and verbal recommendations about potentially appropriate graphic histories.

Year of publication. The search was limited to graphic histories published after 1985 and before January of 2010 for two reasons. First, the GH really began to hit its stride after the landmark publication of Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* (1986), the first critically recognized GH. Prior to that, GHs were few and far between and often of poor quality. Second, it followed that high school history teachers using GHs as supplementary material would be interested in more recent material to hold the reader’s attention. This also excludes earlier attempts that were tied to the shorter episodic approach of comic books or the underground comix movement that might prove to be inappropriate for high school students because of extreme violence and sexuality (for example, Jaxon’s (1979) *Comanche Moon* includes a panel with a Native-American baby trying to suckle from his shot and bleeding mother). Because the final list was compiled in January of 2010, the study only includes graphic histories written prior to that time.

Non-fiction. This study is limited to non-fiction graphic histories, straight informational GHs and biographies. Although there are some excellent historical fiction graphic novels, including, for example, Mat Johnson and Warren Pleece’s *Incognegro* (2008), they have little chance at achieving the goals of Disciplinary Literacy Instruction as defined by Wineburg (Contextualization, Corroboration, and Sourcing) because the fictionalized nature of the works make it hard for students to separate accounts and sources from what is done to serve the story.

Applying the criteria:

Applying the procedures just described, an initial list of 30 titles was identified. A first reading of those 30 graphic histories found 10 GHs that, once examined closely, did not fit the criteria. Three were eliminated because, although they appeared to be history-related, their primary focus turned out to be something other than history (for example, *Pyong Yang: A Journey to North Korea* (Delisle, 2005), though of interest to history students, is primarily a description of contemporary North Korean society.) Three other GHs were eliminated because they were not at an appropriate reading level for instruction in high school. For example, *Mystery in Manzanar* (Fein, 2008) was a leveled reader targeted for middle elementary readers and *To Afghanistan and Back* (Rall, 2003) was written at a level of sophistication more appropriate for adults. Finally, 4 GNs that at first appeared to be nonfiction -- *Incognegro* (Johnson & Pleece, 2008), *300* (Miller & Varley, 1999), *High Society* (Sim, 1994), and *Satchel Paige* (Sturm & Tommaso, 2007) -- were eliminated because they were primarily fiction and, though they contained historical facts and concepts, it was difficult to distinguish between the invented aspects of the narrative and the elements from historical research.

There were two graphic histories included in the final study that could be considered as creative non-fiction. Root (2003) defines creative nonfiction (sometimes called literary journalism) as, "...the application of strategies familiar from fictional narrative: the [author] as first person narrator, and the development of characters and dialogue" (p. 248). *Houdini* (Lutes & Bertozzi, 2007) and *Maus* (Spiegelman, 1991) fit this definition and were included because they had much more in common with historical biographies than with fiction texts. *Houdini* uses the framing device of a single day in Houdini's life to present a short biography. Extensive notes at the end of the book make clear the sources for the details in the story. *Maus* takes the memoir of creator Art Spiegelman's father during the Holocaust in Germany and presents it using images that depict the

Jewish prisoners as mice and the Nazis as cats. The words of the narrative, however, are unaltered from the original transcription.

Table 4.1 (p. 55) lists the resulting 20 graphic histories that met the four criteria described above. These GHs were then subjected to a quantitative analysis of the features described above.

After this phase of the analysis was completed and the list of graphic histories for the quantitative analysis was set, the next phase was to narrow the list to a smaller list of GHs to be subjected to a closer literary case analysis. Although the quantitative analysis captured a useful overall picture of how different GHs provided opportunities for contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration, it tended to emphasize similarities and generalizations. A close literary analysis provided the opportunity to look at how individual GHs combine image and word on a panel-to-panel basis and how they allow rich opportunities for contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration in an individual book that may not appear in the overall pattern of opportunities revealed in the features present in the overall corpus of GHs.

Four criteria determined a graphic history's suitability to be included in the multimodal case analysis.

Topic. First, the graphic history had to focus on a topic that was likely to be useful and relevant in a high school history class. The original research question focuses on how GHs could provide affordances for high school history students to engage in contextualization, corroboration, and sourcing. This criterion allowed for a focus on the GHs that are most likely to be used in the classroom. For example, *'08: A Graphic Diary of the Campaign Trail* (Crowley & Goldman, 2009) is a close up look at two reporters following the process of the presidential campaigns. It explains caucuses, the electoral system, and how presidential candidates interact with the media. Such a book would be a natural choice for a civics class. Other examples include a GH version of *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (Baker, 2008) that powerfully addresses the effects of slavery in the US and would be

ideal for an American history class, and *Safe Area Gorazde* (Sacco, 2002) concerning the war in Bosnia and would be well suited to a world history class. This criterion also eliminated 3 GHs from consideration: *Louis Riel* (Brown, 1999) about the Metis rebellion in Canada; *Blood upon the Rose: Easter 1916* (Hunt, 2009) about the Irish conflict with the British; and *Houdini* (Lutes & Bertozzi, 2007), a biography of the entertainer and escape artist. Each of these is certainly interesting, but it is highly unlikely that any of the three would be included in a history curriculum in the US.

Multimodal format. Second, to be included in the multimodal case analysis portion of the study, the graphic history needed to take advantage of the multimodal nature of the graphic novel format. GHs need to combine images and words to take advantage of the panel-to-panel transitions that move the narrative along. As McCloud (1993) points out, what makes GHs so interesting to readers is what happens between panels. So if the first panel on a page shows an early American explorer setting out from a stockade, the second panel shows his scouting party walking through a snowfield, the third panel shows a close up of his foot breaking through the ice over a stream, and the final panel shows him shivering, there has been a narrative progression from panel to panel. Several GHs stood out because of the innovative ways they combined images and text. For example, *The Magical Life of Long Tack Sam* (Fleming, 2007) uses different styles of images to signal to the reader different narrative topics. *T-Minus: The Race to the Moon* (Ottaviani, Cannon, & Cannon, 2009) uses innovative narration boxes and visual angles to draw the readers in.

In contrast, one of the 3 graphic histories eliminated by this criterion was Harvey Pekar and Gary Dumm's *Students for a Democratic Society: A Graphic History* (2008). Pekar and Dumm's book often relied on the text to carry the meaning, and the images seemed, at best, redundant. In the case of Jacobson and Colon's (2006) adaptation of *The 9-11 Report*, many pages consists of multiple panels, each presenting a different aspect of 9-11, but few of them are dependent upon any other

panel for its meaning, cancelling the advantage of panel-to-panel narrative movement. Pekar's *Unsung Hero: The Story of Robert McNeill* (2005) was also eliminated for this reason.

Contextualization, Sourcing, Corroboration. The third criterion was whether the graphic history used any distinctive ways of providing opportunities for readers to engage in contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration. For example, Fleming's *The Magical Life of Long Tack Sam* (2007) employed small timelines in the margin to provide temporal context. *Journey into Mohawk Country* (O'Connor & VandenBogaert, 2006) used images to convey the Native American context and text to convey the European context. Four GHs -- Anderson's *King*, (1993) Laird and Bey's *Still I Rise: A Cartoon History of African-Americans* (1997), Kubert's *Fax from Sarajevo* (1996), and Spiegelman's *Maus* (1991) -- were eliminated through this criterion. This does not mean that these GHs did not engage in contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration at all; rather, their ways of doing so were the same as other GHs or did not offer new insights for case studies. (*Maus* was eliminated because it has already been written about extensively).

Appeal to High School Students. The final criterion was whether the graphic history seemed to have potential to appeal to high school students. In order for students to engage in contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration, they need to spend time immersed in the book. Therefore, it is important that the GHs cover topics of interest to high school students and that they present those topics in an interesting way. This criterion allowed the study to focus in on those GHs most likely to grab high school students' attentions. For example, both *Palestine* (Sacco, 2001) and *A People's History of American Empire* (Zinn, Konopacki, & Buhle, 2008) present an alternative to the standard history book. Zinn presents a look at US history from the perspective of those who lost out (Native Americans, the people of the Philippines, low-wage workers, etc). Sacco provides a balanced look at both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These two GHs tap into the high school student's desire for the part of the story that doesn't get told. Both books use narration,

gripping (and sometimes violent) visuals, and engaging text. Other GHs selected focus on topics of interest to high school students: the space race (Ottaviani, Cannon, & Cannon, 2009), racial diversity before and during World War Two (Fleming, 2007), violent slave rebellion (Baker, 2008) and other engaging topics.

This criterion also eliminated 2 graphic histories that were much less likely to catch a high school reader's attention -- for example, Guibert and Cope's *Alan's War* (2008) is the story of a US soldier during World War II. Though this sounds like a topic of interest to high school students, Alan Cope's wartime experiences were unremarkable. He did not fight in any major battles, he was not involved in any pivotal moments in the history of the war, and he offers no insights into the nature of war. Most of the GH is a diary of a very ordinary GI's day-to-day experiences.

Applying these criteria resulted in a set of 8 graphic histories for a multimodal case analysis. Table 3.1 shows both the GHs included in the quantitative portion of the study and the GHs included in the multimodal case analysis.

Table 3.1 Graphic Histories Included in Sample

| Title | Creator(s) | Year | Included in Quantitative study (n=20) | Included in Case Studies (n =8) |
|---|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>King</i> | Anderson | 2010 | X | |
| <i>The Confessions of Nat Turner</i> | Kyle Baker | 2008 | X | X |
| <i>Louis Riel: A Comic Strip Biography</i> | Brown | 1999 | X | |
| <i>08: A Graphic Diary of the Campaign Trail</i> | Crowley & Goldman | 2009 | X | X |
| <i>The Magical Life of Long Tack Sam</i> | Fleming | 2007 | X | X |
| <i>Alan's War: The Memories of G.I. Alan Cope</i> | Guibert & Cope | 2008 | X | |
| <i>Blood upon the Rose: Easter 1916</i> | Hunt | 2009 | X | |
| <i>The 9-11 Report</i> | Jacobson & Colon | 2006 | X | |
| <i>Fax from Sarajevo</i> | Kubert | 1996 | X | |
| <i>Still I Rise: A Cartoon History of African Americans</i> | Laird & Bey | 1997 | X | |
| <i>Houdini: The Handcuff King</i> | Lutes & Bertozzi | 2007 | X | |
| <i>T-Minus</i> | Ottoviani | 2009 | X | X |
| <i>Fallout: J. Robert Oppenheimer, Leo Szilard, and the Political Science of the Atomic Bomb.</i> | Ottaviani & Johnson | 2001 | X | |
| <i>Unsung Hero: The Story of Robert McNeill</i> | Pekar & Collier | 2005 | X | |
| <i>Students for a Democratic Society: A Graphic History</i> | Pekar & Dumm | 2008 | X | |
| <i>Palestine</i> | Sacco | (2001) | X | X |
| <i>Safe Area Gorazde</i> | Sacco | (2002) | X | X |
| <i>Maus (I and II)</i> | Spiegelman | (1986) (1991) | X | |
| <i>Journey into Mohawk Country</i> | VandenBogaert & O'Connor | (2006) | X | X |
| <i>A People's History of American Empire</i> | Zinn, Konopacki, & Buhle | (2008) | X | X |

The above list included 5 focused histories of particular events (*Louis Riel, 08: A Graphic Diary of the Campaign Trail, Blood upon the Rose, T-Minus, and Fallout*); 4 memoirs (*Alan's War, Unsung Hero, SDS: A Graphic History, Maus*); 3 biographies (*King, The Magical Life of Long Tack Sam, Houdini*); 2 primary source adaptations (*The Confessions of Nat Turner, Journey into Mohawk Country*); 2 historical overviews of a larger period in history (*Still I Rise, People's History of American Empire*); 2 works of reportage (*Palestine, Safe Area Gorazde*); 1 adaptation of a government report (*The 9/11 Report*); and a personal history (*Fax from Sarajevo*).

Establish data collection unit and unit of analysis

The analysis focused on aspects of each graphic history that are potentially helpful for teaching Disciplinary Literacy Instruction, particularly any place where the GH reveals unique affordances for helping students to source, corroborate, and contextualize (Wineburg, 1991). Because of this, this study examined the intersection of verbal text and image, rather than one or the other.

Previous pilot studies (Boerman-Cornell & Manderino 2007, Boerman-Cornell 2009a, Boerman-Cornell 2009b) indicated that meaning is often carried over several panels. Therefore, the content analysis considered that the unit of analysis could consist of the panel, the page, several panels or pages, or even the chapter as potential units of analysis depending on what carried meaning or narrative movement and what demonstrates the element of the Wineburg's or Lee and Ashby's heuristic. In this study, I employed the *instance* as the unit of analysis. An instance was defined as a single panel, collection or panels, page, or collection of pages in which an opportunity for contextualization, sourcing, or corroboration occurs.

For example, when considering whether, for example, Howard Zinn's *A People's History of American Empire* (2008) has any affordances for providing geographic contextualization, one of the first instances the reader encounters is the image on page 1 that shows the second 9-11 plane

bearing down on the already burning World Trade Towers. Because the World Trade Towers are an iconic image, and because they are linked in most reader's minds to New York City, the instance of geographic contextualization was conveyed by that single iconic image counting as a single instance of geographic contextualization. On page 10 of *A People's History of American Empire*, the text box at the top of the page indicates that the image below it is from the massacre at Wounded Knee. The image associated with that text box is of a group of Native-Americans wrapped in blankets in a desolate landscape. In this case it is the text that is an instance of contextualization, but the image, since it does not indicate a particular location, is not. On page 21, the third panel shows a caricature of George Pullman telling reporters that he is going to his home on the Jersey shore until the strike blows over. The next panel shows Pullman's wife in what is clearly a palatial estate. In this case, two instances of geographic contextualization, the text and the image work together to convey different aspects of the place.

An instance, then, could be a single text box within a panel, two or more images of different locales conveyed in contrasting panels, or a character's realization of where he or she is, which could occur over multiple pages as a single instance of geographic contextualization and so forth. When it was uncertain whether a given instance might be broken down into two instances, the coding was always in the direction of two smaller instances.

Determining the categories to be applied and outlining the coding process

Pilot Studies. Babbie (1995) points out that, "No coding scheme should be used in content analysis until it has been carefully pretested" (p. 313). I conducted two pilot studies to test how well Wineburg's and Lee & Ashby's heuristics provide a framework for looking at graphic histories (Boerman-Cornell 2007; Boerman-Cornell 2009a).

Boerman-Cornell 2007 investigated 3 graphic histories to determine the usefulness of Wineburg's heuristic and Lee and Ashby's structure for coding graphic histories. The study looked

at Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1986), Joe Sacco's *Safe Area Gorazde* (2002), and Jacobson and Colon's adaptation of the US government's *9-11 Report* (2006). Results showed that both Wineburg and Lee and Ashby could be used to structure an analysis. We further determined that, after an initial inter-rater reliability of 92.5% on 33% of the data, both researchers could come to full agreement on coding categories. This confirmed that the coding system could be useful. This pilot study also led to developing a series of sub-categories within each of Wineburg's three categories (contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration). The sub-categories were later incorporated in the coding for the dissertation study. The study also revealed several emergent ways that GHs mediated Wineburg and Lee and Ashby's heuristics, including the idea that GHs could embed maps and primary sources in such a way that the story would provide context for those documents without the reader being able to ignore them as happens with regular history text books; and also the idea that GHs could position the reader as viewer in the scene in such a way as to encourage emotional closeness to or distance from the characters or situations.

The second pilot study (Boerman-Cornell 2009a) looked at 3 graphic histories that had been adapted from primary and secondary historical sources and reports originally written in a conventional word-only version -- the *9-11 Report* (Jacobson & Colon, 2006), O'Connor and VandenBoegart's *Journey into Mohawk Country* (2006), and Howard Zinn's *People's History of American Empire* (2008). In this study it became clear that, while Wineburg's heuristic was picking up a great deal of interesting data, Lee and Ashby's was either picking up the same data or was not generating any counts at all.

This led to a change in the coding system. While some of Lee & Ashby's ideas were attained (evidence, temporality, causation, change, empathy, and accounts), they were incorporated into the structure of Wineburg's heuristic. All three graphic histories were also examined to see if they contained anything that hadn't fit in Wineburg or Lee & Ashby, but which might still have bearing in

using these GHs to teach high school history. Again, the pilot study confirmed that category scheme seemed well-suited to a variety of graphic histories.

Dissertation study. The pilot studies indicated the most potential for capturing affordances for disciplinary teaching in Wineburg's heuristic of contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration. Once those three categories were settled upon, a series of subcategories under each category were developed that helped focus on different aspects of the larger categories for the codings of the graphic histories. After an initial reading of the first five GHs, some of the subcategories were modified to more accurately reflect ideas about the coding that had emerged during those readings. I then recoded those 5 GHs again to reflect the modified system.

White and Marsh (2006) point out that during content analysis it is not unusual for some codes to be combined, eliminated, and for others to emerge. To that end, the study employs Glaser and Strauss's constant comparison approach (1967) meaning that the emerging relationships and categories reflect new insights as new data are combined with old. In the initial readings, both embedded maps and establishing shots emerged as important subcategories. Initial ideas for coding included two subcategories in the Sourcing category, one about use of emotion by the GH author to try to sway the reader, and another about use of violence to sway the reader. Both of these subcategories proved difficult to judge. In the end, though such instances certainly exist, the difficulty of reliably identifying them made it more sensible to cut those categories.

Although the structure was modified and adapted as emergent ideas came out, this coding scheme has proven itself, through two pilot studies, to be solid enough to direct my research, yet flexible enough to include valuable new insights. Figure 3.1 shows the final set of categories employed in this study, structured around Wineburg's heuristic.

Figure 3.1 Coding Categories

Contextualization:

Geographic contextualization (How does the reader come to understand where the event takes place and how the geography of the area influences history?)

Embedded maps

Long shot/ establishing shot (image[s] of an area seen from a distance, allowing the reader to get the big picture of how locations of individual scenes are related.)

Iconic Images/Motifs that establish place (e.g. a scene with the Statue of Liberty in the background establishes that we are in New York. An image of an elevated train signals the reader that the scene takes place in Chicago.)

Narration boxes and other text that establish place

Temporal contextualization (from Lee and Ashby) (How does the GH help the reader become aware of what preceded and followed this particular event in history?)

*Timelines**Juxtaposition of two similar events separated by time*

Image-based time references (e.g. panels showing a stopwatch to show how much time has elapsed or using images of the phases of the moon to indicate that a month has passed)

Narration boxes and other texts that establish time

Social contextualization (How does the GH help the reader understand the relationships between individuals and groups of people?)

Positioning of characters (Where characters stand in relation to each other, how close to each other they are standing, whether they are part of a larger group)

*Visual references to ethnic or social groups**Visual references to cultural practices*

Economic contextualization (How does the GH inform the reader about the economic situation of the time and how it affected historical movement?)

Economic references through images (Depicting clothing or possessions to indicate relative wealth or poverty)

Juxtaposition by panel/ motif of similar or contrasting economic states between two characters/ communities.

References through narration boxes/ word balloons of economic status

Political contextualization (How does the GH inform readers of the political convictions of key figures, and how political movements affected historical movement?)

Political references by image (Images of iconic or well-known political figures or symbolic references – for example, using a donkey to indicate the Democratic Party, or an elephant to indicate the Republican party)

Political affiliation by physical positioning (e.g. a main character present in a crowd of people cheering for a candidate or a character with hands on hips and an angry expression facing a political poster.)

Figure 3.1 continued

Sourcing: (What is the source for facts and arguments reported in an historical account?)

Embedded document (memo, correspondence, journal entry, speech, photograph, etc)

Lettering and word boxes to establish voice, identity

Images that indicate authorial bias (e.g. Spiegelman's depiction of Nazis as cats and Jewish people as mice, or Kubert's depiction of Bosnian soldiers with squinting angry faces)

Corroboration: (How do different accounts of historical events support or contradict each other?)

Parallel accounts of the same event linked by image or motif (e.g. Joe Sacco often includes multiple eyewitness accounts of a single event, but links them by the talking head shot with distinctive lettering at the beginning of each account)

Agreement/non-agreement by other characters (shown by expressions, embedded text, etc.) (An eyewitness might be describing an event to a reporter while behind them, the author might show other people indicating their disagreement through their facial expressions or body stances.)

Collaborative report showing different data sources. (For example, *The 9-11 Report* summarizes many different eyewitness accounts and indicates when there were some accounts at variance with others)

Overall, the three main headings are contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration.

Contextualization looks to answer a version of the question Wineburg (1991) posed: Does the graphic history offer students any forms of help in paying close attention to when the event happened and where it took place? This includes considering within these categories whether there are social, moral, geographic, temporal, economic, or political motivations of individuals or social groups that might explain a particular event. It also involves considering past actions that led up to that event, and whether there were effects of that location, climate, scarcity or abundance of resources that affected the way the event unfolded.

The second general category, paraphrasing Wineburg's (1991) essential question, asks: Does the graphic history help students see more clearly what (or who) the source of the document is? For high school students, this may mean first establishing the distinction between a secondary source narrative (the ordinary text of a history book, for example) and a document (a memo, speech, photograph, law, proclamation, political cartoon, editorial, etc). GHs often do this by retaining the form of the document (showing that it is a memo by depicting it as such, perhaps in the hand of a character or by distinguishing the words of a primary source diary from the rest of the narrative text by highlighting those words in a distinctive style or color of narration box in each panel.) Once that is established, though, the larger questions have to do with who the author was in terms of their political orientation, personal alliances and animosities, goals and beliefs, and so on.

The study also examined how the graphic history offers potential for students to check important details against each other before accepting them as plausible or likely (Wineburg, 1991). GHs can show multiple accounts, and sometimes link them either through a distinctive style that tells the reader that we have moved from the main narrative into an eyewitness account, or through a visual motif that helps the reader realize that we are hearing the same story from a different

perspective. The pilot studies reveal both these approaches in the work of Joe Sacco (2002) and Anne Marie Fleming (2007).

Results of the coding process

Typically in the quantitative summary that is part of phase one of the content analysis described here, it is sufficient to report results as total numbers for each category (number of books in the total sample that contains X feature). But in order to more clearly represent the degree of opportunities for contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration in the 20 graphic histories, I considered not only how many instances of each coding category occurred in the individual GHs, but also took into account that the books differed considerably in terms of length, ranging from 48 pages (Hunt, 2009) to 300 pages (Guibert, 2008) and averaging 175.5 pages (median = 184). Thus, to give a sense of how much a student would encounter a particular feature during reading, I examined both raw frequency and the ‘density’ of occurrence. To calculate density of occurrence, the total number of instances in each subcategory were divided by the total number of pages in that GH. This facilitated comparing density scores from one graphic novel to another. These two sets of numbers – frequency and density -- were examined for patterns both in terms of categories within a single GH and across all the GHs in the study.

Inter-rater Reliability

To check inter-rater reliability, another researcher coded a 10-page section from each of three randomly-selected graphic histories from the corpus: *Louis Reil, 08: A Graphic Diary of the Campaign Trail*, and *Students for a Democratic Society: A Graphic History* using the entire coding system summarized in Figure 3.1. Degree of reliability was determined by calculating the total number of panels in each of the 10-page sections and considering how each of the 20 categories in the coding system was

applied in each panel. Results from this reliability analysis are summarized in Table 3.2. The degree of reliability achieved was considered strong.

Table 3.2 Reliability Analysis Results

| Title | N of Panels in 10-pg Selection | N of Codings (panel n X 20) | % of Identical Codings |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Louis Riel</i> | 60 | 1200 | 98.2 |
| <i>08: Diary</i> | 32 | 640 | 94.3 |
| <i>SDS</i> | 40 | 800 | 91.8 |
| Total | 132 | 2640 | 95.3 |

Multimodal Case Analysis

In order to capture elements of contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration in addition to those revealed in the quantitative analysis, this research employed a multimodal case approach to 8 graphic histories, (selected according to the criteria described above and identified in Table 3.1).

After completing phase 1 of the analysis, I reread these 8 graphic histories several times, taking notes about ways that each GH afforded opportunities for students to engage in contextualization, sourcing, or corroboration. This part of the analysis resembled genre analysis, which critic Northrop Frye (1957) explains as "...Criticism by genres is not so much to classify as to clarify... bringing out a large number of literary relationships that would not be noticed as long as there were no context established for them" (p. 129). The terms *graphic novel* and *graphic history* more accurately refer to formats rather than genres, but the idea of the analysis is the same. Bomer (2003) explains,

"Once we have determined the nature of this text as a whole, that sense of genre helps us to eliminate possibilities, to constrain the likelihood of what will happen on this page. If we have figured out that this is a poem, we'll be expecting the language to do different things than if it were a set of mechanical instructions. We'll read it differently." (p. ix)

As genre criticism allows a critic to look at several examples of a genre to determine similarities and differences, so examining the selection of different examples of the graphic history format can help illuminate how that format works.

The focus of this analysis was on how these particular graphic histories work in relation to contextualization, sourcing and corroboration. As Gillespie (2010) says,

"When we analyze a work, we get under the hood to see how the engine works. Analysis is technical: pulling things apart, examining relationships among parts, mulling causes and

effects. As poet John Ciardi explains it, when we analyze, we are not asking *what* a [work] means anymore, but *how* it means” (p. 4).

Multimodal case analysis allows a different perspective on the way graphic histories make meaning. As a result, however, multimodal case analysis is considerably more subjective than the earlier quantitative study. As Gillespie (2010) explains,

“Unlike in science however, the theories of literary scholars are not subject to empirical tests, so we might think of them less as the findings of an experiment than as the lens through which the critic observes the object under study and conducts the experiment.” (p. 5).

Each case study involved examining the graphic history on three levels.

- The way the overall story used the format of the GH to provide opportunities for contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration.
- The way the GH format allows students to interact with Wineburg’s heuristic on the level of a page.
- What was happening on a panel-to-panel level.

Because of the emphasis on understanding how graphic histories work in terms of making meaning and allowing students to engage in contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration, it might seem the study is operating from a formalist or new critical perspective. In fact, though, the perspective of this part of the study is actually much closer to reader response when considered in terms of the larger arc of my research. Though this multimodal case analysis primarily focuses on the form of the work, it does so to pave the way for further research that will use that base to consider how high school readers actually engage in these aspects of Wineburg’s heuristic.

The multimodal case analysis allows development of a comprehensive map of what graphic histories offer for high school history instruction. This also offers clear direction on where further

research can focus as we determine whether those affordances are useful in the classroom with real students.

Chapter IV. Results

The research question that this study is designed to answer is: What opportunities, if any, do graphic histories afford for high school history teachers to teach contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration?

In examining the categories of contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration, I found it useful to establish the series of subcategories described in Chapter 3 (figure 3.1) in order to discover more about which graphic histories contained which aspects of a larger category. This approach was used to analyze the entire corpus of 20 GHs. Coding each of the 20 GHs led to consideration of the original research question in terms of two ‘sub’ questions:

1. What does quantitative coding analysis reveal about opportunities for contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration across the set of graphic histories available to readers/teachers (the entire corpus of 20)?
2. What does the analysis of selected individual graphic histories reveal about opportunities for teaching high school history?

The first question enabled consideration of whether opportunities for contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration all present and to what degree in the sample, or if such affordances were present in one or two of the categories to a greater degree than the others.

The second question focused on determining if examples of instances within the categories offered robust affordances for students to engage in contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration, or if such opportunities were minor and not very robust.

Opportunities for Contextualization, Sourcing, and Corroboration across the Graphic Histories

Quantitative analysis revealed general patterns, and also patterns specific to each of the three categories. In general, the study found that though GHs offer opportunities for high school

teachers to include context, sourcing and collaboration, (1) GHs do not offer opportunities for all three of these elements to equal degrees and (2) the degree to which each of these elements is present varied considerably from graphic history to graphic history.

Table 4.1 shows both the frequency (the total number of instances in which the GH presented the possibility for students to engage in contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration) and the density (the total number of pages divided by the number of instances to determine how many pages on average between instances).

Table 4.1 Contextualization, Sourcing, and Corroboration Across All GHs

| Title (pages) | Contextualization | | Sourcing | | Corroboration | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Frequency ¹ | Density ² | Frequency | Density | Frequency | Density |
| Alan's War (336) | 247 | 1.3 | 30 | 11.2 | - | - |
| 9/11 Report (115) | 264 | .43 | - ³ | - | 1 | 115 |
| Mohawk Country (144) | 270 | .53 | 1 | 144 | 0 | - |
| SDS (208) | 422 | .49 | 11 | 18.9 | 11 | 38.7 |
| Safe Area Gorazde (227) | 576 | .39 | 15 | 15.1 | 46 | 12.5 |
| History of American Empire (264) | 572 | .46 | 132 | 2 | 6 | 44 |
| Long Tack Sam (153) | 234 | .65 | 16 | 9.6 | 4 | 38.3 |
| T-Minus (123) | 206 | .59 | 68 | 1.8 | 7 | 17.6 |
| Maus (166) | 493 | .34 | 7 | 23.7 | 1 | 166 |
| Still I Rise (205) | 669 | .31 | 3 | 68.3 | - | - |
| Unsung Hero (79) | 200 | .38 | 15 | 5.3 | 3 | 26.3 |
| Nat Turner (188) | 244 | .77 | 6 | 31.3 | - | - |
| 08 Campaign (155) | 728 | 21.3 | 13 | 11.9 | 13 | 11.9 |
| King (236) | 508 | .46 | 51 | 4.6 | 3 | 78.6 |
| Louis Riel (272) | 422 | .64 | 13 | 20.9 | 1 | 272 |
| Fax from Sarajevo (180) | 214 | .84 | 67 | 2.7 | - | - |
| Fallout (205) | 267 | .76 | - | 29.3 | - | - |
| Houdini (82) | 54 | 1.5 | 3 | 27.3 | - | - |
| Palestine (285) | 714 | .4 | 9 | 31.6 | 34 | 8.4 |
| Blood upon the Rose (48) | 59 | .81 | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 7,363 | 1.73 (mean) | 467 | 25.5 (mean) | 130 | 69.1 (mean) |

¹ Frequency = total instances.

² Density = 1 instance per X pages.

³ - indicates null density.

First, GHs, as a type of book, do offer opportunities for students to engage in every one of the categories: contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration. But it is also the case that contextualization offers by far the most opportunities compared to sourcing and corroboration, both in terms of overall frequency and in terms of density. In fact, contextualization opportunities occur more than once per page in 18 of the 20 GHs. There are a total of 467 opportunities for sourcing across the 20 GHs. Opportunities for readers to engage in corroboration, however, are much more limited, occurring a total of only 72 times across the entire sample, never more frequently than about once every 8 pages, and not occurring at all in 11 of the 20 books.

Second, across the three categories, only slightly more than half (11 of 20) GHs have opportunities in all three categories (*SDS: A Graphic History*, *Safe Area Gorazde*, *A People's History of American Empire*, *Long Tack Sam*, *T-Minus*, *Maus*, *Unsung Hero*, *08 Campaign*, *Louis Riel*, and *Palestine*). Moreover, of these 11 GHs, 4 had a corroboration opportunity every 20 pages or fewer, and the others ranged from an opportunity every 26 to 272 pages. In comparison, 18 of the 20 GHs had opportunities for both contextualization and sourcing.

Contextualization:

Wineburg (1991) defines *contextualization* as the ability of the reader to place events and people in time and space. This requires the reader to go beyond the actual words as stated in the document and requires extensive knowledge and experience of the historical subject matter (Britt & Aglinskas, 2002). Five subcategories of contextualization were analyzed: geographic context, temporal context, social context, political context, and economic context. Table 4.2 shows the breakdown of the number of instances per X pages across the five subcategories.

Table 4.2 Contextualization Subcategories (one instance per X pages)

| Title (pages) | Geographic Context | Temporal Context | Social Context | Economic Context | Political Context |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Alan's War (300) | 13.6 | 1.5 | 150 | 14.3 | 0 |
| 9-11 Report(115) | 3.6 | .59 | 2.6 | 6.8 | 2.9 |
| Journey into Mohawk Country (141) | 2.7 | 3.2 | .87 | 35.3 | 20.1 |
| SDS A Graphic History (208) | 1.1 | 1.6 | 6.1 | 18.9 | 5.9 |
| Gorazde (227) | .5 | 2.6 | 20.6 | 15.1 | 13.4 |
| Hist. of American Empire (264) | 4.3 | .86 | 3.7 | 17.6 | 3.6 |
| Long Tack Sam (153) | 4.3 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 10.9 | 11.8 |
| T-Minus (123) | 2.3 | .92 | 15.4 | 30.8 | 15.4 |
| Maus (166) | 1.4 | 1.5 | .91 | 3.9 | 4.4 |
| Still I Rise (205) | 1.4 | .85 | .74 | 2.7 | 14.6 |
| Nat Turner(188) | 7.8 | 11.8 | .94 | 47 | - |
| 08 (155) | 4.1 | 1.3 | 2.2 | 5 | .25 |
| King (236) | 2.7 | 3.4 | .99 | - | 3 |
| Louis Riel (272) | 1.7 | 1.6 | 24.7 | 9.7 | 5.5 |
| Fax from Sarajevo (180) | 2.6 | 1.7 | 45 | 9 | 12.9 |
| Houdini (82) | 5.5 | 2.8 | 41 | 27.3 | - |
| Fallout (205) | 2.6 | 1.3 | - | 9.3 | 12.8 |
| Palestine (285) | 2.3 | 1.1 | 1 | 12.9 | 13 |
| Blood upon the Rose (48) | 1.8 | 2.1 | 12 | 12 | 24 |
| | | | | | |
| Mean | 3.49 | 2.24 | 17.40 | 16.02 | 10.22 |
| Standard Deviation | 3.00 | 2.45 | 34.9 | 11.9 | 6.78 |

These results indicate that there are ample opportunities for readers to engage in contextualization across all five subcategories, and that almost all of the graphic histories offer these opportunities. Some GHs rely more on one category than another (for example, *Journey into Mohawk Country* provides social context more than once per page on average, but provides economic context only once every 35 pages on average).

Geographic Context. Wineburg's definition cited above names both time and space as part of contextualization. When a reader opens a book of any sort, one of the first questions he or she might ask is "Where am I?" When studying history, this question becomes even more important as where a historical event takes place usually influences not only how we understand that event, but also, how the event itself unfolds. It is not, however, as simple as merely knowing the name of the town or region where the event takes place. Rather, contextualization, in this case, includes knowing how the terrain may have affected historical events, what other regions, towns and states the location is near, the connections between the people of that region and their place, and much more detailed issues, like how sight lines and elevation might have affected the outcome of battles. Graphic histories, unlike conventional texts, help students to get a sense of geographic context by using both image and word in an integrated, multimodal format.

When we consider this category as a whole, we can see that all the graphic histories in the study provided some sort of geographic context, though in some cases -- like *Nat Turner* (Baker, 2008) and *'08* (Crowley & Goldman, 2009) -- the narrative might deemphasize the location of where the events are occurring if the location doesn't seem important (*'08*) or if the subjects of the narrative are unsure of where they are (*Nat Turner*).

Within the subcategory of geographic context, I coded four ways in which graphic histories provide geographic contextualization: embedded maps, long shot images, iconic images and motifs, and narration boxes.

Of graphic histories analyzed, 12 contained embedded maps. The most frequent use of embedded maps was in *The 9-11 Report* where they appeared, on average, every 12.7 pages and in *Safe Area Gorazde* where they appeared, on average, every 16.2 pages. The least frequent use of embedded maps was in *Still I Rise* every 205 pages. The mean number of times embedded maps appeared in a GH (of the 12 GHs that had embedded maps) was 1 per 64 pages. The median for the number of times an embedded map appeared was every 48 pages. So, while embedded maps do not appear in every GH, and while they vary considerably in frequency of use, they do appear to be present in sufficient numbers for history teachers to employ them in discussing geographic context.

Graphic histories can also convey geographic context through images. This can provide a visual sense of the location without requiring extensive paragraphs of description and can also allow the narrative to shift from location to location smoothly by simply referencing a visual motif like a building or palm trees. 16 out of 20 GHs used images to indicate geographic context. *The 9-11 Report* used images most often to indicate geographic context – 1 image every 5.2 pages. *T- Minus* had the second most common use of images for geographic context – 1 every 8.2 pages on average. Joe Sacco's *Palestine* had the least number of references (1 every 285 pages) but this may be because *Palestine* takes place in relatively few locations and because, in the GN, Sacco himself is often uncertain of where he is in Palestine. The mean number of image-based geographical context references in the 16 GHs that used images for geographical context is one per 98.3 pages. The median is one reference per 44 pages. Use of images for geographic context in GHs seems more widespread than embedded maps.

Within the images category, there is a particular kind of image that deserves closer examination. A long shot (sometimes called a splash page) is when the graphic history creator uses an entire full page of the GH, in this case to allow the reader to get a panoramic view of the place where the historical narrative is taking place. In GHs, long-shot images help readers determine the vantage points of other panels in relation to each other. Although use of long shots is not as common as the other two categories already examined --long shots appear in only half (10 of the 20) -- they are nonetheless useful when they are used in this sample of GHs. The most frequent use of long shots occurs in *Journey into Mohawk Country* where there is a long shot on average every 47 pages. The least frequent use of the long shot occurs in *Palestine* (on average once every 285 pages). This is deceptive, though, as Joe Sacco uses long shots sparingly, but when he does use them they tend to get the reader's attention. The mean for the 8 GHs that used long shots is one use in every 143.6 pages. The median is a reference every 123 pages. Though long shots are used less commonly, they nonetheless are a useful way to broaden students' senses of the geographic context of a historical narrative.

Finally, the most common way that graphic histories convey geographical context is through narration boxes. Narration boxes allow a quick reference to the location to be dropped into the historical narrative without interrupting the flow of what is going on. A small box in the upper corner of a panel might simply give the location as in "Manila, the Philippines" or "on the National Mall in Washington, DC." This approach is the most common in this corpus, occurring in all of the 20 GHs studied. In *Safe Area Gorazde*, there are, on average, 1.8 narration box references to geographic context per page. The least common use of narration box geographic context is in *Fax from Sarajevo*, but even in this case, on average, there is a reference every 45 pages. This is an outlier, however, as the rest of the GHs studied used narration boxes to indicate geographic context on

average at the most every 5.7 pages. The mean for all GHs that used narration boxes for geographic context was one instance every 5.8 pages. The median was one instance every 3.3 pages.

When considering the subcategories of geographic contextualization collectively, every graphic history exhibited some form (and usually several) of geographic contextualization that one would not find in conventional books. Therefore, GHs do offer high school teachers some new affordances for teaching geographical context within a multi-modal format.

Temporal Context. History is about events in time. Temporal context is the way in which a work enables the reader to consider the event they are reading about in terms of other events that came before it and after it. Temporal context can also orient the reader if it is necessary for the narrative to jump from one time period to another. The coding scheme included four different ways that graphic histories indicated temporal context: timelines, juxtaposition of similar events, narration boxes, and images. Quantitative content analysis indicates that GHs do indeed utilize these ways of providing temporal context.

Much like embedded maps, graphic histories can provide embedded timelines – that is to say, timelines incorporated into the panel-by-panel narration of the graphic history. The use of embedded timelines was not frequent in this sample of graphic histories (only 3 GHs employed them). Moreover, their appearance within those graphic novels was not extensive; embedded timelines appear, on average, every 5.5 pages in *Long Tack Sam* (Fleming, 2007), every 12.7 pages in *The 9-11 Report* (Jacobson & Colon, 2006), and every 285 pages in *Palestine* (Sacco, 2001).

Graphic histories also use the juxtaposition of similar images to call attention to parallels between different events that may be separated by days, months, years, decades, or longer. For example, in *Journey into Mohawk Country* (O'Connor & VandenBogaert, 2006), a panel showing the Dutch explorers leaving a Native American shelter is later duplicated as an image showing the same shelter burnt to ashes. The two panels, though separated by many pages, use the same vantage point

and panel proportion to help the reader link the two panels in his or her mind. Though this technique is not one that was employed with great frequency in the sample, when it is used, it tends to get the reader's attention (as is described in the multimodal case analysis on pp. 85-88). Out of 20 GHs, five used image juxtapositions to encourage consideration of parallels between two different events. *Journey into Mohawk Country* used this technique on average every 70.5 pages, making it the most frequent use. The least frequent use of those GHs that used image juxtaposition was *Safe Area Gorazde* (Sacco, 2002), which used the technique on average once every 227 pages. The mean for image juxtaposition was once every 139.8 pages. The median was 102.5 pages. Thus juxtaposition of images is not common in these GHs, but it does exist in the sample and could, therefore provide readers with an important tool for considering how events in one time period may echo or contrast with events in a different time period.

Most commonly, these graphic histories navigated through time in a way similar to how they navigate through space, by using narration boxes. Narration boxes usually contain a single date or time reference (for example "the next day:" from *Alan's War* (Guibert, 2008) or "About a week later, early afternoon" from *Maus*.) Every GH in the study evidenced use of narration boxes. Five GHs averaged more than one use of narration boxes per page. The least common average use of narration boxes for temporal context was still once every 18.8 pages (*Nat Turner*). The mean use for narration boxes was once every 2.9 pages. The median was 1.6 pages. One reason for the prevalence of this technique is that it is relatively unobtrusive in terms of the flow of the historical narration.

The final temporal context technique observed was the use of images. GHs use images of clocks, calendars, and sometimes the seasons to give the reader a sense for where they are in time in relation to earlier and later panels. The technique of using images to help readers navigate through time was not common in the corpus of GHs, ranging from an average of time-based images every

47 pages (*Nat Turner*) to one every 285 pages (*Palestine*). The mean for the four GHs that used images to indicate temporal context was every 163.7 pages. The median was every 118 pages.

Social Context. Another important aspect of contextualization is social context (see chapter 3 for full definition). In reading about any given historical event, readers need to know about the social groups involved in that event and the nature of their interaction with each other. This proved to be difficult to quantify because, on the one hand, every interaction between two characters in a historical narrative represents social contextualization. On the other hand, counting every panel makes comparisons between different graphic histories difficult. Instead, this study counted examples that were addressing specific aspects of social context in an overt way. Based on pilot studies, the coding scheme also looked for visual references to ethnicity and visual references to culture.

Seventeen of the 20 graphic histories had some visual references to ethnicity. Four GHs averaged at least one visual reference to ethnicity per page - *Journey into Mohawk Country* (O'Connor & VandenBogaert, 2006), *Still I Rise* (Laird & Bey, 1997), *Nat Turner* (Baker, 2008), and *King* (Anderson H. C., 1993). *Safe Area Gorazde* (Sacco, 2002) had the least with one reference to ethnicity every 22.7 pages (though this was perhaps because Joe Sacco is visually trying to emphasize the lack of difference between the Bosnians and Serbians.) The mean for the 12 GHs that evidenced the use of visuals to indicate ethnicity was every 5.3 pages.

Social context can also be revealed through visual references to culture. In some cases, different groups of people might look similar, dress similarly, and, in general, behave similarly, yet have different family, religious, and traditional beliefs and behaviors. Twelve of the 20 graphic histories contained visual references to cultural context. *Palestine* (Sacco, 2001) made the most frequent use of this aspect with multiple references to culture (largely reflected in head coverings or scarves) multiple times per page on average. Of the 12 GHs that made use of visual references to

culture, the least frequent was *Safe Area Gorazde* (Sacco, 2002) with a reference every 22.7 pages on average. Both GHs are written and drawn by Joe Sacco, and both focus on largely Muslim populations. When reading the two, however, it becomes clear that in *Palestine* (Sacco, 2001), variations in Muslim culture are reflected in public through different styles of head scarves. In *Safe Area Gorazde*, (Sacco, 2002) the Serbs and Bosnians coexisted for so well so long because they seemed to keep their individual cultural traditions and religious observances in the private sphere. The mean of use of visual cultural references for the nine GHs was 75.8. The median was 45. So visual references to cultural context were present in over half of the GHs and use within those GHs was present if not constant.

Overall then, graphic histories provided reference to social context for historical narratives, and they did this in ways unique to the multimodal nature of the graphic novel format.

Economic Context. The motives and strategies of nations, communities, and individuals are often related to their economic state or their desired economic state. When we consider contextualization, economic context is one area students should be able to draw from in reading historically. The graphic histories studied here conveyed most of their economic context through words rather than images. This was surprising as I expected something like clothing, for example, to more often indicate a person's economic status.

Only 2 of the 20 graphic histories studied, *Still I Rise* (Laird & Bey, 1997) and *Nat Turner* (Baker, 2008) used images to provide economic context. In each case, the image-based references to economic context were rare, occurring on average only once every 102.5 pages in *Still I Rise*, and once per 188 pages in *Nat Turner*.

On the other hand, the use of narration boxes and word bubbles to provide economic context was much more common. All 20 graphic histories studied provided economic context in this manner. *Still I Rise* was most frequent, averaging an economic reference every 2.7 pages. The

least frequent use of word-based economic context was in *Nat Turner* (once every 62.7 pages on average.) The mean use was every 16.9 pages and the median was 10.9.

Political Context. The political context of any historical narrative includes the ways in which those who hold governmental power or wish to hold power exert pressure on the events of the day. I first examined predominantly image-based expressions of political context. This included images of political leaders, references to political parties, images of governing bodies in session, and any other political references through image. Of the 20 graphic histories, 13 used images to indicate political context. Of those, *08: A Graphic Diary of the Campaign Trail* (Crowley & Goldman, 2009) used images to convey political context most frequently (averaging once per page). This wasn't surprising since the topic of that GH is the 2008 presidential campaign. The least frequent use of images in the 13 GHs occurred in *Palestine* (Sacco, 2001) -- an average of once every 285 pages. Joe Sacco's focus in the book is on the people of Palestine and how little political recourse they seem to have. The mean for all 13 GHs that used image to convey political context was one reference every 58.8 pages. The median was 34.6.

Political context is also conveyed through narration boxes and speech balloons. Of the 20 graphic histories surveyed, 15 used narration boxes and speech balloons to convey political context. Of these, *08: A Graphic Diary of the Campaign Trail* (Crowley & Goldman, 2009) was again the leader with a word-based reference to political context on an average of once per page. The least frequent use was in *Journey into Mohawk Country* (O'Connor & VandenBogaert, 2006), where a word-based reference to political context occurred on average only once per 28.2 pages. The mean number of pages per reference for word-based political context is 12.9 with a median of 11.8 pages per reference.

Thus a majority of the graphic histories studied employed both images and narration boxes to convey the political context of the event being studied.

Overall, graphic histories seem to offer a wide range of robust opportunities for students to engage in contextualization. Contextualization is prevalent across five subcategories, and offers robust opportunities within those subcategories.

Sourcing

Wineburg (1991) explains that *sourcing* involves understanding a document in terms of the opinions, positioning, and context of that author. Sourcing can also refer to the perceived “trustworthiness” of the document being utilized in historical inquiry. To describe what graphic histories have to offer the high school student in terms of sourcing, this study considered two sub-categories: the use of embedded documents, and sourcing through explanatory notes.

Embedded Documents. Historians make a distinction between primary sources, documents written at the time of the event by a person who had some sort of first hand knowledge, and secondary sources, that include history textbooks and other summaries of events written in a later point in time. A primary source document might be a letter, a newspaper article, a military report, a diary entry, and so forth. As was discussed regarding embedded maps, graphic histories have the potential to embed primary sources into the narrative so that they are more salient for readers and thus more likely to be read. Although history textbooks often include primary source documents, they frequently appear in sidebars that students can easily skip.

Of the 20 graphic histories, 17 included embedded primary sources. Of those 17, the most frequent use was in Howard Zinn’s *History of American Empire* (Zinn, Konopacki, & Buhle, 2008) that averaged one embedded document for every 2.1 pages. The least frequent use of embedded primary sources was in Joe Sacco’s *Palestine* (2001), averaging one reference per 285 pages. The mean use of embedded primary sources, of those 13 GHs that included them, was one reference every 65.3 pages. The median was 28.3. It is worth noting that this analysis is based on the number of embedded primary sources used. In the case of a GN like *Journey into Mohawk Country* (O’Connor &

VandenBogaert, 2006), where the entire GN is an adaptation of a single primary source, in this case the diary of a Dutch explorer in the northeastern part of the American continent in the 1600s, the average number of references looks small (once every 141 pages) when, in fact, there is primary source material on every single page – it is just all from the same primary source.

Explanatory Notes. Explanatory notes – often in narration boxes or sometimes using asterisks, or in the foreword or afterword of the book - allow graphic history creators to clarify references and terms in primary sources. They also inform the reader of where information is coming from. Although this is not distinct from what one might expect to find in a regular text, it is helpful for students reading a GH and working on sourcing the documents. Of the 20 GHs surveyed, 16 employed explanatory notes to clarify aspects of sourcing. The most common use of explanatory notes was in *T-Minus* (Ottaviani, Cannon, & Cannon, 2009) featuring an explanatory note every 1.9 pages on average. *T-Minus* used narration boxes most commonly, but also occasionally used asterisks and did feature a text-only explanatory afterword. The least common use of explanatory notes (among those 12 GHs that evidenced some use of them) was in *King* which had one explanatory note in 225 pages. The mean, though, was one reference every 86.2 pages. The median was 68.3 pages.

Sourcing through both embedded documents and explanatory notes was common enough to argue that graphic histories do offer material that allows history teachers to address sourcing in the classroom. The medians for the two subcategories indicated that opportunities for sourcing were less frequent than for contextualization and there were some graphic histories that offered no opportunities for sourcing at all (*The 9/11 Report* and *Blood on the Rose*). Readings of the GHs in the corpus also indicated that some GHs, like *Journey into Mohawk Country*, might show low numbers of opportunities for sourcing, but might actually include significant portions of an embedded

document, while others might include only shorter excerpts. Opportunities for sourcing do exist across a number of GHs in this sample, but they are not as robust as those for contextualization.

Corroboration

Wineburg (1991) defines *corroboration* as checking the details of accounts against each other before accepting them as plausible or likely. Corroboration entails employing intertextual links to determine validity in a historical argument. In this analysis I considered only intertextual links within each graphic history, though it is perhaps worth pointing out that in some instances, two graphic histories were dealing with the same historical topic (*Safe Area Gorazde* (Sacco, 2002) and *Fax from Sarajevo* (Kubert, 1996) for example, both deal with the Bosnian War) and so could be used in tandem for students to investigate corroboration. In considering corroboration within GHs, this analysis considers two subcategories: Parallel Accounts and Collaborative Reports.

Parallel Accounts. A graphic history has the potential to combine different accounts of the same event by giving the reader visual cues of whose account is being presented at any given time. For example, in Joe Sacco's work (Sacco, 2002; Sacco, Palestine, 2001), images of the speaker's head with a distinctive lettering style identifying them beneath, signal to the reader that we are about to follow this person's account of a particular event. Of the 20 GHs analyzed, 8 used parallel accounts. The most common use was in Joe Sacco's *Palestine* that averaged one parallel account reference every 8.4 pages. Of the GHs that used parallel accounts, the least common use was in *King* that used parallel accounts only once in 236 pages. The mean of the 8 GHs that used parallel accounts is once every 79.3 pages. The median is 38.3. Opportunities for using parallel accounts are certainly less common than the subcategories of contextualization, but are still present.

Collaborative Reports. A collaborative report occurs when a set of accounts are combined and considered, then presented as a report. Only 3 of the 20 graphic histories studied used this approach. *The 9/11 Report* (Jacobson & Colon, 2006), a GH version of the US Government report

following the events of the terrorist attacks on 9-11, is, in its entirety, a collaborative report. *Louis Riel* (Brown, 1999) and *Unsung Hero* (Pekar & Collier, 2005) make use of collaborative reports as well. *Louis Riel* uses a court transcript to provide narration for the final section of the book, to accompany the images of Riel's imprisonment and eventual execution. The collaborative report in *Unsung Hero* appears as an isolated document at the end of the book and does not interact with the images at all. At any rate, collaborative reports are not common. Only one GH, *King* used both parallel accounts and collaborative reports. Of the 20 GHs studied, then, 12 provided affordances for corroboration.

Opportunities for corroboration are the least frequent among the three categories studied. There are 8 graphic histories that offer no opportunities for corroboration at all. On the face of it, this category seems the least promising. The two subcategories, however, show that there is potential for using parallel accounts and collaborative reports to teach students about corroboration in history, though the opportunities are not as prevalent as they are for sourcing and contextualization.

Summary of Quantitative Analysis

In response to the overall research question, the first phase of the analysis showed that graphic histories do offer affordances in each of the three categories that Wineburg identifies. In response to the first analysis question, "What does analysis of each subcategory reveal about opportunities for contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration across the 20 graphic histories in the study?" analysis reveals both unique affordances resulting from the multimodal nature of the graphic histories, and conventional affordances that would be no different from text-only publications.

Contextualization in graphic histories occurs across five sub-categories: geographic, temporal, social, economic, and political. Geographic contextualization relies on embedded maps,

splash pages, and narration boxes – all three of which offer techniques that are particular to graphic histories’ multimodal nature. Similarly, temporal contextualization uses at least four approaches that are particular to GHs: embedded timelines, juxtaposition of similar events, narration boxes, and images. Social contextualization, economic contextualization, and political contextualization rely upon narration boxes and images, both of which are unique to the GH history form. Overall then, graphic histories offer high school teachers a way to teach contextualization integrated into the historical narrative rather than appearing in sidebars in a history textbook. Possibilities for this category seem prevalent and robust.

Sourcing in graphic histories includes both embedded documents and explanatory notes. Embedded documents, like the techniques used in contextualization, allow the GH creator to build the documents, via panels, directly into the narrative. Explanatory notes, on the other hand, are not particular to GHs. GHs offer history teachers the chance to teach sourcing, but in the 20 GHs studied, opportunities for sourcing were certainly not as extensive as contextualization.

Corroboration relies on a particular approach to presenting parallel accounts and, very occasionally, use of collaborative reports. Opportunities for corroboration are rare in this sample, but quantitative analysis alone does not reveal how robust those opportunities might be for teachers needing to explain the concept of corroboration, or for use by students as an opportunity to contrast different accounts of the same event.

Analysis also reveals a range of profiles in terms of contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration. This means that, although opportunities for high school students to engage in contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration are present, graphic histories cannot be considered as a group good or bad for use in schools. Each GH has a different combination of the subcategories. Some GHs rely more heavily on images, some blend image and text on an almost equal basis, and

some privilege the text. Some GHs are excellent resources for teaching one category, but not the others.

In order to address first, the question of how robust the opportunities are for students to engage in contextualization, sourcing and corroboration, and second, the question of how graphic histories with varied profiles might be used in the high school history classroom to provide opportunities for contextualization, corroboration and sourcing, this study considers a series of multimodal case analyses to combine the data collected with a deeper reading of 8 GHs. By looking more closely at examples of the categories within particular GHs, we will be able to see where each category works, and where it doesn't. In the next section, this analysis shows some of the considerations for a classroom history teacher performing his or her own analysis before deciding whether to use a given GH and determine what that GH offers to help reach curricular goals.

Multimodal Case Analysis of Selected Individual Graphic Histories

The first phase of this analysis showed that opportunities to use graphic histories to teach high school students contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration occur across a range of graphic histories but also indicated that each GH offers a different set of frequencies and densities for each category and subcategory. At the same time, a close examination of the frequency numbers and density numbers did not indicate how robust the affordances for teaching contextualization, sourcing and corroboration might be in individual selections that could be used in the classroom. This next phase of the analysis consists of a close examination of eight graphic histories in order to consider in what ways different GHs offer more robust or less robust opportunities to teach students to engage in contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration. These eight multimodal case analyses examine how the three types of affordances can be enacted in the context of specific books. Such an analysis helps to see whether even though a particular element of Wineburg's heuristic (for example, corroboration) might not be particularly robust in terms of quantitative opportunities in

the overall sample, an individual GH might not be a powerful resource for teachers to address that element.

The reader will recall from chapter 3 that the selection of the eight graphic histories for close examination was based on 4 factors: whether that particular GH had a useful and relevant topic; whether the GH took advantage of the multimodal format; whether the GH held opportunities for contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration; and whether the GH seemed likely to appeal to high school students.

Selective Contextualization: *08: Diary of the 2008 Campaign*

This graphic history follows two reporters covering the 2008 presidential campaign. It is a focused history of a particular event. As the narrative moves through the primaries to the emergence of the candidate and the final race for electoral votes, it becomes engaging. Though high school students often show little interest in politics, the pacing and interesting, behind-the-scenes look at the process have good potential to draw them in. At the same time, the book seems to show multiple perspectives and retain a historical reliability. All quotations spoken by political figures come straight from the news. The reflections of the two reporters are based on blogs that they kept during the campaign.

Quantitative analysis revealed that *08* pays very little attention to geographic context. Though it has embedded maps (roughly one every 26 pages on average), they are really just outlines of states and provide only the sketchiest notion of where the action is occurring. *08* uses images to indicate where the action is taking place once every 15 pages on average, though those images tend to be general (a palm tree to indicate somewhere tropical) rather than specific to a state, city, or even a particular building. *08* uses narration boxes to indicate the location only once every 6 pages on average. The effect of this is to give the impression, as the reporters follow the campaigns, that the frenetic pace of the campaign is making different locations into a blur. And, in all of history, one

might argue that political campaigning, particularly in the 21st century, may be the one circumstance when the location of the event is often inconsequential.

Consider a sequence of pages starting with page 11 (*08* does not have page numbers, so all references are based on my numbering). On page 11, we see a close up of Hillary Clinton's face in front of a clear background, a medium shot in the next panel of Hillary and Bill Clinton (again with an indistinct background), an inset image of Hillary Clinton with arms raised in victory after winning the New York nomination (the background here indicates we are on a stage, but it is unclear where the stage is) and a final panel of Hillary Clinton being interviewed, but again it is a generic studio. Page 12 has three panels. The first two are close ups of Hillary Clinton with a name plate indicating that she is senator. The final panel shows Howard Dean, John Kerry, and an unidentified third face, but again, there is no indication in the background of where we are. In these four pages, and the four following, we are getting a great deal of exposition about the background of Hillary's campaign, and we are also catching the momentum leading up to the campaign, but we are left with a series of talking heads with no clear indication of where we are.

Later in the graphic history, when we *are* given a sense of geographic context, it tends to be very sketchy, with the backgrounds almost taking on the look of set pieces. On page 18, John McCain appears on the Daily Show (though this is not contextualized in terms of exact location, rather just as a studio in New York somewhere), on page 20 we see the twin towers of New York in a reference to 9/11, and on page 22 we see a Ron Paul lawn sign on a lawn that could be in almost any state in the union.

Other graphic histories have shown that geographic context can be conveyed quickly and efficiently through embedded maps, images, and narration. Why, then, would Crawley and Goldman choose to leave the location of the GH unclear? The effect of the lack of geographic context in this piece is that it helps streamline the action. It allows the reader to take more interest

in the excitement of the campaign. As I read *08*, I found myself contrasting how a high school student would read this journey through the 2008 campaign, versus how the same journey might be covered in a standard history book. I suspect the student would find the GH version more compelling.

In contrast to its lack of geographic context, *08* provides us a great deal of temporal and political context. On average, it provides political context through images on every page. Temporal context is conveyed through narration boxes on average every 1.3 pages. Likewise, it provides additional political context through narration boxes (also averaging at least one per page). Consider page 67. The top panel gives us an image of a stylized Republican elephant. The accompanying text indicates that Romney was arguing that Huckabee's background as an evangelical preacher could make him hard to elect. The next panel is a text box describing some of Huckabee's positions regarding AIDS and business. The following panel is an image of Rush Limbaugh and implies that Limbaugh is opposed to Huckabee. The next panel shows an anti-Huckabee television advertisement. The final panel on the page shows Huckabee responding to these attacks, with text describing what he said. On one page we are given political context in terms of the national party, the average voter, the media, and Romney and Huckabee's stands on various issues.

The disparity in different levels of contextualization has to do with the nature of the event being covered. The '08 campaign was waged in front of television cameras. The candidates were in a new city every day (or sometimes every couple of hours). By keeping geographic context to a minimum, the book gives you a sense of rootlessness. The location of any given sound bite often didn't matter. Temporal context, however, during a campaign of instant responses to accusations and arguments, is very important. Likewise, because the focus of the graphic history is political, providing context about the candidates and what they believe is very important.

The *08* graphic history also provides a great deal of scaffolding for questioning. Sourcing a document requires that the reader consider not only the truthfulness of a document, but also whether there is anything in the political context that might affect the way a source sees the event. In the case of *08*, the two veteran reporters following the campaign (Crowley and Goldman) often question the veracity or interpretation of the preceding panel or panels, for example: Is McCain courting the crazy extremist Republican base (p. 18)? Could someone who doesn't consider abortion to be murder be the Republican nominee (p. 20)? Was America ready for a Mormon president (p. 21)? Does Fred Thompson have the fire in the belly necessary to be a candidate (p. 44)? How could Romney possibly win the nomination (p. 66)? When is the media going to look at the Rezko relationship (p. 89)? Was Obama getting too close to the celebrity world (p. 122)? Does it matter that Hillary Clinton might be exaggerating some of her credentials (p. 135)?

In other places in the graphic history, the reporters don't ask actual questions, but rather make comments and rhetorical questions that cause the reader to think critically about political comments the candidates make. These comments include "But she never actually apologized" (p. 29); "Some people called him a hypocrite" (p. 30); "Who decided Mike Gravel belonged up there?" (p. 35); "Turns out, the question was planted" (p. 52); "[Was] that [comment] about Mitt?" (p. 56); "How did Hillary become a working-class hero?" (p. 114); "What will it take for him to win a large swing state?" (p. 115); "How do you not pick Hillary Clinton?" (p. 121). The reader is brought into a critical (if sometimes cynical) relationship with the events shown in the text.

08 offers little in the way of geographic context, but a great deal in terms of political context. It also offers high school history teachers and students the chance to consider the campaign from a reporter's perspective and to introduce critical thinking questions.

Sourcing and Corroboration: Sacco's *Palestine* and *Safe Area Gorazde*

Joe Sacco's work (as shown in two of his books, *Palestine* (2001) and *Safe Area Gorazde* (2002) – that will be considered together in this section) reveals opportunities for sourcing and corroboration that the quantitative analysis did not highlight. Both graphic histories are examples of reportage, with Sacco the reporter appearing as a figure in the GHs.

The overall quantitative profile for these two books showed robust opportunities in contextualization (*Safe Area Gorazde* contained 576 opportunities for contextualization with a density of just over 2 instances per page. *Palestine* contained 714 instances with a similar density of just over 2 instances per page.). As shown in the overall analysis, opportunities for sourcing were less frequent (*Gorazde* contains just 15 examples of sourcing or once every 15.1 pages on average. *Palestine* contains 9 instances for 1 instance every 31.6 pages). *Palestine* used parallel accounts once every 8.4 pages, and *Safe Area Gorazde* used parallel accounts once every 12.6 pages.

Palestine describes the current living conditions in Palestine and provides context through the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Sacco travelled to and lived in Palestine for months at a time. The images of the Palestinian (and Israeli) sources he interviewed put a human face to a conflict often described in terms of opposed impersonal forces, bombs and missiles, and political policies.

Wineburg's categories of Sourcing and Corroboration often overlap, since they both deal with multiple documents. While sourcing focuses on the bias, perspective, and other factors that determine the slant of a particular document, corroboration often shows not only where two or more accounts are in agreement, but also where they differ (often bringing us back to the question of perspective).

In offering possibilities for contextualization, *Palestine* relies much more on words (on average every 2.3 pages) than images (on average every 285 pages) when conveying the geographical

context, Sacco uses full page and double-pages spreads to help orient the reader to the larger scene. For example, on pages 146-147, he draws a good chunk of a Palestinian neighborhood from a bird's eye view. This allows us to see not only what someone on the ground would see (abandoned cars, flooding, piles of trash) but also things that someone on the ground might miss (corrugated roofs of dwellings held in place with sacks of rocks, places where roads have been blockaded, children with no safe place to play).

Sacco, as an accomplished reporter, finds ways to give details about his sources, even when he cannot identify them by name. He often indicates witnesses' professions. For example, on page 34, he identifies his source as a medical technician. On pages 38 to 40, he clarifies that a different source has been a tour guide since 1941. This gives the reader a sense for how those sources might be describing events from a particular perspective (the medical technician speaks of the injuries of civilians wounded in the fighting). Because this is a graphic history, even when his witnesses do not want to be identified for fear of reprisals, he can draw their faces in such a way that would not allow them to be identified by their enemies, but still allows us to see the facial expressions that accompany their narrations.

Sacco also finds ways to remind readers that they shouldn't always take the word of witnesses as pure truth. On page 205, for example, he asks a man who is in a wheelchair following a Palestinian-Israeli conflict if he is treated well by his community. One of the other men jumps in to say, "We respect him." The man in the wheelchair repeats this assertion: "They respect me". In the next panel, Sacco says to his companion, "I'm sure they respect him... but with all those people listening in, what else could he say?" Similarly, on pages 33 and 34, he begins with the account of an 11-year-old girl who was wounded in the fighting, then explains that in a second follow-up interview, she admitted that she was trying to throw a stone at the soldiers when they shot her. On

page 77, while reporting on a story he heard second hand, Sacco reminds his readers, “I’m a skeptic. Journalistically speaking, you gotta be a Doubting Thomas....”

Sacco’s character often questions both the injustice of the war and the veracity of his sources. On page 187, we have a summary of UN General Rose’s report on Gorazde. In that he claims that the director of the hospital in Gorazde, Dr. Begovic, admitted that casualty estimates were exaggerated. Sacco parenthetically mentions that Begovic told him that he was “greatly upset by Rose’s representation of his remarks.”

Sacco also provides many parallel accounts throughout the book. On page 67, a woman describes how soldiers destroyed her olive grove, then later Sacco interviews her father about the same incident. On pages 82 to 92, Sacco alternates between the accounts of three men who were imprisoned in the Ansar III facility: Yusef, Mohommed, and Iyyad. He also includes several different accounts of interrogations (p. 93-95, 97-99, 105-112).

Like *Palestine, Safe Area Gorazde* combines journalistic and narrative techniques. We are drawn into wondering about the life of the Sacco character because he seems like such a nerd. At the same time, Sacco provides a clear distinction of accounts by indicating when the narrator shifts to an eyewitness. He does this by means of distinctive lettering as described in the first phase of the research regarding accounts. This approach also allows us to feel Sacco’s emotional reaction at times, but at other times, see from the point-of-view of the eyewitnesses. He also really emphasizes the notion of being trapped (see the number of times the book references the Gorazde enclave in the geographic context section – or Rikki’s singing of “Hotel California”).

To give a larger geographic context, Sacco uses embedded maps. There is a map an average of every 16 pages. These range from large and detailed maps (p. 19) to smaller maps meant to convey a single idea (p. 38). What they have in common, though, is that the narrative continues from the previous panels through the map panel, and on into following panels. This makes it

virtually impossible for the reader to skip over the map, the way one might when reading a conventional history text.

Sacco also keeps the reader well anchored in terms of temporal contextualization. He clarifies the time mostly through narration boxes, on average every 2.7 pages. Economic context is also through narration boxes (every 15.2 pages) and political context comes through images (on average every 28.2 pages) and narration boxes (every 25.2 pages on average.)

Sacco's work contains a great many opportunities for high school students to study contrasting accounts of events. For example, when describing the initial assault on Gorazde, Sacco provides accounts from five different witnesses (Edin: p. 69, 79, 85, 87, 183-186; Emina: p. 78, 82, 85; Izet: p. 78, 79, 81, 83, 84; Rumsa: p. 81, 83, 84; Ibro: p. 82, 84). Sacco indicates whose account he is depicting, by distinctive panels that show the speaker and have their name in a larger distinctive type. Sacco is able to switch back and forth from one account to another to form a single coherent narrative, but the reader could also consider these accounts individually. For high school students studying corroboration, this is a useful resource.

Both books provide students with an understanding of complicated conflicts, using portraits of those affected by the violence as a starting point.

The Difference that Pictures Can Make: Baker's *Nat Turner*

Baker's work tells the story of the Nat Turner rebellion using text excerpts from the primary source *The Confessions of Nat Turner* and using images to summarize the historical context within which Turner was writing. Because of this, high school students who might struggle with the formal prose style of the original 1831 manuscript, may get some assistance from the illustrated story that parallels the written excerpts. Baker relies on images far more than words to an extent not seen in any of the other books in this study. He uses these images to provide context for the events of the rebellion.

The quantitative profile for *Nat Turner* is a familiar one. The book has robust opportunities for contextualization (244 instances, over one per page), some opportunities for sourcing (6 instances, one every 31.3 pages), and no opportunities for corroboration. Yet though the profile is unremarkable, some of the specific techniques and approaches that *Nat Turner* uses offer robust opportunities for teaching Wineburg's heuristic.

One technique Baker uses is temporal juxtaposition (i.e. in pages 27-29 when an African woman tries to escape the slaver by trying to jump off a cliff, but is caught by a lasso; and a later scene in pages 51 to 55 where an African man tries to throw his newborn son off the slave ship so that he won't go through the pain of being a slave. The child, like the woman, is caught by a white sailor, except in this case, the African man bites the sailor's arm and the child falls to the sharks. Baker actually uses almost no words at all in the first half of the book to parallel the lack of literacy within the slave community (though graphic symbols, drum beats, and storytelling are all incorporated into the narrative). Once Nat Turner learns to read in the story, Baker begins incorporating excerpts from the original manuscript.

Baker also uses the images to provide a layer of contextualization. The Nat Turner rebellion is known for its brutality. Forty-five white slave-owners were killed, many of them with axes and bludgeons. Baker, however, spends at least as much time concentrating on the graphic violence that surrounded the Africans' capture, the middle passage to America, and their treatment as slaves (including branding of slaves, whippings, a slave having his hands cut off with an axe for attempting to use a drum to communicate with other slaves, a family being separated and sold at auction, and so on). This causes the reader to consider whether the violence of the rebellion itself was not understandable, or even justified (though the graphic violence by the rebels toward the whites seems to add another layer of questions).

Baker also shows that slaves themselves were communicating with layers of meaning. When Nat Turner is secretly learning to read as a young boy, he is discovered by his white owner (89-90). Turner quickly turns the book upside down. The white man laughs at Turner's apparent ignorance, then, still with a smile on his face, scolds Turner (we are not given his words, but he sees to be telling Turner it is futile for a slave to try to read). Turner responds by playing the clown, his facial expression at once both vacant and happy. The white man walks away, and, in a final panel on page 90, we see that Turner's face has changed to a look of keen intelligence and smoldering anger.

This results in a trade-off. On the one hand, the visuals increase the interest level for high school students, and also lead to some useful thinking about the source and how we interpret it. On the other hand, without looking at the original side-by-side with the graphic history adaptation, it is very difficult to tell where Baker is adhering closely to the original and where he is interpreting or elaborating on what he finds there. In the discipline of history, this could be a major stumbling block. Even this, though, would seem to encourage critical thinking, as students could be led to ask these questions, and a history teacher could give them a side-by-side comparison of several pages for them to consider.

It would also be easy to begin a discussion with students contrasting the extreme violence of slavery with the extreme violence of the rebellion, and in so doing, lead into a discussion about the perspective of the author that could connect to issues of sourcing. The GH also contains excerpts from two other accounts of the rebellion, so corroboration is possible (though, as in Sacco's work, there are no truly parallel accounts or collaborative reports and students might have an easier time corroborating if they also had the entire text of the other sources). In the back of the book, Baker provides notes on various panels and what he has shown there, images from that time period of slave ships, and an 8 item bibliography. These could serve as a way of keeping discussion rooted in the document. Finally, though the book gives a remarkably balanced account of the suffering on

both sides, it does so in enough detail that students could engage this period in history critically, in a way that the information contained in standard history books does not allow.

Cultural Contextualization in *Journey into Mohawk Country*

Journey into Mohawk Country is a graphic history primary source adaptation by George O'Connor, of the 1634 diary of a Dutch explorer (Harmen Meyndertsz van den Bogaert) who spent several months among the Mohawk to determine why the Mohawk had stopped trading with the Dutch and had started trading with the French. Though Harmen and his friends are able to restore trade relations with at least some of the sub-tribes, he never determines why the Indians (as he calls them) turned from their Dutch friends in the first place. If a student were to read the text-only journal, they would discover in the extensive footnotes to that edition that, because the Dutch lacked knowledge about Mohawk customs, they regularly committed social gaffes, that Harmen records in his journal, without realizing he is doing so.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, *Journey into Mohawk Country* contains every word from van den Bogaert's journal, but, although text from that journal is used on every page of the graphic history, the quantitative analysis only records it as one opportunity for sourcing (in the sub-category of embedded document). And so O'Connor's GN version retains the arguably unexciting 16th century prose, but uses the images to provide contextualization of the Mohawk's customs and their reactions to the Dutch gaffes, allowing the reader access to the irony of much of what Harmen says. This happens frequently – on average once every 12.8 pages.

For example, on page 15, the party encounters a group from another tribe. The new group drops their packs and flees (presumably frightened by the Europeans' appearance.) In the text of the journal, Harmen reports that the Dutch checked out the bundles, found food there, and gleefully ate it. The images show what the native reaction would have been to such an action, with the Mohawk guides drawn away from the Dutch, with expressions on their faces of disdain. Only a

page later the group comes to a structure made of poles and bark. Harmen decides that, owing to their weariness, they will stay here for the night. It turns out that the habitation, however, is filled with Mohawk women. The guide suggests they proceed on to the village. Harmen refuses and insists they stay. The images show the disdainful and embarrassed expressions of the male guides, and the bemused expressions of the women, leading the reader to conclude that the Dutch are breaking a major cultural taboo. This lack of cultural awareness continues throughout the book as the Dutch amuse themselves by overfeeding a trapped bear that was likely the tribe's totem (p. 29), trying to negotiate a trade agreement without bringing any customary gifts (p. 82), and leaving their sheltering hunter's cabin without fully extinguishing the fire so that, when they have need of shelter on their return trip, they find that it has burned down (p. 138). Though Harmen is unable to conclude why the Mohawk prefer to trade with the French, the answer seems clear to the reader – that the Dutch assumption that the Mohawk should conform to their cultural interpretations rather than the other way around is causing the rift.

It is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that O'Connor's GH version opens up this first person primary source to students in a way that the text only version cannot, by providing cultural context through images and sticking with only the text of the journal for words, allowing students to reach conclusions about the Dutch/Native American interaction on their own.

All about Temporal Contextualization: *T-Minus*

T-Minus: The Race to the Moon chronicles the space race in the 1950s and 60s. Essentially, this graphic history describes two stories simultaneously: the development of the US space program, and the development of the Russian program. The quantitative profile for this GH averages just under two opportunities for contextualization per page, an opportunity for sourcing every two pages, and opportunities for corroboration every 17.6 pages. This GH seems to be robust in all three categories.

In a story about a race, the careful use of temporal contextualization is vital.

T-Minus excels in providing temporal contextualization beyond what it does for corroboration and sourcing. First of all, there are variations of straightforward word-based temporal contextualization. Nearly every page contains a bold sentence indicating now many years (or, later in the book, days, hours, and finally minutes) until a human lands on the moon. Beginning on page 1 (“T-12 years.”) and continuing through to page 121 (“T - 0) the book emphasizes the focus of both space programs on setting foot onto the moon. Besides this relative timeline, though, there are also regular straightforward narration box references to the year (for example on page 1, a narration box reports that we are in “...NACA – Langley Virginia 1957”). Almost every page, either on the right or left margin, also contains the image and basic facts (date T-minus, flight duration) of US and Russian successful launches and unsuccessful launches.

Second, *T-Minus* uses more visual ways of indicating temporal contextualization. There are references to historical markers as a way of grounding the reader in the historical context. On page 1, an engineer mentions President Eisenhower. On page 44, we see President Kennedy giving a speech. Temporal contextualization involves more than just dates. In this case, referencing the presidents connects the text with the reader’s prior knowledge of the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations (and also provides political context).

To provide a larger temporal context, *T-Minus* uses flashbacks including to 1883 in Russia where a moon shot is, for the first time, seriously contemplated (p. 12); New Mexico in 1930, where Robert Goddard is testing the earliest rockets (p. 14); and the defection of the German rocket scientists as the end of World War Two in 1945 (p. 16-19).

T-Minus is also able to juxtapose simultaneous events, often on the same sequence of pages. For example, pages 26 through 28 compare US astronaut training with the USSR cosmonaut training regimens. Pages 72 and 73 employ larger panels to show the American scientists reevaluating their

program in light of recent Soviet advances, and long horizontal panels to show Russian cosmonauts surviving in the woods after overshooting their landing zone.

Finally, *T-Minus* is masterful in its use of panels to establish pace. For example, on page 101, after several pages of many panels on each page (providing a sense of almost frenetic movement), there is a full page illustration of Apollo 8 with a giant image of the moon to the right and a relatively small image of the earth in the center of the page. Time seems suddenly to stop.

T-Minus also offers some chances for thinking about historical context. The GH counters the notion that the US and Russian scientists were adversaries. Here the US and Russian scientists are shown more as friendly rivals – with admiration and respect for each other (p. 79). There is also a distinctive moment where a corporation in the US puts national interests before its own interests (p. 48-51). Students might contrast this with the attitudes of the current US corporate world. There could be a little critical thinking in considering how scientists, the government, and the military go together. The Russian accident with pure oxygen (p. 33) and the Chaffee/Grissom accident (p. 81) on the US side are examples of that.

This is a story that will engage students in the race, but also help them to see multiple perspectives by considering both the American and the Russian perspectives.

Embedding for Authenticity and Credibility: *A People's History of American Empire*

Howard Zinn argues in the introduction to his GH overview of American History, *A People's History of American Empire* that the book will present "...a continuing pattern of American behavior" that includes using the military "...not for moral purposes but to expand economic power and military power" and building both an "internal empire" and an international empire (Zinn, Konopacki, & Buhle, 2008, p. 7). In order to make his argument credible, Zinn, like any historian, must rely on credible sources. Unlike the previous GHs we have looked at, *People's History of American Empire* has a higher density of opportunities for sourcing (one every 2 pages) than

contextualization (one every 4.6 pages). Opportunities for corroboration are also present, though not as common (one for every 44 pages.) By embedding photographs and documents in the narrative, Zinn provides the reader with the basis for his arguments, giving the reader the chance to engage in questioning or affirming the sources he uses.

Zinn also serves as a narrator for the book – or rather, as Paul Buhle explains in the forward “...by a character based as closely as possible on Zinn’s own words.” This Zinn character gives the narrative story of his life growing up in New York, then being a bombardier in WWII in an interesting example of use of narrative to argue for pacifism. On the one hand, having a character with a bias to tell the history of the United States from a particular perspective could be seen as a limitation for high school readers – since it might cause them to be unduly sympathetic to Zinn’s cause by sweeping them along in the narrative flow without questioning the veracity of what the Zinn character says. On the other hand, since the character is drawn in an exaggerated caricatured style, readers might be more ready to question his assertions than the less-assailable authoritative print and layout, and impersonal voice of a conventional history book (which, of course, is also making a series of arguments.)

This also raises the larger question of facial expressions and body stances of historic figures being drawn by artists. On the one hand, this allows the creator of the graphic history to be able to easily telegraph attitudes and reactions by historic characters in such a way that readers are more easily able to comprehend how a particular historic figure would respond to a particular situation. Drawings of figures and their expressions are, however, a sort of two-edged sword. The other side is that any drawing of a person introduced another layer of subjectivity. How does the reader know that the historical figure would have reacted in that way. Zinn, in particular is making an argument. Readers need to be on the look out for authorial bias. Zinn relies on photographs, interspersed liberally within the drawings, to try to support the way he draws characters. The fact remains,

however, that any drawing, even from a photograph, means that the artist made decisions about how to depict that character – decisions that go beyond the decisions the photographer made.

Zinn's graphic history is remarkable in its use of embedded documents and photographs for both sourcing and corroboration. Zinn includes historical pictures on almost every page (see p. 50, 51, 53). He often has historical subjects drawn in cartoon form appear in the photos. For example, on page 68, a cartoon version of an African American soldier sits in a tent, writing a letter home about the treatment of the Filipinos by the American soldiers. Outside the tent we see other US soldiers, but in photographic form. This allows Zinn (and his illustrators) to advance the narrative through the drawn representations and at the same time show the audience that this is a narrative derived from historical sources (as exemplified by the photographs).

In a variation of this approach, Zinn sometimes extends the narrative into photographs by having the narrative boxes continue, as if the photograph were simply another graphic history panel. For example, on page 228, the first three panels are cartoon representations of the major players in the Iran-Contra affair. The third panel contains cartoon images of Oliver North taking the oath to testify, his right hand up in the air, and John Poindexter sitting in front of a microphone, as at a congressional hearing. Above these images is a narration box that reads, "Though President Reagan and Vice President George Bush were involved, neither was indicted. Rather, the congressional committee put lesser culprits like Oliver North and John Poindexter on the witness stand. Several of them were indicted." The next panel is a photograph of George Bush taking the oath of office. Above him is a narration box that reads, "As for the major culprits, Reagan retired in peace, and Vice President Bush was elected the next president of the United States." The panel following that one shows Senator John Kerry reading a report on the links between drug trafficking and foreign policy. Here we have both a narration box summarizing the hearing, and a dialogue balloon from Kerry's mouth containing a quote from him. This approach allows the GH to benefit both from the

intriguing format of a traditional graphic novel, and from the embedded photographs that give readers a clearer basis for drawing conclusions.

Besides photographs, Zinn also embeds newspaper headlines and articles (e.g. 6, 25, and 40); period newspaper illustrations (e.g. 18, 19, 26); political cartoons (e.g. 39, 62, 69); recruitment posters (e.g. 83, 89) and documents (e.g. 125, 191, 233). Each of these strengthens the validity of his argument, but also allows readers to examine the evidence themselves and, perhaps, question its legitimacy.

Finally, Zinn also relies on written accounts. For example, from page 11 to page 17 we get the account of Black Elk, a witness to the Massacre at Wounded Knee. On page 65, we get the account of US Army Private William Grayson regarding the start of the Philippine War the night of February 4, 1899. Though Zinn seldom provides contrasting accounts of the same event, the embedded accounts he does provide allow students to learn to source the accounts. If this GH were used in contrast with a history book making a different argument than Zinn's and using a different set of accounts to support that argument, readers confronted with the differences between the two could engage in sourcing to determine which interpretation seems more defensible.

Zinn's combination of cartoon images and embedded documents gives his graphic history both a sense of credibility and a narrative unity and flow. His overall perspective on history would be valuable for students to encounter in either the text-only version or the GH version – but the embedded images in the GH version would allow for more sourcing of facts and accounts.

Learning about Sourcing in Historical Research: *The Magical Life of Long Tack Sam*

This graphic history is partly biography, but also partly the story of a historical search, with all the pitfalls and struggles that such a search is heir to. *Long Tack Sam* concerns a filmmaker, Ann Marie Fleming, and her search for information about her great-grandfather, a famous vaudeville performer who performed by the name Long Tack Sam. The piece is an interesting description of

the entertainment world of the 30s and 40s, but also serves as a useful description of the difficulties and joys of historical research. As they read about Fleming's search, students also have the opportunity to learn more about how Fleming considers and questions the veracity of each source. Readers discover more about Fleming as well, which may help them to see how her particular perspective and interests may color the GH.

From a quantitative perspective, *Long Tack Sam* exhibits many opportunities for contextualization (once every .65 pages), and some opportunities for sourcing (once every 9.6 pages) and 4 opportunities for corroboration (once every 38.3 pages).

One of the useful aspects of this GH is the way it provides historical context for those who might not be familiar with the time period in which it is taking place (for example, high school history students). One way it does this is through extensive use of timelines. *Long Tack Sam* includes timelines on average once every 5.5 pages. For example, on page 84, in the midst of an account of the time that Long Tack Sam's family lived in Austria, a timeline includes information about what was going on in the US in 1925 (Scopes Trial, Charlie Chaplin's film *The Gold Rush* is released, the Lieca pocket camera revolutionizes photography); in Cuba in 1926 (Fidel Castro is born); and in Japan (Hirohito becomes emperor) Sometimes the events listed in the timelines directly connect to what is happening to Long Tack Sam at the time. Other times, though there is not a clear connection, they allow the reader to get a sense for what the world was like at the time in terms of culture, entertainment, politics, economics, and international relations. Having said this, it is also true that the timelines in *Long Tack Sam* are not embedded in the narrative. They can escape the reader's notice if the reader is concentrating on the flow of the narrative.

Long Tack Sam is, at least in part, the story of a Chinese magician who married a woman from Austria, then, because of World War Two, fled with his family to England, Australia, and the United States. Ethnicity and prejudice play a significant part in the narrative. Anne Marie Fleming

uses a variety of visual devices to remind readers that the ethnicity of those described and interviewed may play a part in their perceptions. She uses a stick figure with slanted eyes (pages 4-7, for example) as well as a fuller cartoon drawing (pages 1-3 for example) as a way of depicting her own Chinese, Austrian, Australian heritage. She uses photographs of herself, Long Tack Sam, and the people she interviews to remind the reader of the ethnicity (see for example, 8-10). There are also historical images including a newspaper from 1908 with a line drawing of Sam and Poldi's wedding (p. 20); several playbills with pictures of Sam performing (p. 29); and assembled mixed-media images (p. 54-55). One of the most striking examples is on pages 26 and 27. On these pages, a magician named Jay Marshall describes how hard it is to determine the ethnicity of Vaudeville magicians. The pages show images of Fu Manchu (a famous performer thought to be Chinese whose real name was David Bamberg); Bamberg's father (who performed using the Japanese name Okito, but claimed to be Chinese even though he was actually Dutch); John Mulholland, who was clearly white, but who wore a mask to appear Chinese; an actual Chinese magician with the stage name Ching Ling Foo; and Chung Ling Soo (actually Billy Robinson, though he copied Ching Ling Foo's act.) The images are embedded within the explanatory text, making clear to the reader how hard it can be to distinguish ethnicity in old photographs.

Because *Long Tack Sam* is the story of a search for historical facts, it contains multiple accounts describing the same event. This occurs on average every 38.3 pages. For example, an Austrian man who knew Long Tack Sam tells the story of Sam's courtship of his wife Poldi (p. 17-18). On page 20 there is a newspaper account of the same event. On page 139, the GH presents two accounts of Christmas at Long Tack Sam's villa from two of his grandchildren. By far the most striking example of parallel accounts, though, is the multiple stories of how Long Tack Sam decided to be a magician. Each narrative is told using the garishly colorful style of a golden age comic book. This allows the reader to readily distinguish between the five different accounts of the same story.

Though some elements of the accounts are parallel (Long Tack Sam learns his craft in China after running away from home to the city) other elements are not (Did he run away to escape an overbearing brother, a life of abject poverty, to escape prosecution for the accidental damage of a merchant's property, or to escape a jealous rival?). The reader discovers that sometimes constructing a coherent narrative is very difficult.

Finally, *Long Tack Sam* offers some exemplary sourcing. First of all, like *A People's History of American Empire*, the GN is filled with embedded documents (they appear, on average, every 10.9 pages). The author's on-panel persona often questions the veracity of the accounts and information she is presenting. For example, there is an article by Bennett Cerf, describing an encounter that Long Tack Sam had with a racist fellow entertainer (32). The author, Fleming, appreciates the story, but doubts the ending. At other points, the sources question the accounts they are referencing, or even their own memory. A historian of magic, David Price Jr., shows Fleming another account of Long Tack Sam's origins, but then he himself questions its veracity (p. 37). At another point, as Fleming is interviewing Chinese magician Sun Tai, he himself questions whether he is remembering things accurately. This can help raise student's awareness of the importance of sourcing the accounts that history is drawn from.

The book may be most valuable, though, to model persistence in historical research and at the same time to remind students that different sources have different versions of the same historical information.

Conclusions

Both quantitative analysis and multimodal case analysis yielded insights on how the opportunities for using graphic histories in the classroom differ from the affordances of traditional historical texts. Data from both types of analysis, then, suggest the following four conclusions.

1. Graphic histories offer rich and varied affordances for high school history teachers and their students to engage in corroboration, sourcing, and contextualization.
2. Graphic history creators tend to tailor contextualization specifically to the historical event being narrated. *T-Minus* (Ottaviani, Cannon, & Cannon, 2009) is the story of the space race, so through images, narration boxes, and timeline, it can focus on temporal context. *08* (Crowley & Goldman, 2009) concerns a political campaign, and so, while political context is vital, the geographic context of where speeches are being made, is less important. *Nat Turner* (Baker, 2008) provides narrative context through images so that the text of Nat Turner's journal fits in a larger narrative. The images in *Journey into Mohawk Country* (O'Connor & VandenBogaert, 2006) provide cultural context that illuminate the primary source document that forms its core.
3. Although opportunities for students to engage in sourcing and corroboration are less common than opportunities for contextualization, some of those opportunities are particularly robust, even in reporting situations where privacy issues make it hard to use names and photos (*Palestine* (Sacco, 2001) and *Safe Area Gorazde* (Sacco, 2002)).
4. The use of narrative panel divisions makes it possible to smoothly present contrasting accounts of the same event in a single, coherent narrative thread (*Palestine* (Sacco, 2001), *Safe Area Gorazde* (Sacco, 2002)) or by replaying the event in different versions (*Long Tack Sam* (Fleming, 2007)).

These conclusions suggest not so much that graphic histories are monolithically useful for education, or even teaching history – but rather that each graphic history has particular affordances (both affordances that traditional texts share and some value added affordances that are not present in traditional texts), and that high school history teachers, having considered their goals for a

particular unit, should seek out graphic histories that have the affordances that would help them reach their goals.

Chapter V. Implications for Teaching and Further Research

The overall research question in this study was: What opportunities do graphic novels afford high school history teachers to teach contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration? This overall research question was investigated through two ‘sub’ questions:

1. What does analysis of each subcategory reveal about opportunities for contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration across the graphic histories in the study?
2. Second, what does analysis of selected individual graphic histories across all categories reveal about opportunities for teaching high school history?

The first phase of the analysis, that focused on the quantitative analysis of the corpus of 20 graphic histories, concluded that as a whole, GHs do offer affordances for each of Weinberg’s three categories, and that analysis identified both affordances that are shared with regular word-only texts, and those that are unique to the graphic novel format. It was also found that among the group of GHs more robust opportunities were present for students to engage in contextualization and sourcing than in corroboration. A third finding from the quantitative coding was that different GHs have quite different profiles in terms of the opportunities they present for these three aspects of reading history.

Graphic histories are multimodal. They use a close combination of words and images, along with conventions like organizing the page into panels, indicating the speaker by narration boxes and word bubbles, and so on in order to convey information to the reader. Although we know that reading has become a great deal more multimodal over the last ten to twenty years because of technological developments such as smart boards, websites, I pads and so on, and while we know that GHs have become much more prevalent as material for the classroom, it is also the case that little research has been done on what exactly is different about them and what they might offer

classroom teachers and readers. Results from this study can make a contribution to a better understanding of what GHs can offer.

In discussing the implications of the findings from this study, we will consider the three areas of Wineburg's heuristic: contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration.

Contextualization

Graphic histories offer several affordances for contextualization that are not present in conventional text-only books. Several techniques that were highlighted by the coding used embedding, or incorporating elements of contextualization more naturally into the narrative flow. Consider a history textbook. Although it wouldn't be fair to consider any high school textbook monomodal, since it conveys information through text, photographs, charts, maps, timelines, political cartoons, and other visuals, it is true that the history textbook is organized primarily through a single flow of text. That is to say, a primary textual flow proceeds through each chapter. There are other, separate captions, charts, primary sources in sidebar boxes, photographs, political cartoons, maps, and so on – but the reader follows a single primary textual flow all the way through the chapter. One way images in the corpus of graphic histories examined in this study connected back to that flow was through a link between text and related image.

For example, in a history textbook, one might be reading about the Bosnian war, and on the same page there might be a black and white photograph of a line of bodies killed and mutilated by the invading Serbian army. Another way images might be organized in a history textbook is through sidebars, in which images and captions are set aside from the main text in a box that might or might not be closely linked to the primary textual flow. In this case, the primary flow might be describing the hardships of the war for the civilians, and a sidebar might contain a photograph of a Bosnian schoolteacher and text that describes how he had to hike over the mountains in the bitter cold winter to buy food, and then carry it all the way back to feed his extended family. One advantage is

that such image-text constructions allow flexibility for the history book to incorporate both closely-related images and those that are ancillary. A significant disadvantage, however, is that that primary textual flow that runs through every page, exerts such a pull on the reader that leaving that flow to linger on a map or a photograph can be difficult. While the reader might depart from the text to look at the images, he or she may not depart from the text at the right time (perhaps waiting until he or she is done reading the text on that page) or spend enough time with the images to gain all the important information from them.

Graphic histories, however, can embed images within that primary flow. The text boxes and recurring images of the single GH flow can incorporate maps, photographs, timelines, and images within the panel structure of the page. This means that a map, for example, is not separated from the primary flow by the way it is positioned and the box drawn around it, but rather the map is within a panel that is embedded in several other panels that make up that page. Because GNs are read in a prescribed left-to-right, top-to-bottom order (McCloud, 1993), the panel containing the map is as much a part of the primary flow as a paragraph in the main text of a standard textbook. In addition, GHs often overlap textboxes of the narrative within the map, so that, for example, in *Safe Area Gorazde*, a panel in the upper half of page 38 contains a map showing the Yugoslav republics that achieved independence in 1991, and within that map is a text box that contains exposition that extends from the previous panel, saying “Bosnia was now at a crossroads. It could remain in a Yugoslavia consisting of a chauvinistic dominant Serbia and Serbia’s close ally Montenegro, or seek independence and run the risk of war” (2002, p. 38). In a similar way, GHs can embed timelines, photographs, and political cartoons, so that, as the reader encounter them, they do so within the primary flow and with the voice of a text box to help them connect the map, timeline, or image with the rest of the primary flow. This technique, found in a majority of the corpus of GHs examined in

this study, is certainly a new and potentially valuable affordance for both geographic and temporal contextualization that is not available in a standard text approach.

History textbooks also use photographs and other images to evoke mood. Again, though, that mood effect tends to be separate from the primary textual flow through the chapter. In a graphic history, the mood is integrated with the flow of the information given. It is unclear, though whether such an integration might be positive (perhaps because the addition of mood might keep readers more engaged in the material) or negative (perhaps because the addition of affect and mood might interfere with readers' attempts to objectively comprehend the material).

To aid students in engaging in temporal contextualization, graphic histories also incorporate image juxtaposition. GHs work on the principal of panel-to-panel juxtaposition all the time. When reading a GH, the reader moves from one panel to the next comparing the images in the two panels to see what is different between them, and from that to conclude what has changed and how much time has elapsed. So, for example, in the GH *Maus*, there is a scene in which Vladek and Anje hide in the closet when a German soldier visits the house where they are staying. In one panel, they are standing in the darkened closet. The next panel is almost identical, but Vladek is tipping his head back and holding a finger on his nose, and Anje is looking alarmed. In the third panel, Anje has picked up a pillow from the floor of the closet and is holding it over Vladek's face so that he can quietly sneeze into it (Spiegelman, *Maus I*, 1986, p. 143). The reader looks from one panel to the next to determine what has happened and to fill in the action in the reader's imagination.

The new affordance that graphic histories can provide for temporal context is to use this technique over a greater range of panels. For example, in *Still I Rise*, on page 48, the second panel shows an African-American man in 1776, standing on top of two precarious walls, trying to decide which one to walk. The walls are labeled to represent the man's two equally unpleasant choices: join the British army or the American army (Laird & Bey, 1997). 130 pages later, a similar image appears.

It is the mid 1940s and this time two African-American men and one African-American woman are standing at the edge of two precarious walls. One is labeled integration and the other is labeled desegregation (p. 178). By using a similar image-based metaphor, the creators of the GH are cuing readers to draw a conclusion about similarities between two events separated by nearly 200 years. The images allow the inference to be made without interrupting the narrative flow, and without directly making the comparison, so that readers discover the parallel on their own. For temporal contextualization, this is also a new affordance.

In social contextualization, the multimodal nature of graphic histories allows for information about ethnicity and culture to be conveyed visually, again without having to stop the narrative flow. On the one hand, this might allow readers to plunge more deeply into the argument and engage with information from photographs, charts and other visual means of expression. On the other hand, it might be that readers carried along by the narrative might not stop to critically to consider what they are reading. Research is needed to determine how readers engage with social contextualization in a GH as opposed to a conventional text.

I would argue, however, that there are certainly affordances here for deeply engaged and thoughtful reading. In *Nat Turner*, for example, there is a 15 panel sequence that relates to Nat Turner learning to read. In the first panel, we see an African-American boy perhaps seven or eight years old, slouched down next to a woodpile, reading a Bible. The next four panels are a two page spread of scenes drawn from what he is reading. In each panel, the boy is in the foreground, and the progression shows his eyes getting wider and wider as he reads. The first of these four panels shows the people of Israel in chains, with pyramids in the background. The second shows two workers bowed under the crushing weight of an enormous stone block that they are trying to carry on their backs. Immediately behind them is an Egyptian overseer wearing a head scarf and cracking a whip. In the third of these four panels is Moses, throwing down his staff and transforming it into

a threatening snake at the foot of the pharaoh, who is sitting on his throne. In the final image of the four, the boy's eyes are as wide as they can be, and the image is of Moses, his staff held high, bringing the waters of the red sea crashing down on those who had enslaved the people of Israel.

The next page spread has seven panels. The first shows a white man's boot (in contrast to the boy who is barefoot) and the second panel is a close-up of the boy's ear. Clearly he has heard someone approaching. He quickly turns the Bible upside-down and assumes an exaggerated expression of idiocy, his tongue hanging out, one eye closed, and his hand scratching his head, as if he is puzzled by this book. The next three panels show the white man standing over the boy, hands on hips, then the white man's face, clearly laughing, and then the white man, still smiling, holding the Bible and wagging his finger at the boy.

The final page of the sequence consists of three panels. In the first, the man holds the Bible, still smiling, while the boy appears to be dancing, a huge grin on his face. The penultimate panel shows the white man, still smiling, putting on his hat and walking away, apparently satisfied that this kid is too stupid to read, and therefore not a threat. The final image shows the boy, looking almost straight at the reader, but a little to the left, in the direction the man has gone. The boy's eyes are narrowed, his brow tight, and his facial expression is one of focused rage, intensity, and intelligence – a stark contrast to his joking and dancing guise from the panel just above it (Baker, 2008, pp. 85-90).

In five pages, Baker strongly enhances and clarifies our understanding of the social context in which the Nat Turner rebellion took place. We understand clearly that the boy, presumably young Nat Turner himself, knows that reading is forbidden, yet values it enough to sneak away and take the risk. We also understand quickly how he brings his social and cultural context to bear on what he reads. The story of the people of Israel in Egypt, for the boy, is clearly a story of oppression that mirrors the cultural context that he is in, and also a story of rebellion, destruction of

the oppressors, and liberation into freedom. Although the white overseer's context might cause him to view the Bible as a good book filled with platitudes and commands to obey those in authority, the boy's cultural context leads him to see it as an encouragement to rebellion. The final part of the sequence shows the two cultures in relation to each other, with the white overseers quite willing to believe that their slaves are intellectually inferior, happy drones, satisfied with their subjugation and too stupid to contemplate retaliation. The fact is, as seen in his face, the boy's hatred is intense, focused, and calculating.

Of course, it isn't fair to contrast this with a history textbook, which strives for objectivity. Rather, this is a primary source. The text that accompanies the images I have just described is an abridged version of Turner's *Confessions*. It describes, in Turner's rather dry prose, his education. It reads, in part:

"To a mind like mine, restless and inquisitive of everything that was passing, it is easy to suppose that religion was the subject to which it would be directed, and although this subject principally occupied my thoughts, there was nothing that I saw or heard of to which my attention was not directed" (Baker, 2008, p. 85).

One might be tempted to praise Baker's adaptation for engaging readers by giving them exciting images to pair with the uninteresting prose, or to criticize Baker for making up history and inventing moments that did not happen. I argue that both of these positions, however, miss the point. In order to understand what Baker is saying in the text, we need to know the social context in which he was saying it. The images provide that context by giving us a glimpse into both the context in which the white overseers viewed their slaves, and the context in which the African-American people viewed their oppressors. In chapter 4, we considered how *Journey into Mohawk Country* also uses images to provide social context.

Graphic histories also can help us keep cultural context in mind over a long stretch of material without having to awkwardly remind us of that context again and again. In Joe Sacco's *Palestine*, almost every page contains multiple images of Muslim people wearing head scarves. Although Sacco draws direct attention to the importance and meaning of the head scarf early in the book, by simply depicting it on virtually every page, he reminds us that it is always there.

Graphic histories do offer new affordances for social contextualization, although the quantitative findings did not reveal any new affordances for economic and political contextualization. The coding revealed that GHs provide material for the reader to engage in economic and political contextualization, but did not show any affordances specific to GHs. When contextualization is viewed as a whole however, through the lens of the quantitative portion of this study, it is clear that, in addition to existing affordances, GHs offer rich and robust possibilities for new affordances in reading history.

Sourcing

Sourcing, as a category, offered fewer new affordances than contextualization. The most powerful examples of affordances that the quantitative coding revealed were an extensive use of embedded documents. As with embedded images, maps, and timelines, embedded documents offer students the chance to encounter a document in the context of the narrative flow to which it applies. To then use that document to engage in sourcing, the reader would have to be able to derive from that document information that would support its veracity; clarify the motivations, perspectives, beliefs, and circumstances of the author; and contrast that information with other sources. While there were GHs that provided that affordance, they did not do so in a way that was different from how a conventional text would do so.

One of the graphic histories that used the greatest number of embedded documents was Howard Zinn's *People's History of American Empire*. And while that book does present a radically

different perspective than the one usually offered in history books -- giving students the opportunity to consider the actions of the United States from the perspective of those peoples that the United States interacted with -- it does not seem to do that, at least according to the quantitative data, in a way that is much different from the way Zinn does that in the text-only version of the same book. In other words, though GHs offer possibilities for sourcing, they are not different affordances from what regular text-only books would offer. And the frequency and density of those embedded document affordances are fairly weak.

However, when we consider the multimodal case analysis, we find some isolated examples of what graphic novels potentially have to offer in terms of sourcing opportunities. Joe Sacco's *Palestine*, for example, identifies some rich possibilities for the reader to engage in sourcing. First, by including himself as a character in the narrative, Sacco introduces a reporter/guide who can help readers to see when the context may be pushing the source to present a particular slant on the truth. The case analysis describes a scene where Sacco is talking to a Palestinian who has been injured. Sacco questions the man while he is surrounded by other men from the community. When Sacco asks how he fits in to the community now that he is bound to a wheelchair, another man jumps in and says that the community respects him. The man in the wheelchair affirms this assertion. Then Sacco, in his guise as the reporter/guide says, "I'm sure they respect him... but with all those people listening in, what else could he say?" Here Sacco introduces the concept of sourcing, at least in a basic form to the readers. The graphic history allows readers to see the facial expressions of not only the source, but also of the reporter and the people around the source. This allows Sacco to signal to the reader that there is something suspicious about a particular aspect of the account in a way that a text-only publication might be unable to. This happens at several other points in the book (as described in Chapter 4). What Sacco is doing here is apprenticing the reader into the idea

of questioning the source. This could prove to be a very useful affordance to prepare students to engage in sourcing on their own.

In *The Magical Life of Long Tack Sam*, Ann Marie Fleming shows how sourcing fits into the larger picture of an historical narrative. As she gathers accounts of her great-grandfather's life, she runs into stories that are contradictory. This causes her to evaluate the value of the accounts and reach, if not a single conclusion, at least a narrowed list of possible stories and interpretations. In this case, readers might consider the accounts and try to do some sifting on their own, before they reach the end of Fleming's narrative. Because each time she forms an opinion about the way the historical narrative goes, she presents that theoretical narrative in a distinctive coloring and style, it is easy for the reader to pick out the accounts to contrast.

In *A History of American Empire*, we consider the impact of graphic renderings of narrators and characters on the students' opportunities to engage in sourcing. In Zinn's GH, a caricature of Zinn provides transitions and overall narration at the beginnings and sometimes throughout chapters of the book. In addition, in some chapters, historical figures depicted in photographs (Eugene Debs, Teddy Roosevelt, and George W. Bush, for example) also appear in the story in caricatured form. On the one hand, this allows readers to compare the historical figure's actual image with the cartoonish drawing. It also allows readers to question whether facial expressions and body language is accurate to what really happened. Having said that, although readers might ask such questions, it may be more difficult to come up with answers to the questions they raise. None of the GHs studied offered any extra sections explaining the artist's process in researching and drawing the images. Nor are we necessarily given any insight into the artist's political and philosophical leanings. In the case of Zinn's book, we are given to suppose that the artist of the book shares Zinn's political and philosophical perspectives, but we have no way of knowing that for sure. So while high school history teachers might legitimately engage students in questioning the

basis for the facial expressions on the historical figure's faces, that discussion might, of necessity prove inconclusive.

Having said that, the above observations represent new affordances for the reader to engage in sourcing. Though sourcing is not a very rich category in terms of number of opportunities, or in terms of embedded documents, the two opportunities described above suggest largely unrealized potential.

Corroboration

Quantitative coding revealed that affordances like parallel accounts and collaborative reports were far less prevalent than affordances in contextualization. However, numbers may not be telling the whole story here. Though the plentiful opportunities to engage readers with new affordances makes it clear through quantitative coding that graphic histories are well suited to support contextualization, smaller numbers, as in the corroboration category, cause us to wonder about the possibility that, even though opportunities for corroboration or sourcing are rare, the opportunities that exist might be robust and useful. To determine this, and what implications such a conclusion might have, we need to look at the data from the multimodal case analyses.

The multimodal case analyses revealed within Joe Sacco's work (both *Palestine* and *Safe Area Gorazde*) that within a graphic history it is possible to tell a single narrative, but, by means of a recurring motif. In the case of *Safe Area Gorazde*, that motif is the use of a head shot of the source with their name or occupation underneath at the beginning of their section of the narrative taken from their account. This allows Sacco to switch back and forth from narrative to narrative in a way that isn't distracting to the narrator, yet makes it clear whose account we are dealing with at any given time. Sacco employs this technique in both books (in the narrative about crossing the mountain for food that appears in *Safe Area Gorazde*, for example; and in the narrative about how Palestinians are treated in Israeli prisons that appears in *Palestine*). Although text-only narratives

could employ some variation of this approach (perhaps using a format like a script or a transcript to indicate who is talking), with the purely visual cue it can be accomplished in a GH without breaking the narrative.

In *The Magical Life of Long Tack Sam*, one way that readers can engage in the sourcing discussed in the earlier section, is to see if the different accounts of the beginning of Long Tack Sam's career match up with each other. In fact, since the different versions are told using similar panel structure and the same appearance of the same subjects and settings of the narrative, it would be easy for readers to compare one version with the next.

The multimodal case analyses, then helped establish some robust affordances within the categories of sourcing and corroboration, even though there were only three graphic histories that employed that technique.

Implications for Classroom Practice

Graphic histories offer rich and varied affordances for high school history teachers and their students to engage in contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration. Taken together, the patterns revealed in the quantitative survey and the deep look into specific GHs suggest that GHs could profitably be used by high school history teachers to help students develop comprehension skills involving contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration. However, obviously, more research is necessary to determine how practical and beneficial these affordances are when used in the high school history classroom.

For high school history teachers, however, this does not mean abandoning the traditional history textbook in favor of the graphic history on the grounds that GHs are new and multimodal and so will engage students. What is at issue here is not so much engaging students (because if that is all we are looking for, then GHs might swiftly be replaced by the next trendy form of multimodality) but rather what happens in conjunction with students' initial engagement. Classroom

practitioners should consider how the affordances of particular GHs can help them reach their goals. Just as many history teachers incorporate trade books or primary sources to supplement the traditional textbook – they do not (or perhaps should not) incorporate a trade book because it is a good idea overall to include that format in their teaching – but rather because a particular trade book helps help them reach their teaching goals.

It is also worth noting that as we speak of using graphic histories in the classroom we must recognize that we are talking about a range of different kinds of texts. In the corpus of 20 GHs that this study looked at, there were 5 memoirs, 5 event histories, 3 biographies, 2 primary sources, 2 historical surveys, 2 works of reportage, 1 adaptation of a government report, and 1 personal history. Obviously, as with regular trade books, the teacher must help the students understand the particular affordances and limitations of each genre. Primary sources, for example, have the advantage of being written in direct proximity to the historical event. This means that descriptions are more credible, and more extensive details provide the historian with more concrete information to seek to corroborate. At the same time, though, readers must cope with a syntax that sometimes needs to be contextualized to be understood, and with a perspective of the event that lacks the overall understanding that comes from the perspective of looking back on history. Similarly, though memoirs offer both the detail of memory and the perspective of time, they can exhibit the sentimentality and revisionism that comes with a personal view of past history. As a final example, biographies (like *Long Tack Sam*) often describe how many accounts can combine to inform the historian about the subject's life and can provide focus on a narrow part of history. At the same time, such a biography can sometimes be so focused on that particular life that it lacks contextualization of the larger historical, economic, and political setting. Teachers, then, must help students consider the genre of the work they are reading.

It is also important to consider that teaching reading involves not only the text and what the reader makes of the text, but also what the teacher can scaffold to help the reader make of the text. So GHs like *History of American Empire* or *Still I Rise*, because of the particular arguments they make, might raise history teacher's suspicions about how trustworthy the material is. Other GHs, like *Journey into Mohawk Country* and *Houdini* might raise different suspicions about the degree of speculation necessary on the part of the GH creators to draw facial reactions on historical figures who have been dead for decades or even hundreds of years. However, this too is an affordance. Engaging students in questioning the veracity of both the text and the images provides the opportunity for teachers to show students one of the central tenets of the discipline of history – that all that we know must be questioned and examined.

Using graphic histories in the classroom will not necessarily be an easy adjustment for teachers. The very thing that gives GHs their semiotic power – the multiplicative complexity of integrating text and image – also adds a layer (or perhaps multiple layers) of complexity. At times, teaching high school students involves trying to simplify difficult concepts. In such cases, using graphic novels may complicate the concept being taught rather than clarifying it. This is a very real potential hazard.

At the same time, once students have a solid grasp on a subject, graphic histories could offer an opportunity for teachers to challenge students to really engage in contextualization, corroboration, sourcing, and other difficult but important aspects of what history is really about.

Graphic History Creators Tailor Contextualization to the Historical Events Being Narrated.

The very nature of history study is that it is dominated by contextualization. The practice of history consists of people from a particular time and place trying to make sense of a very different time and place. So contextualization is, in many ways, absolutely central to what historians, history teachers, and history students do when they learn history. This study reveals that graphic histories

offer opportunities for readers to engage in contextualization in terms of geography, temporality, politics, economic issues, and social differences. However, the research also shows that no one GH offers opportunities across all of these forms of contextualization. Further, there are other aspects of contextualization that have not been considered or researched in this study. Although it is possible to make a grid showing the degree to which each GH offers affordances in each form of contextualization, such a chart can only offer the number of references for each type of contextualization. It is harder to determine how useful each GH is in offering tools for students to contextualize.

Classroom practitioners should not evaluate graphic histories monolithically (“Since GHs are good for contextualization, I should use a GH”) nor even numerically (“Analysis shows that this GH provides geographic contextualization at least once every two pages, so it is a good one to use”) but rather holistically. History teachers should consider what they are trying to help history students learn to do in terms of contextualization, then read a potential GH with that idea in mind. And if they teach students using a GH, they ought to engage in the same evaluation process they would with a traditional text.

Although opportunities for students to engage in sourcing and corroboration are less common than opportunities for contextualization, some of the affordances in sourcing are particularly robust.

Graphic histories seem to offer a great deal of potential, as the Joe Sacco GHs demonstrated, to use illustration to provide embodiment, facial expression, and body language, even in situations where, due to the sensitive nature of the topic being discussed, using a photograph would be impossible. In both of Sacco’s books, and in Zinn’s work as well, multiple accounts of the same event provide students with opportunities to contrast particular accounts. Some GHs might also be contrasted with other traditional text accounts as well.

However, high school history teachers might also do well to introduce a critical element into any work on sourcing through graphic histories. When one looks at the contrasting accounts of daily life in Joe Sacco's *Palestine*, one must keep in mind that the advantages of a GH in depicting the facial and body images are, by their nature, utterly dependent on the author (in this case, Sacco) and his interpretation of the event. This interpretation influences the final GH product in a variety of ways – bias, emotion, cultural differences, and individual differences. So, for example, if Sacco depicts an angry Palestinian youth, we are assuming that Sacco is drawing the face as he saw it, that his interpretation of anger as the emotion is correct, and that he has understood what the anger is directed at. The reader also needs to consider what biases and interpretations Sacco brings to the work. Although this is also true in traditional text versions, the combination of images and words may provide more layers of interpretation – that may provide more doors for bias and misinterpretation.

The use of narrative panel divisions makes it possible to smoothly present contrasting accounts of the same event in a single, coherent narrative thread.

In a traditional text, jumping back and forth between accounts of the same event is, at best, a tricky proposition. Traditional texts can present an entire account and then present another entire account, but if the accounts are lengthy, it may be a difficult task for high school students to be able to hold details from one account in their mind while reading the second account. Some traditional texts jump back and forth from one account to the other to highlight contrasts of similarities. With more than two or three accounts, though, this can become confusing – and the transitions required to orient the reader as to which account they are reading at any point in time can soon become cumbersome.

Graphic histories can employ simple indicators to let the reader know which account they are considering, as in Sacco's narrations of the winter run over the mountains in *Gorazde* and

descriptions of Israeli prisons in *Palestine*. This approach may be particularly good for high school teachers trying to engage students in corroboration and sourcing for the first time. In the GHs considered for this study, though, seldom was there a totality of each witness's account, though, which might suggest that GHs be used as a first step, with students moving on to contrast traditional text accounts once they master the idea.

Implications for Future Research

In chapter 1, the rationale behind this dissertation suggested that, before researchers can consider how graphic histories can best be used in the classroom, it is necessary to determine whether there are affordances present in GHs that would indicate their usefulness in the classroom. This study has concluded that there are rich possibilities for GHs to contribute to disciplinary reading. What sort of research is necessary, then, in order for researchers and teachers alike to use GHs to help meet particular curricular goals?

First, there is much we still need to know about graphic novels in general and graphic histories in particular. The format is new enough that it is hard to separate the affordances particular to the format itself from those that might result from the newness and excitement of the format, that might be resulting in a first wave of particularly creative work. What will happen when a second wave of less-interesting material comes along (including graphic history textbooks). A recent article by Yeo-Joo Lim describes a current phenomenon in Korea (Lim, 2011). Libraries in Seoul have had to separate graphic novel collections and limit children's access to them since the explosion of the popular new genre Educational Graphic Novels (or EGNs). This might suggest that there is something particular to the graphic novel format that might go beyond the current wave of particularly creative material. This is not to say that there will not be poorly written and drawn, uncreative, textbook-like graphic histories. There already are. But researcher should continue to look to the format and what we can learn about what makes GHs good and how children read them.

The second area future researchers may look into is whether students currently read graphic histories in a way that engages the affordances this study has identified. Though the analysis indicates that GHs can offer space for contextualization, corroboration, and sourcing, the immediate question that follows is, what happens in the classroom? Will students see what is happening with the images in *Journey into Mohawk Country*, contextualizing the social gaffes that Harman is reporting in his diary? Will students be able to question the veracity of the different accounts that Joe Sacco uses to describe events in Palestine and the Bosnian War? Can teachers help students consider the questions raised by the reporters in *08* or by the multiple narrators in *Still I Rise*? Do GHs help students read history with a mental timeline? Do students see cause and effect when they read GHs? GHs seem to have the content for such reading, but do students read them in that way?

The third set of general questions considers not whether students *will do* all this, but whether graphic histories afford teachers the opportunity to teach in such a way that students *are likely to* do all this. When scaffolded, can students learn to read history GHs with a mental timeline, see cause and effect in GH narratives, and engage in corroboration and contextualization? Can students learn to engage with embedded maps, embedded timelines, or long shots in GHs, and does that result in them having a clearer idea of the geographic context, or does that still depend on the student's ability to connect to their own prior knowledge? How can teachers best scaffold students so that they can discover on their own the way that *Journey into Mohawk Country* provides the context of Mohawk societal mores that brings the gaffes of the Dutch explorers into clear relief? How do students make sense of contextualization using the modes of image and text at the same time? What happens when GHs are used as one of several multiple texts dealing with the same event or events? How can teachers best use GHs in combination with those other texts? All these questions and many more beside could have a direct impact of teaching and learning.

Researchers should work with classroom teachers to observe, analyze, and determine which is the best way to use graphic histories to teach students how to examine different corroborating sources. Do the affordances which GHs offer that seem to be the same as affordances in conventional history texts allow students to comprehend these concepts more quickly or more fully? Is that true for all students or just some of them? In cases where GHs appear to be doing the same thing as conventional texts, researchers might consider whether there are differences in, for example, the level of student motivation, or differences in comprehension of how historical research goes.

Conclusion

Graphic histories represent great potential in further developing reading comprehension. This is not because, as many teachers and researcher alike suppose, GHs are easier to read than regular text books. Rather, reading GHs is a remarkably complex activity. In addition to the tasks that Kintsch and others outlined in Chapter II, GH readers need to synthesize images and text in every panel – usually several times per pages. They must construct a verbatim representation of the meaning derived from that synthesis, develop a semantic representation of the intersection of image and word, and derive a situational representation of that to which the text refers. This is a complex task.

It is not unlikely that, again in every panel, readers must formulate and accept or reject a list of propositions derived from the synthesis of text and image, drawing on verbal and visual structures and prior knowledge of verbal and visual content both within and outside that particular graphic history, other GHs the reader has read, and the rest of what they know.

In the midst of all this cognitive activity, they also need to learn how to distill information in a way that makes sense within the constraints, affordances, and strategies of that particular discipline's way of thinking.

Researchers and teachers need to be able to wade into this complex activity to make determinations of how to approach finding out more about the way readers comprehend a graphic history text within a disciplinary context, and how to teach readers the best ways to engage in that comprehension.

The study of graphic histories in the context of disciplinary literacy is currently in its infancy. This dissertation offers a framework based on content analysis. It is my intention in my own research to move from this first step in the direction of examining what happens in the classroom. This study indicates that there appears to be a great deal of potential in GHs. It also indicates that there is a wealth of unexplored territory that would benefit from further investigation by other researchers and practitioners.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in English at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI, May 1988.

Master of Fine Arts in fiction writing at Columbia College in Chicago, IL, June 1994. 4.0 GPA.
 Thesis: Frog Dreams (a novel)

Master of Education in curriculum and instruction at Dordt College in Sioux Center, IA. May 2004.
 4.0 GPA. Thesis: *Assessing the Success of a Media Discernment Course for Freshmen at Illiana High School*

Ph. D. in Curriculum and Instruction (Language, Literacy and Culture Division) at University of Illinois at Chicago, Fall 2011. Dissertation: *Learning to See History: A Content Analysis of the Affordances of Graphic Novels for High School Teaching*

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Assistant Professor of Education: Trinity College, Palos Heights, Illinois
 (2005 – present)

--Taught Educational Psychology, Content Area Reading, Fine Arts Across the Curriculum, Children's Literature, Creative Writing, and Methods of Teaching Secondary English

--Served as Chair of Ethnic Diversity Committee (2007-2010), and as member of the Curriculum Committee (2010 – present), Force to Lead Unit Tasks in Education (2008 – present), and Cultural Affairs Committee (2006-2007). Faculty advisor for Trinprov Team (from 2005 to the present) and Student Chapter of ASCD (from 2007 to the present).

High School English Teacher: Illiana Christian High School in Lansing, Illinois (1996-2005)
 Taught American Literature, British Literature, World Literature, AP Literature, Creative Writing, Drama, and Perspectives on Culture. Also co-directed two drama productions a year and served as faculty advisor for the fine arts competition, the video club, the Mock Trial Team, the Improv Team, and the writing club.

Instructor: Trinity College in Palos Heights, Illinois; 1991 – 2002

--Taught Methods of Teaching Secondary English, Basic Composition, Oral Interpretation, and Advanced Writing. I also served at various times as a faculty advisor for the student literary publication, The Mirror; the student newspaper, The Courier; the student Writers' Guild; and the student Drama Society. I wrote curriculum for and taught in the adult degree completion program as well

Instructor: Columbia College in Chicago, Illinois; 1992 - 1999

--Taught Introduction to Fiction Writing, Fiction Writing 1, Fiction Writing 2, Prose Forms, Critical Reading And Writing I, Fiction Writing and Dreams, and Literary Magazine Publishing to both undergraduates and MFA students.

Teacher: SEARCH program (1992 – 1995)

-SEARCH was a two-week summer program at Trinity College for gifted elementary school students in the South Chicago suburbs. I taught classes in using oral storytelling to improve writing ability, oral rhetoric and debate, the literature of the natural world, and writing and performing poetry.

WRITING AND EDITING EXPERIENCE

Editor: Trinity College Higher Learning Commission Report (2009-2010)

-I worked with a six-person writing team to standardize the voice in an accreditation report and I proofread the final draft.

Staff Writer and Editor: Church and Community Project (1990 to 1993)

-Part-time job for a Lilly grant-funded sociological research project affiliated with McCormick Seminary and the University of Chicago that investigated how churches and community agencies can best work together.

Director of Publications and Publicity: Trinity College, (1989 to 1990)

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Mackenzi Huyser; Boerman-Cornell, Bill; and DeBoer, Kendra (2011) “Christian schools and demographic change: Two case studies.” *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 20:1. 4-27.

Boerman-Cornell, Bill (2011) “Graphic novels for the classroom: Affordances for using graphic novels to teach high school history.” Chapter in Carrington and Harding’s *Going Graphic: Comics and Graphic Novels for Young People*, Lichfield, Staffordshire, UK: Pied Piper.

Boerman-Cornell, William (2010) History is relatives: Educational affordances of the graphic novel in The Magical Life of Long Tack Sam. *International Journal of Comic Art*. 12:1, 147-156.

Boerman-Cornell, William; Huyser, MacKenzi (2008) A Diverse set of diversity experiences: A Case example of constructing cultural competence in teacher education. *Teaching with Compassion, Competence, Commitment*. 2:1, 54-73

Boerman-Cornell, W. (2006) Reconciling opposing visions: Understanding verbal and visual grammar in graphic novels. *Education and the Public Good Yearbook*. Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago.

Boerman-Cornell, William (1999) The Five humors. *English Journal*.

PRACTITIONER –LEVEL PUBLICATIONS

Teale, W.; J. Kim; and W. Boerman-Cornell (2008) It's Elementary: Graphic novels for the K-6 classroom. *Booklinks*. 17:5, 6-13.

Zumdahl, L.; Huyser, M; Malinowski, R.; Woo, D.; Vallone, T.; and Boerman-Cornell (2006). Preparing future teachers to be culturally competent: An Innovative program for educators. *Success in High-Need Schools: The Online Journal of ACI's Center for Success in High-Need School*, 2:3, October 2006.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“Graphic Novels in the Discipline of History: An Analysis of Primary Sources in Traditional Text and Graphic Novel Formats.” Paper presented at American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference, New Orleans April 9 2011

“Text Encounters in secondary classrooms.” (Chair of session). Literacy Research Association National Reading Conference: Fort Worth, TX. Dec. 3, 2010

“The images are the context: A Content analysis of the usefulness of graphic novels for teaching disciplinary literacy skills for high school history instruction.” Literacy Research Association National Reading Conference: Fort Worth, TX. Dec. 1, 2010.

“The Play's the thing: Collaborative Shakespeare with high school students and pre-service teachers.” Service Learning Symposium: The Heart and Soul of Engaged Living. National Lewis University, 21 April 2010.

“Graphic novels: More than engagement for middle and high school students.” With Dr. Jung Kim, International Reading Association Conference: Chicago, IL. April 2010

“Graphic novels in the discipline of history: An Analysis of primary sources in traditional text and graphic novel formats.” Literacy Research Association/National Reading Conference. Albuquerque, New Mexico. December 2009

“Graphic novels in the high school classroom: Affordances for using graphic novels to teach high school history.” British International Board of Books for young People (IBBY)/ National Council for Readers of Children’s Literature (NCRCL) Conference. London, England: Roehampton College. November 2009

“Collaborative multimodal production: The Power of improvisation.” National Reading Conference, Orlando, Florida. 3 December 2008

“Multimodal history and content area reading strategies: Textual analyses of three graphic novels.” With Michael Manderino. National Reading Conference: Austin, TX. 1 December 2007

“Words and pictures all at once: Identifying skills used by successful graphic novel readers.” National Reading Conference: Austin, TX. 30 November 2007

“Turning an eye toward the adolescent reader: Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) and adolescent literacy.” Education and the Public Good Conference, Chicago, IL. 3 March 2007

“Multimodality and its implications in and out of school: The Gap between graphic novel research and practice.” National Reading Conference. Los Angeles, California. November 2006.

“Multimodal hero versus anti-comprehension villain: Opposing views of the educative value of graphic novels.” National Reading Conference. Los Angeles, California. November 2006.

“Multimodality and its implications in and out of the classroom.” Literacy Matters Forum. University of Illinois at Chicago: Chicago, IL. October 2006.

“Graphic novels in the elementary classroom” with Jeff Smith and Bill Teale. International Reading Association Conference. Chicago, Illinois. May 1-4, 2006

“Reconciling opposing visions: Understanding verbal and visual grammar in graphic novels.” Presented at the Education and the Public Good Conference, Chicago, 25 February 2006

IN-SERVICES, TALKS, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

“Reading in math class!?” (With Dave Klanderman and Mandi Maxwell). Christian Educators’ Association Conference, South Bend, IN . October 21, 2010.

“Social justice through the arts and humanities.” Raising a Generation of Justice Symposium. Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, IL, April 2010

“A Day in the life of a first year teacher: Improv in the classroom.” ACI New Teacher Induction Academy, Bloomington, IL. June 2008

“Understanding African-American and Dutch-American cultures,” With Dr. David Brodnax. Diversity Lecture at Trinity College, Palos Heights, IL. November, 2007

“Top ten ways to build school community in and out of the classroom.” Christian Educators’ Association Conference. South Bend, IN, 18 October 2007.

“Preparing future teachers to serve in high needs schools through collaboration.” ACI Center Partnership Meeting. Trinity College, Palos Heights, IL. 18 July 2007

“A Day in the life of a first year teacher: Improv in the classroom.” ACI New Teacher Induction Academy, Springfield, IL. June 2007

“Humoring your students: Humor in the classroom.” Three hour in-service at The Universal School, a private Muslim school. Bridgeview, IL. 20 February 2006

“Humor in the English classroom.” Christian Educators Association Conference. South Bend, Indiana. October of 2002

BOARD SERVICE AND OTHER COMMITTEE WORK

Acted as a peer-reviewer of conference proposals in the Adolescent Literacy Strand for the 2010 Literacy Research Association Conference, May 2010, May 2011.

Served on the writing team and as the lead editor for Trinity’s HLC document from 2009 through 2010.

Served in 2009 on both the Political Science and English Department Search Committees at Trinity College.

Peer reviewer in 2008 for both the National Reading Conference and for the *National Reading Conference Yearbook*.

Co-authored, with Dave Klanderma, *The English Education Initial Report*, for the state visit. Trinity Christian College, June 2007

Served on Strategic Planning Committee for Calvin Christian School from April 2007 to July 2007.

Served on Ethnic Diversity Committee for Trinity College from September 2006 to May 2010. Appointed chair in December of 2006. Served on subcommittee to select the Greater Chicagoland Leadership Christian Scholarship from 2006 to 2010.

In June of 2006 and July of 2007, I worked with members of the Education Department and the Social Work Department to help host a diversity camp that brought together Trinity students, African-American high school students, and grade school students from high needs schools.

AWARDS AND GRANTS

Campus Compact/State Farm Faculty Fellows Collaborative Grant – Education 201 and Herzl Elementary Students collaborate to present a dramatization of several Mo Willem’s books. Spring 2011

Campus Compact/State Farm Faculty Fellows Collaborative Grant – Education 201 and Kelly High Honors Students collaborate to present Romeo and Juliet. Spring 2010

ACI “Education at the Blackboard” Grant – Summer 2007 -- Culture Camp with Restoration Ministries.

Trinity Research Fellowship – Summer 2007 – protocol analysis of graphic novel readers.

Trinity Research Fellowship – Summer 2006 – textual analysis of graphic novels.

2006-07 VanderVelde Junior Scholar Program – Worked with undergraduate student Annette Witte on a project looking at how teachers use graphic novels in the classroom.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

I am a member of the International Reading Association, the Literacy Research Association, the American Educational Research Association, The United States Board of Books for Young People, and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Learning to See History:
A Content Analysis of the Affordances of Graphic Novels for High School Teaching
William Boerman-Cornell
Language, Literacy, and Culture
University of Illinois Chicago
2012
Chicago, Illinois
Chair: William Teale

Recent studies of graphic novels (book-length fiction or non-fiction narratives that employ the conventions of comic books to convey meaning) and multimodality have hinted that graphic novels (GNs) might offer a great deal of meaning-making potential to readers. Some studies have argued that graphic novels could be useful for English Language Learners (ELL) and struggling readers. Other studies have argued the opposite, pointing out that reading words and pictures together may require more effort on the part of the reader than text-only books. Some studies have offered analysis of graphic novels as literature, but there have been no studies that examine graphic novels in terms of what they could offer to a specific content area studied in high school.

To determine whether graphic novels might be useful for high school history teachers hoping to address discipline-specific reading techniques, I studied 20 non-fiction historical graphic novels. My initial research question was: What opportunities, if any, do graphic novels afford for high school history teachers to teach contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration. During the analysis of the results, I broke that question into two analysis questions: 1. What does quantitative analysis reveal about opportunities for contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration across the graphic novels in the study? 2. What does the analysis of individual graphic novels across all categories reveal about opportunities for teaching high school history?

Quantitative content analysis revealed that the GNs studied provided extensive opportunities for high school history students to engage in contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration, (three areas identified by Wineburg as being important to discipline-specific reading within the history field).

Qualitative analysis of several graphic novels as case studies suggests specific multimodal ways in which GNs support contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration.