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ARTICULATING TRAUMA IN SHAUN TAN'S *THE ARRIVAL***

As a "trans" form of literature, according to Knowles, Peacock and Earle, the graphic novel offers a suitable medium for narrating transitional experiences. Shaun Tan's *The Arrival* (2006) demonstrates this by telling a universal yet diverse story of migration and trauma, employing a dreamlike combination of realism and fantasy, and the immediacy of visual expression to represent precarious situations, states and emotions which are almost unrepresentable. A complex dialogue among images and pages, and the slow movement from panel to panel enable the reader to gradually understand the shifts inherent in migrant and traumatic experiences. As words would monopolise attention in Tan's view and situate the narrative in a particular language, a conspicuous lack of words allows the narrative to communicate across cultures, simultaneously signalling the difficulty of verbally articulating trauma. Relying on studies of the graphic novel and trauma, this paper explores Tan's narrative strategies for conveying trauma, and portraying migration as a shared and timeless experience. At the same time, the paper examines Tan's promotion of cross-cultural and cross-species empathy and solidarity, thus avoiding what Stef Craps sees as one of the pitfalls of trauma theory.

Key words: *The Arrival*, graphic novel, migration, Shaun Tan, trauma

THE GRAPHIC NOVEL AS A MEDIUM FOR NARRATING TRAUMA

As much as we all think we know what the graphic novel is, there is no consensus on its definitions or distinctive features. While some see it as a form of storytelling (Meyer, 2013: 272), others interpret it as a genre of literature (Schmitz-Emans, 2013: 385, 389). Andrés Romero-Jódar places it among "narrative iconical genres" that use "iconical language" and "rely on the juxtaposition of icons so as to create a narrative" (Romero-Jódar, 2017: 3), and Charles Hatfield thinks the graphic novel is "a viable package" of long-form comics and "the critical byword of the

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new comics" (Hatfield, 2005: 23, 20). The graphic novel evades clear definition and categorisation because it covers a wide range of different formats, styles, themes, and genres (superhero, autobiography, science fiction, and horror, to name just a few), and it usually combines text and image in book-length comic form. Intense debates centre around the blurred boundaries between graphic narratives and graphic novels, and especially between comics and graphic novels: some see them as distinct but related genres (Romero-Jódar), whereas others see the term "graphic novel" as expressive of a wish to validate our love of comics (Alan Moore). Such debates persistently fail to provide all-satisfying distinctions, so matters of demarcation – graphic narrative/graphic novel/comic or "juvenile fictions" (Chaney, 2011: 6)/serious art – remain, as they should be, unresolved. Similarly, attempts to unambiguously identify the origins of these overlapping phenomena seem futile because their development has followed different routes in different cultures. All of that, however, lies outside the scope of the present discussion, where the term "graphic novel" designates a type of novel that develops a sustained narrative in comic-book format, using various combinations of text and image or images alone as iconical language.

To understand why the graphic novel is seen as suitable for narrating trauma and other sensitive issues, we need to start from the form and its direct expression. "The comics form is visually configured not only by what is represented but also by what is absent" (Viljoen, 2021: 50), what remains in the gutters, which makes it adequate for thematising trauma since trauma is traditionally viewed as ineffable, unrepresentable and vulnerable to unethical appropriation. Contrary to that view, Jean-Marie Viljoen asks the following question: "What if, contrary to what we have learnt in the west, we can share some horrific experiences with and of others." (Viljoen, 2021: 1) To explore that possibility, Viljoen builds upon discussions of trauma by shifting focus to postcolonial spaces and visual narratives, graphic novels included. The graphic novel became a popular medium for representations of trauma with the arrival of alternative/underground comics and the politically charged and/or autobiographically inspired book-length comics in the 1960s and 70s, when the graphic novel as a whole experienced a transformation that led to its appreciation as "a respectful art form" (Romero-Jódar, 2017: 1). Sam Knowles has come closest to explaining the graphic novel's appeal for exploring trauma in his claim that the genre's extraordinary ability to convey distressing experiences lies in the immediacy of expression that is "denied other forms of post-traumatic narrative" (Knowles, 2015: 84). As "a 'trans' form of literature" (Knowles–Peacock–Earle, 2016: 380) that crosses boundaries like text/image, fantasy/realism or fiction/autobiography, the graphic novel offers a suitable medium

for narrating transitional experiences, with the movement from panel to panel enabling the reader to gradually understand the shifts inherent in such experiences.

In *The Arrival*, Shaun Tan's graphic novel on migration and trauma, the movement is slow to convey the slow-paced process of adaptation. To achieve slow movement, enable focus on details and draw attention away from text, which monopolises our attention, Tan decided to drop written words (Earle, 2016: 396). Together with an unspecified context, the absence of words allows the visual narrative to communicate across cultures and, crucially, highlights the difficulty or impossibility of verbally articulating trauma. Within trauma studies, "critics seem to agree on the impossibility of representing traumatic experiences by means of traditional language" (Romero-Jódar, 2017: 21), and by traditional we mean verbal, factual and realistic. If we cease to insist on "a direct and 'accurate' approach […] that approximates 'the truth'" (Viljoen, 2021: 4) as the only form of representation, we find the capacity for representing the unrepresentable in what may be considered non-traditional language: in visual expression and combinations of realism and fantasy that draw on imagination and memory. Narrating through wordless images, Tan's novel confirms a paradox that characterises trauma: "Trauma is both highly resistant to articulation and wildly generative of narratives." (Bond–Craps, 2020: 4) Trauma narratives have proliferated in graphic novels because, with or without words, their form and expression facilitate the sharing of trauma, ranging from the personal (Debbie Drechsler's *Daddy's Girl: Visitors in the Night* (1996)) to the personal and collective (Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1980)). In an era of "trauma boom" (Bond–Craps, 2020: 2), this gave rise to the subgenre called the trauma graphic novel, which "emerged out of the 1970s autobiographic testimonies in comic books" to explore "traumatic memories" and mimic "the forms and symptoms of traumatic neurosis" (Romero-Jódar, 2017: 3, 22). The genre is not confined to autobiographical experiences and may focus on collective rather than individual trauma, but in either case, the manifestations of trauma are reflected by structural fragmentation.

Structural fragmentation as a defining feature of the graphic novel may exhibit an affinity with an "aesthetic of fragmentation and aporia as uniquely suited to the task of bearing witness to trauma" (Craps, 2013: 2), but it is also perfectly suited to portraying lives fragmented by dislocation that is triggered by traumatic events and is in itself traumatic. Both Stef Craps and Romero-Jódar trace such narrative structures and techniques to modernism: Craps finds the association with modernism in the said aesthetic of fragmentation and aporia, while Romero-Jódar believes that "many graphic novelists seem to have found in the Modernist stream-of-consciousness novel a basis from which to develop their own experimental

narratives" (Romero-Jódar, 2017: 2). However, there is a risk of generalisation in this insistence on the links between graphic novels and modernism, and an added risk of a limited interpretation of a form whose complexity cannot be understood solely through its association with modernism. For all its interest in "the context of the subject in society and community" and the author's wish "to offer a comprehensive overview of the trauma graphic novel" (Romero-Jódar, 2017: 25-26), Romero-Jódar's study remains limited, for it reduces all trauma narratives to "a continuation or revamp of the Modernist stream-of-consciousness novel" and examines only those graphic novels which fit this definition and "approach the subject of trauma from a Western perspective" (Romero-Jódar, 2017: 24-25). Limiting the scope and focus of his study is not necessarily problematic. Reading all trauma literature as a legacy of modernism certainly is, and Tan's novel is a living proof of trauma narratives with no roots in the modernist stream of consciousness. While the influence of modernist literature, art and music on the graphic novel is indisputable in terms of techniques, authors, specific works, titles and lines, Tan's work exhibits no modernist features that are commonly found in the graphic novel, such as an interest in the individual mind, stream of consciousness or the intertextual use of modernist texts and authors. I therefore contend that the aesthetic of fragmentation in *The Arrival* as a reflection of the experiences of migration and trauma is not a modernist trope, but a feature of form.

As "an aesthetic form that defies linear logic" (Viljoen, 2021: 48), Tan's graphic novel is by definition fragmented, and its fragmentation mimics discontinuity as a dominant feature of the experiences of migration and trauma, and a distinctive trait of the workings of memory. In other words, neither Tan's novel nor my analysis of it suggest an adherence to what Craps calls a dominant or normative trauma aesthetic (Craps, 2013: 4-5) in a study which itself demonstrates in its analysis of authors like Fred D'Aguiar and Caryl Phillips that an aesthetic of fragmentation as a suitable vehicle for representing trauma is not the sole property of modernism or Western writing. In fact, authors across genres and cultures have found that dispersed, incoherent forms, plots and characters adequately communicate a lack of coherence and continuity in transitional and traumatic experiences. That this is a common rather than the only option is demonstrated by narratives like Min Jin Lee's *Pachinko* (2017), a novel which relates personal and collective traumas in the form of a fairly traditional novel. Furthermore, if such an aesthetic has created "a narrow canon of valued trauma literature, consisting of high-brow, avant-garde works by mostly Western writers" (Craps, 2013: 5), as a graphic novel by an author of mixed origins, *The Arrival* is none of these. Additionally, Tan's novel does not conceptualise trauma according to a certain

discourse, Western or non-Western, nor does it medicalise or pathologise it. Instead, he conceives of trauma as a shape-shifting monster that varies from context to context and from character to character. Economic precarity, war, political oppression, loss, loneliness, nostalgia, and cultural illiteracy all directly relate to the experience of trauma, which can result from a single event or sustained traumatisation, and can be acute or cumulative, psychological, emotional or physical, individual, collective or both. Articulating trauma in such a way, *The Arrival* helps explain why "the definition of trauma remains unstable" (Bond–Craps, 2020: 4): there can be no clear, single or precise definition of a phenomenon that is so heterogeneous that even the most comprehensive definitions fail to grasp its nuanced nature.

THE ARRIVAL: MIGRATION AND TRAUMA AS SHARED AND UNIVERSAL EXPERIENCES

Tan's story of migration and trauma starts with images depicting precarity at home. The introductory panels predominantly focus on a single object, face or action, foregrounding details like cracked china, facial expressions that speak of unhappiness or emotional distress, or the packing of a family photo, to suggest an atmosphere of love and sadness in which the title protagonist, the father, is preparing for a journey of forced migration. That his migration is propelled by a precarious economic situation is also allegorised as threatening tales which hover above the empty streets of their town. First we see a shadow of a tail, then the shadow and the tail, and then numerous tails of unseen creatures creeping along the streets or flying above. The fragmentation of structure and the gutters between the panels formally reflect the family's separation, and all the while the panels rely on "emotional directness" (Knowles, 2015: 84) to convey a sense of oppression and danger. Arguably, the most effective one among them is the last panel in the chapter, which shows the wife and the daughter walking through the empty streets in the shadow of a tail.

Chapter II recounts the trauma of the father's journey and arrival in a new place, with a sense of loss, isolation and nostalgia pervading the panels. Journeys, the issues of belonging and otherness have always been among the graphic novel's thematic concerns, for "there has always been a link between the graphic novel form, explorations of 'otherness', and considerations of what it means to be 'at home'" (Knowles, 2015: 85). This may refer to a wide variety of graphic novels and Tan's narrative continues this tradition in its exploration of migration and cultural otherness. The first page of the chapter zooms out from the family photo to the

father's hands in front of the photo to the father sitting and nostalgically looking at the photo to his image behind the porthole, as he himself zooms out of his former life when the ship takes him away. The final panels show more and more of these portholes behind which lonely migrants are waiting to be delivered into a new and hopefully better life. These panels simultaneously reflect the trauma of isolation and a sense of togetherness: the experience is agonising but shared. What potentially allows the reader insight into how it feels is the reader's own "migration" from panel to panel, as well as the narrative's subsequent "migration" between fantasy and realism (Earle, 2016: 386). This part of the protagonist's and the reader's journey already suggests that migration is an experience which reminds us that "change is the only constant" (Earle, 2016: 396), and the changes implicit in migration are signalled by panels showing transforming clouds, which precede the moment of arrival.

What follows is the trauma of cultural dislocation as any sense of familiarity is challenged by the prevailing strangeness of the new place. Among the huddling migrants, the father makes an origami bird, with the panel showing the bird taking us back to the very first panel in the novel that shows a similar bird and establishes it as a symbol of familiarity. In quick succession we then see the father turning a confused face towards what we soon realise are bird-like creatures in a harbour. The sense of strangeness and confusion is, however, balanced with the hopes that the migrants bring to the new place. Both strangeness and hope are confirmed by the statues in the harbour which redefine the real-life Statue of Liberty. Unlike the Statue of Liberty, the statues in Tan's imaginary new place breathe off a sense of warmth, hospitality and cross-species appreciation, for they show two human figures shaking hands while animal-like creatures are perching on their arms and shoulders. To give the impression of dislocation and a lack of stability in the life of a migrant, the comforting image of the statues is then succeeded by panels showing crowds, a man shouting into a megaphone, and the migrants filing and waiting to be processed. The panels then focus on the traumatic "dehumanization of the immigrant" (Banerjee, 2016: 406), who is medically inspected, labelled (as a chilling reminder of the many historical examples of branding the undesirables) and finally given papers. All the while, the father is at a loss for words, confused and frustrated. The sense of strangeness suggested by the bird-like creatures upon arrival is soon repeated in panels showing unusual means of transport and surreal architecture that characterises the new place.

Strangeness is continuously conveyed through dreamlike imagery of buildings, roads, landscapes, flora and fauna, household devices, and food. Even as strangeness mounts a challenge to his process of adaptation, the immigrant meets it

with both anxiety and curiosity. The trauma of cultural illiteracy, whose threats are literalised as a big creature that chases the protagonist away while he is delivering parcels, is gradually alleviated as the immigrant learns about his surroundings and gets accustomed to them. In the process, Tan repeatedly emphasises that the traumatic experience of migration is at the same time individual and shared. The protagonist arrives alone but is surrounded by many other migrants, and his subsequent adaptation is greatly facilitated by the unusual creatures in the new place, whose appearance hovers between the familiar and the unknown as each and every one of them resembles an animal on Earth but also markedly differs from it, and by the helpful inhabitants of that place, many of whom are immigrants themselves. Tan's careful considerations of a unique but shared nature of migration and trauma places *The Arrival* within a decades-long history of such topics in the graphic novel as one of the visual aesthetic forms with "a potential to facilitate a rich encounter or sharing of traumatic experiences" (Viljoen, 2021: 5). That trauma is shared might not help if the experience is associated with torture or genocide, but it might ease the distress of migration. How traumatic experiences are shared, and how they strengthen a sense of solidarity among the immigrants in Tan's novel, is best seen in the panels which focus on the immigrants' pasts.

Tan's visual representations of various yet shared experiences of past traumas that propelled migration alter between realistic representations of exploitation in factories and war, on one hand, and allegorical or literalised representations of oppression and danger in the form of (dragon?) tails and masked giants on the other. While the former are closer to the demand for accuracy and directness in representations of trauma, the latter reflect how trauma affects memories of distressing events or periods, and how imagination and memory "not only accommodate but also preserve the inexplicable" (Viljoen, 2021: 4). Again, gradual movement from panel to panel allows the reader to process and consider the details of the depicted experiences. A young girl's exploitation in a coal energy plant is presented in panels which associate economic exploitation with intellectual oppression and physical abuse. She is caught reading, the book is torn away from her by male hands that brutally pull at her clothes, the book is then locked in a drawer, and the girl is forcibly given a shovel. The gruelling and unhealthy physical work, the physical and intellectual abuse all show in the girl's frightened face, as well as her slouching and then crouching figure. That the victim is a young girl demonstrates Tan's awareness of the vulnerability of women and child workers in places were the laws designed to protect workers are loose or non-existent. The abuse that traumatises her is shared, as is shown in a large panel which depicts the girl working alongside other girls, and she now shares her story with the central

protagonist and the reader. The girl in Tan's novel has managed to escape oppression, with the book in her hand, but her story makes us wonder how many such victims manage to find a better life.

Another story of oppression and trauma is allegorically depicted in panels showing masked giants exterminating people like insects. The story ends with a successful escape, but one that involves a dangerous journey across the sea in a boat which is paid for by family heirlooms. The story is one we have heard all too often in the past years, but unlike places which openly advertise their "stop the boats" politics, the new place in Tan's novel welcomes these traumatised people, so the final panels show them enjoying a meal with the central character, laughing and playing music. The last tale of violence and trauma that the protagonist and the reader are invited to hear/see is told by an elderly immigrant who was once welcomed to Tan's imaginary new place. The joyful scenes of soldiers being seen off are quickly succeeded by panels showing the soldiers' legs walking and then running across ever more rough terrains, with the colours becoming darker in an atmosphere of danger and, possibly, panic. Two large panels follow, one showing the soldiers charging and the other displaying piles of skeletons, before the panels shift focus back to legs, this time to foreground a single human figure with one leg, walking with crutches, falling down and walking again. The emotionally devastating visual details of difficulty, pain, danger, physical and psychological trauma are all provided in gradation to allow the reader to take them all in before they realise that the happy young soldier from the beginning of the story and the injured one from the end of it are, in fact, the elderly immigrant telling the story.

Contrary to the common view that "[t]raumatic memories are repressed as they are formed, leaving them unavailable to conscious recall; subsequently, they recur in various displaced ways, as hallucinations, flashbacks, or nightmares" (Bond–Craps, 2020: 4), the immigrants' memories of trauma in Tan's novel are available to conscious recall, so they recur in the decidedly conscious and willing act of retelling, as the immigrants in the new country share their stories. Each experience is distinct but they have all been exposed to some kind of trauma. Since trauma is a phenomenon that transcends the boundaries of space, time, nation, and culture, "listening to the trauma of another can contribute to cross-cultural solidarity and to the creation of new forms of community" (Craps, 2013 2). As if to confirm this, the community in Tan's novel continuously welcomes new arrivals and develops a strong sense of mutual solidarity based on shared experience.

Migration and trauma are widely accepted as timeless and universal, even though they are frequently framed in Western medical and psychological discourses. This is why Craps believes non-Western and minority experiences need

to be understood on their own terms. Instead of narrating culturally contextualised migration and trauma, Tan decided on a universal story of migration which deals with common issues, such as loss, nostalgia, cultural illiteracy, or difficulty in adaptation, and features "a generic everyman protagonist", in an attempt to do justice to experiences which are "too unique and diverse" (Earle, 2016: 390). The result is a story about trauma not as "a Western artefact" (Craps, 2013: 3) but as a human experience. To depict the timelessness and universality of both migration and trauma, the inside cover of the book offers a display of images that resemble passport photographs and show migrants of different ages, genders, cultures, races, and ethnicities. Additionally, throughout the novel, the panels are in sepia tones to remind the reader of old photographs, like those of Ellis Island which served as Tan's inspiration, and lend the narrative a degree of realism. Panels showing people's outfits or objects like musical instruments typically combine the old and new to disassociate the story from any particular moment in time and add an air of temporal indeterminacy. Surreal architecture also contributes to the themes' timelessness and universality, so the narrative's amalgam of realism and fantasy further removes the story from association with any specific location or culture, suggesting that this narrative is an interpretation rather than a mimetic representation. The drawing style that is suspended between fantasy and realism shows Tan's awareness of the complexities of migration and trauma, and an inestimable degree to which they escape direct or mimetic representation. As "[r]ealism can break a writer's heart" (Rushdie, 1995: 70), fantasy in *The Arrival* also provides a distance from the related traumatic experiences. However, it does not act as a screen that obscures trauma or protects the reader from it, but a device which enables the story to communicate across contexts. Tan's novel avoids the risk of conflating distinct experiences while drawing parallels among them by highlighting their peculiarities: tails, giants, male exploiters in factories, and war atrocities all signal the unique nature of each situation. To show respect for heterogeneity, Tan keeps them at a distance from one another by narrating them alongside one another and separating them by gutters and pages. In that, Tan avoids another risk, that of encouraging appropriation of trauma: "modern trauma writers and critics typically discourage adopting a vicarious relationship to the suffering of others, regarding it as appropriative and unethical" (Bond–Craps, 2020: 6). Instead of unethical appropriation, Tan promotes understanding that offers a reminder "to not take wisdom, experience or comfort for granted" (Earle, 2016: 394).

POSTHUMAN POSSIBILITIES

Tan's distressing yet warm and compassionate novel never assumes or simply "tells". It asks questions instead, making space for the transformation of the reader's curiosity into understanding and empathy. The new country in *The Arrival* is a posthuman world of species egalitarianism, populated by traumatised humans, "strange creatures and oddly mechanistic contraptions" (Banerjee, 2016: 403). "The New Country" is "an alternative universe" (Earle, 2016: 390) where mutual tolerance and appreciative coexistence de-centre man and promote cosmopolitan empathy (McCulloch, 2012) and solidarity across species. The cover image "opens up the possibilities of such relationships" (Banerjee, 2016: 409) and the statues the migrants see in the harbour further strengthen the impression that such relationships are possible on a wide scale. The narrative repeatedly confirms it by showing that we can read otherness as interesting rather than problematic (Earle, 2016: 396), and approach it with empathy instead of anxiety, fear or hostility. Significantly, *The Arrival* insists on the need to share traumatic experiences to help develop empathy and solidarity across differences. Relying on Donna Haraway's idea of companion species, as well as the posthumanist concept of "*zoe*-centred egalitarianism" (Braidotti, 2013: 66), Bidisha Banerjee argues that *The Arrival* suggests that it is possible "to coexist harmoniously with incommensurable difference" (Banerjee, 2016: 402) in a world that demonstrates genuine appreciation for all living beings. What saves this idea from utopianism in Tan's novel is the presence of trauma: the imagined world is not one devoid of traumatic experiences but informed and shaped by them. In a time when "trauma is big business" and fodder for "marketing and consumption" (Bond–Craps, 2020: 2-3) in literature, art, popular culture, and the tourist industry, Tan refrains from the pitfalls of trauma culture: from an obsessive insistence on displaying trauma and from sensationalising, sentimentalising or in any other way exploiting traumatic experiences. Instead, he demonstrates how we can alleviate, understand and learn to live through, with and after such experiences in an atmosphere of compassion and solidarity. If this sounds naïve – not all traumas can be overcome – it is also true. Tan's representations of migration, trauma and recovery show us what the world *is* like, but also what it *can be* like.

Craps reminds us that many of the founding texts of trauma theory fail to promote genuine cross-cultural ethical engagement because

> they marginalize or ignore traumatic experiences of non-Western or minority cultures, they tend to take for granted the universal validity of definitions of trauma and recovery that have developed out of the history of Western modernity, they often favour or even prescribe a modernist aesthetic of fragmentation and aporia as

> uniquely suited to the task of bearing witness to trauma, and they generally disregard the connections between metropolitan and non-Western or minority traumas. (Craps, 2013: 2)

In the world of contemporary graphic novels, the need for a widening of theoretical horizons is essential because "narrative iconical works from all over the world portray traumatizing events and their effects on the individual's psyche" (Romero-Jódar, 2017: 21), which is why this analysis leaves the founding texts of trauma studies aside. By focusing on unspecified and heterogeneous experiences of migration and trauma in a visual story that specifically deals with solidarity across cultures, nations, races, ethnicities, and genders, it is my wish to bypass "trauma theory's Eurocentric biases" (Craps, 2013: 2) and contribute to a widening scope of trauma theory, one which would include various definitions and experiences of trauma, and call for cosmopolitan and cross-species empathy as the necessary basis for global solidarity that could eradicate rather than perpetuate existing inequalities and help prevent future injustices.

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ARTIKULISANJE TRAUME U *DOLASKU* ŠONA TENA

Rezime

Inspirisan pričama iz stvarnog života, grafički roman *Dolazak* (2006) Šona Tena kombinuje realistički i fantazijski pristup kako bi ispričao univerzalnu priču o migraciji i traumi, i istovremeno ukazao na jedinstvenu i raznovrsnu prirodu takvih iskustava. Uspostavivši ravnotežu između neobičnosti i znatiželje, izolovanosti i zajedništva, izmeštenosti i prilagođavanja, Tenova pripovest koristi neposrednost vizuelnog izraza kako bi dočarala „gotovo neopisiva iskustva" (Knowles, 2015: 84): ekonomsku ranjivost, rat, političko ugnjetavanje, gubitak, usamljenost, nostalgiju i kulturnu nepismenost. Ako struktura ovog grafičkog romana pokazuje naklonjenost „estetici fragmentacije i aporije kao jedinoj podobnoj za zadatak svedočenja traumi" (Craps, 2013: 2), ona takođe adekvatno prenosi dislociranost kao posledicu traumatičnih događaja koja je i sama po sebi traumatična. U tom smislu, grafički roman kao „'trans' forma književnosti" (Knowles et al., 2016: 380) predstavlja odgovarajući medijum za pripovedanje o transformativnim iskustvima, a prelazak s jednog panela na drugi čitaocu omogućava da postepeno razume promene svojstvene iskustvima migracije i traume. Kompleksan dijalog između slika i stranica u romanu kao protivtežu traumama iz prošlosti i sadašnjosti uspostavlja empatiju, komunikaciju i solidarnost u neimenovanoj novoj zemlji. Kako reči pripovest smeštaju u kontekst određenog jezika, upadljivo odsustvo reči u Tenovom romanu podstiče razumevanje time što mu omogućava da komunicira preko granica kultura, i istovremeno

ukazuje na poteškoće u verbalnom artikulisanju traume. U okvirima studija o grafičkom romanu i traumi, ovaj rad istražuje narativne tehnike koje Ten upotrebljava da bi dočarao individualnu i kolektivnu traumu i predstavio migraciju kao zajedničko i vanvremensko iskustvo. Rad istovremeno ispituje Tenove strategije promovisanja empatije i solidarnosti između različitih kultura i vrsta, te pokazuje kako i Tenov roman i ovaj rad izbegavaju ono što Stef Kraps vidi kao jednu od zamki teorije o traumi.

Ključne reči: *Dolazak*, grafički roman, migracija, Šon Ten, trauma

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