# Postmodern Identity Acuity of Characters: A Study of Sarnath Banerjee Graphic Novel *Corridor*

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Date of Submission: 03-12-2022 Date of Acceptance: 15-12-2022

#### Abstract

The incipient storylines of an expeditiously transmuting twenty-first-century India have fallen to the Indian graphic novel. The main objective of this study is to investigate the formation of identity city through the interpretation of characters from Sarnath Banerjee's graphic novel Corridor's graphic narrations. This project aims to optically canvass Sarnath Banerjee's narration techniques in Corridor. In addition, Sarnath Banerjee's Corridor depicts the postmodern contemporary society that possesses socio-cultural reflection in demonstrating various aspects of life and identity. Also, the graphical novel depicts the novel's postmodern nature that led to the depiction of the characters and the city. In the real world, people who are "ecumenically" "political beasts" in the real worldwe're fascinated by aesthetics and visual grammar. Ex-centric viewpoints are prevalent in Indian graphic narratives. The Corridor is Sarnath Banerjee's first graphic that demonstrates an argumentative study of postmodern masculinity in the urban area of India with people belonging to distinct socio-cultural backgrounds. HarperCollins was established in 2004. We can postulate Corridor is a one-off predicated on its constrained release. It's like a drama or a TV soap opera with collages, characters, magazine clippings, posters, and photos. The purpose of the research study is to examine if graphical novels intend to better attract readers towards the novels concerningtheir visualized and demonstration of unexpected connectivity. Corridor deftly captures the sensitivity "postmodern India, " except JehangirRangoonwala, a used bookstore owner in Delhi's Connaught Place, who claims to have invented the galaxy and its socio-cultural dynamics. In Sarnath Banerjee's work, the identity understanding of charactershas a vigorous sense of self. The research paper further argues that a vivid relation and tie exists between distinct individuals even though they belong to a different cultural

background and have a similar set of stories that revolve around a specific Corridor. The story is divided into several socioeconomic classes aroundJehangirRangoonwalla's famous Connaught Place tea shop. The research paper aims to explore the graphical narration technique of Sarnath Banerjee that attracts a variety of readers with a focus on the perspective of readers respectively. Besides, the study is significant in expressing graphical narration benefit in focusing on customer perception to develop novels that best attract readers.

**Keywords:** Graphical Novel, IdentityAcuity, Socio-cultural dynamics, Socioeconomic

#### I. Introduction

The Indian graphic novel, according to Corey K. Creekmur (2015), did not emerge from Indian comic culture; rather, it arrived in India planarity composed in the twenty-first century from the West, with its official characteristics in dialogue with American, European, and East Asian, and Japanese comic cultures, manga in particular, and comic cultures in general. On the other hand, its ingredients are all of the Indian inceptions. In India, the graphic novel has provided an alternative platform for voices that have been marginalized in Indian political and cultural discussions, contrary to mainstream comic book legacies, according to Creekmur. Graphic novels are "heavily invested in authentic depictions of everyday life and how fairly mundane people perceive it, as opposed to the wondrous, extraordinary exploits visually perceived in superhero comics," as opposed to traditional comics. The Corridor is a quality novel that expresses the lifestyles of four different characters in urban areas of India. The study further emphasizes different layers of society belonging to distinct backgrounds and their quest forties that vividly reflect the grey shades of their parts of life. To appreciate Sarnath Banerjee's graphic novel Corridor, you must first have a fundamental

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understanding of graphic novels. The interview of Sarnath Banerjee with Guemica expressed his view on numerous socio-cultural backgrounds and lifestyles of people, reflecting realistic thoughts of distinct people being postmodern towards numerous aspects. The interview relates how the author portrays his thoughts and imaginative ideas into a mixture of graphical portray that best suit individual's choice of attractive novels. Sarnath Banerjee verbally expressed in an interview with "Guernica," a non-profit magazine dedicated to ecumenical art and politics that has been published online since 2004, that:

Guernica: Interest is one thing, execution wholly another. In high school, a close friend and I embarked on several 'Sarnath Banerjee—style' graphic novels; we never got far. How did you end up writing the book? For kids of my generation, *Corridor* was some mysterious form of contraband. It came out of nowhere. India's first graphic novel! (Asokan).

Sarnath Banerjee was shown by the Sooni's photographs of Bombay Parsees, which got inspired as SooniTaraporevala's visualized visualizations. The situation prompted the author to initiate graphical novels for attracting more readers towards the novels. Sarnath Banerjee learned Sooni's amazing ability to use her camera, which probes people's deeper, funnier, and more eccentric aspects through her photography (Banerjee). Indeed, the Indian graphic book has embraced the task of conveying the developing stories of an expeditiously transmuting twenty-first-century India, providing unrestricted and frequently unwonted optically canvass standard subjects. According to the author, it is an "alternative space" with the faculty to accept "voices that frequently fall outside of the realm of Indian sociopolitical and cultural discourses" (Donde). We find non- or neutralize thought-inciting stories told in various unique narrative forms and visual grammars due to the genre's popularity among "left-leaning activists, ecological warriors, travelling birds, and political beasts" — not just in India, but "the globe over." Ex-centric ("ex-centric") voices can be auricular discerned through Indian graphic storytelling (Sarma).

The graphic novel *Corridor* by Sarnath Banerjee is the first to be published in India. Penguin India and HarperCollins launched it in 2004. Though it is erroneous that this was the first graphic novel, OrijitSen's 'River of Stories' was published in 1994, more than a decennium afore. Given Corridor's constrained distribution, we can postulate it's a graphic novel that's unique in its genre (Modi). Much akin to visually examining a

drama or a television soap opera, the Corridor is denselv packed with collages, disparate personalities, magazine cutbacks, posters, newspapers, and photographic images, all of which are muddled together, and stories that lack clear commencements and terminuses, are replete with repetitions and elisions. Corridor prosperously navigates postmodernist canons to depict a developing India, referred to as 'Incipient India' or 'postmodern India.' The Corridor is a depiction of antediluvian Lutyens' Delhi with five characters, all of whom are dealing with some form of mystification in their lives, except for JehangirRangoonwala, who owns a secondhand bookstall in Connaught Place and believes he is at the engendering of the galaxy because it is a circular pattern metro station, the city's most astronomically immense (Adami, p. 98).

The research paper investigates the emergence of identity acuity through characters from Sarnath Banerjee's graphic novel Corridor. A diverse cast of characters from sundry convivial strata and backgrounds appear in the novel. Throughout the story, all of the main characters revolve around JehangirRangoonwalla's enlightened dispenser tea shop in Connaught Place, a popular neighbourhood hangout.

The main objective of this study is to investigate the formation of identity acuity through the interpretation of characters from Sarnath Banerjee's graphic novel Corridor's graphic narrations. This project aims to optically canvass Sarnath Banerjee's narration techniques in Corridor. In addition, Sarnath Banerjee's Corridor depicts the postmodern contemporary society that possesses socio-cultural reflection in demonstrating various aspects of life and identity. Also, the graphical novel depicts the novel's postmodern naturethat led to the depiction of the characters and the city. Through the evaluation of Sarnath Banerjee's Corridor, the aspects of port modern contemporary society of India have been redefined that presents a realistic view of the society having hidden learning of cultural and socioeconomically improvement options. A postmodern nature has been revealed by representing different individual interactions with a postmodern environment representing the shifting and development of characters through both graphics and words. Thus, The Corridor, as the first Indian graphic novel has a significant impact on understanding the aspects of socio-economical and cultural aspects of the country, which is also a great representation of Sarnath Banerjee's creativity and visualization.



Sarnath Banerjee's graphic novel Corridor, published in 2004, appears to have been the catalyst for the graphic novel genre's popularity in India. The Corridor's "cosmopolitan sensibility," according to RatikAsokan (2016), verbalized directly to the country's edified urban youth, depicting a world of "roadside hustlers and refulgentcolored hoardings, of free and independent university students and cautious property owners, of fashionable parties and seedy markets," to denominate a few examples. Banerjee has indicted three more novels since the publication of his debut: "The Barn Owl's Wondrous Capers (2007), The Harappa Files (2007), and All Quiet in Vikaspuri (2011)."In his exordium to the book, Asokan inscribes, "Time and again, he delves deeply into the psyche of middle-class India — that perfidious zone of consumer culture aspiration, post-colonial grief, and conservative leanings — and emerges with reports on its denizens' yearnings and worries" (Asokan). I intend to fixate on the portrayal of the uninspired masculinity of the adolescent urban cosmopolitan male in his debut work and how the graphic novel lends itself to tackling the topic of modern masculinity (Asokan). The subsequent prospect is considered the graphic novel Corridor portrays the lifestyle of four men belonging to urban India that depicts the modern masculinity aspect reliably. As per the inscriptions found, my core intention is to provide a proper portrayal of uninspired masculinity related to the adolescent adult male in a definite cosmopolitan setting. In addition, I also aim to provide a definite understanding of the effectiveness maintained by the graphic novel in tackling concepts based on masculinity in a modern world context.

The Indian graphic novel, according to Corey K. Creekmur (2015), did not emerge from Indian comic culture; rather, it arrived in India planarity composed in the twenty-first century from the West, with its official characteristics in dialogue with American, European, East Asian, and Japanese comic cultures, manga in particular, and comic cultures in general (p. 349). On the other hand, its ingredients are all of the Indian inception (p. 349). In India, the graphic novel has provided an alternative platform for voices that have been marginalized in Indian political and cultural discussions, contrary to mainstream comic book legacies, according to Creekmur (p. 350). Graphic novels are "heavily invested in authentic depictions of everyday life and how fairly mundane people perceive it, as opposed to the wondrous, extraordinary exploits visually perceived in superhero comics" instead of traditional comics (Anjaria, p. 315).

The substratum of the comic book form is humour. The term "comic" implies that the author is not taking himself solemnly. In India, comic books for children were categorized for this purpose, such as the Diamond comics or the Raj comics. For academic purposes, Amar Chitra Katha's novels tell historiographical and mythological tales, that is, narratives with much historical and mythological consequentiality. The comic format makes heftily ponderous themes palatable to an adolescent readership (Chakraborty, 2018). As a result, the term "graphic novel" is more opportune for the more solemn subjects addressed in works like Banerjee's and others, which, while engendering comedy, do not appear to be as hysterical as earlier Indian comics. This can be optically discerned in Baneriee's work (Sandten, 2011). These books are not intended for children; rather, they aim at adults and adolescents. We can optically discern the dissolution of rigid distinctions between lofty and low art, corporate and parallel films, literary and pulp indicting, and other things with the birth of the graphic book. The graphic novel is a product of postmodernism, according to its definition.

The reader's role in textual meaning construction is emphasized by reader replication theory. Reader's replications indicate psychological reproduction of the personal view of an individual on reading an intercepted text such that appreciable outcomes are initiated as a response to the psychological understanding. In replication to a text, the reader develops textual designation as they gain the ability to summarize the context as interpretivism, and each reader is situated differently predicated on factors such as faculty, culture, gender, and overall experiences. A reader's viewpoint may vary according to faculty, culture, and experiences. Yet, expert writing looks beyond those binderies and delivers exact meaning through different aspects of writing. Sarnath Banerjee's graphic novel does just that. A clarified and welldefined viewpoint can be observed of Delhi's postmodern commercial quarters with the most well-kneaded character designs that attract different and deliver a clarified view (Banerjee).Sarnath Baneriee's novel Corridor provides a distinct kind of literacy that is no less than traditional reading, thanks to the graphics and text of graphic storytelling. Sarnath Banerjee's graphic novel Corridoris about the patrons of a secondhand bookstall in Delhi's colonial Corridors of Connaught Place. The Corridor expeditiously became a cult favourite, with five guys probing for



texts, love, and aphrodisiacs in a secondhand bookstall in Delhi's famed commercial quarter. JehangirRangoonwalla, the "enlightened dispenser of tea, sapience, and secondhand books," is one of Banerjee's most well-kenned characters (Banerjee, 2004).

The specific graphic novel deals a surfeit of characters, each belonging to a different lamina and background of society, including Brighu Sen, Digital Dutta, Shintu, that haunts around the books shop of JeThe book's narrator, BrighuSen, is an adolescent urbanite and self-described collector on the lookout for James Watson's Double Helix, an infrequent book. Then we meet Digital Dutta, a Marxist computer engineer hoping to work in America on an H1-B visa. Shintu is a newlywed who is always on the lookout for the ultimate potency boost that could solve his difficulties. The Programme Officer, Shintu's mother, the maid in Shintu's house, and some characters like Hakim and Murthy are caricatures with comedic detail etched on them.

The setting of the novel initiates the mood and reveals the characters and their conflicts such that the theme of the story is suitably addressed to attract readers towards the novel. The Corridor exudes a self-assured, ecumenical sensibility rooted in the unique textures of Delhi street life. Banerjee made a vocation out of mixing seedy Delhi alleyways with Keats poetry, culture, and kitsch. His early work was frequently exhibited on Delhi billboards and street photographs, efficaciously imitating the mindset of post-colonial city dwellers who were straddling cultures. Sarnath Banerjee misprizes how the running word takes precedence over the visual image all of the time. The story is set in modern-day Delhi and Calcutta's Connaught Place. The author ascertains that sundry photographs and items in the background frame are referenced, physically contacting on various cultural allusions.

It's connected to a postmodern accentuation on the reader as an engenderer of texts rather than a passive consumer. In contrast to text-predicated methodologies like incipient reproval, which are predicated on an objective meaning already present in work being evaluated, it is infeasible to determine the construal of a text before the reader encounters or reads it. This study aims to identify and evaluate how different readers, additionally kenned as "interpretive communities," derive meaning from both personal emotions and inherited or culturally conditioned reading habits. Stanley Fish, David Bleich, and Wolfgang Iser are among the theorists that relate to the reader-response theory as the novels focus on the needs and experiences of

readers other than providing a focus on the content of the author demonstrating a specific story or sequence. Saranath Banerjee's *Corridor* investigates how the reader perceives the city's qualities and landscape.

Some have even regarded a graphic novel as a gimmick. "But an image can easily explore the larger facts of life" (Sarma). He talks about the "creative tension between word and image" and the "final tango between reader and text". "Imagination works between the panels" (Banerjee). Graphic novels mainly require the reader to make meaning from structures and sequential arts. It also includes linguistic, visual, and spatial cues (Meyer and Jiménez, 2017). The reader also uses the 'multiple cueing systems' to create the meaning by using some graphic elements. There are several elements in the graphic novel like characters, colour and hue, frame, line, panel, text, etc. Most of the authors mainly regard graphic novels as a 'gimmick'. As per the of (RatikAsokan), the 'cosmopolitan sensibility of the Corridor is mainly spoken directly to the educated generation of the country.

The novel mainly captures the garish billboard, conservative landlords, roadside hustlers, etc. According to (Modi) there are six main characters Angresh Bosch, Jehangir, Rangoonwala, DVD Murthy, Shintu Sarkar, Digital Dutta, and Bhrigu. The novelist mainly shows the nightmare life of Delhi; Digital Dutta is one of the important characters of his novel. The novel shows Digital Dutta images with the Bollywood style brawl with goons. The role of digital Dutta is mainly set in the central park with his girlfriend, Dolly. The character of Digital Dutta is mainly struggling in his sleep with his expectations vs his dreams.



Fig. 1: Corridor(Page 38)

The novelist depicts the nightmare life of a Delhi urbanite that is incognizant of public space. For example, the incident depicted in Fig. 1, in which Digital Dutta engages in a Bollywood-style brawl with goons, bears witness. Dutta was sitting in Central Park, Connaught Place, with his girlfriend, Dolly. The role of Digital Dutta sitting in Central Park is to initiate a controversy with his girlfriend about the importance of an H-1B visa for their believed by Dolly's marriage, as Unbeknownst to the couple, four men with no regard for God, family, or country lurked in the shadows. The men's passionate nature is revealed in the stark artwork of the following panels. They decide it's a good time to catch the unarmed and unsuspecting couple off sentinel.

Consider how a man's remark about Digital's mother affects him synoptically, revealing postmodern heroes' and superheroines' frailty. He becomes the advocator of the defenceless, battling for phrenic space with Nargis of Mother India, Nirupa Roy, and all the Leftist heroes, from Marx, Mao, and Che to our own JyotiBasu. Suddenly, the "hero" enters the antediluvian martial art of Aikido

and beats the malefactors to a pulp. A malaria mosquito ineluctably kills this hero in the postmodern world. 'Extreme emotional reaction' is seen when Dutta is engaged in fighting with goons who tease his girlfriends. Sarnath Banerjee is mainly called the pioneer of the Graphic Novel. He mainly gained popularity after the publication of 'Corridor' 2004. The author grew up in Calcutta and Delhi but has been based in Berlin since 2011. He completed his study in visual communication at Goldsmith College. Banerjee primarily works as a documentary filmmaker. Orijitsen is mainly encouraging MR. Banerjee on drawing. 'All quiet in Vikaspuri'is the fourth graphic novel of MR. Banerjee. He mainly depicted the water wars of Delhi.

In contrast to Dutta's persona, Shintu, a morally upright figure according to Hakim GulabkhusPeshawari, preaches virtuous habits (visually perceive figure 2). The novel deals with the artwork are photos from a moral science textbook or a chart on good manners.



Fig. 2: Corridor (Page 65)

After 40 jobs and years of probing for answers to life's mysteries, Rangoonwalla, the sapient owner of a secondhand bookshop, achieves enlightenment in an elevator in Nariman Point. Rangoonwalla's customary customers at his

bookstore now share tea, sagacity, and the infrequent joint or game of chess with him. Banerjee uses Rangoonwalla to emphasize character self-revelation, as shown in Fig. 3. The author mocks the godly men of postmodern India and their peculiar cult adherents.



Fig. 3: Corridor (Page 18)

The reader can facilely relate to Rangoonwalla's psychological liberation through the panel above. One such customer is BrighuSen, an ignorant, keenly intellective Bengali man suffering from existential anguish and dissatisfaction. Brighu is Ibn Battuta on his best days. Brighu enters the realm of Rangoonwalla to bridge the gap between himself and his documentary filmmaker, doter Kali.

Banerjee's graphic novel Corridor is concerned with pursuing cognizance in advisement to underlying spiritualism. Brighu peregrinate to Delhi, just like Banerjee. He's the cosmopolitan adolescent Bengali who records hunts on Free School Street and drinks potation at the Olympus. Brighu visits his parents' house in Calcutta in the next panel, as shown in Fig. 4, where he heedfully aurally perceives an Elnore James musical composition and reads a Tintin comic. At the same time, a Rolling Stones poster keeps an ocular perceiver on him.



Fig. 4: Corridor (Page 88)

The novel demonstrated many characters from different socio-cultural backgrounds to express their greyer shades of life. Banerjee introduces a variety of minor and major characters arbitrarily in the novel. However, there included a vivid tie to bind the characters in the corridors of contemporary Connaught place in Delhi and Calcutta, respectively. The pages vividly depict the forensic scientist with three passions: poisons, reggae, and John Keats, as well as the guy on the train who introduces himself as "Myself Murthy." Others in support roles include the Programme Officer. After making over two million phone calls, one only verbalizes a few times, but appears to be quite nice in exclusive congregations. Like most Indian mothers, Mummy Shintu does not accept her son to become more proximate to his wife. Shinto's maid fortuitously applies the aphrodisiac 'Sandeka Tel' to her hair. Hakim and Murthy, for example, are caricatures. They are, however, all a component of the suffocating Indian capital and Banerjee's story. Digital Dutta and Brighu are the most outgoing of the characters.



Fig. 5: Panels from Corridor

The frenzied accumulation of minor and forgotten musicians, as depicted in Fig. 5, is the strangest postmodern character portrayal. In this scenario, Brighu claims that he cannot heedfully auricular discern such LPs because he is trepidations of damaging them. Brighu additionally verbalizes how much he relishes the leather-bound volumes of Phantom comics (The Ghost Who Ambulates). As a result, the protagonist in Corridor has been depicted to evoke the most precise post-modernistic identity through the utilization of psychological maelstrom rendered through the most insightful inter-textual relational techniques, where both images and verbal languages have been prosperously incorporated to prosperously incorporate the meta-reference underscoring the entire genre of graphical representation-predicated.

The gradual loss of coherence is reflected in the postmodern identity. This story depicts the absurdity of subsistence through the deconstruction of the visionary character Digital Dutta, numerous dreams, and scenarios that reflect this Kolkata-predicated software programmer's journey and struggle for identity. Sarnath Banerjee has identified the following instances in which the character of Digital Dutta is depicted as having unrestricted ingenious musings. Digital Dutta's sundry

inclinations have reached the pinnacle of absurdity. This includes availing Harry Houdini with some of his most famous eludes and calculating Heisenberg's equations. Digital Dutta has pictured himself as Chris Evert's mixed-doubles partner. These visual representations could be interpreted as a sedulous stream of consciousness method that coalesces sundry scenarios to define the parameters of assiduous variability within the general psyche of postmodern human beings.

Aside from the characters, Banerjee's panel captures the city's energy. His vivid depiction of Old Delhi's early morning calm before the city erupts into chaos is glorious and heartbreaking. Unlike Brighu's girlfriend's early photographs of frivolous parties and inane conversation, these photographs of Delhi depict a peaceful, old, soulful city. Despite a brief section set in Calcutta, the focus of this book is on Delhi, and a city Baneriee venerates despite its many imperfections. Readers may relate to some of the jests and Indian phrases (such as "doing god kens what"). Brighu's uncle, for example, is reminiscent of elderly uncles in Calcutta, who reveres The Statesman and wears a monkey cap to keep warm during the winter. In both books, cities and urban geography are more than just settings. Banerjee's favourite subjects are architecture and maps. The Connaught Circle is crucial to the story in Corridor, which is set in a bookshop on the outer circle.

#### II. Conclusion

Aside from their regalement value, graphic novels' ostensible consequentiality may magnetize more attention to the amassment. Graphic novels may resuscitate the humanistic notion that reading should teach and regale. The stories of the characters in Sarnath Banerjee's Corridor alternate. In comparison to Banerjee's later work, the early sketches are rough. The city and the characters are multi-layered. Others are in contact with each other. Colourful flashes supersede the monochrome panels. In a longer scene, Shintu pays a visit to the hakim. Banerjee receives morals edification via a collage of visuals from movie posters and billboards in his character portrayal story.Banerjee's Corridor characters have their own story, which the author expertly weaves together. Banerjee prospers in revealing their more tenebrous sides by telling their stories. Sarnath Banerjee uses sketches, paintings, and photographs to depict the characters. In imaginative word and image alchemy, the author depicts the solitude and fragmentation of Indian urban life. As a result, the characters and cities in Sarnath Banerjee's Corridor are depicted in a post-



modernistic manner. It intends to depict a different lifestyle and character other than the expected personality portrayed of each uninspired masculine individual.

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