**Chapter 8**

**Folding, Cutting, Reassembling: Materializing Trauma and Memory in Comics[1]**

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**Introduction**

Rosalind B. Penfold's *Dragonslippers* (2005) opens with a potent metaphor. Introducing the text, Penfold, who serves as both narrator and character, presents a selection of drawings she produced while she was in an abusive relationship (see Fig. 8.1). 'The most *important* one is on top', Penfold begins, pulling out a sheet of paper that shows a long horizontal line running from 1955 to 2040, indicating the span of her life. 'It's just a line... but it says *everything*. It's my *whole life*. See this *decade*?' she continues, gesturing to a short segment of the lifeline. 'It's only a *blip* on my lifeline, right? But it went so *deep…* that if I *s-t-r-e-t-c-h* this line *out…* those 10 years are *longer…* than *all* the other years *before* or *after*!' (2006: 2-3). As she says this, she tears the page containing the horizontal lifeline along the depth of the valley that covers that decade, making it significantly longer than the surrounding years, as her narration indicates.

Insert Fig. 8.1: Rosalind B. Penfold unfolds her personal timeline in *Dragonslippers* (Penfold 2006: 2-3). Reproduced with the permission of the artist.

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[1] My thanks to Will Grady, Maggie Gray, Ian Horton and Margaret Pilkington for their input into this chapter. Some of the works addressed in this chapter have also been discussed, albeit in very different ways, in chapters in *Representing Acts of Violence in Comics* (Hague, Horton and Mickwitz eds., 2019; see references to Pearson, Streeten and Szép in this chapter's bibliography for full details).

Penfold's imagery works in at least two ways here, first in its visualisation of time and second in its invocation of materiality. First, in terms of visual representation, this sequence challenges the ostensibly objective nature of the timeline, making subjective a measurement that can often 'obscure the presence of an active author' (Lupton & Miller, 2000: 168). This is achieved by emphasizing the distorting effect that trauma can have upon an individual's experience of time. As the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition* (DSM-5) makes clear, this is a known element of responses to trauma, with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), for example, being characterized by symptoms such as '[r]ecurrent involuntary, and intrusive distressing memories of the traumatic event(s)', '[r]ecurrent, distressing dreams in which the content and/or affect of the dream are related to the traumatic event(s)' and '[d]issociative reactions (e.g., flashbacks) in which the individual feels or acts as if the traumatic event(s) were recurring' (APA, 2013: 271). These patterns of mental recurrence can serve to drastically elongate the *experience* of trauma, extending its effects far beyond the period in which the traumatic events themselves take place, as Penfold's depiction of her torn timeline makes clear.

More than showing the *distortion* of time, however, this sequence also indicates something that is rarely found in comics: duration. While duration is an inextricable component of time as we understand it through our experience—and cannot be removed from some media forms, such as music, because sound must necessarily endure across time—images can sometimes appear to exist as fixed points without duration (see Hague, 2014: 74-5. While this is only an appearance (the light that transmits images to our eyes takes time to move, even if we do not perceive this), a second mode of understanding temporality is more obviously manifest upon the page of the comic or in a printed timeline than *time as duration*: that is, *time as sequence*. This second mode can be understood simply as past, present and future, i.e. the order of events. As numerous commentators have observed, in comics all three temporalities

are generally present upon the page at the same time since the reader can usually see them simultaneously (see, for example, McCloud 1993: 104; Hatfield, 2005: 48-58).

Penfold's work brings these two understandings of time together. The ordering of events from 1955 to 2040, positioned along a line-structured by 'a grid that regulates their placement' (Lupton & Miller, 2000: 168), is *time as sequence*, while the length (and elongation) of that line is *time as duration*. In so doing, Penfold foregrounds the experience of trauma, but does so in a way that emphasizes its relationship with the structuring properties of time. Events do happen in a given sequence, that is undeniable (we cannot lift a glass from a table before it has been put on the table). But the nature of those events and the ways we experience them might radically alter our understanding of them: it can make them seem longer or shorter, or affect our perception of the sequence even as the sequence itself remains the same, fixed by history. The possibility of perception overriding sequence in this way has echoes of the Proustian moment, whose most famous exemplar is the narrator's encounter with a few crumbs of Madeline cake in a cup of tea in *Swann's Way*, but which is more fully explored and explained in *Time Regained*, the final volume of *Remembrance of Things Past* (a.k.a. *In Search of Lost Time* (1908)). Therein, Proust writes about the way in which a sensation might come to exist 'outside time' (Proust, 2006: 1150):

> [...] let a sound, a scent already heard and breathed in the past be heard and breathed anew, simultaneously in the present and in the past, real without being actual, ideal without being abstract, then instantly the permanent and characteristic essence hidden in things is freed and our true being which has for long seemed dead but was not so in other ways awakes and revives, thanks to this celestial nourishment. An instant liberated from the order of time has recreated in us man liberated from the same order, so that he should be conscious of it (1151).

Elsewhere, I have connected this passage to Thierry Groensteen's concept of braiding, specifically in relation to an adaptation of Proust's novel (Hague, 2015: 184-5; Heuet 2002-7). Here, however, I would like to build upon that connection by arguing that Penfold's

presentation of her timeline extends and expands on this notion through its interweaving of experience and structure (see Hague, 2015: 184-7). Groensteen describes braiding thus:

> [...] within the paged multiframe that constitutes a complete comic, every panel exists, potentially if not actually, in relation with each of the others. This totality, where the physical form is generally, according to French editorial norms, that of an album, responds to a model of organization that is not that of the strip nor that of the chain, but that of the *network*.
> Jan Baetens and Pascal Lefèvre have justly noted that 'far from presenting itself as a chain of panels, the comic demands a reading capable of searching, beyond linear relations, to the aspects or fragments of panels susceptible to being networked with certain aspects or fragments of other panels'. Braiding is precisely the operation that, from the point of creation, programs and carries out this sort of bridging. It consists of an additional and remarkable structuration that, taking account of the breakdown and the page layout, defines a *series* within the sequential framework (Groensteen, 2007: 146).

But where Stéphane Heuet's adaptations of Proust's novel enact this network-based approach through their visual form yet remain firmly within a relatively conservative physical comics' structure (the conventional Franco-Belgian album format), in its tearing of the page Penfold's gestures more substantively towards the *physicality* of the network Groensteen describes.

By dismantling a pre-existing shape and reforming it, Penfold shows how trauma can actually reshape an individual's life in material ways, and she is not alone in depicting the effects of trauma in this way. Nicola Streeten's *Billy, Me and You* (2011) uses the metaphor of a broken vase to depict the impact of her son's death, showing the vase in various states of destruction from intact to shattered. Asking repeatedly 'Is this still a vase?', the sequence concludes by comparing an unbroken vase to one that has been reconstructed and asking, 'Which is normal?' (see Fig. 8.2).

Insert Fig. 8.2: Nicola Streeten explores the relationship between the whole object and the reassembled fragments in *Billy, Me and You* (2011: 175). Reproduced with the permission of the artist.

Returning to the notion of braiding, we might connect both Penfold's and Streeten's depicted damage to that of an 'additional and remarkable structuration', one that goes 'beyond linear relations, to the aspects or fragments of panels susceptible to being networked with certain aspects or fragments of other panels' (Groensteen, 2007: 146). However, here it is not the panel that is being reworked but other elements of depicted material forms. In Penfold's case, this material is the paper, torn into a new shape, while in Streeten's it is the ceramic, which is reassembled to *resemble* the older form as closely as possible. While the constituting material itself is not braided as such (since it comprises the totality, and therefore is not separable), the *tears* in the paper and the *cracks* in the ceramic still provide meaningful structures and connections that bring together existing elements in new ways. At the most basic level, these tears and cracks might be understood as fulfilling similar functions to the gutters in a comic, since they are effectively gaps or spaces that put different pieces of material into (new) relationships with each other, yet which continue to be defined and delimited by those gaps.

This is most obvious in the case of the vase, where the fragments of the vase are *constituted* by the gaps: prior to the vase being broken the fragments did not exist, and the meaningful relationships between the various pieces are only determined by aligning the shapes in a particular way. Beyond this though, the tears and cracks also constitute a new structure that exceeds any linear relationship between one piece and those that surround it, since they comprise a new network, an 'additional and remarkable structuration', in which the tear or the crack is the repeating and unifying function that brings together the new network. Through the resizing of the material, this also requires us to understand that network in terms of duration as much as structure. The tear or crack does have an immediate presence in the relationship between two pieces, but it also extends beyond this immediate location through its continuation along the surface beyond the individual fragments.

While Penfold and Streeten provide excellent examples of *visual* representations of these networks, there are some works that go further to materialize this fragmentation in their physical, *material* bodies, rather than simply as a visual metaphor. Over the remainder of this chapter, I will examine several such works, exploring the ways in which history and trauma (both together and separately) can be articulated not only through depicted damage but through physically enacted interventions upon a work. For reasons of space, I will limit my discussion to three types of intervention: folding, cutting, and reassembly. In describing these approaches, I do not mean to imply that they are the only types of intervention. Rather, these are three common strategies employed by creators in conceiving of works that involve the reader in sustained bodily engagement with the text, one that has a meaningful impact upon the articulation of trauma or history that such texts present.

## Folding: Joe Sacco's *The Great War* (2013)

The least drastic of the three interventions I will discuss here is the fold. Arguably, folding is common in comics: we might identify the opening and closing of a book (whether a comic book or a graphic novel) as being a kind of fold, at least of the cover, and in the case of books that are saddle stitched or sewn, the turning of the pages inside as well.[2] Even in these straightforward cases, the fold or hinge's effects upon the book are profound, since opening a book will essentially double its surface area in size, and change the orientation of its rectangular shape from a page-sized portrait to a landscape with the dimensions of a spread. In less conventional formats, such as the horizontally oriented page often found in reprints of

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[2] Because glue binding, which is fairly common in graphic novels and manga, involves the pages being stuck to the spine individually, the progression through the pages themselves does not strictly involve folding, though the overall effect may be similar. Some works may have folded pages stitched in quartos and then glued to the spine: these works occupy a kind of halfway position.

newspaper comic strips, there is no shift of orientation, but the dimensions do nonetheless alter, extending horizontally, with the opening of the book's cover. This transformation, enacted by the reader at the start and reversed at the end of the reading experience, literally opens the book up to them, increasing its presence in space and in their field of vision, and enables their access to a range of tactile, auditory and olfactory experiences that are unavailable when the book is closed. In this sense, the fold is an enabling mechanism that allows access to information and experiences when worked in one direction, or denies them when worked in another. Folds allow for revelation or concealment, and they may also be used to create complex structural effects, enabling a sheet of paper to fly through the air (as in a paper aeroplane) or represent an utterly different form (as in the art of origami).

However, the spinal fold is not the only way in which folds have been used to great effect in comics, and I would here like to consider an example of a text that uses them somewhat unconventionally in order to present a complex and emotive vision of history. Joe Sacco's *The Great War* (2013) is described on its cover as 'An Illustrated Panorama', and is not a book but a '24-foot-long black-and-white drawing printed on heavyweight accordion-fold paper and packaged in a deluxe hardcover slipcase' (Sacco, 2013). While this description places the emphasis upon the image as a single piece, the accordion-fold is important. This fold segments the image, meaningfully, into twenty-four sides approximately A4 in size (twenty-six if we count the paratextual matter at the front of the publication), so that the image presents 'July 1, 1916: The First Day of the Battle of the Somme' (i.e. twenty-four hours) across the span of the twenty-four sides. The relationship between sequence and surface here is obvious: on the one hand, the folded sides comprise a sequence, developing over time as the reader progresses through them; on the other, the single strip suggests a surface that contains within it past, present and future.

If this makes *The Great War* a fairly conventional graphic narrative, it defies expectation in other ways. For example, although the folds of *The Great War* do still enable or disable reading experiences according to their state, this does not work in quite the same way as the codex form of the book described earlier. There, the open fold suggested an access to visual information, and while the same is true here, it also initiates several other different interactions. For example, while the opened book can still be held in the reader's hand, and (s)he can proceed through it via manual interactions involving the arms, hands and fingers with the rest of the body remaining relatively stationary, when *The Great War* is opened fully it becomes far too large to hold. Instead, it must be placed or hung on a surface and navigated bodily by the reader, who will then adjust the position of their feet, head and entire body to physically move around the image.

This requirement, especially the impossibility of holding the image in the hands, suggests a rethinking of the relationship between the individual reader and the image. Where the reader of a book can generally contain the image within roughly the space of their own body and thus maintain control over it, Sacco's panorama exceeds and overwhelms the capacity of the individual to contain, manipulate, or even perceive the image without radically repositioning their body at some distance from it. This quality arguably makes the image more suited to a gallery space than to an individual reading situation, but it is worth remembering that this is a relatively mass-market product. It is readily available through major publishers (Jonathan Cape in the UK), and while it is somewhat expensive (RRP £20), it is within the range of comparable titles such as Chris Ware's *Building Stories* (RRP £35), *Quimby the Mouse* (RRP £16.99), Posy Simmonds' *Mrs Weber's Omnibus* (RRP £20) and Richard McGuire's *Here* (RRP £22.99). It is thus presented as a book, or at least book-like object, to be owned and read by an individual reader, rather than to be visited in a museum or gallery exhibition (although it has *been* exhibited; see Cartoonmuseum, 2015 for one example). Indeed, one video of Sacco himself

interacting with the book shows him unfolding it on the floor of (presumably) his house in such

a way that it would be difficult to view (Norton, 2013), an experience that is likely shared by

most readers.

This leads us to ask: what is the logic of such an unwieldy object? Sacco gives some clues

in an interview:

> I wanted to sort of view it as if you're looking at the world from above, somehow
> removed, and you're just observing what's going on without [...] being told what's
> going on. This allowed me to [...] think things through myself or experience different
> things at different times as I was drawing, and you begin to think of what an amazing
> human endeavour war is, and [...] about how that's where humanity really puts its
> efforts. And you [...] show the enthusiastic soldiers going to the trenches, [...] waving
> at the cameras, and you think of them as individuals [...]. Everyone has a story when
> you're drawing them because you want to personalise them [...]. It's an interesting
> procedure (Norton, 2013).

Later in the same interview, Sacco again draws attention to the contrast between the

experiences of individual soldiers and the 'bigger picture':

> I spent time with troops in Iraq, with American marines. And [...] what I remember
> most [...] about that is that they didn't talk about the bigger picture so much; they were
> really concerned about themselves and about their friends. They were concerned about
> 'we're gonna get everyone home'. But I thought of those things when I was showing
> the soldiers marching together. You're aware that a lot of these soldiers knew each
> other and were friends. [...] How that informs the piece itself, it's very hard to put my
> finger on it, but I know it's there somehow (Norton, 2013).

It is there, I would suggest, in the folds of the image. Sacco's description emphasizes not only

the experience of the individual in history, or the 'bigger picture' of history's progress, but the

relationship between the two and the ways in which they influence and affect each other.

Perhaps the most famous *written* articulation of this relationship comes from Leo Tolstoy, who

wrote in *War and Peace*:

> Each man lives for himself, using his freedom to get what he wants, and he feels with every fibre of his being that at any particular time he is free to perform an action or refrain from doing so, but the moment any action is taken it becomes an irrevocable piece of history, with a significance which has more to do with predetermination than freedom
>
> There are two sides to life for every individual: a personal life, in which his freedom exists in proportion to the abstract nature of his interests, and an elemental life within the swarm of humanity, in which a man inevitably follows laws laid down for him (Tolstoy 2007: 669).

And as he later continues:

> When it comes to events in history, so-called 'great men' are nothing but labels attached to events; like real labels, they have the least possible connection with events themselves.
>
> Every action they perform, which they take to be self-determined and independent, is in a historical sense quite the opposite; it is interconnected with the whole course of history, and predetermined from eternity (671).

Sacco's work makes tangible this difficult perceptual relationship. On the one hand, the reader is free to control the object and the reading, progressing through the twenty-four sides at will, moving backwards and forwards at their own pace. On the other, they are an observer, incapable (due to distance) of perceiving the individuals in the lengthy scene, and unable (due to size) to manipulate the physicality of the object in any meaningful way. The effect of this is also to increase the duration of the reading process, a feature that in turn emphasizes the duration of the event both literally, and historically in terms of the trauma it inflicted. While we might expect to apprehend an image in the span of a moment, in this case it is physically difficult, if not impossible, to take in the whole of this panorama from a single viewpoint (unless the viewer can see the image from a great distance, though this would leave her/him unable to discern its details). This difficulty means that the reader must preserve in their memory the elements of the image that they have viewed but can no longer see as they move across the image, and the viewer is thus asked not only to *look* upon the scene but to *remember* it actively as a part of the act of reading. In this way, the reader is situated as the historical

subject, with the tension between sequence and surface materializing, through the folds of the panorama, the nature and experience of history itself.[3]

**Cutting: Dana Walrath's *View From the High Ground* (2016)**

In Dana Walrath's *View From the High Ground* (2016), a different kind of physical intervention is enacted. The installation is comprised of 'nine hand made books drawn into the pages of an old zoology text, arranged in chronological order, embedded in slate and placed on a tall white washed wood tabletop supported by pipes and furnace parts' (Walrath, 2016). The work 'focuses on nine of the genocides of the past 500 years: [...] American Indians, African Americans, Australian Aborigines, Armenians, the Holocaust, genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and the genocide of Rohingya in Myanmar', with each book documenting one of these genocides. Critical to this project, writes Walrath, is a tactile interaction with the work. Each book's pages are cut horizontally into three sections. These can then be turned independently of one another, allowing multiple images to be assembled by bringing different sections from different pages into view simultaneously. The images in the piece depict the human victims of a given genocide alongside animals both 'specific to that region' and drawn 'from the hate rhetoric and mechanisms specific to each of the genocides'. As Walrath writes, this allows for various combinations of animals and humans to be produced by the reader, thus highlighting processes of dehumanization that one of her key sources, Genocide Watch, identify as one of the 'Ten Stages of Genocide' (Stanton, 2016).[4]

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[3] For a longer and quite different perspective on *The Great War*, I direct the reader to Szép 2019. Therein, Eszter Szép also interrogates the work in terms of its materiality, but where I emphasise the role of a dualistic tension of sequence and surface in situating the reader/viewer as the subject of history, Szép suggests that its use of haptic techniques materially stimulate a sense of vulnerability and shared experiences: 'Physical interaction between book and reader,' she writes, 'can elicit an embodied understanding via a bodily realisation of mutual vulnerability' (Szép 2019: 99).

[4] Genocide Watch is one among a number of international organizations to highlight dehumanization as an indicator of the potential for genocide (see United Nations, 2014: 19, 22).

> The interactive component of the piece—the handmade books presented here—forces the viewer to experience dehumanization, to literally feel their hand in it, as they page through the images.
>
> My intent is to awaken the viewer to recognizing this practice as they transform images back and forth between human/beast/predator/vermin/parasite and various chimera (Walrath, 2016).

The effect of this process is one of forced combination and recombination. In the more accessible digitized version of the installation, it is not possible to turn the three segments of the page simultaneously to effect a 'conventional' reading. Instead, the reader must first move one section of the page, then another and another, perhaps going backwards and forwards to compare the images on the various pages. The images can be deeply affecting. In the booklet entitled 'African Americans', for example, we find depictions of human beings juxtaposed and combined with those of domesticated animals: the shackles that imprison a man's body are echoed in images of similar confines applied to a bull, for example; or a man imprisoned with an iron bit are provocatively combined with the depiction of a horse's body (see Fig. 8.3). Similarly difficult images can be found in each of the nine books.

**Insert Fig. 8.3:** One example of the mixed images found in Dana Walrath's *View from the High Ground*; this combination taken from 'African Americans' (Walrath, 2016). Reproduced with the permission of the artist.

On their own terms, the images presented in *View From the High Ground* are effective: a depiction of a shackled man or one imprisoned in a bit are troubling enough, confronting readers with rightly difficult viewing experiences. Moreover, the range of genocides covered across the nine books makes clear that genocide is a depressingly unexceptional situation.[5] Cumulatively, the work stresses the very real possibility that genocides can and will happen

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[5] On the historical trajectory of genocide, see Pinker, 2011: 320-343.

again, thus cautioning the reader to guard against them actively rather than simply viewing them historically.

Beyond this, however, it is the physicality of *View From the High Ground* that places additional demands upon the reader, because it extends and magnifies the notion that they themselves are implicated in the active production of dehumanizing ideas. In presenting these images in a segmented fashion, with cuts in the images facilitating their multiple combination and recombination, Walrath encourages a type of reading that goes beyond reception by asking the reader to produce configurations of their own choosing. This is not the first work to offer such an approach—Raymond Queneau's *Cent mille milliards de poèmes* (*A Hundred Thousand Billion Poems*) (Mathews & Brotchie, 2011: 11-33) and others have experimented with similar forms of flexibility in reception/production, especially by delivering the reader not *one* text to be consumed passively but an overwhelming number of possibilities to be realized (in the sense that the number of possible configurations vastly exceeds the number that will actually be realized).[6] Just as Queneau gives the reader the opportunity to produce new poems, Walrath forces her readers to participate in processes of dehumanization *as they read* and assemble different images from a set of pre-existing contexts.

It is also worth pointing out that the different sections of the page may have varying *durations* too: while one third of the page may be turned quickly, another might linger, conditioning the reading of several subsequent sections. In this way, Walrath emphasizes the dynamic and cross-historical nature of processes of dehumanization. As with Sacco, Walrath here pushes beyond the individual instances of genocide documented in each book to engage a broader realm of theorization and representation. Where Sacco used a single day of World War I to articulate history through the folds of *The Great War*, Walrath literally cuts through specific

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[6] For more on works that offer readers choices in the order of reception, and the meaningfulness of these choices, see Grennan & Hague, 2018.

historical acts to offer an insight into the nature of dehumanization: shifting, variable, adaptable and a constant threat to humanity.

**Reassembly: Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas's *Red: A Haida Manga* (2010)**

Although folding and cutting are significant features of the above-mentioned comics, in neither case do these interventions actually dissolve the structure of the work entirely. In *The Great War*, structural coherence is in fact maintained by the fold itself, while in *View From the High Ground*, the books' spines still hold together the split pages—they may move in an unusual way, but they remain 'of a piece' with the rest of the work. Thus, while these works reposition information and ideas in a fashion similar to Penfold's metaphorical tears in *Dragonslippers*, they do not quite suggest the extent of breakage and reassembly signified by Streeten's vase in *Billy, Me & You*. In the final section of this chapter, I want to look at a comic that asks the reader to carry out this work of refashioning and reassembly: Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas' *Red: A Haida Manga* (2010).[7] *Red* references 'a classic Haida oral narrative' that documents 'the tragic story of a leader so blinded by revenge that he leads his community to the brink of war and destruction' (Yahgulanaas, 2010). As the end flap informs readers, it is rendered in a style that brings together the artist's 'cultural and political experiences as indigenous [Haida] person with contemporary graphic literature to produce a unique genre called Haida Manga'. The work is sold as a conventionally bound book and readers are at first expected to read it as such, from top-left to bottom-right, and front to back. However, at the end of the book is an author's note explaining that this is in fact only *one* way in which the text might be read:

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[7] My thanks to the members of the University of the Arts London's Montgolfier Group for their reflections on *Red: A Haida Manga*.

> *Red* is more than a collection of bound pages, something more than a story to be read page by page. *Red* is also a complex of images, a composite, one that will defy your ability to experience story as a simple progression of events. Turn the page to see the entire work.
>
> I welcome you to destroy this book. I welcome you to rip the pages out of their bindings. Following the layout provided overleaf and using the pages from two copies of this book, you can reconstruct this work of art (Yahgulanaas, 2010: 109).

Turning overleaf, this larger image reveals continuities across the pages of the book that are otherwise hidden when viewed as pages that should only be navigated one by one. The thick, curved black lines that serve as panel borders (and perhaps gutters too, given their width and the lack of space between them) are revealed to flow off the edges of the pages and join up with lines on other pages, forming large shapes that only become visible in this reassembled form. While there are some comparisons with Sacco's *Great War* here, there is one crucial difference: while Sacco's work can be read *both* as readerly sequence and larger image, *Red* can exist *only* as one *or* the other. It can be read as a book, or it can be pulled apart and reassembled as a composite, but it cannot be *both*—once it has been disassembled, there is no way back to the original page-bound, sequential progression.

This is an important distinction, for while both works could make valid claims to both library shelves or gallery walls, the power of Sacco's depiction of the first day of the Somme rests, as I have argued above, on the possibility of shifting between the view of history as grand narrative (or totality, the total image) and history as biography (or individuality, the individual pages). Consigned to either one or the other (as opposed to both), Yahgulanaas' comic speaks through its material form to the concept of hindsight. After all, the lines were always present, they always connected to each other in fluid ways that exceeded the boundaries of the page. But these connections remained unknown, invisible even, to the reader of the sequence, becoming visible and known only to the reader of the whole piece. However, once the reader has disassembled the work and attained this perspective (rather than simply referring to the small image at the back of the book), there can be no way back to the original sequence.

In this way, the work physically enacts one of the moral principles contained in Yahgulanaas' narrative, which addresses the folly of vengeance and the ways in which hindsight can force people to reconsider the value of taking revenge. The most explicit presentation of this idea in the narrative comes when the titular Red presents his sister with the head of a man whom he believes to be an enemy, a raider who came to his home and kidnapped his sister many years previously. His sister is despairing: 'My husband! Red! What have you done?' she asks. 'He was the father of my child. A good man. *Your* brother-in-law' (Yahgulanaas, 2010: 89). Red is stupefied, and stands alone in the sea lamenting his mistake. Though this is not the end of the narrative (which continues with further violence and culminates in Red's suicide), it is still a pivotal moment: it represents the point at which the ties that bind together the various players in the narrative are made visible to Red and the actual social structures of the community (rather than those he imagines) are revealed. In like fashion, the disassembly of the book compels the reader to regard the whole and disregard the fragments: once the continuity of the line has been revealed it becomes unavoidable, and the reading experience of the individual panels are forced take place in the context of it.[8]

**Conclusion**

If '[t]he traumatized [...] carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess' (Caruth, 1995: 5), then *The Great War*, *View From the High Ground* and *Red: A Haida Manga* all suggest traumatized texts. In each case, the frame of the book contains, but is also exceeded by, an *other* text—something

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[8] Various texts use this disassembly/reassembly technique in similar ways, although the overall effects of it depend upon the individual text. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss further examples here, but I refer to the reader especially to Moore (1988), Moore, Williams III and Klein (2005) and Sim (1980).

that is carried within the printed object, yet which, through some kind of physical manipulation and tactile encounter (folding, cutting, reassembly), goes beyond that object's bounds. Just as the braided image penetrates the graphic narrative, or the cracks in Streeten's vase extend beyond the juxtaposition between individual fragments, the mechanisms of manipulation here run through the work, providing both the specific encounters and general structures upon which the works hang. In this regard, they materialize the traumas they depict, while at the same time compelling the reader to enter into an active, physical relationship with those traumas.

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