**Review Essay**

**Youth, Comics and Trauma in Transitional Justice**

*They Called Us Enemy*, George Takei, Justin Eisinger and Steven Scott, illustrated by Harmony Becker. Top Shelf Productions, July 2019, 208pp. ISBN: 9781603094504 – paperback ($19.99).

*The Complete Persepolis*, Marjane Satrapi. Pantheon, October 2007, 341pp. ISBN: 9780375714832 – paperback ($25.95).

*Deogratias: A Tale of Rwanda*, Joe Stassen, translated by Alexis Siegel. First Second, May 2006, 80pp. ISBN: 9781596431034 – paperback ($16.95).

Transitional justice (TJ) institutions and practitioners have increasingly turned to a wide array of methods and mediums to connect with different publics. Within this move to increase the relevance and effectiveness of TJ interventions, the arts have been ever more utilized as a means through which difficult narratives about past trauma and violence are processed and communicated to affected communities.[[1]](#footnote-1) More specifically, several TJ institutions have turned to comics to communicate to youth, as a constituency that is often ignored by TJ processes.[[2]](#footnote-2) Examples include the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda’s *100 Days in the Land of 1000 Hills*[[3]](#footnote-3) and the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s *The* *TRC Report: A Senior Secondary School Version*.[[4]](#footnote-4) These comics tell stories of genocide and violence, but more importantly for this review they specifically tell stories of the experience of youthwithin violent contexts *to* youth. As such, the comic has become a site where recent UN calls to better integrate youth into post-conflict processes[[5]](#footnote-5) and give greater prominence to arts and culture[[6]](#footnote-6) intersect. There appears, then, an implicit assumption, first, that comics can effectively communicate complex issues of trauma and conflict to assist transition and, second, that they are particularly effective at communicating these issues to youth.[[7]](#footnote-7)

This review essay reflects on the relationship between youth, comics and transitional justice by reviewing three relevant graphic novels: George Takei and colleagues’ *They Called Us Enemy*,Marjane Satrapi’s *The Complete Persepolis* and Joe Stassen’s *Deogratias: A Tale of Rwanda*. Whilst these graphic novels speak to multiple TJ themes, the review is structured around two interrelated ones: (youth) agency and trauma. These have been selected as central themes that cut through each of the texts, but also because they speak to two of the most pressing issues relating to youth and TJ. The former highlights complex role of youth in violence and transition, which, as explored below, has been frequently ignored by TJ practitioners.[[8]](#footnote-8) The latter represents what remains one of the central questions for TJ: how should trauma be responded to after war and authoritarianism?[[9]](#footnote-9) As such, for comics to act as TJ sites that adequately engage with youth experiences, it is important to understand the ways in which their interventions shape and limit understandings of the role youth play in conflict and transition, and their experiences of trauma.

The essay argues that each of the comics forwards a complicated understanding of the role of youth in TJ contexts and underscores that there can be no universal account of that experience. In this respect, the comics challenge the current dominant understanding of youth as victims. Moreover, it finds that comic representations of trauma open up logics and narratives which sit in contrast with TJ’s drive to draw a line under the past. Indeed, in each comic, key TJ assumptions are challenged, and the comic form itself is central to this. One of the strands that runs through this essay, then, is regarding the role that the comic form itself plays in influencing how these comics respond to the experiences of youth in TJ contexts.

This is not to say that the comics under review are without issue. In this respect, each comic is produced by adults, and not youth, and potentially therefore re-silences young people’s voices.[[10]](#footnote-10) However, two of these comics are reflectionsof the author’s own youth experience and *Persepolis* is, as discussed later, explicitly (and expertly) told from the vantage point of youth. Furthermore, this does not detract from the review essay’s primary interest, which is the potential for the comic form to tell stories that capture the complexity of youth experiences of TJ. The production of ‘TJ comics’ by adults reflects, moreover, how TJ mechanisms have produced comics to date. Yet, what is interesting here is that whilst, as I have discussed elsewhere, these official TJ comics have failed to make use of comics as a complex, multimodal medium, which carries with it the potential to treat questions of trauma, identity and truth in nuanced ways, these limitations are *not* found in the comics under review.[[11]](#footnote-11) As such, the drive to explore the relationship among youth, comics and TJ throughout these three graphic novels remains.

# **The Graphic Novels**

The graphic novels under review deal with very different contexts and experiences of violence and use the comic form in specific ways to explore and communicate this. *They Called Us Enemy* isStar Trek star George Takei’s autobiographical account of his youth, co-written with Justin Eisinger and Steven Scott, with illustration from Harmony Becker. It details Takei’s, and his family’s, experience of the US internment of Japanese-Americans during the Second World War and relies on a relatively traditional, black-and-white, American-style comic form, infused with elements of manga (see Figure 1). In this way, it aesthetically captures the dual identity of both the main protagonists, the Takei family and illustrator Becker.[[12]](#footnote-12)

The narrative moves between a present-day retelling of the Takei’s family’s war-time experience of US concentration camps across various public venues (TEDx, conferences, etc.) and a depiction of those wartime experiences themselves. The story focuses on the naivety and resilience of youth in the face of oppression, of Takei’s parents’ adaption and resistance to the traumatic reality of the US internment policy (pp. 66–70) and the state’s role in orchestrating this oppression (pp. 20–24).

[Insert Figure 1]

Takei describes the project as bringing an unknown trauma embedded in the US’ past to present-day consciousness – to reckon with that history and challenge current politics, specifically in relation to the US migrant detention centres across the southern border and former US President Donald Trump’s travel ban on certain countries with majority Muslim populations (pp. 197–198, 200–201).[[13]](#footnote-13) Like the official TJ comics discussed, Takei sees the comic form as a way to communicate with younger generations.[[14]](#footnote-14) It is also an attempt to reclaim the narrative of who and what can be American.[[15]](#footnote-15) As such, whilst the book is critical of certain US policies, overall the book praisesUS culture and identity, and through telling the story hopes to heal US society – rather than fundamentally transform it. In this sense, in addition to portraying youth experiences of state oppression, the book, like a truth commission’s final report, looks to tell a narrative which focuses on accountability for past trauma to produce a more peaceful future.

*Persepolis*, like *They Called Us Enemy*, is an autobiographical account of the author, Marjane Satrapi. It narrates her experience growing up in Iran first under the Shah and then under the Islamic Revolution, as well as during the Iran–Iraq war and after her subsequent immigration to Europe. The story draws on a simple but powerful aesthetic inspired by her training as a graphic artist in Tehran.[[16]](#footnote-16) The black and white images’ bold and sharp lines give a sense of clarity and power to the novel and leave space for the story to come through in an uncluttered way.

The story captures the defiance of youth in the face of multiple regimes that attempt to control and restrict life, of the trauma and endurance of war, and her struggles as someone perceived to be too Western to be Iranian and too Iranian to be Western. It is as funny as it is moving, and the play between these modes of storytelling (assisted by the novel’s aesthetic) creates a space through which the experience of youth in times of war and authoritarianism can be explored in all its complexity. Like *They Called Us Enemy*, *Persepolis* is concerned with correcting misremembrance of the past and ignorance in the present, though primarily directed at those outside Iran’s stereotypical focus on ‘the veil, beards and nuclear weapons.’[[17]](#footnote-17) Satrapi notes, in contrast, Iran’s rich history of poetry, art and philosophy – and the very production of the graphic novel showcases exactly this. The search for narratives which capture the complexity of Iranian history and especially youth’s experience of, and contribution to, that history, similarly focuses our attention on themes of youth, agency and trauma.

Joe Stassen’s *Deogratias*,unlike the other two novels, does not recall a narrative of his own youth, or even of his own country, Belgium. Rather, *Deogratias* is a fictional tale of a young Rwandan boy’s experience before, during and after the Rwandan genocide. *Deogratias* is in full colour and adopts a cartoony, and garish, aesthetic, which draws attention to the horror of genocide.[[18]](#footnote-18)

The story collapses two temporal moments: post-genocide Rwanda (1995) and the genocide itself (1994). It follows Deogratias in the post-genocide era as a devasted subject, torn apart (physically and emotionally) by the genocide, which remains a constant presence in his life. This is visually represented by his torn clothing and his nightly transformation into a dog as he is forced to relive the genocide. The story of the genocide in 1994 follows his love interest in two Tutsis, the immediate build up to the genocide and Deogratias’ participation in the genocide. Whilst Deogratias is the main protagonist, an equally prominent theme is the role of international actors, whether the depiction of a racist and misogynist French solider or, in many ways equally vile, missionaries who fled Rwanda in 1994 leaving their congregation to their fate (pp. 58–61) – the garish aesthetic particularly draws out these characters’ obscene personalities.

Given Stassen is Belgian, not Rwandan, it is particularly important that he addresses the role and responsibility of international actors. Yet, this awareness of his positionality is not always present in the novel and, in this respect, an uncomfortable and problematic part of the narrative is the sexualized depiction of Tutsi women, which resonates with both colonial and genocide narratives of Tutsi women as *femmes fatale* (pp. 19–20, 48–49, 57). While, then, the novel is not without issue, it also offers an interesting exploration of youth, agency and trauma, particularly in its identification of the fraught nature of accountability for trauma after episodes of mass atrocity.

Whilst each graphic novel tells a different story of the role of youth in TJ contexts and uses the comic form in specific ways to tell it, the aforementioned themes of agency and trauma feature in prominently in each. The following explores how each comic engages with these themes. Throughout, I am interested in the way that the comic form – or different approaches to it – opens and closes particular types of storytelling and influences the comics’ performance as a potential site of TJ.

# **Youth and Agency in Transitional Justice**

TJ often perpetuates distinctive understandings of agency, particularly in relation to victimhood and perpetratorhood. Within this framework, feminine subjects, such as women, and children, are de facto victims of conflict due to their (perceived) passivity, whilst men are assumed to be the active agents.[[19]](#footnote-19) Such a depiction is problematic for its reproduction of gendered notions of agency, but it also leads to the side-lining of women and youth from transitional processes.[[20]](#footnote-20) Writing about youth specifically, Daniel Agbiboa argues that youth are treated as irrational actors, devoid of meaningful agency, in conflict and post-conflict contexts. Yet, as Agbiboa demonstrates, youth play complicated roles in the pursuit of violence and peace and should be seen as ‘tactical agents’ of change.[[21]](#footnote-21) Whilst present in varying degrees in each of the graphic novels reviewed, this notion of youth as tactical agents resonates most prominently within *Persepolis*, and the comic form, as used by Satrapi, assists with the construction of this narrative.

Satrapi’s depiction of her childhood jettisons any stereotypical notion of the victimization of youth under repressive regimes and in war. Rather, the prominent theme in *Persepolis* is Satrapi’s ability to challenge and contest the social and political frames she encounters. Whether her parents’ communist ideology (pp. 33–34) or the fundamentalism of the Islamic Revolution and the Christian nuns she encounters in Iran and Austria, attempts to control and constrain her identity are constantly challenged. What is more, they are challenged with humour. She, for instance, imagines herself in dialogue with God discussing the merits of Marxist materialism (pp. 12–14), she makes fun of the Islamic Revolution’s creation of martyrs out of those who died in the Iran–Iraq war (pp. 96–97) and she rudely defends her Iranian identity after a nun chastises her in Austria (pp. 176–177). Humour is used to *defend* her sense of self, and the stark and bold drawing style amplifies the humour in these stories, and the extremes of affective experience in the novel.

Whilst some of this resistance is a product of youth’s naivety (and Satrapi perfectly captures a youthful voice in her narration), the consistency with which youth challenges orthodoxy throughout *Persepolis* means that it cannot be dismissed as apolitical youth angst. It is, rather, a clear indication of the political nature of youth; a critical and acute voice and subjectivity that needs to be listened to carefully. She is absolutely right, in this sense, to question the authenticity of her parents’ Marxist zeal from their position of comfort and wealth, to ask questions of the way in which the Iranian state constituted martyrs to legitimize the huge casualties suffered by young Iranians in war, and the xenophobia and racism to which she was subjected in the ‘cultured’ West. Youth and humour here offer acts of resistance and draw attention to, and render absurd, the violent structures which curtail freedom.

*Deogratias* and *They Called Us Enemy* deal with the question of youth agency in slightly different ways. *They Called Us Enemy*, for instance, captures the resilience and adaptability of youth in the face of oppressive state, and societal, violence. Yet it relies, unlike *Persepolis* or *Deogratias*, on the naivety of Takei as a young child to explain this resilience. Takei, then, simply did not understand what was happening during the war, and this generated a sense of naive innocence, as, for instance, he and his brother saw deportation and internment as an adventure (p. 38). Playful aspects of the manga style emphasize this state of play (see Figure 1).

In many respects, despite this being an autobiographical account of Takei’s childhood, that side of the narrative is secondary to the novel’s focus on the state orchestrated internment of Japanese-Americans and his parents’ resilience. Unlike *Persepolis*, which tells the narrative from the perspective of youth, *They Called Us Enemy* tells the story with a strong sense of retrospection. Takei’s naivety is presented knowingly, and the parents’ role of protecting this naivety takes centre stage. Yet, whilst I would argue that this means *They Called Us Enemy* does not achieve the same cutting critique of oppressive power relations as *Persepolis*, and partially reinserts a gendered understanding of youth as passive, the emphasis on the *playful* nature of youth’s experience offers up another example of resistance to an oppressive regime’s attempts to alienate and dehumanize the Other.[[22]](#footnote-22)

*Deogratias* asks different, yet important, questions about youth agency in states of crisis. Deogratias is both an active agent and one overcome by the genocide. Deogratias is portrayed throughout the build up to the genocide as an intelligent child who can play off the naive international actors (such as local priests) for self-gain (pp. 35–39). But during the genocide Deogratias becomes overwhelmed by circumstance. At that point, whilst he appears to offer protection to some Tutsis – though not unproblematically (pp. 61–63) – he also participates in the rape and killing of others (pp. 70–74), and at the end of the novel he admits to poisoning three people after the genocide: an Interahamwe, Julius, and the French and Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) soldiers he drinks with (pp. 69–70). Whilst the killings of the French solider and Julius appear to be revenge for their role in his becoming a genocidaire, Deogratias’ seemingly senseless killing of Bosco, the RPF soldier, speaks to the total collapse of any meaningful moral or legal order for Deogratias.

This uncertainty around Deogratias’ agency and culpability does interesting things politically. Perhaps most explicitly it asks questions of whether a juridical understandings of responsibility, and the search for neat divisions between victims and perpetrators, which continue to be dominant in TJ, can be applied in instances of mass violence like genocide.[[23]](#footnote-23) This question is perhaps most forcefully asked at the end of the novel when Deogratias is finally arrested for his role, not in the genocide, but for murders he commits afterwards.[[24]](#footnote-24) What is more, Deogratias is arrested not as a boy but as a dog. He transforms permanently into an animal, as the trauma of genocide finally envelops him completely (pp. 77–78) – thus also raising questions regarding the association between trauma and victimhood and perpetratorhood, discussed more below. The legitimacy and value, then, of this legal reckoning is questioned in these frames.

Taken together, the three graphic novels make clear that there is no single experience of youth that can or should be told after war, genocide or authoritarianism. Rather, for some, youth engagement in conflict is an expression of resistance, for others an experience of moral collapse, and for others still a state of naivety and play. But in each case the form of the graphic novel plays a role in highlighting these stories. Whether this is the bold aesthetic in *Persepolis*, the use of some of the playful elements of manga in *They Called Us Enemy*, or the ability to play on the borders of reality and fantasy in *Deogratias*.

# **Trauma and Transitional Justice**

The question of how to respond to trauma sits at the heart of TJ. Yet, there is little consensus about the best way to address trauma, and some TJ scholars argue that too often TJ’s emphasis on drawing a line under the past forecloses discussion of the political significance of trauma.[[25]](#footnote-25) As I have argued elsewhere in relation to Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* – a comic which tells the story of Spiegelman’s father’s experience and memory of the Holocaust – the comic form carries with it the potential to address the complexity of trauma and its enduring legacies.[[26]](#footnote-26) Indeed *Maus* reflects what Jenny Edkins calls ‘encircling trauma,’ as trauma’s rupturing capacity cuts through and undermines any notion of drawing a line under the past, but rather embraces trauma as a means of political change in the present.[[27]](#footnote-27) A number of visual tropes are drawn on within the graphic novels under review which further demonstrate the comic form’s ability to deal with trauma’s complexity.

Trauma is far less present in *Persepolis* than in the other novels, and, rather, Satrapi and her friends and family’s resistance and resilience, as discussed, is the more important narrative. Yet, what connects the moments of trauma in the book is a sense of trauma as an unfillable void. In the depiction of her discovery that her friends’ house had been bombed by the Iraqi air force, trauma is represented by a blacked-out frame and the caption ‘no scream in the world could have relieved my suffering and my anger’ (p. 142). Later, just before trying to commit suicide – having been rejected by her Iranian friends on her return from Austria for being a ‘decadent Western woman’ – the image is of a line drawing of a corpse you would see in a crime scene accompanied by the caption ‘I was nothing’ (p. 272). In this way, trauma is not something that can be swept aside, but is a deep absence, the effects of which linger long into the future. *Persepolis*,then, draws on the familiar aesthetic representational trope of trauma as *absence*.

Trauma is depicted in several ways in *Deogratias* and *They Called Us Enemy*. In *Deogratias*, the frames are arranged to collapse any meaningful distinction between past and present.[[28]](#footnote-28) The rapid, and chaotic, flitting between past and present blurs the lines between genocide and post-genocide, as the trauma of violence is rendered not a thing of the past, but something that defines the present and future. The novel’s ability to capture this aspect of trauma is, in many respects, implicit in the comic form itself; as Hilary Chute argues, ‘the fragmented visual-narrative construction of comics “mimics” the shape of “traumatic memory.”’[[29]](#footnote-29)

The collapsing of narratives within a page through specific sequencing of comic frames is also used to good effect in *They Called Us Enemy*, in particular to suggest narratives of culpability and responsibility. One of the most powerful sequences in the novel deals with the legal process of the internment of Japanese-Americans: first being stripped of legal rights and property, then being transported in inhumane conditions, before being segregated off from the rest of society in camps (pp. 14–27). Throughout this sequence, the state’s targeting of Japanese-Americans is detailed in captions over images that depict the ostracizing and violent effects that this has on the Japanese-American community (Figure 2). This places the state at the heart of producing trauma, which is something Edkins argues is so often concealed in the official re-telling of traumatic narratives.[[30]](#footnote-30)

[insert Figure 2]

More importantly, the novel folds the treatment of Japanese-Americans into a broader, and more enduring, narrative of state-orchestrated trauma. In this way, a particularly important series of frames depicts, without any captions, Takei seeing dejected, elderly and tired African-American men at a railway station, as he is deported by train to the concentration camps (p. 53). Along with the later depiction of Latino internment at the southern border (p. 197) and of Trump’s travel ban (pp. 200–201), this demonstrates the enduring nature of these structures of governance that target and traumatize particular communities as Other and therefore calls for action to bring a halt to present and future acts of trauma. Here, the relationship between trauma and the state is implied without being explicitly stated. It is for the reader to *read in* these narratives, and engage with the text in an active way, which raises these questions around state culpability for the violence and trauma. Whilst this opens up a space for engaged, ‘ethical witnessing,’[[31]](#footnote-31) the critical call for accountability becomes more muted as it is situated within an account that, more broadly, *praises* US culture and identity. This at the very least inserts some ambiguity into the narrative, but also potentially prevents a complete reckoning about the legacies of a national identity which is *founded* on the destruction of the Other.[[32]](#footnote-32)

In *Deogratias* the comic form is used in other ways to help capture trauma and its consequences. Deogratias’ transformation into a dog every evening (pp. 47–49), and at the end permanently, offers a physical depiction of the way trauma viscerally consumes the body (pp. 74–77). Here, Deogratias turns into the same dog he saw eating the corpses of the two Tutsi girls, Apollinaria and Benina, he desired prior to the genocide and later participated in killing. Each night, then, Deogratias is physically transported into a past state as a result of the ongoing physical effects of trauma. This captures trauma’s visceral and affective nature, and the way it shapes the very being of traumatized subjects in the present. Importantly, this direct visualization of the manifestation of trauma goes beyond the common frame of trauma as absence, which is so often the focus of the analysis between comics and trauma – as with *Persepolis*.[[33]](#footnote-33)

This also, and especially in the context of the Rwandan genocide, asks challenging questions over the assumed relationship between trauma and victimhood and perpetratorhood. For whilst the dehumanization of genocide victims through anthropomorphism is a common facet of genocide – as was the case in Rwanda with Tutsis being labelled ‘cockroaches’ – here, the dehumanization of the perpetrator via the active reliving of a traumatic moment and transformation into a dog suggests that trauma spills beyond the self-evident victims of genocide. This, again, challenges TJ’s prominent framings of victimhood and perpetratorhood. In this way, the comic works do ‘not simply reflect the culturally dominant shape of trauma … [but] also invoke it, play with it, revise it, challenge it, and in [its] most innovative moments, move beyond it.’[[34]](#footnote-34)

The traumatic narratives in each comic, though in different ways, capture the rupturing effect of trauma on both individuals and society, and show its enduring legacies. They also raise questions about some of TJ’s logics and assumptions, particularly around drawing a line under the past, and of who is a traumatized subject. Moreover, what is equally important for the political work that comics facilitate, is that they do not enforce a new hegemonic ‘truth’ of trauma onto audiences. Rather, here, they open space for engagement and dialogue, and with this the potential for ‘ethical witnessing.’[[35]](#footnote-35) In some ways this is an implicit part of the comic form, which is based around ‘cyclical tension between panel and gutter, presence and absence, seen and unseen, the represented and the omitted.’[[36]](#footnote-36) When utilized to good effect, as I would argue is the case with these comics, this produces a different logic to many TJ mechanisms, which seek to both tame trauma and render a new, incontestable, truth.[[37]](#footnote-37)

# **Concluding Thoughts**

The comics under review demonstrate two key findings about youth and TJ. The first is the need to take youth experiences of transition seriously and move beyond a limited understanding of youth as victims. Taking this further, as is being examined in other contexts and with other artistic mediums,[[38]](#footnote-38) there is a need – an acknowledged limitation of these specific comics – to examine the potential role of youths themselves in the production of comics. Second, comics in TJ contexts are too often seen as a way of easily communicating to youth. Publications such as those of the SCLC spread the TJ mechanisms’ ‘truths’ rather than engage youth in meaningful ways. Moreover, as I have argued elsewhere, they often fail to make use of the aesthetic possibilities of the comics to tell more complicated, nuanced and politically important accounts of violence.[[39]](#footnote-39) In contrast, and whilst not without issues, the graphic novels under review demonstrate exactly the potential of comics to engage in the themes of youth, agency and trauma.[[40]](#footnote-40) And in each, the comic form is part of the way in which this is achieved. In *Persepolis*, then, it adds to the humour and cutting nature of the critique posed by youth in TJ contexts. In *They Called Us Enemy* and *Deogratias* it creates space where more complex accounts of agency and responsibility are told, both of youth and more generally. None of these graphic novels tries to create a new hegemonic truth; rather they each inspire inquisition, learning and dialogue. It is in this way that comics offer the potential to act as important TJ sites and reinforce the rising importance and centrality of the arts as a site of transitional justice.[[41]](#footnote-41)

By Henry Redwood, Senior Lecturer in International Relations, London South Bank University, UK. Email: henry.redwood@lsbu.ac.uk

1. Peter Rush and Olivera Simić, eds., *The Arts of Transitional Justice* (London: Springer, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Denise Bentrovato, ‘Beyond Transitional Justice: Evaluating School Outreach and Educational Materials in Postwar Rwanda and Sierra Leone,’ in *Transitional Justice in Education: Engaging Young People in Peacebuilding and Reconciliation*, eds. Clara Ramírez-Barat and Martina Schulze(Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ‘100 Days in the Land of a Thousand Hills,’ http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/education/education.shtml (accessed 16 July 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Mohamed Sheriff and Elvira Bobson-Kamara, *TRC Report: A Senior Secondary School Version*, illustrated by Simeon Sesay (2005), http://www.sierraleonetrc.org/index.php/view-the-final-report/popular-reports/item/trc-report-a-secondary-school-version?category\_id=16 (accessed 16 July 2018). Henry Redwood and Alister Wedderburn, ‘A Cat-and-Maus Game: The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in Post-Conflict Comics,’ *Review of International Studies* 45(4) (2019): 588–606. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. UN Security Council Resolution 2250, 9 December 2015. <https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2250(2015)&referer=/english/&Lang=E>. See also, Clara Ramírez-Barat, *Engaging Children and Youth in Transitional Justice Processes: Guidance for Outreach Programs* (New York: International Centre for Transitional Justice, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Arnaud Kurze and Christopher Lamont, eds., *New Critical Spaces in Transitional Justice: Gender, Art, and Memory* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Redwood and Wedderburn, supra n 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Daniel Agbiboa, ‘Youth as Tactical Agents of Peacebuilding and Development in the Sahel,’ *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 10(3) (2015): 30–45; Adriana Rudling, ‘“I'm Not that Chained-Up Little Person": Four Paragons of Victimhood in Transitional Justice Discourse,’ *Human Rights Quarterly* 41(2) (2019): 421–440. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Julia Viebach, ‘Of Other Times: Temporality, Memory and Trauma in Post-Genocide Rwanda,’ *International Review of Victimology* 25(3) (2019): 277–301. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. There are now multiple examples of youth-led arts-based TJ projects, though, as far as I am aware, none that specifically use comics. Henry Redwood et al., ‘Hybrid Peacebuilding in Bosnia-Herzegovina,’ *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* (forthcoming). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Redwood and Wedderburn, supra n 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Scott Rosenberg, ‘Artist Harmony Becker Discusses Working on “They Called Us Enemy” with George Takei,’ Amny, 12 August 2019, <https://www.amny.com/entertainment/george-takei-harmony-becker-they-called-us-enemy-1-34950911/> (accessed 22 October 2021). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. ‘George Takei on His New Memoir, “They Called Us Enemy,”’ PBS, 4 September 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/amanpour-and-company/video/george-takei-on-his-new-memoir-they-called-us-enemy/> (accessed 22 October 2021). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. ‘Interview: George Takei Talks “They Called Us Enemy,”’ Previews World, 8 June 2021, <https://www.previewsworld.com/Article/231676-Interview-George-Takei-Talks-They-Called-Us-Enemy> (accessed 22 October 2021). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. He notes how his parents had ‘proved that being American is not just for somepeople. … Only in America could that happen’ (p. 194). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Marjane Satrapi, ‘Why I Wrote Persepolis,’ Great Graphic Novels, December 2003, <https://greatgraphicnovels.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/whyiwroteperspolis1.pdf> (accessed 22 October 2021). A preview of *Persepolis* can be found here: https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/160892/the-complete-persepolis-by-marjane-satrapi/ (access 14 December 2021) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. ‘Conversation: Graphic Novelist, Director Marjane Satrap,’ PBS News, 17 August 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwAWGdRx_Qc> (accessed 22 October 2021). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. A preview of *Deogratias* can be found here: <https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250189646> (accessed 14 December 2021). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Caron Gentry and Laura Sjoberg, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women’s Violence in Global*

    *Politics* (Chicago: Zed Books, 2007); Henry Redwood, *The Archival Politics of International Courts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 145–155; Kieran McEvoy and Kirsten McConnachie, ‘Victims and Transitional Justice: Voice, Agency and Blame,’ *Social and Legal Studies* 22(4) (2013): 489–513. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Laura Shepherd and Caitlin Hamilton, ‘Gender and Peacebuilding,’ in *Handbook on Gender and War*,eds. Simona Sharoni, Julia Welland, Linda Steiner and Jennifer Pedersen (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2016), 467–483; Maria O’Reilly, ‘Gender and Peacebuilding,’ in *Routledge Handbook of Peacebuilding*, ed. Roger MacGinty (London: Routledge, 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Agbiboa, supra n 8 at 30–45. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. This also suggest perhaps a need to think how agency itself is constituted and understood in post-conflict spaces. See, Maria O’Reilly, *Gendered Agency in War and Peace: Gender Justice and Women's Activism in Post-Conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina* (London: Springer, 2017). Indeed, each of these comics also offer interesting insights into the gendered experiences of transitional justice contexts, and the gendered nature of TJ representations of those experiences. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. See, Henry Redwood, ‘Archiving (In)justice: Building Archives and Imagining Community,’ *Millennium* 48(3) (2020): 55–74, 138–144. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Bosco, the RPF solider, all but says Deogratias is too insignificant to be wanted regarding his crimes during the genocide. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Redwood, supra n 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Redwood and Wedderburn, supra n 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. The two temporal moments carry distinctive visual aesthetics, with frames depicting the present drawn with a black border. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Quoted in Dominic Davies, ‘Introduction,’ in *Documenting Trauma in Comics*, eds. Dominic Davies and Christopher Rifkind (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Edkins, supra n 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Frank Möller, *Visual Peace: Images, Spectatorship, and the Politics of Violence* (London: Springer, 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. I thank Brinton Lykes for this astute observation. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Hilary Chute, *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics and Documentary Form* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Davies, supra n 29 at 8. See also, Lee Ann Fujii, *Show Time: The Logic and Power of Violent Display* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2021). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Möller, supra n 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Davies, supra n 29 at 10–11. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Redwood and Wedderburn, supra n 4 at 599–602. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Redwood et al., supra n 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Redwood and Wedderburn, supra n 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Another potential strand of research here would be to examine the turn within contemporary mainstream graphic novels to address, and in some respects rectify, the comic industries’ own problematic past (such as Gene Luen Yang, *Superman Smashes the Klan* (Burbank, CA: DC Comics, 2020)) and in the process engage with a more diverse range of artists. I thank the guest editors for this observation. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. See, ‘Creative Approaches to Transitional Justice: Contributions of Arts and Culture,’ special issue of *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 14(1) (2020). [↑](#footnote-ref-41)