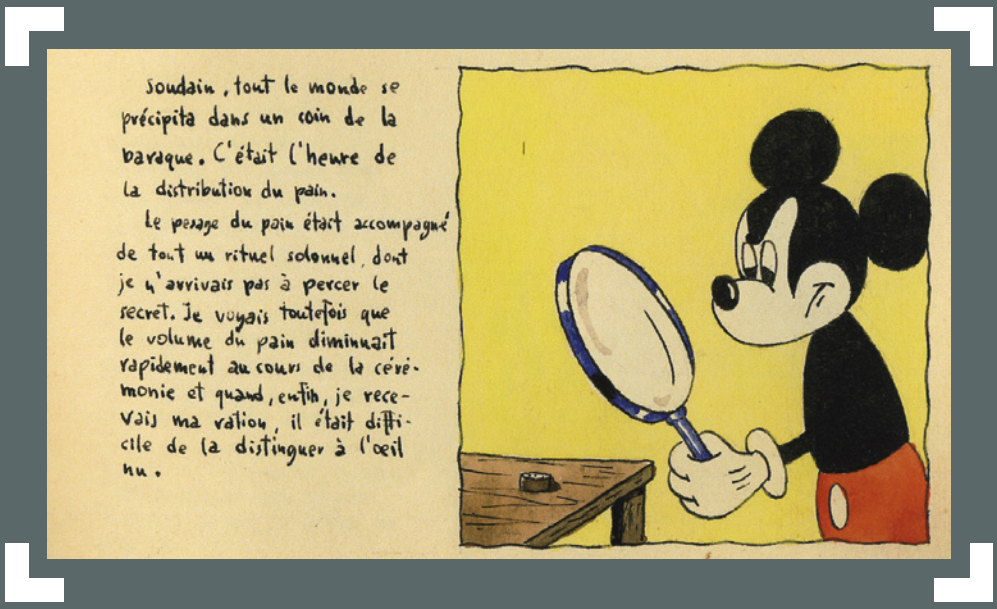


Beyond MAUS

The Legacy of Holocaust Comics

Edited by
Ole Frahm
Hans-Joachim Hahn
Markus Streb

böhlau



© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

Schriften des Centrums für Jüdische Studien

Band 34

Herausgegeben von Gerald Lamprecht und Olaf Terpitz

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

Ole Frahm, Hans-Joachim Hahn, Markus Streb (eds.)

BEYOND MAUS

The Legacy of Holocaust Comics

BÖHLAU VERLAG WIEN KÖLN WEIMAR

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665



Published with the support from:
Amt der Steiermärkischen Landesregierung

Die Drucklegung des Bandes wurde durch die Fritz Thyssen Stiftung für Wissenschaftsförderung gefördert.

Deutsche Nationalbibliothek Cataloging-in-publication data:
http://dnb.d-nb.de

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, Zeltgasse 1, 1080 Vienna, Austria, an imprint of the Brill-Group (Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands; Brill USA Inc., Boston MA, USA; Brill Asia Pte Ltd, Singapore; Brill Deutschland GmbH, Paderborn, Germany; Brill Österreich GmbH, Vienna, Austria)
Koninklijke Brill NV incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Hotei, Brill Schöningh, Brill Fink, Brill mentis, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Böhlau, Verlag Antike and V&R unipress.
All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any other information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

Cover Illustration: Horst Rosenthal: *Mickey AU CAMP DE GURS* 1942 ; p. 9 ©Mémorial de la Shoah, Paris.

Cover design: Michael Haderer, Vienna
Typesetting: Michael Rauscher, Vienna
Printing and binding: Hubert&Co. BuchPartner, Göttingen

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlage | www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com

ISBN 978-3-205-21066-5

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

Table of Contents

Sarah Lightman: Forward (And Backwords) 7

Ole Frahm, Hans-Joachim Hahn and Markus Streb: Introduction 11

Ole Frahm: Ghosts, Golems, Angels: The Medial Specificity of Comics Representing the Holocaust 33

I.

Kathrin Hoffmann-Curtius: Post-war Graphic Cycles 65

Emil Gruber: *Israël Souviens Toi!* Early Representations of the Holocaust Between Caricature and Comic Book 81

II.

Markus Streb: Early Representations of Concentration Camps in Golden Age Comic Books. Graphic Narratives, American Society, and the Holocaust 103

Didier Pasamonik: From the Dreyfus Affair to *MAUS*. A Short History of the Animalization of the Representation of the Jews 125

Kees Ribbens: The Invisible Jews in August Froehlich's "Nazi Death Parade" (1944). An Early American Sequential Narrative Attempt to Visualize the Final Stages of the Holocaust 133

III.

Jaqueline Berndt: Collapsing Boundaries. Mangaesque Paths Beyond *MAUS* 169

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

Susanne Korbel: The Portrayal of Children's Experiences of the Holocaust in Israeli Graphic Novels and Comics 193

Kalina Kupczyńska: Haunted But Not Healed. The Holocaust in Recent Polish Comics 209

IV.

Hans-Joachim Hahn: Distorted Traces of the Holocaust in Hergé's *Tintin* . 239

Jörn Ahrens: Hidden Atrocities. The Holocaust Framed by Edmond-François Calvo and Émile Bravo 261

V.

Georg Marschnig: "Students like it, it's still their genre." A Qualitative Approach to Teacher's Views on Holocaust Education with Comics 289

Jeff McLaughlin: Graphic Novels and the Holocaust: "Just" Comics? 305

VI.

Nina Eckhoff-Heindl and Véronique Sina: Second Generation Comics. On the Construction of (Post-)Memory in Art Spiegelman's *MAUS* and Michel Kichka's *Deuxième Génération* 333

Dana Mihăilescu: "Shot in the heart on Valentine's day". Monsters, Sexuality, the Holocaust and Late 1960s American Culture in Emil Ferris's *My Favorite Thing Is Monsters. Book I* (2017) 353

Dennis Bock: "Inside Concentration Camps". Social Life and Prisoner Societies in Comic Books and Graphic Novels 381

List of Figures 403
Contributors 410
Index 417

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

Sarah Lightman

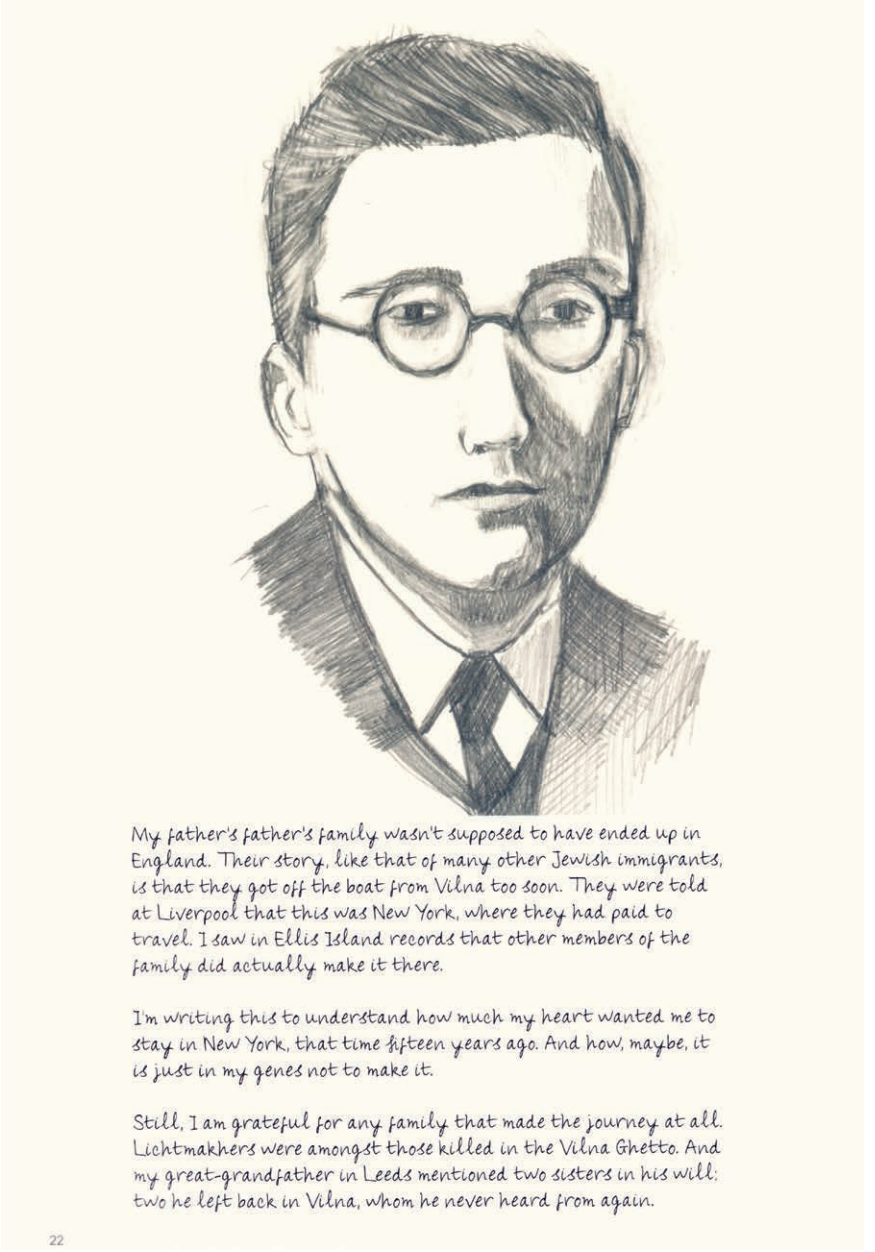
Forward (And Backwords)

With this portrait of my paternal grandfather, Harold, I ushered in the only reference to the Holocaust in my autobiographical graphic novel, *The Book of Sarah*. In contrast to the presence of my grandfather's face, the story of his father's – my great-grandfather's – written will stands like Lot's wife outside the destroyed city of Sodom, looking back at the lost sisters who stayed behind in Vilna after the pogroms at the beginning of the twentieth century. As I wrote the text for this page, I was not in any position to verify this story or the origination story about disembarking at the wrong stop, as my grandfather had died years before. But this was what I heard as I grew up, a family mythology of survival, naivety, serendipity and both good and bad luck. The shadow of the lost Lichtmakher family in the Holocaust was not spoken of frequently: firstly, that side of my family was dedicated to becoming as British as possible, and secondly, my immediate family had more pressing war damage to contend with – the breakdown of my maternal grandfather, also named Harold, after his British military service – seemed to have had more direct impact on the emotional life of the family.

I, however, extended this re-remembered/misremembered history into a new life and a new century, by naming my child Harry, after both of these Harolds. Whilst I have yet to introduce the Holocaust to my child – we are currently living through a pandemic so there is enough precarity and death in our lives these days – Harry knows his name has a history. And yet any family history I teach him will be, like this page of my graphic novel, a patriarchal story, about men who survived and recorded themselves, and about women's lives lost, and lost women's voices. I cannot even draw the sisters: we have no photos or records of them, so it can only be my grandfather's face who stands for his lost aunts. This gendered story reminds me that while Judaism is a matrilinear religion, Jewish biblical narrative and, in my case, remembered and recorded Jewish family history focus on the male line.

Which takes us to the conference and now this collection that examines the world of comics and the Holocaust: "Beyond *MAUS*. The Legacy of Holocaust Comics". "Beyond *MAUS*" was a fascinating and occasionally emotional three-day conference at the Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Graz in 2019. The conference looked, as does this collection of essays, at the history of comics before and after *MAUS*, and the role comics had, and have, in the memorialisation of the Holocaust. Art Spiegelman's ground-breaking comic was first

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665



My father's father's family wasn't supposed to have ended up in England. Their story, like that of many other Jewish immigrants, is that they got off the boat from Vilna too soon. They were told at Liverpool that this was New York, where they had paid to travel. I saw in Ellis Island records that other members of the family did actually make it there.

I'm writing this to understand how much my heart wanted me to stay in New York, that time fifteen years ago. And how, maybe, it is just in my genes not to make it.

Still, I am grateful for any family that made the journey at all. Lichtmakhers were amongst those killed in the Vilna Ghetto. And my great-grandfather in Leeds mentioned two sisters in his will; two he left back in Vilna, whom he never heard from again.

22

Sarah Lightman: The Book of Sarah 2019, Oxford: Myriad Editions, p. 22.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

published as a serial in 1980 in *RAW*, and then six chapters were published by Pantheon Books as *MAUS: A Survivor's Tale.* Although *MAUS* forms a central part of the comics canon, its pivotal concept – Jews as Mice, Nazis as Cats, Poles as Pigs – did not come from a vacuum, and in this collection Didier Pasamonik reflects on the earlier history of the animalisation of the representation of the Jews in posters and art, whilst Emil Gruber brings together representations of the Holocaust in comics and caricatures in the 1930s and 1940s. With the memorialisation and celebration of one Holocaust story in *MAUS*, other silences are heard more distinctly, and Kalina Kupczyńska recognises the political reasons behind the absence of comics about Jewish children in Poland during the Holocaust. The public status of comics was transformed when Spiegelman won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992, and the success of *MAUS* encouraged the publication of more comics about the Holocaust, and their use in educational settings. Susanne Korbel collects together the new wave of Israeli comics about children's Holocaust experiences, including Rutu Modan's *The Most Popular Girl in Warsaw* and the Hebrew translation of Ari Folman and David Polonsky's bestselling graphic adaptation of Anne Frank's Diary. Meanwhile, Georg Marschnig asks what role comics play in the Holocaust education. *MAUS* has been translated into thirty languages, but there are plenty of lesser-known comics, and shared themes, that would do well to be studied more. Markus Streb examines images of concentration camp comics in Golden Age Comics, Dennis Bock analyses trends and shifts in the depictions of concentration camp societies in his essay, Kees Ribbens studies the lesser-known "Nazi Death Parade" by August M. Froehlich and Ole Frahm reflects on the role of repetitions in serialised Holocaust images. Some comics creators turned away as history happened around them, and in his essay Hans-Joachim Hahn writes about distorted traces of the Holocaust in comics by Hergé, who never engaged directly with Nazi genocide, or with the fate of the Jews, whilst Jörn Ahrens focuses on Émile Bravo's contribution to the Franco–Belgian comics classic series Spirou, as a hero who matures within the setting of occupied Belgium during World War II. Going beyond *MAUS* also means looking beyond the traditional format of comics and of anglophone comics in particular. Kathrin Hoffmann-Curtius examines post-war graphic cycles, and Jaqueline Berndt queries the genderedness of comics-specific memory in manga. Art Spiegelman fêted Emil Ferris as one of the most important comics artists of our time, and her novel *My Favorite Thing Is Monsters*, a story of female characters and their Holocaust trauma, is discussed in this collection by Dana Mihăilescu. Finally, Nina Eckhoff-Heindl and Véronique Sina write about myth-making in second-generation Holocaust survivors, in both *MAUS* and Michel Kichka's *Deuxième Génération.*

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

When I return to my drawn page now, framed "Beyond *MAUS*", I appreciate it as myth, memory, multigenerational Holocaust lost stories, a true version of recalled, gendered, family oral history. I play with the possibility of placing my work beyond any tight definition of comics – this page of *The Book of Sarah* might fit into the more expansive field of graphic cycles about the Holocaust. Primarily, I understand "Beyond *MAUS*" as a collective reminder to look back and forward with no fear, unlike Lot's wife: to examine new works being made today about the Holocaust whilst also finding innovative ways to understand works made years before.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

Ole Frahm, Hans-Joachim Hahn and Markus Streb

Introduction

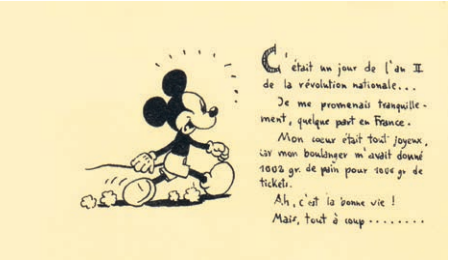


Fig. 1 *Mickey au Camp de Gurs* by Horst Rosenthal

In 1942, Horst Rosenthal drew a booklet named *Mickey au Camp de Gurs* "without the authorisation of Walt Disney" (fig. 1).[1] It shows us unmistakably that there is a connection between comics and the Holocaust that predates Art Spiegelman's ground-breaking *MAUS. A Survivor's Tale*. *MAUS* convinced the international public with its personal and autobiographical story of the survivor Vladek Spiegelman on black and white comics pages. And this work provoked many discussions since it depicted its characters as chimeras, human bodies with animal heads. Jews are depicted with the heads of mice, for example, and the Germans with those of cats (fig. 2). With *MAUS* the whole perception of the relation between comics and the Holocaust shifted. Other artists felt encouraged, and earlier works like Rosenthal's were seen in a new light. In *Mickey au Camp de Gurs* Mickey Mouse, Rosenthal's alter ego, is arrested on the street for being an international. He is brought to the camp of Gurs, which he observes like a detective. In the end, in a touching fantasy, Mickey leaves for America, the land of freedom. This little story also proves that already while the atrocities were taking place, there were narratives with serial images trying to tell the story of what was later to become known as the Holocaust.[2] Rosenthal condenses the experience

1 Kotek, Joël/Pasamonik, Didier: Mickey à Gurs. Les Carnets de dessin de Horst Rosenthal, Paris 2014.

2 That the term 'Holocaust' is now used around the globe to refer to the German genocide of European Jewry is a result of the tremendous impact of the TV mini-series *Holocaust*, which was first broadcast in 1978. We use the term 'Shoah' synonymously. Only because "Holocaust" has become the most established signifier for the murder of European Jewry we continue to use the term although there has been serious criticism of its connotations ever since: The ancient Greek word *holokaustos* referred to an animal sacrifice, completely consumed by fire. It also bears

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665



Fig. 2 The Unmasking of the "Jews" by Germans. Art Spiegelman: *MAUS. A Survivor's Tale*, p. 155

of the systematic persecution of the Jews into a story featuring a character taken from comics.

Beyond MAUS. The Legacy of Holocaust Comics assembles some of the contributions from the international conference with the same title, which was held at the Center for Jewish Studies in Graz, Austria in May 2019, as well as a few new contributions. We started discussing the idea of such a conference exclusively dedicated to serialized images of the Holocaust in early 2017 at a meeting of the Villigster Forschungsforum zu Nationalsozialismus, Rassismus und Antisemitismus (Villigst Research Group on National Socialism, Racism, and Antisemitism).[3] Some of the questions that came up right at the start accompanied the whole process that eventually led to the conference and the edited volume at hand: What role do comics play in the discourse about the Holocaust and in today's cultures of memory? What are their possibilities, what new perspectives do they offer, which old certainties do they call into question? What can the aesthetics of comics contribute to discussions about the representation of the Holocaust? The essays gathered in this volume will not provide unified answers to these questions, but a variety of them – and we hope that they will encourage further discussion.

Christian anti-Jewish traits. On the discussion see Hahn, Hans-Joachim: Repräsentationen des Holocaust. Zur westdeutschen Erinnerungskultur seit 1979, Heidelberg 2005, pp. 42–43.

3 We find it quite amazing and confirmatory that in 2018, when the planning of our conference had already been at its peak, Ewa Stańczyk edited a special issue of the Journal of Modern Jewish Studies, using "Beyond MAUS" as part of the title as well. The special issue was later turned into a book. The obviousness of the title "Beyond MAUS" points at the urgent need to widen the focus of the existing research on the topic, like contributors to Ewa Stańczyk's edited volume and to our edited volume do.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

Transmission

In his essay "When Did the Holocaust End?" Martin Jay writes about the footage that was shot in Bergen-Belsen after the liberation of the camp: "These are images that resist closure and mourning and normalization; they are testimony to the ways that we can never know the Holocaust as an objective reality, but will surely still feel its unsettling power long after the last survivor goes to her grave."[4] It is typical for a lot of writings about the genocide of the Jews that they primarily consider photography and film, that is, traces of light captured by photographic emulsion. And for sure there are good reasons for that. George Didi-Huberman convincingly argues in *Images in Spite of All* with regard to the series of four images secretly exposed by a member of the Sonderkommando at Auschwitz-Birkenau that photographic images are specific witnesses of the destruction.[5] Quoting Hannah Arendt, Huberman claims that these photographs offer "instants of truth,"[6] while on the other hand one of David Olére's drawings of the *Sonderkommando* done 1947 is described "in terms of a *deferred action*".[7] And even if he concedes that this deferred action can be "an integral part of the sudden appearance of the image,"[8] the art historian fails to write about series of drawings like the very important one by MM.[9]

This is even more surprising if one considers that the four "images in spite of all" are the only known photographs of Auschwitz made by prisoners, which thus offer a different view of the extermination than the photographs by the SS, which still dominate public (visual) discourses. However, in argumentations like the one presented by Jay the vast number of drawings by prisoners are overlooked. These drawings bear witness and resist closure in many ways – and provide a singular perspective on the extermination of the Jews in the death camps in the villages and the ghettos. Drawings by prisoners have always been an im-

4 Jay, Martin: When Did the Holocaust End? in: Martin Jay: Refractions of Violence, New York/London 2003, pp. 47–60, here p. 60.

5 Didi-Huberman, George: Images in Spite of All. Four Photographs from Auschwitz, Chicago/London 2008.

6 Ibid., p. 31.

7 Ibid., p. 30. While Didi-Huberman reproduces the photos and reproduction of the photos, he does not show Olère's drawing, only the reference. Serge Klarsfeld (ed.): David Olère. The Eyes of a Witness. A Painter in the Sonderkommando of Auschwitz, New York 1989.

8 Didi-Huberman: Images in Spite of All, p. 30.

9 Instead, Didi-Huberman prefers to reason about the writings by members of the *Sonderkommando* that were found after the liberation, see ibid., pp. 30–31. He ignores MM's drawings totally. They were already available but not published in a book of its own – Sieradzka, Agnieszka (ed.): The Sketchbook from Auschwitz, Oświęciem 2011. See also Frahm's contribution in this volume for more details.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

portant source but only began to attract public interest in the last twenty years. Immediately after the war, grey literature bloomed, but only for a short time, during which pamphlets of prisoner's drawings were printed and distributed.[10] Drawings like the sketchbook of someone with the pseudonym MM were found, but not published. For a long time after that, there were few publications or discussions of such drawings from the camps.

In the early eighties, when Art Spiegelman had already began publishing his outstanding comic *MAUS* chapter by chapter in *RAW,* there was only the collection by Janet Blatter and Sybil Milton.[11] Spiegelman published the second volume of *MAUS* in 1991, two years before Zvi Amishai-Maisel's seminal work *Depiction and Interpretation: The Influence of the Holocaust on the Visual Arts*, which made a lot of drawings from the camps available for a wider audience.[12] She discusses some serial works, like the one by Lea Grundig, but ignores series, such as those by Rosenthal or MM. At the same time, she shows how some motifs gain a certain seriality in art depicting the Holocaust. Until today, there are not many studies about the specific aesthetics, ethics and the historical truth serial drawings provide. While Spiegelman quotes the *Sonderkommando* photos in *MAUS*, pointing out their importance twelve years before Didi-Huberman's study was published,[13] he also strikingly refers to several drawings done by prisoners.[14] He was, for example, well aware of the drawings done by the Jewish survivor and artist Alfred Kantor. His *The Book of Alfred Kantor* was produced in 1946 and eventually published in 1971.[15] It contains a series of hand-drawn and annotated images that were already partly conceived and pencilled during his imprisonment in the camps Theresienstadt, Auschwitz and Schwarzheide.

One could understand Spiegelman's venture as a specific kind of transmission of the prisoner drawings. In *MAUS* one does not find any quotations of photos taken by Nazi photographers that show people,[16] but many references to Kan-

10 Spiegelman, Art: MetaMAUS. A Look Inside a Modern Classic, MAUS, New York 2011, for example the documents in the DVD section "Anja's Bookshelf" with printed drawings from Ravensbrück.

11 Blatter, Janet/Milton, Sybil (eds.): Art of the Holocaust, New York 1981.

12 Amishai-Maisels, Ziva: Depiction and Interpretation. The Influence of the Holocaust on the Visual Arts, Oxford 1993.

13 Spiegelman, Art: MAUS. A Survivor's Tale II. And Here My Troubles Began…, New York 1991, p. 72.

14 Cf. Frahm, Ole: Genealogie des Holocaust. Art Spiegelmans *MAUS. A Survivor's Tale*, Paderborn 2006, chapter 2.2–2.4.

15 Kantor, Alfred: The Book of Alfred Kantor, New York 1971.

16 Cf. Frahm, Genealogie des Holocaust, pp. 152–154.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

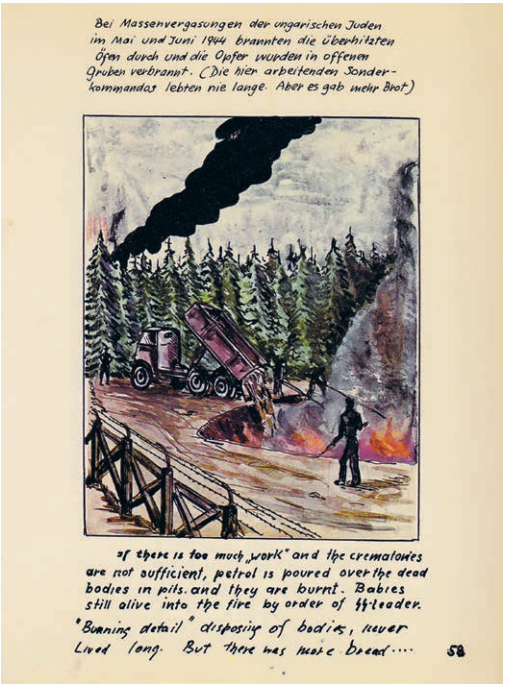


Fig. 3 Alfred Kantor's Image "In Spite of All". Alfred Kantor: *The Book of Alfred Kantor*, p. 58

tor's drawings.[17] One of these references is the recurrent chimney.[18] *MAUS II* quotes Kantor's repetition of the motif to reflect the continuous burning of the corpses and the preceding killings. By quoting Kantor's series in their seriality and also serialising single prisoner drawings, *MAUS* translates these documents, these very specific works of art with their own aesthetics, into the very different aesthetics of comics. While there is much literature about *MAUS* concerning its position within the arts reflecting on the Holocaust, or about the 'postmemory' it activates,[19] there is not very much literature about the relation between this comic and the role that prisoner's drawings played as source material.[20]

One of the reasons may be that serial prisoner drawings as such, especially those by untrained artists like Kantor or MM, are also not usually discussed as a genre of their own. In a way, this connects them with comics. Comics only began to see greater critical attention once they were not just published as series,

17 Cf. Spiegelman, MetaMAUS, on the DVD there is lots of this material related to the pages.

18 Frahm, Genealogie des Holocaust, pp. 207–218.

19 See the contribution by Eckhoff-Heindl/Sina in this volume.

20 There is also not much literature about *MAUS* in the context of the history of comics, except for the reference to Disney.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

in newspapers or comic books, but as single books, as *graphic novels*. With this development the interest in comics about the Holocaust also grew. It led to some important contributions in the field, on which this volume relies.[21] The critical literature about serial prisoner drawings as a distinct genre is still quite small.[22] One of the first works that recognised serial drawings as a genre relevant to the Holocaust is Kathrin Hoffmann-Curtius' seminal *Judenmord: Art and the Holocaust in Post-War Germany*.[23] So far, the sole monograph about the subject is *Das Lager von Bild zu Bild* (The Camp from Image to Image) by Jörn Wendland.[24] This volume would like to take these approaches and bring them into the broader context of comics, which either consciously or unconsciously pick up the dispersed traditions the serial drawings of prisoners established.

Above all, we would like to understand *Beyond MAUS: The Legacy of Holocaust Comics* in this context as a significant attempt to recognise a large corpus of comics about the Holocaust, and to deliver fundamental analyses and provide material for further discussions. Moreover, we hope to encourage new research that can bring additional examples to light.

Beyond MAUS does *not* mean that we want to forget about Spiegelman's ground-breaking contribution. We would like rather to understand *MAUS* in the manifold chains of signs, the many series of drawings and panels that in very different ways also deal in one way or another with the impossible representation of the systematic mass murder of the Jews by the Germans and their collaborators. This includes questions like: What kind of images, after-images or

21 See for example Baskind, Samantha (ed.): The Jewish Graphic Novel. Critical Approaches, New Brunswick, NJ 2008; Palandt, Ralf (ed.): Rechtsextremismus, Rassismus und Antisemitismus in Comics, Berlin 2011; Chapman, Jane/Ellin, Dan/Sherif, Adam (eds.): Comics, the Holocaust and Hiroshima, Basingstoke/New York 2015; Royal, Derek Parker (ed.): Visualizing Jewish Narrative. Jewish Comics and Graphic Novels, London/New York et.al. 2017; Barzilai, Maya: Golem. Modern Wars and their Monsters, New York 2016; Baskind, Samantha: The Warsaw Ghetto in American Art and Culture. University Park PA 2018; Stańczyk, Ewa (ed.): Comic Books, Graphic Novels and the Holocaust: Beyond Maus, London 2018, with some of the contributers of this volume; and recently Aarons, Victoria: Holocaust Graphic Narratives. Generation, Trauma, and Memory, New Brunswick, NJ 2020.

22 Wendland, Jörn: Das Lager von Bild zu Bild, Köln/Weimar/Wien 2017, pp. 15–17. At the same time it should be stressed that in the pedagogical work of memorial sites drawings are playing an important role, but rather as documents than with regards to their specific aesthetics.

23 Hoffmann-Curtius, Kathrin: Judenmord. Art and the Holocaust in Post-War Germany, London 2018, the German version was published two years earlier. See also her contribution in this volume.

24 Wendland: Das Lager von Bild zu Bild, unfortunately not translated so far. But one of its many merits is that it provides a broad collection of series, for instance the whole series by Horst Rosenthal, *Mickey au Camps de Gurs*, there pp. 343–349.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

Fig. 4 Tableaus of Repetition: Dave Sim *Judenhass*, n. p.



counter-images do comics *other* than *MAUS* provide?[25] What kind of legacy do comics provide in the light of the remembrance of the Shoah? How do comics remember and reflect on the Holocaust, even if they do so only in passing or obliquely? What happens when they reflect images that, as Jay writes, "resist closure and mourning and normalization", like Dave Sim does so disturbingly in *Judenhass* by redrawing iconic photographs from the liberation of the camps in tableau-like non-narrative series (fig. 4)?[26] How does the (re-)drawing of images affect the discourse and our thinking about these images? With this volume we aim at presenting and analysing images by which the Holocaust is passed on to future generations.

25 Cf. Chute, Hillary L.: Disaster Drawn. Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form, Cambridge, Mass. 2016, chapter 4: MAUS's Archival Images and the Postwar Comics Field.

26 Sim, Dave: Judenhass. Kitchener 2008.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

Drawings

Beyond MAUS already suggests that, without Spiegelman's still impressive approach, this undertaking would not have been imaginable.[27] Through his drawings and writings, he argued convincingly that there is a certain connection between the Holocaust, the story of the survivor and comics. Although Spiegelman did not know Horst Rosenthal's *Micky au camp de Gurs* when he started to work on *MAUS*,[28] and we do not know if he recognised the series of drawings by MM as a series,[29] he was well aware of works by concentration camp inmates like Alfred Kantor and comics like "Master Race" by Al Feldstein and Bernard Krigstein.[30] He incorporated the knowledge about art from the camps into his works and thus into the pictorial legacy of comics in general. In this vein, we want to broaden our view by considering series of prisoner drawings that bear a certain similarity to the functioning modes of comics. We think it is worth reflecting on the specific relation between such series and the Holocaust, both with respect to the drawings themselves as well as their seriality.

Ole Frahm's introductory considerations in *Ghosts, Golems and Angels: The Medial Specificity of Comics Representing the Holocaust* single out three means that are present in serialized images that make comics particularly apt for representing the Holocaust: the repetition of stereotypes, the repetition of images and the repetition of word and image. Analysing works by Henry Darger, MM and the survivor Yehuda Bacon, he shows how these repetitions are intertwined with three very different comics from three decades, from the 1950s, 1970s and 2000s.

Closely related in her approach, though with very different material, is Kathrin Hoffmann-Curtius's interpretation in *Post-war Graphic Cycles*. She discusses three works that are rather neglected by art historians: Lea Grundig's *Valley of Slaughter*, Eduard Winkler's *Brown Death* and Jerzy Zielezinski's *K.Z. Album*. Hoffmann-Curtius draws the attention to the framing of these cycles

27 We are not concerned with the impact of *MAUS* on the development of the graphic novel in general as described by Gordon, Ian: Let Us Not Call Them Graphic Novels. Comic Books as Biography and History, in: Radical History Review 106 (Winter 2010), pp. 185–192.

28 The first attempts to deal with the story of his perents were published 1972, Spiegelman, Art: MAUS, in Spiegelman, Art: Breakdowns. From Maus to Now, San Francisco 1977, n. pag. First published in *Funny Aminals* [sic!] 1972, pp. 1–3. The booklet of Rosenthal was given 1978 to the Foundation de Shoah in Paris (see Didier Pasamonik's contribution in this volume).

29 The sketchbook as a series was not published earlier than 2011, Sieradzka: The Sketchbook from Auschwitz.

30 Spiegelman,Art/Benson, John/Kasakove, David: Master Race: The Graphic Story as an Art Form, in Spiegelman, Art: Comix, Essays, Graphics & Scraps. From Maus to Now to MAUS to Now, New York 1999, pp. 86–90.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665



Fig. 5 The Big Bad Wolf Disguised as "Jewish Peddler", in: *Three Little Pigs* (1933) (filmstill)



Fig. 6 Practical Pig Disguised as an "Italian Greengrocer", in: *Three Little Wolves* (1936) (filmstill)

as well as to recurring figures, discussing similarities between these examples of serial images and comics – but she also stresses important conceptual differences regarding the representation of the Holocaust.

Stereotypes, Masks, and Antisemitism

In his book *The Longest Shadow* Geoffrey Hartman called popular representations of the Holocaust a "Pandora's box", exemplifying this with Art Spiegelman's *MAUS* and Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List*, mainly because of their usage of stereotypes.[31] Stereotypes of Jews as repeated in comics are often associated primarily with the long tradition of antisemitic caricatures, propagating the image of the Jews as despicable and animal-like. And there are of course numerous examples of this. One may mention Eduard Fuchs who collected antisemitic caricatures as a reaction to the rise of antisemitism in Germany during and after the First World War. Fuchs published some of them in his famous book *Die*

31 Hartman, Geoffrey: The Longest Shadow. In the Aftermath of the Holocaust, Bloomington/Indianapolis 1996, p. 12.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

Juden in der Karikatur ("Jews in Caricature") in 1921.[32] His book however also reminds us of the fact that not every stereotyped Jewish figure in caricatures, comics or animated films was necessarily part of an antisemitic discourse.[33] One famous example beyond the scope of Fuchs' sample is a short cartoon sequence of Walt Disney's *The Three Little Pigs* (1933) from the *Silly Symphonies* series. Here, the Big Bad Wolf disguises himself as a stereotypical Jewish door-to-door salesman, whereas in the sequel *Three Little Wolves* (1936) Practical Pig, the cleverest of the three pigs, disguises himself as an Italian greengrocer in order to distract the wolf and free his brothers Fifer and Fiddler (fig. 5 and 6).

The mocking can, at least partially, be read as humour based on ethnic stereotypes in a society of immigrants. Caroline Fourest notes in a recent publication that it was quite common, especially in the United States, to caricature people alongside ascribed stereotypical group identities until long into the 1930s.[34] Such stereotypical figures as "the drinking Irishman", "the sweet Italian" or, in Disney's cartoon, the Jewish door-to-door salesman and the Italian greengrocer are of course highly ambivalent. Comics (and cartoons) were crucial "in representing, constructing, and reifying the immigrant subject".[35] Returning to our example, some remarks should be added: In the two Disney films mentioned above, both stereotypical images serve as disguises for the Big Bad Wolf and Practical Pig, respectively. Both characters are of course already stereotypes themselves, centred around one driving characteristic aspect: The wolf wants to eat the pigs who try to escape and mock their adversary. Clearly, the wolf's disguise of the Jewish door-to-door salesman repeats the old antisemitic stereotype of the "Jewish nose", introduced into Western discourse in the Christian Middle Ages.[36] But the repetition of the stereotype in the cartoon unmasks it as ridiculous.[37] In fact,

32 Fuchs, Eduard: Die Juden in der Karikatur. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte, München 1921.

33 For a detailed analysis of Fuchs's seminal collection see Frahm, Ole: Eduard Fuchs' karikierende Antisemitismustheorie, in: Hahn, Hans-Joachim/Kistenmacher, Olaf (eds.): Beschreibungsversuche der Judenfeindschaft. Zur Geschichte der Antisemitismusforschung vor 1944, Berlin/Munich/Boston 2015, pp. 426–450.

34 Fourest, Caroline: Generation beleidigt. Von der Sprachpolizei zur Gedankenpolizei. Über den wachsenden Einfluss linker Identitärer. Eine Kritik. From the French by Alexander Carstiuc, Mark Feldon and Christoph Hesse. Berlin 2020, p. 40. Douglas Brode has made this point as well in his seminal study on multiculturalism in Walt Disney's world. See Brode, Douglas: Multiculturalism and the Mouse. Race and Sex in Disney Entertainment, Austin, TX 2005, p. 102.

35 Serrano, Nhora Lucía: Immigrants and Comics: Graphic Spaces of Remembrance, Transaction, and Mimesis, New York/London 2021 (forthcoming).

36 Cf. Lipton, Sarah: The Invention of the Jewish Nose, in: The New York Review, November 14th 2014, online: https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2014/11/14/invention-jewish-nose/, accessed 9/1/2021.

37 Brode reminds us of the fact that it is the wolf, and *not* the filmmaker, who "presents" the stereo-

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

what we observe is a series of repetitions. When the Big Bad Wolf disguises himself as a Jewish peddler, this repeats the anti-Jewish stereotype but also makes it plainly visible simultaneously. Therefore, one could argue, the stereotype has become visible *as a stereotype* precisely because its repetition by the wolf is portrayed as a quotation. In light of the sequel, the transferring moment of repetition becomes even more apparent: Now it is Practical Pig and the disguise of the Italian greengrocer which is repeating the play on stereotypes. Additionally, the Big Bad Wolf in the sequel of 1936 is presented to the viewer as German, speaking a mixture of American English and German. This indicates another transferring repetition: The Big Bad Wolf can be used as an image to represent German aggression and National Socialism in a fairy tale world.

In short, there are a lot of ambivalent historical images, which hint at the fact that stereotypes in popular culture in general and comics specifically always demand careful analysis. Without a doubt, the recurrent characters of the serial strips in newspapers as well as those of the comic books are stereotypes. As Frahm argues in his analysis of antisemitic traits in Hergé's comic series *Tintin et Milou* (The Adventures of Tintin), Tintin, the main protagonist of the adventures, even forms something like an "empty, as it were, meaningless stereotype".[38] Precisely this allows the readers to distance themselves from the character Tintin. Nevertheless, and this is Hartman's argument, caricatures (and, in their grotesque aesthetics, comics too) had their part in fostering the persecution and destruction of the Jews.

With this problematic aspect of the history of caricatures in mind, it is especially noteworthy that caricatures were also produced to fight against the persecution of the Jews of Europe, as Emil Gruber's contribution *Israël souviens toi! Early Representations of the Holocaust Between Caricature and Comic Book* forcefully demonstrates. The article uncovers a multitude of examples from the early 1930s and 1940s, many of which are nearly forgotten today. These caricatures were used under different historical circumstances, from left wing criticism of Fascism in Austria even before the Nazis came to power to propaganda material against the German occupiers in Poland during World War II. Gruber also points to an anti-Fascist booklet named *The Yellow Spot* from 1936 which even included antisemitic caricatures from the infamous *Stürmer* because these were seen as proof of the German persecution of the Jews. This underlines the

type of the Jewish peddler. And the wolf wants to convince the pigs of his innocence: by disguising as a Jew. Convincingly Brode concludes: "Jews, by implication, are 'good'; evil incarnate, trying to disguise itself, assumes the form of a Jew, someone who may be 'different' yet can be trusted." Brode: Multiculturalism and the Mouse, pp. 102–103.

38 Frahm, Ole: Die Sprache des Comics, Hamburg 2010, p. 290. The translation is ours.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

importance of concrete practices as well as of the framing and reception of the caricatures: Here the replacement and repetition of the disturbing antisemitic image is used as a means of enlightenment. A complementary set of examples reflecting on the depiction of Jews is presented by Didier Pasamonik. In his article *From the Dreyfus Affair to MAUS: A Short History of the Animalization of the Representation of the Jews*, he shows how often Jews were debased by the use of animal images. Pasamonik briefly sketches the long history of these denigrating comparisons from antiquity to Nazism, with a stronger emphasis on the period of the late 19th century onwards.

How are such stereotypes of Jews reflected in comics after the Holocaust? What images of "the Jew" do they provide? And how are Jews marked as such? Markus Streb's article *Early Representations of Concentration Camps in Golden Age Comic Books* examines, looking at a large number of lesser-known examples, how the first waves of comics referring to the German atrocities portray different groups of victims and almost ignore Jews as a specific group completely.

Forgotten Comics

Speaking of tracing, collecting, or analysing forgotten and lesser-known examples, it is important for us to point out a large number of comics that have never or only rarely been addressed by scholars or collectors and comics enthusiasts.

Generally speaking, there is a rather small, informally canonised, yet not fixed, corpus of comics that is almost exclusively referenced when it comes to discussing comics about the Shoah. Apart from *MAUS*, Joe Kubert's *Yossel*, Miriam Katin's *We are on Our Own* and Pascal Croci's *Auschwitz* are some of the most prominent examples in this limited corpus. In contrast, we have been able to identify more than 400 comics that deal with the Shoah in one way or another so far. From early horror and romance comics in the 1950s, to 1970s superhero and action comics, to more than fifty comics about Anne Frank and recent zombie stories, as well as an ever-growing number of graphic novels from the last two decades, a plethora of comics is still waiting to be discovered and discussed.

We would like to highlight two recent outstanding publications that have helped to uncover some of these hidden comics. One is the exhibition catalogue accompanying the exhibition *Shoah et bande dessinée*, curated by Didier Pasamonik and Joël Kotek. The other publication is *We spoke out: Comic Books and the Holocaust*, which collects shorter comic stories about the Holocaust that were published before *MAUS*.[39] While the latter publication deals exclusively

39 Pasamonik, Didier/Kotek, Joël (eds.): Shoah et bande dessinée. L'image au service de la mémoire,

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

with comics from the US, the exhibition catalogue adopts a broader perspective, including a vast number of international comics.

International Comics

Most of the comics dealing with the Shoah were and still are published in the United States or on the Franco-Belgian comics market. Accordingly, the majority of the better-known examples belong to this group. However, beginning in the early 1960s, there are examples from a wider variety of countries: There is a large number of (mostly biographical) comics from Central and South America, there are examples from Southern and Eastern Europe and from Shanghai. The last decades even saw an increase in publications from Germany and Austria, coinciding with a growing public acceptance of comics in these two countries. Furthermore, there is a large corpus of comics dealing with Anne Frank, most of which have been published in Central and South America and Asia. However diverse and incomparable the different comics might be, we think it is important to understand that the remembrance of the Holocaust has become an international phenomenon that is recognisable in the field of comics as it is elsewhere.

In this volume we especially want to shed light on comics from Japan, Israel and Poland: Jaqueline Berndt focusses on two examples of Japanese manga and their approaches to depicting Anne Frank and the Shoah in her article *Collapsing Boundaries: Mangaesque Paths Beyond MAUS*. Her analysis considers aspects like gender and genre and uncovers a number of collapsing boundaries and emergent fusions in her examples. Berndt shows how an excessive use of cuteness is used to portray Anne Frank in manga. In *The Portrayal of Children's Experiences of the Holocaust in Israeli Graphic Novels and Comics,* Susanne Korbel discusses recent Israeli publications and shows how they reflect both contemporary debates and historical narratives. Among other examples, such as the early works of Rutu Modan, she discusses a comics version of the story of Anne Frank as well, showing how important re-enactment is as an (pedagogical) strategy to deal with the Holocaust in comics. Kalina Kupczyńska traces rare contemporary examples of educational and alternative Polish comics dealing with Jewish life and the Shoah in *Haunted but not healed: The Holocaust in recent Polish Comics*. She makes us aware of a growing number of comics commissioned and developed by memorials and museums. In light of a growing nationalist interpretation of Polish history, the representation of the Shoah in

Paris 2017; Adams, Neal/Medoff, Rafael/Yoe, Craig (eds.): We Spoke Out. Comic Books and the Holocaust, San Diego CA 2018.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

comics provides an interesting case study of how this trend is both reflected and criticised in alternative comics.

All three articles open up new perspectives for the analysis of international dimensions of Holocaust remembrance in comics. By offering deep insights into the interrelatedness of societies, memorial cultures, and comics, they also remind us that many examples from other parts of the world are still waiting to be discussed and contextualised. Current research is only at the beginning of a process of discovering the multitude of comics about the Holocaust from all around the world.

Figures of the Holocaust

Comics became famous for their characters. In the early days slapstick protagonists like the *Yellow Kid*, *Happy Hooligan* or the animal strip *Krazy Kat* entertained a mass audience. With the Great Depression, heroic figures became more popular, some of whom still populate the popular imagination. These include not only comic/funny ones like *Popeye* or *Tintin* and later *Spirou* but also *Superman* and the many other superheroes who would later save the world from the Nazis. Both types of protagonists do not seem to be particularly appropriate characters for stories about the Holocaust, and thus it is no coincidence that horror comics became a preferred genre for telling such stories in the first years after the war. Lawrence L. Langer has argued that the survivor does not fit the role of the hero and its implied narrative structures.[40] *MAUS* – and this is an important contribution in the history of comics – abstains from a traditional hero.[41] However, the role of the heroic in comics about the Shoah remains a topic of discussion, since there are comics like the unfinished series *Au nom des tous les miens* by Patrick Cothias and Paul Gillon, which revolve around heroic and mostly male characters.[42] Recent publications like the series *Chutz-Pow! Superheroes of the Holocaust*, which was edited by the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh, also focus on the motif of the heroic.[43]

40 Langer, Lawrence L.: Holocaust Testimonies. The Ruins of Memory, New Haven/London 1991.

41 Gordon, Joan: Surviving the Survivor. Art Spiegelman's *MAUS*, in: Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts 5/2, 1993, pp. 81–89

42 Cothias, Patrick/Gillon, Paul: Au nom des tous le miens. Les fourmis, Paris 1986; ibid.: Au nom des tous le miens. Les renards, Paris 1987. See Frahm, Ole/Hein, Michael: Hilflose Täter. Was Auschwitz in einigen Comic-Geschichten verloren hat, in Kaps, Joachim (ed.): Comic Almanach 1993, Wimmelbach 1993, pp. 90–106.

43 In his paper presented at the conference *Beyond MAUS* in Graz, Martin Lund argued that, especially in American comics, there is a tendency to portray protagonists and survivors as super-

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

In this volume Jörn Ahrens takes a look at Émile Bravo's refiguring of one of the icons of Franco-Belgian comic history, Spirou, in *Le journal d'un ingénu* (The Diary of a Naive Young Man) and the still open-ended series *L'Espoir malgré tout* (Hope Against All Odds), all drawn by Émile Bravo. Ahrens' essay *Hidden Atrocities. The Holocaust Framed by Edmund Calvo and Émile Bravo* calls into question the characters which help to mediate our approach to the Holocaust. In a close reading he argues that the anthropomorphic figures of Calvo's *La bête est morte!* and Bravo's Spirou are two "possible ends of an iconographic reflection on the atrocities of the Holocaust in the medium of comics". Both comics reflect their respective means and, in Bravo's case, also the history of the medium itself. In *Distorted Traces of the Holocaust in Hergé's Tintin* Hans-Joachim Hahn dismantles the other indisputable hero of the classic era of Franco-Belgian comics. Referring to the image of the mirage and other misleading traces that are repeatedly found in *Tintin et Milou* (The Adventures of Tintin), Hahn not only calls into question how we read comics, but also how we should read displaced, deformed and more subtle traces of history in these comics.

More generally we would like to ask: What kind of (perhaps distorted) figures of the Holocaust reappear in the comics? Sometimes they are explicitly related to monsters, like in Emil Ferris' graphic novel discussed by Dana Mihăilescu. Sometimes golems appear, like in *Breath of Bones* by Steve Niles and Dave Wachter or in *The Golem's Voice* by David G. Klein.[44] We must also consider characters like the *Muselmann* that "no one wants to draw" but which appear in comics.[45] How survivors will reappear in future comics remains to be seen.

We would like to point out that there is one figure who is largely absent in this volume: that of the superhero (or likewise, villains like Holocaust).[46] The reason is certainly not that there are no such stories. "The Night of the Reaper" or "The Golem of Gotham,"[47] both starring Batman, show the ambivalent relation

heroes. He claims that we might be seeing a specific form of "hyper-Americanization" of the Holocaust in superhero fictions like the *X-Men* series or *Chutz-Pow!*.

44 Niles, Steve/Santoro, Matt/Wachter, Dave: Breath of Bones. A Tale of the Golem, Milwaukie 2014. Klein, David G.: The Golem's Voice, n.p. 2015. See Frahm, Ole: Mickey und der Golem: Reflexionen des Holocaust im Comic, in: Bannasch, Bettina/Hahn, Hans-Joachim (eds.): Darstellen, Vermitteln, Aneignen: Gegenwärtige Reflexionen des Holocaust, Göttingen 2018, pp. 215–256.

45 Frahm, Ole/Streb, Markus: No one wants to draw the *Muselmann*? Visual Representations of the *Muselmann* in Comics, in The Journal of Holocaust Research, 34, 3 (2020), pp. 241–261.

46 Holocaust first appears 1995 in Lobdell, Scott/Cruz, Roger/Epting, Steve: X-Men Alpha, 1, New York: Marvel 1995.

47 O'Neil, Dan/Adams, Neil: The Night of the Reaper, in Batman 237, New York: DC 1971; Milligan, Peter/Aparo, Jim/DeCarlo, Mike: The Golem of Gotham, in Detective Comics 631, New

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

between the superhero and the survivor, in both cases questioning what kind of justice is possible and acceptable. The numerous references to the Holocaust throughout the Superman series could also be considered. For other topics, like the role of the Holocaust in the X-Men comics, especially with regard to the survivor Magneto, extensive discussions have already begun and are ongoing.[48] In this context, beyond the question of stereotypes, questions of body concepts, masculinity, gendering and the production of clichés arise and can be, for example, related to the recurring depiction of the tall, cold-blooded SS officer.[49]

Limits of representation

The crucial questions of representations of the Holocaust are always linked to all sorts of different limitations. A famous volume with articles on the problems of historical writings on the Holocaust edited by Saul Friedländer 1992 was titled *Probing the Limits of Representation*.[50] These limits have to do with the event itself and the fact that the SS tried to eliminate most traces of the crime. Just recently, a new study was published on the SS officer Paul Blobel and the *Sonderkommando 1005* who forced prisoners to dig up mass graves and burn the corpses.[51] Another limitation has to do with the difficulties people outside of occupied Europe had in truly understanding what was going on in the camps. A very interesting, almost forgotten series of drawings is discussed in Kees Ribbens' article *The Invisible Jews in August Froehlich's "Nazi Death Parade" (1944): An early American sequential narrative attempt to visualize the final stages of the Holocaust*. Ribbens argues that the publication *Bloody Record*, containing serial images on the genocide, was intended to convince the public in the United States

York: DC 1991; Milligan, Peter/Aparo, Jim/DeCarlo, Mike: The Golem of Gotham, in Detective Comics 632, New York: DC 1991.

48 See for example Bower, Kathrin: Holocaust Avengers. From "The Master Race" to Magneto, in: International Journal of Comic Art 6/2 (2004), pp. 182–194; Christiansen, Ole Johan/Plischke, Thomas: From Perpetrator to Victim and Back Again. The Supervillain Magneto as a Representative of the Holocaust in Superhero Comics, in: Rohr, Susanne/Komor, Sophia (eds.): The Holocaust, Art, and Taboo. Transatlantic Exchanges on the Ethics and Aesthetics of Representation, Heidelberg 2010, pp. 179–201; Pettitt, Joanne: Remembering the Holocaust in American superhero comics, in: Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics 10/1, 2019, pp. 155–166.

49 Cf. in't Velt, Laurike: The Representation of Genocide in Graphic Novels: Considering the Role of Kitsch, Cham 2019.

50 Friedländer, Saul (ed.): Probing the Limits of Representation. Nazism and the 'Final Solution', Cambridge/London 1992.

51 Angrick, Andrej: 'Aktion 1005'. Spurenbeseitigung von NS-Massenverbrechen 1942–1945. Eine 'geheime Reichssache' im Spannungsfeld von Kriegswende und Propaganda, Göttingen 2018.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

of the atrocities against Jews in occupied Europe. For that purpose, the Austrian-born artist August Maria Froehlich even drew a highly ambivalent sketch of the dying inside a gas chamber as part of his series of drawings.

In *MAUS*, the destruction of traces of the destruction is addressed on multiple levels. One important level is the story of the burnt diaries of Artie's mother Anja, which expresses that the destruction is not over after the war but is also a question of transmission and heritage.[52] This question is even more relevant for the so-called "Second" and "Third Generation[s]", for artists like Leela Corman, Amy Kurzweil and Michel Kichka, who are experimenting with new approaches. This topic is taken up in the chapter by Nina Heindl and Véronique Sina, *Second Generation Comics. On the construction of (post-)memory in Art Spiegelman's* MAUS *and Michel Kichka's* Deuxième Génération. They understand *MAUS* mainly as a reflection of memory processes, which are always mediated. Thus, referring to Marianne Hirsch's concept of "postmemory", they discuss the role of photography in both comics and consider photos as remedialized in the context of the comics pages, where they provoke new traces and, in a way, retrace the lost traces.

The references in Emil Ferris' *My Favorite Thing is Monsters* are not limited to the sources the Holocaust provides. Ferris especially relates to what Walter Benjamin called *Nachgeschichte*. She sets her story in 1968, when, as Dana Mihăilescu discusses in *"Shot in the heart on Valentine's day": Monsters, Sexuality, the Holocaust and Late 1960s American Culture in Emil Ferris's* My Favorite Thing Is Monsters. Book I *(2017)*, not only were many misogynistic underground comix published, but also movies, like Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*. But Mihăilescu's contribution also points out that the history of the concentration camps has to be rewritten again and again, especially since the topic of sexuality has been taboo for a long time and only received attention recently. Dennis Bock agrees with this point in *"Inside Concentration Camps": Social Life and Prisoner Societies in Comic Books and Graphic Novels*, calling these "hidden social dimensions" of life in the camps. Bock also widens the scope to include other aspects of camp life and provides a broad overview beginning with Horst Rosenthal's *Mickey au camp de Gurs*. He also rereads many comics that seem to mention concentration camps in passing. He presents stories like Feldstein's and Krigstein's "Master Race" from 1955, which, for example, inspired Spiegelman and laid formalistic and thematic foundations and contains many implications about the constitution of prisoner societies. For Bock, as for all contributors,

52 Frahm, Ole: 'THESE PAPERS HAD TOO MANY MEMORIES FOR ME… SO I BURNED THEM'. Genealogical Remembrance in Art Spiegelman's *MAUS*, in: Batens, Jan (ed.): The Graphic Novel, Leuven 2001, pp. 61–78.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

MAUS marks a shift in the discourse. In Bock's discussion this is especially important, since it is the first comic that facilitated our reflecting on the hierarchies within prisoner societies – which could also be related back to the sketchbook of MM, in which the artist repeatedly describes how the Kapos maltreated the prisoners. In a certain way, such examples also show that 'the limits of representation' not only concern the question of destruction, but also the discourse about the Holocaust itself.

Politics of Remembrance – The Place of Comics in Culture

The politics of remembrance constitute a highly contested field, which has attracted more and more public awareness over the last four decades. Only in the 1990s was the term "culture of memory" or "memory culture" (in German "*Erinnerungskultur*") coined, although the concept of "collective memory" and the reflection of its social conditions date back to the 1920s.[53] In Germany it was the broadcast of the US-American TV series *Holocaust* in January 1979 that sparked a huge debate and brought an awareness for the German genocide of the European Jews to a wider audience. Critics of the series often attacked popular culture in general, which was regarded as the wrong medium. A closely related allegation criticised the "Americanisation of the Holocaust".[54] At the same time, it was clear that with the enormous, though controversial, success of the TV series popular culture had become a serious field where remembrance of the Holocaust could take place.[55] But only with the publication of Spiegelman's *MAUS* in 1986

53 The interest in cultural and collective memory goes back to the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs who was murdered in Buchenwald in 1945. His seminal study *La mémoire collective* [1939] was only published posthumously in 1950. Some more recent studies are Assmann, Aleida/Conrad, Sebastian (eds.): Memory in a global age. Discourses, practices and trajectories, Basingstoke, Hampshire 2010; Frei, Norbert: Vergangenheitspolitik. Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit, Munich 1999; Reichel, Peter: Politik mit der Erinnerung: Gedächtnisorte im Streit um die nationalsozialistische Vergangenheit, Frankfurt a. M. 1999; ibid.: Vergangenheitsbewältigung in Deutschland. Die Auseinandersetzung mit der NS-Diktatur von 1945 bis heute, Munich 2001; Novick, Peter: The Holocaust in American Life, Boston/New York 1999.

54 Cf. Rosenfeld, Alvin H.: The Americanization of the Holocaust, in: ibid.: Thinking about the Holocaust: After Half a Century, Bloomington/Indianapolis 1997, pp. 119–150. In contrast to Rosenfeld and other critics of the "Americanisation", Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider embrace this development as a universalisation of Holocaust memory by the means of popular representations: Levy, Daniel/Sznaider, Natan: Holocaust And Memory In The Global Age. Transl. by Assenka Oksiloff, Philadelphia 2006.

55 *MAUS* also could be understood as a reaction to the TV series cf. Frahm, Ole: Art Spiegelman. "Ein Comic mit einem Lesezeichen", in: Reddition 39 (March 2003), pp. 4–11, here p. 5.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

and the author's winning of the Pulitzer Prize in 1992, were comics definitively established as a 'legitimate' medium for the communication of Holocaust history and memory.[56] But also with the growing acceptance of popular culture in general, the acceptance of comics as a means to teach about the Shoah specifically has also definitely increased during the last couple of years.[57] This growing awareness coincides with increasing efforts to use comics as pedagogical tools at different memorial sites and an ever-growing number of sophisticated and less sophisticated comics addressing issues of the Holocaust, not to mention the successful blockbuster movies based on Marvel comic books. But are comics indeed an integral part of contemporary 'memory cultures'? To what extent does the old divide between High and Low still limit the place of comics in them? Or could comics even call into question that which is taken for granted in the hegemonic 'cultures of memory'?

Some of the articles in this volume specifically address questions around the use of comics in teaching about the murder of the Jews of Europe. Georg Marschnig looks at comics from this perspective in his *"Students like it, it's still their genre." A qualitative Approach to Teacher's Views on Holocaust Education with Comics*. The article focuses on the relation between forms of historical learning about the Shoah and comics and is based on a qualitative interview study with history teachers in contemporary Austrian schools. Radically claiming that every artistic representation of the Holocaust is a "lie" "by necessity", Jeff McLaughlin discusses a number of Holocaust graphic novels that are available in English in his *Graphic Novels and the Holocaust: 'Just' Comics?* Focussing on fictional works, many of them specifically for children and adolescents, McLaughlin tries to develop a means to differentiate between better and worse representations within the realm of fiction.

Future Prospects

Especially in Germany the complaint that there are enough stories about the Holocaust can be heard again and again. It is claimed that the same stories are repeated too often, that people do not want to hear (or read) them anymore. From the perspective of comics, which are informed by an aesthetics of repetition, this complaint appears rather strange, even absurd. Besides, a perceived "Holocaust fatigue" is not restricted to the 'land of the perpetrators', regardless of whether or

56 Cf. Aarons: Holocaust Graphic Narratives, p. 2.

57 Cf. Bannasch, Bettina/Hahn, Hans-Joachim (eds.): Darstellen, Vermitteln, Aneignen. Gegenwärtige Reflexionen des Holocaust, Göttingen 2018.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

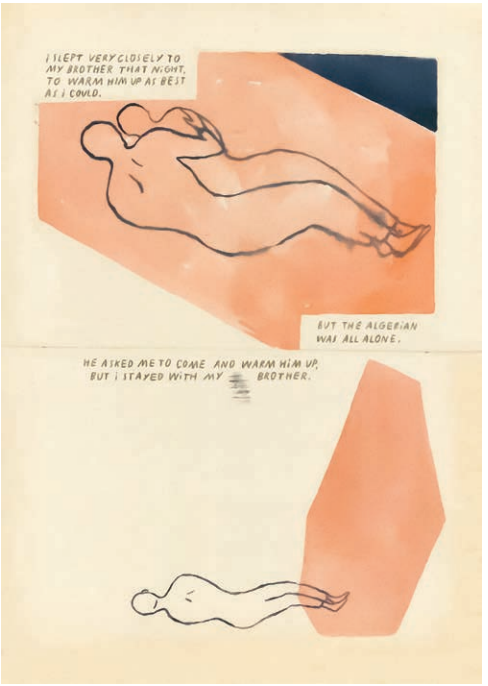


Fig. 7 Redrawing the Story of Muslim Prisoners. Nino Paula Bulling: Tamgout, Buchenwald, Paris, in KUS 26, 2015, p. 29

not this term is in any sense appropriate to address the commercialisation of the memory in the first place. It is in this context that Aarons speaks not only of the need to revitalise the discourses on the Shoah, but also emphasizes the specific potential of comics: "The graphic narrative defamiliarizes the discourse of the Holocaust testimony by transplanting it into this new medium."[58] Repetition *and* defamiliarization are two (conflicting) sides of the medium which strengthen its aesthetic vitality.

Recent publications, for example the two volumes *Redrawing Stories from the Past* published by the avantgarde magazine *KUS*,[59] show that the established format of the graphic novel is not the only possible one to confront stories of the Holocaust. The two volumes contain several short stories like the one by Nino Paula Bulling about the political prisoner Mohamed Kaci who had a French-Algerian background and was killed in the camp Neu-Stassfurt (fig. 7).

58 Aarons: Holocaust Graphic Narratives, p. 7.

59 Redrawing Stories from the Past. Anthology with comics about victims of National Socialism by five European authors, KUS Nr. 23 (November 2015); Redrawing Stories from the Past II. Comics anthology about emigration during the Second World War. KUS Nr. 34 (February 2019).

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

By discovering new sources and researching the nearly forgotten solidarity between Jews and Arabs in Paris during the Second World War, Bulling reminds us that there are many sources and topics still waiting to be discovered, calling for different methods of storytelling.

Certainly, though in a different way, this is also true for the discussion of comics that portray aspects of the Holocaust. There is not one method of analysis, one approach to understanding these comics. Our volume demonstrates how important it is to exchange ideas and reconcile the manifold approaches in future discussions. We are glad to bring together perspectives on comics from many different disciplines, such as history, art history, media studies, sociology, Japanese studies, philosophy, pedagogy as well as cultural and literary studies. But most of all, there are many sources and topics which are still waiting to be discovered, analysed, discussed and brought into new constellations with other comics, forming a unique, open and diverse corpus for the future legacy of the Holocaust.

This volume could not have been realised without the support of many individuals and institutions. In the first place, we would like to thank the Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Graz for hosting the preceding conference. We are very grateful to its director Gerald Lamprecht and our colleagues Susanne Korbel and Olaf Terpitz at the Center for their flexible help and welcoming all participants. Furthermore, we are very thankful to our colleagues of the Villigster Forschungsforum zu Nationalsozialismus, Rassismus und Antisemitismus, with whom we have been discussing questions concerning the legacy of Holocaust comics for many years. We would like to especially thank all the presenters at the conference in Graz who did not directly contribute to this volume: Samantha Baskind, Joël Kotek, Pascal Lefèvre, Jens R. Nielsen, Marie Schröer, Christine Gundermann, Martin Lund, Laurike in't Veld and Harriet Earle. We furthermore thank Adam Roussel for proofreading our introduction.

Last but not least we are very grateful to Fritz Thyssen Stiftung and Stiftung Zeitlehren for their generous funding.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

Ole Frahm

Ghosts, Golems, Angels

The Medial Specificity of Comics Representing the Holocaust

There are three formal means that make comics an astonishingly apt medium to represent and remember the holocaust. However, they might not seem obvious at first sight. All three means are related to repetition and they are certainly ambivalent and contested: *firstly* the reproduction of stereotypes, which should be examined quite cautiously since this could include the reproduction of prejudices as well as clichés that are not very elucidating;[1] *secondly* the repetition of images that deal with similarities and differences and by their sequence could reflect what they exclude from their depictions between the images and thus questioning with which images we remember the Holocaust; *thirdly* the juxtaposition of words and images that sometimes refers to the same objects, reminding the reader of the instability of the particular referentiality of both words and images, that could evoke ghosts, golems and angels with a historical signature of its own.

This essay tries to contour these three modes of repetition with the help of a detour, considering three examples that are not comics, but echo each of the three means in their own aesthetics by singling out one aspect that is interesting in this context and would only become visible mixed with the others in comics (1). Afterwards, three very different comics from three different decades will be examined. In each of them these three means are recurring in different and complex ways. Two were published before and one after *MAUS. A Survivor's Tale* (2).[2] Finally, Spiegelman's graphic novel is introduced as a reference point, enabling some conclusions from the close readings (3).

1 in 't Velt, Laurike: The Representation of Genocide in Graphic Novels: Considering the Role of Kitsch, Cham 2019.

2 Spiegelman, Art: MAUS. A Survivor's Tale. My Father Bleeds History, New York 1986; idem: MAUS. A Survivor's Tale II. And Here My Troubles Began…, New York 1991. For sure the three mentioned means are also important for the aesthetics of Spiegelman's approach – see Frahm, Ole: Genealogie des Holocaust. Art Spiegelmans *MAUS. A Survivor's Tale*, Paderborn 2006.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

1. Formal Means of the Representation of the Holocaust in Comics

1.1 Repetition of Stereotypes

Next to the 9th chapter of *MAUS. And Here My Troubles Began…*, printed in *RAW* in 1990, the editors Françoise Mouly and her husband Art Spiegelman published some paintings by Henry Darger (1892–1973).[3] Darger is an exceptional outsider artist whose work was discovered when he moved to an elderly home.[4] He wanted his work to be destroyed, but his landlord, Nathan Lehner, a photographer and teacher at the new Bauhaus in Chicago saved the more than 500 paintings, the epic *The Story of the Vivian Girls, in What is Known as the In the Realms of the Unreal, of the Glandeco-Angelinian War Storm, Caused by the Child-Slave Rebellion* with its 15 000 pages as well as Darger's reference books, "piles of phone directories used to paste-in complete runs of *Nancy* clipped from the daily paper".[5] As fantastic and unreal his imaginations seem to be, they are certainly an ambivalent reflection of history and especially popular culture and its depiction of children in the 20th century.[6]

The juxtaposition of *MAUS* and Darger's work in *RAW* is not so surprising if we consider that several of his large paintings mention concentration camps in their title. John McGregor as well as Klaus Biesenbach suppose, they were done after the Holocaust had been reported in US newspapers.[7] *At Jeannie Richee. They are placed in concentration camp with crowd of child prisoners* provides a rather unusual reflection on the camps (fig. 1).

The barbed wire and the two guards that are as large as giants or better as watch towers are for sure elements that refer to well-known images of the camps, that Darger called in his novel, that he started to write already 1912, "child slave

3 Darger, Henry: "The Child Slave Rebellion", in: RAW, 2/2 (1990), pp. 163–174.

4 For the story and the work of Darger see Bonesteel, Michael: Henry Darger. Author, Artist, Sorry Saint, Protector of Children, in: Bonesteel, Michael (ed.): Henry Darger. Art and Selected Writings, New York 2000, pp. 7–35; Anderson, Brooke Davis: Darger, New York 2001; MacGregor, John: Henry Darger. In the Realms of the Unreal, New York 2002; Biesenbach, Klaus (ed.): Henry Darger. Munich/Berlin/London/New York 2009.

5 Darger: The Child Slave Rebellion, p. 163.

6 Not only McGregor: Darger, interprets Darger's work mainly from a psychological point of view and underestimates the aesthetical choices Darger made, especially the complex comment of the depiction of girls in popular culture.

7 MacGregor: Darger, p. 545; Biesenbach: Darger, p. 18. It is remarkable that the German curator Biesenbach does not mention the liberation of the concentration camps explicitly, but „the bombings of Dresden and Coventry" as examples for disasters that influenced Darger's visions. None of Darger's paintings are dated, but he did not start to draw his large formats before 1940 – Michael Bonesteel proposes a rough order of the oeuvre, Bonesteel: Darger, p. 26.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665



Fig. 1 A grave in the clouds – Henry Darger: *At Jeannie Richee. They are placed in concentration camp with crowd of child prisoners*

camps".[8] Obviously he renamed the child slave camps to concentration camps to put these illustrations in a contemporary context. The inmates on grey ground are not in striped grey/blue and white uniforms but naked, their bodies are white, exposing their vulnerability. They are not working but shown talking and playing, one, next to a guard, seems to fly an invisible kite. As in most of Darger's paintings the figures are traced from templates he drew from comics, colouring books and other sources of popular culture, but there is no other image, as to my knowledge, where a child is part of the clouds. The eerie cloud on the left of the painting takes the shape of a torso of a girl, naked as the others. This drawing reminds of Celan's word of a "grave in the clouds"[9], as the poet phrased in his famous *Deathfugue*. Darger's ghostly girl, not as white as the camp inmates, rather yellow like the clouds, is not recognised by the others, but is watching them.[10]

By repeating the figures, Darger reflects the repetition of figures as it is common in the popular culture of the 20th century. He is pulling them out of the context of their appearance, isolating them and then putting them in a new constellation in his images. His reference to comic strips is interesting since he is one of the earliest known collectors of this volatile medium. In his painting *Part two. Break out of concentration camp killing and wounding enemy soldier guards* his reflection of the reproduced and repeated figure in comics is even more obvious (fig. 2).

It may be a surprise that the concentration camp in this case is depicted as a "wooden stockade used in the American West in the war with the Indians"[11] and

8 MacGregor: Darger, pp. 544–549.

9 Celan, Paul: Poems of Paul Celan, trans by Michael Hamburger, New York 1989, p. 62; Celan, Paul: Selected Poems and Prose by Paul Celan, trans. by John Felstiner. New York 2000, p. 32; Celan, Paul: Selections, trans. by Paul Joris. Berkeley 2005, p. 47.

10 It should be noted that the painting *Place not mentioned. Episode 3.2. Escape with great number of kids still fighting* reiterates this situation, without the guards and without the girl in the clouds but many strange cloud formations; it is reprinted in Anderson: Darger, pp. 72–73.

11 This strange description writes MacGregor: Darger, p. 545. He does not interpret the fact, instead he states that we can "accompany Darger into the dark recesses of his own mind", where we "begin to encounter irrational extrems" – that means "describing life in a terrible factory where naked children labour in impossible conditions". MacGregor, ibid., p. 548. That these conditions

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665



Fig. 2 Reflection of stereotypes – Henry Darger: *Part two. Break out of concentration camp killing and wounding enemy soldier guards.*

the whole setting seems to refer to the Western genre. I would like to draw the attention to the mirrored figures in the foreground of the panoramic painting. Behind them, a kneeling girl on the left begs the stunned boy (or is it a girl?) in one of Darger's rare speech balloons: "Come down before you're hit", referring to little smoke clouds coming from inside the fort. The half naked boy/girl stands as the only one half naked below his or her waist, exposed and vulnerable. The two girls in the foreground comment this scene. They repeat each other with many differences concerning the colour of the clothes and their hair as well as differences in how Darger contours their faces, for example through painting the eyebrows. They seem to flee from each other but could not escape the fact of being reproduced. In this case they were taken from the comic strip *Little Annie Rooney* by Darrell McClure.[12] It is not possible to know what Darger may have imagined why these children are persecuted. But this persecution is especially related to the reproduced, repeated image. Another painting thematising the inner life of the fictitious concentration camp shows that these figures are bound to certain stereotypical images of girls that play with dolls, knit or play in the kitchen.[13] In *Part two. Break out of concentration camp*, the two mirrored reproductions of Little Annie Rooney's mate try to escape in two directions, but from being reproduced as a stereotyped image they could not escape. There is nothing beyond the stereotype. The panoramic painting looks like a catalogue of

refer to the twentieth century and not to the dark recesses of Darger's mind does not come to MacGregor's mind.

12 There is not much literature on *Little Annie Rooney* and Darrell McClure beyond the fact that he is "being that rarest of cartoonists, one who knows the difference between a topping lift and a martingale" and that "Annie is continually cheerful" and "loves everybody". Waugh, Coulton: The Comics, New York 1974 (1947), p. 126, 128. There are no reprints available either.

13 Both were exhibited 2004 at the Gallery St. Etienne, New York, in the exhibition „Henry Darger. Art and Myth", unfortunately without a catalogue. I did not find the mentioned painting reproduced. Darger's images are not trying to relativise the Holocaust, they are translating what happened into the idiom of his work.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

stereotyped images of little girls – with the already mentioned exception of the half naked girl/boy.[14] With this recurrent figure of a sexually ambivalent figure that is excluded from the mainstream of popular culture Darger marks a decisive difference. In this painting this figure is even shown in an endangered position that could not relate to her or his dangerous situation. It looks as if he or she is closing her or his ears. It should be mentioned that he or she is bending the head like the girl in the clouds, whose genital is hidden by the cloud.

By referring to the concentration camp, the painting of Darger points out, that all the figures in which or with the help of which the Holocaust is remembered, could be understood as stereotyped. The figures in comics could both reproduce and reflect these stereotypes. Darger's way of representing children figures reminds us of the fact, that Alfred Rosenberg, as Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe argued, stated that in the "Nazi Myth" the Aryan stands for the undivided or not separable and thus not reproduceable singular identity, while the "antitype, the bastard par excellence" – the Jews – are mere reproduction.[15]

Henry Darger's appropriation points out that in comics we see reproduced identities, if identities at all, since childhood in Darger's vision seems to be interspersed with stereotypical images. Darger's work – and that makes the juxtaposition to *MAUS* understandable – is a different, but also very conscious reflection of masscultural reproduced stereotypes that helps to rethink their use and appearance in comics. At the same time, with the figure in the clouds and the endangered hybrid figure, Darger reminds us of the exclusions these stereotypes produce. Even if the depictions still are quite stereotyped with an ambivalent difference, they could be displaced and become open to different meanings. When we discuss antisemitic stereotypes in comics or iconic images of the concentration camps, it is a central question how they reproduce or redraw these stereotypes and icons specifically – or add new ones, like the ghostly girl, the monstrous golem, or the saving angel.

1.2 Repetition of Images

The drawings of a sketchbook, done by an unknown artist with the initials MM, are often reproduced in a way that it is not visible to understand them as a ser-

14 While MacGregor supposes that Darger just did not know that girls does not have a penis (MacGregor, Darger, chapter 10), at least Michel Thévoz mentions "transsexuality". Thevoz, Michel: The Strange Hell of Beauty…, in: Anderson: Darger, pp. 15–21, here p. 15.

15 Lacoue-Labarthe, Philipe/Nancy, Jean-Luc: "The Nazi Myth", in: Critical Inquiry 16/2 (Winter 1990), pp. 291–312, here p. 307.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

ies.[16] Sometimes at least some images of the series were discussed, for example by Detlef Hoffmann.[17] One of the reasons why these drawings were not seen as a complete series of 22 pages, might be that the series was not published earlier than 2011 by the Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau.[18] Considering the fact that the sketchbook was already found in 1947 this is surprising, especially since it is such an unusual account about which one could write an essay on its own. Foremost interesting is the fact that a prisoner was perceiving his situation in a way that he not just drew a loose picture series, but a series of pictures with sometimes recurring figures. As Jörn Wendland has shown in his seminal study *Das Lager von Bild zu Bild* there are other similar examples.[19]

In the context of comics beyond *MAUS* I just would like to point out three aspects of the sketchbook that are telling:

Firstly. The image of the ramp in Auschwitz, page 14, is an important counter-image that corrects the very often reproduced photos of Lili Jacob's Auschwitz-Album, that was published as facsimile by Beate and Serge Klarsfeld already in 1981 (fig. 3).[20]

The photo album done by the SS implies a certain rationality of the selection by dividing the album in chapters about men and women who are "einsatzfähig" ("fit for labour") and the ones that were not in the eyes of the SS ("nicht einsatzfähig", "unfit for labour").[21] The logic of the decision-making for the selections

16 For example, in the collection Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum (ed.): Cierpienie I Nadzieja. Krakow 1989, drawings from the sketchbook are reprinted as numbers 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 42–44, 46, 47, 52 and 56. The connection of the series is not understandable, image no. 10 of the series is not reprinted. In the volume Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum (ed.): Kunst in Auschwitz 1940–1945 drawings from the sketchbook are not reprinted, maybe because they are recognised as documents and not as art.

17 Hoffmann, Detlef: Auschwitz im visuellen Gedächtnis. Das Chaos des Verbrechens und die symbolische Ordnung der Bilder, in Fritz Bauer Institut (ed.): Auschwitz: Geschichte, Rezeption und Wirkung. Jahrbuch 1996 zur Geschichte und Wirkung des Holocaust, Frankfurt a. M. 1996, pp. 223–257.

18 Sieradzka, Agnieszka (ed.): The Sketchbook from Auschwitz, Oświęciem 2011.

19 Wendland, Jörn: Das Lager von Bild zu Bild, Köln/Weimar/Wien 2017. For an introduction to the sketchbook see Sieradzka: Sketchbook from Auschwitz; Uhl, Karsten: The Auschwitz Sketchbook, in David Mickenberg, Corinne Granof, Peter Hayes: The Last Expression. Art and Auschwitz, Evanston, IL 2003, pp. 94–103.

20 Klarsfeld, Serge (ed.): The Auschwitz Album. Lili Jacob's Album, New York 1980. Some of the photos circulated much earlier, like in Schoenberner, Gerhard: Der gelbe Stern, Hamburg 1961, see Frahm: Genealogie des Holocaust, chapter 2.3.

21 See http://auschwitz.org/en/museum/news/waiting-for-death-in-the-birch-forest-in-birkenau,339.html, accessed 07/01/2021.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665



Fig. 3 On the ramp – MM: *Sketchbook*, page 14

is made visible. Everything is in order, perfectly organised and without any visible violence.

MM's rendering of the situation of the selection MM tells a different story than the much more often reproduced images by the SS photographer. It is the story of violent separations by the simple means of serialisation of the figure. In the image that precedes the image of the separation we see a man with a little boy walking hand in hand who are violently separated in the second image.[22] By redrawing the same figures with some differences the violent process of the selection could be shown that is not visible in the well-known photos.[23] But this 'story' stays fragment in the sketchbook. In the series of drawings, they are numbered with letters as a small series of four images in total – they interrupt the continuity of images that describe everyday-life in the camp.

Secondly. The scene of the selection is already the second interruption or different counting within the whole series. The first interruption, also four images numbered from A to D, page 6 to 8, concerns the process of the destruction. Drawing A is showing the hospital and how prisoners who are looking like skeletons are put on a truck. On drawing B on page 7 we see the same truck (the number plate is again "SS 1071") driving along a barbed wire in a forest (fig. 4). This image is paralleled with a group of civilians walking towards a gas chamber and a crematorium. Drawing D on page 8 shows the same building from a different perspective (fig. 5).

Wendland proposes a subtle historical interpretation of the sketchbook and its representation of the process of destruction. He turns against some explana-

22 This motif is interesting since it reappears in *La Bête est Morte* by Calvo and Dancette, who could not have known MM's drawings – about Calvo and Dancette see Jörn Ahrens' essay in this volume.

23 This becomes invisible, if only the first drawing is reproduced like in Doosry, Yasmin (ed.): Representations of Auschwitz. 50 Years of Photographs, Paintings and Graphics, Oświęcim 1995, n.p., where it is even reprinted with a page from the photo album.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665



Fig. 4 Transport to the crematorium – MM: *Sketchbook*, page 7



Fig. 5 In front of the crematorium – MM: *Sketchbook*, page 8

tions of the functioning of closure in comics like the very popular one by Scott McCloud in *Understanding Comics*.[24] McCloud states that the different images are completed in the reader's mind, meaning that what is not shown will be imagined. Wendland insists, because of the way in which MM is telling the story (if we can speak here already of a story) of the murder, that what is happening between the images cannot be imagined.[25] And even if the sequentiality of the images, stressed by the letters of the alphabet, implies an unambiguous continuity, this assumption is questionable. The parallel images of the sick and the well-dressed, branded by the Magen David, interrupt the continuity the series of images seem to establish as a certain course of time. This is further stressed by the figure of a small boy who is depicted on the far right of drawing C (fig. 4). He is mirroring the boy who later (in the numbered row of the sketches) is separated from his father (fig. 3): both are going to be gassed.

24 McCloud, Scott: Understanding Comics, New York 1994, pp. 64–68; see for a newer adaption of McClouds proposal Davis, Paul Fisher: Comics as Communication. A Functional Approach, Cham 2019, pp. 67–85. For a critique of this approach see Frahm, Ole: Die Sprache des Comics, Hamburg 2010.

25 Wendland, Lager, pp. 163–168.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665

MM is not showing the killing of these two boys – and he seems to trust the drawings so much that he does not comment this testimony with written text, beyond his recurring signature MM.[26] Just by the red colour of the chimneys and the red dot on the tip of the cigarette the SS-officer is smoking, the destruction and the murder are referenced unmistakably. The corpses and the truck on this drawing seem to refer to the transport of the ill prisoners – but they were not already dead on image B. And they were not naked. This, again, shows that this series of images is not about continuity but about discontinuity in the face of the ceaseless process of destruction. Even if the series seems to imply narration, the strategy of the images reminds us of the fact that here is something happening that escapes a narrative closure and imagination. This effect is created by the seriality of the images like the repetition of figures of the boys that are similar but not the same. We are forced to look at the images closely and to try to see what is shown there with all the details MM is providing. Only in these details the continuities and discontinuities between the drawings become understandable.

There are not many comics that relate to the fragmented complexity of the sketchbook by MM in their structure. However, they provide other possibilities – as I would like to show in the second part of this essay – by their complex constellations of stereotypes, sequences of images and words. But it is important to note what all comics share with the sketchbook by MM structurally: they are fragmented. By being fragmented the question stays unanswered if they form an integral whole or if the fragments are exhibited as fragments.

Thirdly. Another drawing of MM's series should be taken into consideration: two pages after the depiction of the crematorium an escape is seen (fig. 6). Since this is page 10 in the sketchbook it most likely is an escape from the concentration camp.

The escaping people do not wear prisoner's clothes, they have civilian haircuts while nearly all images of prisoners in the first drawings show shaven heads.[27] Agnieszka Sieradzka suppose that "deportees […] tried to save themselves at the last moment by escaping" and this is what MM is depicting here.[28] In the centre of this extraordinary image we see a German soldier, who fell on the ground, looking at the observer (or the shooting officer in the foreground). Right behind him stands a man, who tries to get the soldier's rifle and is stabbed in the back with a bajonet by another German soldier. Above this scene, on the horizon, in the middle between the civilian and the second, supposedly murderous soldier,

26 Sometimes the reprinting of his drawings are titled like in State Museum of Auschwitz: Cierpienie I Nadzieja.

27 An exception is the second image on page four.

28 Sieradzka: Sketchbook, p. 63. Uhl: The Auschwitz Sketchbook, ignores this drawing.

© 2021 by Böhlau Verlag, an imprint of the Brill-Group
ISBN Print: 9783205210658 — ISBN E-Book: 9783205210665