Trauma, Memory and Mediation:
The Holocaust, A Case Study

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CERTIFICATE

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This is to certify that I, Saradindu Bhattacharya, have carried out the research embodied in the present thesis, "Trauma, Memory and Mediation: The Holocaust, A Case Study", for the full period prescribed under the PhD ordinances of the University of Hyderabad.

I declare that to the best of my knowledge no part of this thesis was earlier submitted for the award of a research degree of any other university.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis is a study of the representations of trauma and memory across various genres and media within a testimonial cultural context. I use second generation Holocaust narratives as a case study. This category includes not only memoirs written by the children of Holocaust survivors but also texts authored by those who do not bear any direct familial or racial relation to the victims of the Holocaust but who nevertheless establish a form of cultural understanding of and belonging to the larger, universal condition of human suffering they represent.

I argue that the personal, embodied experience of trauma becomes available for witnessing, to both the victim and the secondary witness, only when it is put into a narrative form; that is to say, the articulation of trauma by the victim in the presence of a empathetic, even distanced audience is essential to its transformation from individual experience to collective memory. This experience of trauma is made available to an audience only through and after mediation at different levels of recollection and narration across various generic and media forms and consequently always already removed from the actual event that caused it. Thus, it is the narrativization of the individual experience of suffering that enables the primary and the secondary witnesses of trauma to create and share a collective, cultural memory of the event that caused it and thereby identify themselves as members of a narrative society.

I use the Holocaust as a case study for the narrative representation of trauma, with specific reference to second generation graphic memoirs, documentaries and films, and online memorials. As I shall demonstrate, the Holocaust has emerged as a paradigm case for the study of trauma and its representation in the twentieth century, in terms of both the

historical scale of the event itself and of the popular and critical attention it has received. I focus exclusively on second generation narratives of the Holocaust because they not only foreground the mediated nature of traumatic memory but also reveal the significance (and continuity) of such mediated memory in the popular imagination of history. The politics of affiliation, on which second generation Holocaust narratives are based provides a model for understanding how trauma is rendered transmissible and identifiable beyond the immediate historical context of its occurrence.

An examination of such narratives is, therefore, not only useful in understanding the significance of the Holocaust in our own cultural context but also indicative of the ways in which traumatic memory functions as a means of constituting an ethically responsive and responsible community of witnesses. As primary resources, I sample print, electronic and digital texts which employ, in various combinations, a range of textual "signs" (visual, verbal, aural) to represent the memory of an experience that has often been described as being un-representable. I use as my primary texts Art Spiegelman's path-breaking graphic memoir *Maus* (1986, 1991), and several others that followed it, like Joe Kubert's *Yossel* (2003), Pascal Croci's *Auschwitz* (2003), Martin Lemelman's *Mendel's Daughter* (2006) and Miriam Katin's *We Are On Our Own* (2006); Claude Lanzmann's authoritative documentary *Shoah* (1985) and Steven Spielberg's canonical film *Schindler's List* (1993); the website hosted by the Israeli state-sponsored Holocaust museum *Yad Vashem* and the encyclopaedic virtual memorial *Holocaust Survivors and Remembrance Project.*

My choice of primary texts is determined by their representative value within the genres and media to which they belong as well as their larger, cultural significance within the canon of Holocaust representations. My focus on texts like *Maus*, *Shoah, Schindler's List* and *Yad Vashem* reflects the popular and critical currency they have acquired as iconic

representations of the Holocaust. Thus, *Maus*, which was the first ever treatment of the serious matter of the Holocaust in a medium till then considered suitable mostly for juvenile or comical subjects, offered "a new mode of inquiry into the past" and "redrew the contractual terms for the depictions of the Holocaust in popular art" (Doherty 70). Similarly, *Shoah* not only received critical acclaim and popular success – remaining the most profitable documentary released in the United States for years – it also focused, more than any other film that preceded it, "not only on what to represent in a film about the Holocaust, but also how to do so", thereby setting the standards for the filmic representation of the event (Liebman 4-6). On the other hand, *Schindler's List* appeared close to the fiftieth anniversary of the Second World War, a moment marking "the transition in historical consciousness from lived, personal memories to collective, maufactured memory", and thus generated a popular trans-generational imagination of the Holocaust (Loshitzky 3). Likewise, the establishment of the Yad Vashem museum in Israel and its appearance on the web as a companion website marks the Jewish community's official representation and memorialization of its collective, traumatic legacy in a global context. While these are, by no means, the only instances of the representation of the Holocaust in contemporary popular culture, their cultural pre-eminence merits close attention and offers substantial ground for the arguments I shall make in the course of this study. I restrict myself to Holocaust narratives that have appeared in the last quarter of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first, since this period marks the second wave of Holocaust representation charcaterized, as I will demonstrate in the following pages, by a growing urgency not only to represent the traumatic experience of the Holocaust but also to memorialize the event as a collective, historical legacy.

While I do not use traditional "literary" texts and forms and focus instead, on narratives located in genres and media that seek to re-present the Holocaust in spaces more

popular than the strict purview of the academician or the historian, I do rely on methods of literary-critical analysis to "read" narratives of trauma for the ways in which they emplot experiences of extreme suffering and characterize victims of violence as human subjects. I also analyze my primary texts in terms of the thematic and formal qualities they borrow from various literary genres of life writing, such as (auto)biography, memoir and bildungsroman. Given the volume and variety of texts about the Holocaust that continue to appear every year, my study is, however, by no means exhaustive.

In this introductory chapter, I chart the history of the representation of the Holocaust across various genres and media forms, starting from the first-person survivor accounts of Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel, though the televized trial of Adolf Eichmann and the popular American TV series *Holocaust*, to the more recent surge in second generation testimonial and fictional narratives in print, electronic and digital media. I focus especially on the representation of the Holocaust in visual media to contextualize the emergence of a collective, cultural memory about an event that is otherwise considered to be beyond representation. I also offer an overview of scholarship on the Holocaust, with special emphasis on theorists who have examined the significance of narrative and media to the representation of traumatic memory. Drawing upon the work of critics like Marianne Hirsch, Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub and Michael Rothberg, I propose that the traumatic memory of an event like the Holocaust goes beyond the psychological dimension of the individual victim's embodied, historically rooted experience of suffering and assumes a more widely communicable cultural form in and through the process of secondary witnessing. I use second generation graphic memoirs like *Maus*, films like *Schindler's List* and websites like *Yad Vashem*, among others, to illustrate my thesis.

The Holocaust in Literature and Popular Culture

The Holocaust is a landmark event/phenomenon in contemporary cultural history not only in terms of the methods and magnitude of the horrors perpetrated by a genocidal state on its people, but also in terms of the attention it has received from academicians, creative writers and artists, and in various generic forms and media. The Holocaust not only marks the inaugural moment in the formal study of atrocity and trauma but is also one of the most extensively documented, archived, commemorated and represented historical event of our times. In fact, the Holocaust has become a paradigmatic case for the study of other instances of atrocity, ethnic violence and genocide (Schaffer and Smith 20), none of which surpasses it in terms of cultural prominence and visibility across media; this, in spite of the fact that the Jews themselves have a centuries-old history of persecution and the fact that even in the twentieth century there have been other instances of state-sponsored genocide, such as the Armenian massacre during and just after the First World War, the mass killings in Rwanda in 1994, the ongoing Darfur conflict in Sudan or even the persistent Israel-Palestine conflict. In fact, it is only in the post-Holocaust period that trauma and genocide studies have emerged as a significant field of research. The Holocaust continues to be represented as being *the* most significant instance of genocide in the twentieth century – one that is considered unprecedented and unique in terms of the nature of the methods and means of torture devised by a state to exterminate a people, as well as in terms of the magnitude of the loss, suffering and trauma it caused to its victims. In this section, I will trace a brief outline of the history of the representation of the Holocaust across print, electronic and digital media, focusing especially on the significance of the role popular media have played in the public imagination of and response to the Holocaust[1]. While I offer what can be only a tiny sample of the

[1] I focus primarily, though not exclusively, on the production and reception of narratives about the Holocaust in the USA, as the Holocaust has become part of a global discourse of trauma and human rights majorly due to the American interest in the representation and memorialization of the event as a paradigm case. For more

massive body of "texts" produced about the Holocaust over the last fifty-odd years, I seek to identify major trends and significant moments in the domain of Holocaust representation by way of charting a critical history of the relationship between trauma and media using the Holocaust as a case study.

The immensity of the atrocities committed by the Nazis on the European Jews elicited a political, juridical and ethical response from governments across the world. The first instance of such an international response came in the form of the Nuremberg trials, held between November 1945 and October, 1946, in which prominent members of the Nazi administration were tried and executed for war crimes by a jury consisting of members from the victorious Allied Nations – the United Kingdom, the United States of America, France and the Soviet Union. The trials led to the codification of war crimes in the form of the Nuremberg principles (a set of guidelines for defining acts that constitute war crimes) and served as the prototype for the establishment of other international legal charters that followed in the wake of the Second World War, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which marked the emergence of an official, public discourse of human rights within a global context. Though the Nuremberg trials marked a significant moment in the history of the cultural response to the Holocaust, it was only during the trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1961 that the Holocaust captured the collective imagination of a larger, witnessing public. The trial was the first one of its kind to be telecast for an international audience, especially in the United States which had the largest number of viewers: indeed, as Jeffrey Shandler points out, it played a crucial role in the American popular imagination of the Holocaust as "the [televisual] medium not only informed the viewers but also shaped

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detailed discussions, see Peter Novick's *The Holocaust in American Life* (1999), Norman G. Finkelstein's *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (2000), Alison Landsberg's *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (2004) and Alvin S. Rosenfeld's *The End of the Holocaust* (2011).

public discussion of what it meant to be a "witness" to this historic event" (92). In contrast to the Nuremberg trials, the Eichmann trial relied more heavily on survivor testimonies than on documentary evidence and had a large press presence, which the jury justified, citing British law, as being a condition for the fairness of the trial (Shandler 93). Thus, the televisation of the trial implied that what the viewers were witnessing was not just the case of a culpable individual being played out in a court of law, but also the very act of *bearing witness* to the Holocaust as a historical event. The trial itself was as much the subject of witnessing as were the traumatic experiences to which the survivors testified. The element of "spectacle" implicit in the televisation of the trial was thus crucial to the witnessing audience's understanding of and response to the Holocaust. As Shandler points out, "The medium's intimate scale and domestic viewing context gave viewers an unparalleled sense of proximity to the proceedings", making the trial a "morally transformative experience [...] repeatedly linked to a validation of the authority of mass communications media" (96-97). In fact, as Shandler goes on to observe, this sense of immediacy was itself the direct consequence of a great degree of mediation of the "event" before it reached the audience.

Not only did the trial footage offer viewers images, such as close-ups of Eichmann's face or hands, that were unavailable to courtroom spectators, the trial's presentation on television had transformed this "actuality" though the process of selecting and editing excerpts of the footage, re-engineering its multilingual sound track, and recontextualizing it through reporters' commentary and supplementary coverage (107). This media-genic courtroom "spectacle" was thus essentially an instance of putting a narrative order to the events of the trial, one that seemingly offered viewers unmediated access to the testimonial performance and simultaneously also structured their interpretation of that performance. Not surprisingly, therefore, contemporary news coverage of the trial puzzled over Eichmann's

outwardly undemonstrative appearance (Shandler 100-01), as it posed a perceptual difficulty to the viewers' easy identification of his physical presence as a marker of extraordinary evil. Hannah Arendt, who covered the news of the trial for the *New York Times*, subsequently described Eichmann's ordinariness as a symptom of the "banality of evil" in her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), arguing that historical events like the Holocaust do not result from pathological evil in a few individuals but are caused by the actions of ordinary people who participate in state-sponsored acts of violence as through they were normal. What the Eichmann trial signalled was the constitution of a witnessing public whose collective response to the Holocaust was determined by the media's ability to facilitate an identification of the victims and the perpetrators of genocidal violence.

The initial moves towards the creation of such a witnessing public were made in the decade leading up to the Eichmann trial, with the publication of testimonial accounts of Holocaust victims and survivors. The most famous of such accounts was Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl* (1952), which remains till date one of the most popular books about the Holocaust. As an adolescent girl full of hope, doubts, anxieties and promise, killed before she could attain adulthood, Anne Frank came to symbolize the tragic loss of human life caused by the Holocaust and became an easily identifiable, representative figure of the Holocaust victim. In fact, the diary received so much popular and critical attention, that it was adapted into a play in 1955 and subsequently into a movie in 1959 by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett. If Anne Frank functioned as a popular cultural icon of the Holocaust through the various media avatars in which her private diary became a public testimonial document, Auschwitz survivors like Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel received considerable critical attention by bringing out individual accounts of their experiences at the concentration camp – *Survival in Auschwitz* (1958) and *Night* (1960) respectively. Both offer a first-hand account of the

severely dehumanizing effects of the extreme deprivations they suffered at the concentration camp. While Levi describes how he managed to ensure his physical subsistence in the camp by finding work that was relatively less brutalizing than what most inmates were made to do, he is also faced with moral shame when he witnesses the hanging of one of the men held responsible for blowing up a crematorium. Similarly, Wiesel highlights the benumbing of ordinary human responses to suffering and the disintegration of filial bonds under the pressure of the conditions of survival at the concentration camp, and suggests that the mere fact of physical survival does not ensure psychic or moral integrity. Thus, these early writers of Holocaust testimonies set the stage for the representation of historical trauma as transcending the event that caused it and for assessing its impact in terms of the aftermath it has on the *human* "self" of the victim.

The boundless nature of violence and trauma was also explored in the critically acclaimed French short documentary film *Night and Fog* (Resnais 1955), the earliest of its kind, which made use of both wartime footage and contemporary shots of the abandoned concentration camps, visually conflating the past and the present and foregrounding the impossibility of bringing the "story" of the Holocaust to a conclusion. While testimonies and documentary videos adopted a more or less straightforward, realist mode of representation, this period also witnessed the work of poets like Paul Celan, who relied on a different kind of language – characterized by short sentence fragments, inverted syntax, peculiar word combinations – to give expression to the traumatic experiences of the Holocaust. Such linguistic experimentation suggested that the trauma of the Holocaust could not be represented faithfully in any traditional literary form, governed by rules of coherence, unity and comprehensiveness, but could only be figuratively traced in and through the disruption of language itself. In this sense, Celan's poetry offered an aesthetic and ethical counterpoint to

the more popular, realist representational modes adopted by texts that sought to offer the Holocaust as the "stories" of identifiable characters.

The popularization of the Holocaust in the US as a subject of public remembrance outside the domain of scholarly criticism and high art was effected, in the decade following the Eichmann trial, through the airing of the NBC television miniseries *Holocaust* (1978). The series traced the fates of the members of a German Jewish family, the Weisses, through the events leading up to, during and following the Holocaust. The spectacle of the systematic disintegration of a family, made available to the viewers as concurrent plot trajectories that followed each character through to his/her tragic fate, rendered the trauma of the Holocaust identifiable as a "story". The familiar, domestic format of the television series presented to the audience an account of the Holocaust that elicited an empathetic response to a few characters who were easily recognizable as victims; at the same time, by following each of the characters through their different "stories", unfolding in different parts of Europe and representing each individual's struggle for survival, the series also depicted their traumatic experiences as being located within the larger, historical reality of the Holocaust. The popular appeal of the series was in a large part owing to the fact that it reinforced the already existing moral assumptions and stereotypes about both victims and perpetrators of violence (Meek 152). Though the series was criticized for sentimentalizing and trivializing the Holocaust, most notably by Elie Wiesel, who accused it of transforming history into a soap opera (Kaes 28), it did manage to capture the collective imagination of a large number of viewers in both the US and West Germany (Meek 150-51). Other critics like Andreas Huyssen argued that the series had brought to the fore the necessity of an emotive response to the Holocaust as a means of working through historical trauma (*Great Divide* 99-100) In fact, the series sparked off a public debate on the political and aesthetic role played by mass media in the

appropriation and representation of national history (Kaes 30-34). The significance of the series, like the televised Nuremberg trials, was that it allowed for the constitution of a sizeable witnessing public – this time around a fictional rather than a testimonial narrative – whose moral and emotive response to trauma was structured by the media format in which the history of the Holocaust was being reconstructed.

The question of an appropriate mode of representing the historical trauma of the Holocaust acquired greater urgency as the need to preserve the voices of primary witnesses was felt with the increasing historical gap between the event and its memory. The establishment of the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University in 1981 marked the first step towards the preservation of the traumatic accounts of eyewitnesses as public documents. The video testimonies neither had the fictional narrative structure of a television series nor the documentary framework of an authorial voice-over: in the words of Geoffrey Hartman, one of the founders of the archive, these testimonies have a "special counter-cinematic integrity" (*Longest Shadow* 139). Though these video testimonies convey a sense of intimacy and immediacy with the victim, they are also, as Oren Baruch Stier points out, the result of a conscious process of textual construction, involving camera technique, role play, interviewing strategies and institutional contexts (70-71). The significance of the video archive is that while it enables the audience to respond to the suffering of the victims empathetically, it also demonstrates that "the making of memory is an ongoing collective, communal and cultural process" (Stier 109). The location of traumatic memory in the moment and act of witnessing rather than in a fixed, historically delimited past was similarly foregrounded by Claude Lanzmann in his monumental documentary film *Shoah* in 1985. The total absence of archival footage and the persistent focus on the moment of recording the testimonies that chiefly constitute the documentary served to emphasize the "present-ness" of

traumatic memory. Lanzmann's visits to the abandoned sites of Nazi atrocities, often featured alongside the video testimonies, also highlighted the impossibility of "capturing" the horrific events of the past without falsifying the experiences that the interviewees bear witness to. The non-linear narrative structure of the documentary sought to create, in stark contrast to the more traditional plot-driven structure of *Holocaust*, an understanding of historical trauma as a subject that resists and defies representation except through its articulation as fragmented, displaced, incoherent memory. Despite its conscious resistance to the use of images that have been circulated endlessly in contemporary media and become almost clichéd in the field of Holocaust representation, *Shoah* itself has become part of a cultural lexicon that defines our understanding of historical trauma. Thus, Leek observes that "[t]he images and verbal testimony in *Shoah* are themselves subject to preservation in archive, citations in other texts and transformations of meaning through their ongoing displacement in space and time" (162).

Another key moment in the history of the representation of the Holocaust, following close on the heels of Lanzmann's *Shoah*, was the publication of the first volume of Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *Maus* in 1986. Spiegelman's choice of the medium of the comic book for depicting his father's memory of surviving Auschwitz as well as his own continual struggle with his traumatic familial legacy marked a distinct and deliberate move towards defamiliarizing the experience of exceptional violence and suffering, while simultaneously also rendering it accessible to an audience historically removed from it. While Spiegelman's highly self-reflexive visual craft of using animal imagery to depict his characters resisted the pitfalls of oversimplification of or easy identification with traumatic experience, his inclusion of his own uneasy role as the son of Holocaust survivors and a second generation author within the narrative pointed to the necessity of understanding the trans-generational nature of trauma. The book also posed a challenge to the task of categorization in terms of its generic

location and was shifted, on the insistence of the author, from the *New York Times*'s bestseller fiction to non-fiction list (Liss 54). In a way, *Maus* signalled the growing cultural need to represent, comprehend and respond to the trauma of the Holocaust in forms that did not adhere to absolute distinctions between binaries like fiction/non-fiction, history/autobiography, high/low art. In fact, if the overwhelming critical and commercial success of *Maus* is any indication, the creation and preservation of a common, cultural memory of the Holocaust in the context of secondary witnessing is crucially determined by the "legibility" of the medium in which trauma is represented. This need to find narrative forms that enable the telling of the "story" of the Holocaust (by and for second generation authors and readers) without claiming a direct, unmediated access to the experience of trauma also found literary expression in experimental works like Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow: or The Nature of the Offence* (1991). The novel is an account of the experiences of a former Nazi doctor, narrated by a somewhat dissociated consciousness in reverse chronological order. The deliberate reversal of the sequence of events as well as the ironic distance maintained almost throughout the narrative between the narrator's consciousness (the speaking/seeing "I") and his body prevents the reader's identification with the perpetrator's perspective or even an illicit voyeuristic participation in or enjoyment of his actions. While the narrator's own body recovers from the debilitating effects of old age through the strength and vigour of youth back into childhood and infancy and finally his birth, the history of the decimation of the European Jews is itself traced backwards in time, so that the narrative becomes one about the re-construction of a race from blood, bones, ashes and smoke. The chilling irony of the narrative arises from the fact that the reader, already aware of the real course of historical events, witnesses the bodies of the victims of Auschwitz literally pieced together by the perpetrator of violence. As Erin McGlothlin observes: "The horrific quality of the narrator's

misreading of what happens in the Holocaust is predicated on the fact not only that we are all too aware of the real reasons for the camp's existence, but also that we know in history, as opposed to the narrator's world in the novel, the tragic crimes of Auschwitz can never be undone ("Theorizing the Perpetrator" 224). As the subtitle of the book suggests, the text consciously engages the reader with the nature of traumatic memory and foregrounds the role its own narrative strategy plays in the representation of the Holocaust as an event that cannot be "interpreted" independently of the act of narration itself. In this, the book resonates with *Maus*'s postmodernist strategy of including the "story" of its own making as an integral part of the narrative. Such experimentation with form – the visual grammar of animal imagery in *Maus* and the inversion of chronological order in *Time's Arrow* – is suggestive of second generation authors' negotiations with generic and media conventions in their attempts to represent historical trauma that defies and exceeds the "language" of traditional literary forms.

The limitations of any one kind of literary "language" to capture the traumatic memory of the Holocaust has been explored in more recent experimental works of fiction like W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz* (2001) and Yann Martel's *Beatrice and Virgil* (2010). *Austerlitz* presents an interesting case for the study of literary commemoration of the Holocaust by means of textualizing the suppressed individual memory of trauma. By tracing the life story of its titular protagonist back to his forgotten past as a child victim of the Holocaust, the book not only reflects upon the disruptive, fragmentary and non-chronological nature of trauma but also foregrounds a hybridized form of inscribing the past that provides an alternative to official, monumentalized means of writing history. Combining elements of biography and memoir seamlessly with those of architectural history and philosophical treatise, and employing words and visuals together (mostly photographs but also diagrammatic sketches),

the book resists easy categorization as either fiction or history and alerts the reader to the limitations of both in providing a comprehensible if not comprehensive insight into the trauma of the Holocaust. The book also reveals the cultural aspect of remembering individual experience of trauma through its central character's quest for locating his identity in a past that is always beyond reach. Austerlitz's search for his lost roots is predicated not on the possibility of finding evidence of his lineage but on his desire to identify himself as part of a larger, historical experience that exists only in its absence, as traumatic memory. The narrative enacts this form of identification through the reconstruction of traumatic memory that is both personal and collective. Such performances of memory are identified by Rothberg and Yidliz (2011) as "acts of citizenship", which they define as "*deeds* that take place regardless of formal citizenship status and beyond the bounds of normative practices" (34). Austerlitz's quest for a personal history of trauma is based not on the possibility of establishing his identity in an absolute, empirically verifiable way as a victim of the Holocaust, but on his desire to identify his own "story" as part of a larger, historical narrative of trauma. The appropriation of traumatic memory and history by means of scripting such a narrative of the "self" is thus effectively a conscious act of claiming a form of unofficial, extra-legal citizenship within the diffused and dispersed category of Holocaust victims/survivors. In a comparable instance, Yann Martel explores in *Beatrice and Virgil* the difficulty of claiming such memory citizenship when the aesthetic and ethical lines between the "stories" of the victim and the perpetrator of trauma are blurred. The two central characters in the book, one, a frustrated author and another, a taxidermist, are both called Henry and are individually engaged in trying to script a narrative of the Holocaust. The thematic concern with finding an appropriate form of expression of massive trauma is realized structurally in the book through the alternating use of dramatic dialogue between

characters in a beast fable and the third-person prose narrative that traces the stories of the two human protagonists. The ultimate, violent breakdown of communication between the two characters, with the novelist killing the taxidermist whom he suspects of being a former Nazi, represents the impossibility of narrating the history of the Holocaust in any form without declaring one's own moral position vis-a-vis the experience of trauma. Both these texts thus engage with the problematic nature of claiming affiliation with the memory of trauma as well as the significance of such an act to the narrative representation of the Holocaust.

While the works of Spiegelman, Amis, Sebald and Martel are avant-garde in their capacity to bend the rules of the forms in which they exist and suggest a "re-vision" of the traumatic legacy of the Holocaust, Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993) stands at the more populist end of the representational spectrum. Coinciding with the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C., the release of the film reinforced the prominence of the Holocaust in American cultural memory (Landsberg 121). The film was a commercial success and received largely positive reviews in the popular press, making it one of the largest media events surrounding the Holocaust since the appearance of *Holocaust* on American television. The film's significance, Landsberg points out, was in its ability to create, by means of publicity as well as its capacity to "elicit deep identification on the part of its spectators", a public sphere around it (121). Unlike documentaries like *Night and Fog* and *Shoah*, that self-consciously maintained a critical distance between the audience and the images of trauma on screen, *Schindler's List* relied heavily on the viewers' empathetic identification with the moral position of the protagonist. While the film itself is based on the true story of Oskar Schindler, the dramatization of "real" historical events, with a focus on the evolution of a single central character, runs the risk of generalizing and simplifying the trauma of the victims as a mere subtext to his heroic

endeavours of rescuing them. Yet, the affective dimension of responding to trauma plays a crucial a role in the constitution of a witnessing community, as it enables the audience to identify the victims of trauma, especially within the fictional parameters of the film, as human subjects. The medium of the film, with its capacity to engage large audiences in acts of collective witnessing, has, in fact, become increasingly popular for the representations of the Holocaust since the early 1990s. Other significant cinematic depictions of the Holocaust include Roberto Benigni's *Life is Beautiful* (1997), Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* (2002) and Stephen Daldry's *The Reader* (2008). In each of these films, the audience's sympathetic attention is drawn towards a few central characters by means of focalizing the massive, collective trauma of the Holocaust in and through the experiences of a few individuals on screen. For example, in both *Life is Beautiful* and *The Pianist*, the breakdown of the structure of the family – one of the greatest sources of trauma for victims of the Holocaust – is represented in terms of its impact on the central character. While the former offers what is at best a sentimentalized spectacle of an innocent child unable to comprehend the true nature of the horrifying events unfolding around him, the latter presents a somewhat ambiguous vision of the redemptive power of art in the face of human suffering. On the other hand, films like *The Reader* seek to complicate the audience's identification of trauma wholly and exclusively with the figure of the victim, presenting a romanticized spectacle of an enduring human bond established between a Nazi war criminal and a lawyer in spite of their conflicting moral positions vis-a-vis the Holocaust. The characterization of the perpetrator of violence as an uncomprehending agent of a genocidal state machinery poses an aesthetic and ethical conundrum; at the same time, it also seeks to define the traumatic aftermath of the Holocaust in terms of the human capacity for both good and evil. If the narrative focus on recognizably human characters in these films enables a collective identification with the subject of trauma,

the narration of an alternate history of the Holocaust in Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) effects a distantiation of the event from the audience and alerts them, through its plot trajectory of the murder of Hitler and his accomplices in a carefully orchestrated plan, to the systematic nature of the killing of Jews. The cinematic inversion of the fate of millions of Jews in the climactic spectacle of the Nazis trapped and burnt to death in an auditorium renders the trauma of the Holocaust at once familiar and alien, drawing the audience to a recognition of the inhumanity of genocide without allowing them a route to an easy identification with the subjects of violence. Such a "re-visioning" of the Holocaust within the popular format of a Hollywood thriller makes for a collective witnessing of historical trauma as a subject of, as well as determined by, conscious narrative reordering.

In recent times, the Holocaust has also been represented in new media like the World Wide Web and has become the subject of "virtual" witnessing by a large, culturally diverse and dispersed but globally networked audience. There are innumerable online databases and memorial sites devoted to the study and commemoration of the Holocaust, several of them designed by American universities as bibliographic resource bases meant to help scholars researching in this field. For instance, *The Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust* (http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/default.htm) hosted by the University of South Florida, is a massive encyclopaedic project comprising resources ranging from "primary" texts like Nazi documents belonging to the Second World War and video testimonies of survivors, to new age digital features such as interactive quizzes and virtual reality movies that allow the user to tour through a concentration camp right into the gas chambers. This site typifies the kind of sensory experience the internet combines with a more traditional "textual" understanding of a historical phenomenon like the Holocaust. Other similar websites that put together text, images and videos in a participatory online environment include the *Holocaust Survivors and*

Remembrance Project (http://isurvived.org/) and *A Cybrary of the Holocaust* (http://www.remember.org). The combination of traditional resources of studying the Holocaust with new methods of engaging with it imaginatively marks the continuity between the different narrative forms and technologies that together build up the discourse of the Holocaust in contemporary culture. Virtual memorials like *Yad Vashem* (http://www.yadvashem.org/) allow direct survivors or persons related to them to register and testify online as witnesses of the Holocaust, thereby offering a virtual space for voices from the Holocaust to be heard; *Cybrary* even offers a link that survivors "looking for people lost in the Holocaust" may use to find friends and family (http://remember.org/unite/). Thus, the technology of the internet, characterized by the enhanced ease and speed of updating and networking information, becomes a crucial element here in representing and enacting the perpetual nature of the trauma of the Holocaust. While documenting the past is a major aim of such websites, some of them, such as the ones hosted by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (http://www.ushmm.org/) and the Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, University of Minnesota (http://chgs.umn.edu/), also draw the audience's attention to genocidal activities taking place in our own times in various parts of the world and call for corrective action. Thus, the Holocaust serves as a paradigm case for studying as well as responding to other instances of genocide, accruing cultural currency through its constant circulation across media and serving as a locus of an ever-expanding web of narratives. The interactive, conglomerate environment of the internet throws open the public domain of Holocaust representation to a variety of texts and voices and offers a prominent instance of how representations of a historical event construct and constitute collective memory and cultural consciousness.

In the next section, I offer a brief survey of scholarship and criticism on the

representation of the Holocaust, with a focus on theories of trauma and memory that explore the cultural and ethical rather than the psychological aspects of bearing witness. I lay out ideas and concepts that critics of the Holocaust have used to explore the relationship between the individual experience of exceptional suffering and the familiar media and contexts in and through which such experience is communicated to a wider audience. Thus, I define and develop the theoretical framework for my own study from criticism that identifies the Holocaust as an instance of historical trauma that demands as well as creates a morally responsive and responsible witnessing public through narrative reconstructions of memory.

Trauma, Memory, Media and the Holocaust: An Overview of Criticism

The Holocaust posed a serious challenge to Western intellectual traditions of creative and critical writing as it was an event that was unprecedented in terms of the nature and magnitude of the violence inflicted by one group of humans on another. The Holocaust defied traditional modes of representing and interpreting human experience as no "language" was perceived to be adequate to the task of expressing faithfully the immense trauma it caused to its victims. Thus, early on in the history of Holocaust criticism, Theodor Adorno declared in an essay titled "Cultural Criticism and Society" (1949), "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" (*Prisms* 34). Often misinterpreted as a denial of the possibility of *any* writing about the Holocaust, this statement does not, in fact, recommend absolute silence on the subject; rather, it suggests that in order to find a way of speaking about the Holocaust, we must interrogate the fundamental assumptions (like "progress" and "civilization") of the very culture that permitted the occurrence of the Holocaust. In fact, rather than treat the Holocaust as a uniquely un-representable event, critics like Zygmunt Bauman (*Modernity and the Holocaust* 1989) argue that the Holocaust was not an aberration in modern history; rather, it was, in terms of its magnitude, a result of the enormous possibilities of technology and the

extensive structures of bureaucracy that are characteristic of modern societies, and questions the traditional notions of culture and progress as being self-evidently good. The kinds of atrocities inflicted by the agents of a genocidal state on its subjects during the Holocaust brought into question the category of the "human" itself and represented an order of experience that tested the limits of language. As Giorgio Agamben argues in *Remnants of Auschwitz* (1999), "[T]he survivors bore witness to something it is impossible to bear witness to" (13). Through his reading of various testimonials, especially of Primo Levi, Agamben arrives at the conclusion that the only true witnesses of the Holocaust are those who did not survive to bear witness (33-34). He identifies the "Muselmann" – an inmate who had been reduced to an automaton-like existence through total submission to violence – as the ultimate figure of the impossibility of bearing witness to the reality of the concentration camp; the muselmann "marks the threshold between the human and the inhuman" (55). Yet, any narrative representation of the Holocaust must identify the victim of trauma as human for his/her experience to be accessible to the audience. Thus, Lawrence Langer, one of the pioneering literary critics of the Holocaust, pointed to the paradox of attempting to represent the atrocity of the Holocaust (as well as of other instances of genocidal violence such as the bombing of Hiroshima, the excesses of the Stalinist regime, the Vietnam war) truthfully in literature, while simultaneously also identifying "traces of the human" in such traumatic experiences (*Age of Atrocity* 2). The paradox Langer refers to here arises from the fact that while events like the Holocaust signify the total, wilful abnegation of the worth of human life, any act of representation of such an event conveys its traumatic import only by means of a narrative recognition of the victimized subject at the core of such experience as human. Holocaust narratives work through this paradox by rendering the historical trauma identifiable to their audience as human experience of suffering and loss. As Langer proposes

in *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination* (1975), the Holocaust has given rise to a literature of atrocity that combines "historical fact" and imaginative truth", which in its turn, "has taken as its task *making* such reality "possible" for the imagination" (8).

The narrative construction of this "reality" is crucial not only for the audience to access an order of experience they are unfamiliar with but also for the victim of atrocity him/herself to articulate the memory of trauma. If trauma marks a violent interruption in the victim's notion of his/her "self" as being constituted by a continuous series of experiences, the narrative re-membering of trauma constitutes an act of identifying him/her as a victim *after* the disruptive event itself has occurred. Thus, Geoffrey Hartman contends:

> The knowledge of trauma, or the knowledge that comes from that source, is composed of two contradictory elements. One is the traumatic event, registered rather than experienced. It seems to have bypassed perception or consciousness and falls directly into the psyche. The other is a kind of memory of the event, in the form of a perceptual troping of it by the bypassed or severely split (dissociated) psyche. ("Traumatic Knowledge" 537)

The "perceptual troping" that Hartman refers to here is enabled and enacted through the (belated) re-cognition of trauma in a narrative form. Michael Rothberg points to this belated nature of "knowing" trauma when he says, "[T]rauma's conditions of possibility lie in surviving the accident of the extreme [...]. The narrator is traumatized in so far as she lives on beyond extremity into a new world of everydayness [...]. Trauma always entails a coming after..." (*Extremities* 64). Rothberg further theorizes the disruptive potential of trauma by suggesting that it is implicated in everyday space and time and necessitates a form of realism in its representation.

The traumatic realist project is not an attempt to reflect the traumatic event

mimetically, but to *produce* it as an object of knowledge, and to *transform* its readers so that they are forced to acknowledge their relationship to post-traumatic culture [...]. Because it seeks both to construct access to a previously unknowable object and to instruct an audience in how to approach that object, the stakes of traumatic realism are at once epistemological and pedagogical, or, political (67). Thus, Rothberg's theory of "traumatic realism" marks the coexistence of the mundane with the extreme in traumatic memory and provides a useful representational model for avoiding the pitfalls of either banalizing or sacralizing the Holocaust. Such a conceptualization of trauma is also significant because it points to the role of the audience in the process of creating knowledge about trauma. In fact, the articulation of trauma is possible only *after* the occurrence of the event that caused it precisely because a historical distance between the source and the effect of trauma is necessary for the victim to be able to address a witnessing audience. The condition of address-ability, argues Kelly Oliver, is crucial to the victim's sense of his/her own "self":

> It is the possibility of address that sustains psychic life and the subject's sense of its subjective agency. To conceive of oneself as a subject is to have the ability to address oneself to another, real or imaginary, actual or potential. Subjectivity is the result of, and depends on the process of witnessing [...]. (*Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* 17)

This possibility for the victimized subject to address his/her memory of trauma to an "other" is realized most evidently in the form of the testimony, which has been the subject of study for major Holocaust scholars. Chief among such studies is *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (1992), in which Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub study autobiographical accounts of Holocaust survivors within the context of classroom teaching to demonstrate how the testimonial form determines our understanding of the

relationship between trauma, memory, narrative and history. Laub argues that the hearer of testimony is included in the process of creation of knowledge that constitutes the traumatic event, that s/he is "a participant and co-owner of the traumatic event" (57). This implies that the memory of trauma is created as a result of a communicative act between the victim and the listener under a testimonial condition. Thus, Felman observes, "By virtue of the fact that the testimony is *addressed* to others, the witness, from within the solitude of his stance, is the vehicle of an occurrence, a reality, a stance or a dimension *beyond himself*" (3). Traumatic memory is thus located in the common space created and shared by the victim and the listener in the act of bearing witness. If the experience of trauma renders the victim unable to claim his/her own identity as a human subject, its recollection in the presence of an empathetic listener restores to him/her their lost subjectivity in the very act of bearing witness. Thus, the testimonial act is performative, both in the sense of requiring the victimized subject and an empathetic listener to participate together in re-membering the experience of trauma, and in the sense of effecting the recognition of the victim's subjectivity in and through the very act of such communication between the two. Thus, Oliver observes:

> The performance of witnessing is transformative because it reestablishes the dialogue through which representation and thereby meaning are possible, and because this representation allows the victim to assert his own subjective agency and humanity into an experience in which it was annihilated or reduced to guilt and self-abuse. (93)

Though the reclamation of subjectivity by the victim of trauma depends on the listener's participation in the testimonial performance, it is imperative that a distinction be maintained between the two and a vicarious identification with an other's suffering be resisted. In this context, Dominick LaCapra proposes that while a feeling of empathy with the

victim is a necessary affective component of understanding trauma, the secondary witness must also resist appropriation of an "Other's" pain and maintain a distinction between that experience and his own – a condition he terms "empathic unsettlement". LaCapra observes that this "involves a kind of virtual experience through which one puts oneself in the other's position while recognizing the difference of that position and hence not taking the other's place" (722-23). What LaCapra's formulation suggests, is the importance of making a distinction between identity and identification in the act of bearing witness to trauma. This distinction assumes particular significance in the case of second generation Holocaust narratives, where children of survivors negotiate their relation with their own familial inheritance of trauma by means of narrativizing and publishing their parents' testimonial accounts. In such instances of secondary witnessing, the historical gap between the victim and the second generation author and reader calls for a model of interpreting trauma that is experientially inaccessible but culturally transmissible. Marianne Hirsch uses the term "postmemory" to describe the second generation survivor's response to the trauma of the first – "experiences that they "remember" only as narratives and images with which they grew up but that are so powerful, so monumental, as to constitute memories in their own right" ("Surviving Images" 218-19). The term conveys the experiential gap between the events of the Holocaust and the second generation survivor, as well as his/her attempt to bridge this gap through imaginative acts of representation.

The term "postmemory" is meant to convey its temporal and qualitative difference from survivor memory, its secondary, or second generation memory quality, its basis in displacement, its vicariousness and belatedness. Postmemory is a powerful form of memory, precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through representation, projection and creation – often based on silence rather than

speech, on the invisible rather than the visible. That is not, of course, to say that survivor memory itself is unmediated, but that it is more directly – chronologically – connected to the past (220). Hirsch also proposes that postmemory can serve as a useful model not only to understand second generation survivors' relation to familial trauma but also to describe the ethical identification of "less proximate groups" with collective, cultural trauma (221). Thus, the process of bearing secondary witness to the Holocaust is based on a principle of *affiliation* rather than *filiation*, especially when the experience of trauma is available only as memories that are passed on from one generation to the next. In fact, second generation Holocaust narratives often self-consciously reflect on the process of their own making as part of the traumatic history they seek to represent Thus, Erin McGlothin argues:

> [T]he manner in which the second-generation text tells the story of its struggle with its Holocaust legacy *itself* tells a story of that legacy. The text's poetics become the site at which the events of the Holocaust are registered and their legacy is inscribed. The writing of the second generation functions as a residue of this marking of Holocaust legacy, which leaves its traces in the process of writing rather than revealing the full presence of the event. (*Second Generation Holocaust Literature* 12-13)

In emphasizing the representational, mediated, self-reflexive nature of trans-generational traumatic memory, Hirsch and McGlothin alert us to the significant role played by the textual and media forms in our understanding of the relationship between memory, narrative and history. In this context, R. Clifton Spargo observes that the post-1990s boom in the field of Holocaust writing, ranging from the traditional genres of memoirs and diaries, poetry and novels, to more recent forms such as pseudo-memoirs, magic-realist fiction and graphic novels, indicates that "even the truths of history are culturally mediated. In thinking

about the past we are always already living in the present, finding ourselves immersed in culture; and all of that persistent perspective must also be part of the stories – historical, testimonial, or simply fictive – that we recover" (*After Representation* 7). Spargo also suggests that "the diversification of media for representing historical and contemporary events has increased the urgency of addressing the intersection between the hypothetically nonrepresentable event and the pervasive, representation-saturated environment" (ix). In fact, in spite of the claims made for the unique, unspeakable nature of the Holocaust, the production and circulation of a great number of narratives about the event in the public domain suggest that the massive trauma caused by it can be expressed and responded to only in its telling. James E. Young observes, in the context of the public memorialization of the Holocaust, that acts of collective witnessing of trauma themselves become a part of the fabric of the shared memory of the event: "At some point, it may even be the activity of remembering together that becomes the shared memory; once ritualized, remembering together becomes an event in itself that is to be shared and remembered" (*Texture of Memory* 7). Narratives of trauma are thus not only crucial to the victim's reclamation of his/her own identity as a human subject but also central to the secondary witness's identification of him/herself as a participant in the preservation of collective memory. Such narratives lead to the evolution of what Pramod K. Nayar calls a "shared grammar of victimage" (*Writing Wrongs* 144) that enables the victim of trauma to articulate the experience of personal suffering in the presence of an audience, who in their turn, bear the responsibility to respond to such accounts with empathy and thereby declare their own subject positions as ethical witnesses. The generation and circulation of narratives of trauma thus functions as a cultural and political impulse for more of such texts to be produced and sustains the identity of the witnessing audience as members of a *narrative society* (Nayar 132). Nayar argues further that

narratives of atrocity and trauma are not read in isolation but in congruence with other such narratives, and therefore constitute an "allotropic" genre (152). The recognition of the same theme of human rights violation in each atrocity narrative over and above its cultural specificities enables the witnessing audience to empathize with the individual human subject at the centre of the experience of trauma. Thus, the collective, secondary witnessing of trauma through allotropic atrocity narratives generates an affective rather than statistical understanding of an event like the Holocaust and leads to the emergence of what Nayar describes as a *sentimental* narrative society (145).

I have attempted here to chart the terrain of Holocaust scholarship as it has evolved to take into account the cultural imperative to bear witness to distant, historical trauma within a testimonial context. I have also described the theoretical perspectives on the representation of trauma and memory that inform my own reading of Holocaust narratives. In the next section, I lay out the central argument, rationale and scope of my study and offer a brief outline of the chapters that constitute my thesis.

Chapter Plan

I now offer a brief outline of the chapters that follow this Introduction.

In the second chapter, titled "Paratextual Strategies", I examine how paratexts, such as forewords and afterwords, prefaces, author interviews, glossaries, background or "extra" information about films, "Home" and "About" pages of websites, frame the interpretation of narratives of trauma in terms of their generic location, thematic significance, textual evolution and authorial intent. I emphasize the role and function of the paratext as much in terms of its relationship with the process of reading as with its position vis-a-vis the "main" text. *I argue that these paratexts serve not only as a means of authenticating and justifying the "texts" they are appended to but also as a set of guidelines for the audience to interpret*

and respond to the same.

In the third chapter, titled "Barbaric Space: Visualizing Trauma", I examine how the use of images in these texts constructs a visual field wherein the extreme horror of the Holocaust is introduced into the safe space occupied by the spectator. Thus, the visual reconstruction of traumatic memory involves the creation of a "barbaric space", one where the suffering of the victim is communicated through these images to a witnessing audience. *I argue that the Holocaust victim, "othered" through the infliction of dehumanizing violence, is enabled to address an audience within the barbaric space of the visual field*. I analyze the different levels of authorship and viewership at which the traumatic experience of the victim is mediated in the process of its narrative reconstruction.

In the fourth chapter, titled "Mediating Voice and Agency", I examine how these texts enable the Holocaust victim to reconstitute his/her fragmented "self" by defining his/her own subject position vis-a-vis trauma as a suffering human; simultaneously, the secondary witness defines his/her subject position within the narrative by means of a sympathetic identification of the victim *as* human. For the primary witness, the ability to articulate traumatic memory in the presence of a sympathetic "other" signifies a reclamation of his/her own voice as a human agent that had been curbed by the actual experience of trauma. Likewise, for the audience, participation in the act of bearing witness to another human's suffering implies an agential move towards creating a shared, collective memory of trauma out of the private experience of suffering. Thus, I argue, *these texts establish a narrative contract between the victim and the audience as co-participants in an act of bearing witness that requires both to articulate and respond to trauma as human subjects*.

Following from the dialogic nature of bearing witness to trauma, in the fifth chapter, titled "Empathy, Witness and Testimony", I trace the emergence of an empathetic testimonial

form across second generation Holocaust narratives. *I argue that as the historical gap between the events of the Holocaust and its witnesses increases, it becomes imperative for both second generation authors and readers to express, by means of an empathetic response to the Holocaust victim's narrative of suffering, a cultural affiliation to, rather than an experiential familiarity with, historical trauma.* Thus, it is by means of bringing a *sympathetic imagination* to bear upon their "reading" of such narratives of trauma that audiences perform their role as ethical witnesses to the Holocaust.

In the sixth chapter, titled "Transmitting Trauma", I examine how the trauma of the individual Holocaust victim is rendered transmissible across narratives belonging to different genres and media. In the first section, I argue that trauma is communicated to experiential outsiders by means of its narrative representation as an "immutable mobile". Bruno Latour defines this as a set of facts or data that can be mobilized so that they do not undergo "distortion, corruption or decay" in the process of transmission and finally become combinable so that they can be "cumulated, aggregated" into a body of knowledge (223). I demonstrate how the recurrent use of certain themes such as the victim's body as the site of pain and suffering, the concentrationary universe of the camps, the relation between individual suffering and collective memory, the construction and identification of the victim's "self" and its relation to the particular testimonial performance, constitutes trauma as an "immutable mobile" and renders it identifiable to a sympathetic audience. In the next section, I examine how *these narratives of trauma constitute an allotropic genre – one in which texts representing the subjective experiences of individual victims can be read in conjunction as variants of the same theme* – and call for a set of reading practices that, over and above their distinct formal features, locate them as parts of a narrative continuum. What makes these texts allotropic is not only the recurrence of certain themes of trauma – the brutalization of

the body, self-alienation and fragmentation of the victim's identity, the conflation of the mundane with the horrific in the victim's memory – but also the transmission and reception of such experiences by audiences who "read" such narratives *in relation to* one another and as part of a composite genre. I study each of these themes across narratives of trauma belonging to different genres and media; additionally, I also examine how these texts often employ and combine a multiplicity of generic conventions of forms of life writing like (auto)biography, bildungsroman, testimonio, diary and memoir in ways that structure their reading as allotropes of a larger genre – that of the atrocity narrative.

In the seventh chapter, titled "Narrative Society", *I argue that these narratives generate a shared currency of affect – for the victim through the articulation of his/her memory of feeling pain and suffering as a human subject and for the secondary witness through the expression of his/her feeling of empathy as an appropriate response to historically distant trauma*. "Feeling" is thus an aspect of "knowing" trauma within a testimonial context where the subjects involved are informed by and identified through an *ethic of affective witnessing.* Thus, such texts create as well as demand an audience of ethical readers whose sympathetic response to trauma constitutes them as members of a narrative society. The formation of a narrative society is thus predicated upon the circulation and consumption of narratives of trauma by a community of "sentimental" readers and is also the cultural condition for the public memorialization of the Holocaust through the production of more such narratives.

In the concluding chapter, I summarize the arguments put forward in the preceding chapters and propose that *the creation and preservation of a cultural memory about historical trauma through its textualization is crucial not only to the victim's own articulation of his/her identity as human but also to the audience's identification of itself as a community of ethical,*

humane witnesses. The representation of the Holocaust in second generation narratives is a case study in the formation of such a narrative society and could function as a paradigm for studying the public imagination of and response to other instances of atrocity, trauma and human rights violation.

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Chapter 2

Paratextual Strategies

In this chapter, I examine representations of the Holocaust across various genres and media in terms of the paratextual strategies employed in "texts" that seek to offer glimpses of an event located in a historical past but also self-consciously defend the aesthetic worth and ethical necessity of such narrative attempts in the face of the impossibility of representing the experience of trauma in any comprehensive, exhaustive form. Examining paratextual devices like forewords and afterwords, prefaces, author interviews, glossaries, background or "extra" information about films, and "Home" and "About" pages of websites, I argue that they *define and defend the second generation writer's relation to the subject matter of traumatic memory as well as suggest to the audience ways of "reading" such texts within a global, testimonial context*.

Paratexts are, as Gerard Genette defined it, "thresholds of interpretation". In other words, they are frames of reading. Given the fact that this dissertation itself moves from text to readership and allotropic narrative forms, I believe it is important to study how frames of interpretation are inaugurated well before the "actual" or "core" narratives in these texts. Paratexts locate the ensuing texts within contexts, direct the reader to the contexts and other texts. Hence, in the case of Holocaust writing in particular, paratexts of the kind I shall be studying here serve a crucial mediating and directorial function of developing frames of contextualization and reading.

The term paratext was first used and theorized by Genette, who used it to study the role of features like titles, dedications, prefaces and epilogues interpreting the "main" text. It is useful to note that etymologically, the prefix "para" means, according to the *OED*, both "beside, adjacent to" and "beyond and distinct from, but analogous to". Thus, in reading

paratextual strategies, I look at how they frame the interpretation of a text in terms of what lies within its "main" body as well as how they supplement its meaning(s) over and above its strict boundaries within the larger contexts of its production and reception as a material, cultural artefact. I emphasize the role and function of the paratext not so much in terms of its position vis-a-vis the "main" text but in terms of its relationship with the process of reading itself. As Jonathan Gray (2010) rightly observes, paratexts would have been unremarkable if all they did was to describe accurately what lies within the text; rather, they are significant because they have "considerable power to amplify, reduce, erase, or add meaning" to the text, so that "much of the textuality that exists in the world is paratext driven" (46).

The chapter is divided into five sections that collectively demonstrate how paratexts (i) authenticate and validate narrative accounts of trauma, (ii) create a narrative space for authors to appropriate inherited trauma as a familial and cultural legacy, (iii) locate individual "stories" of suffering and loss within the larger context of memorializing the Holocaust, (iv) offer metacritical commentary on the genesis of the text itself as part of the process of the writing of history, and (v) extend and expand the representative and interpretive potential of Holocaust narratives for a networked, global audience.

Paratexts, Authenticity, Credibility

In this section, I examine how paratextual devices like prefaces and afterwords not only chart the genesis of the Holocaust narrative but also define and justify the author's aesthetic and ethical agenda in writing the text. I use Kubert's *Yossel* and Croci's *Auschwitz* to demonstrate how these second generation fictional(ized) accounts of the Holocaust draw upon as well as recreate the first-person testimonial form and thereby claim for themselves the attributes of authenticity and credibility in terms of *historical truthfulness*.

Prefaces often serve as points of entry into a text by charting its genesis, establishing

its generic location and thematic significance and explaining/justifying the author's intent. The preface introduces to the reader the value of the subject matter of the text, as well as proclaims the author's intentions and investment in the creation of the text. Joe Kubert's *Yossel: April 19, 1943* (2003) presents an interesting case in this context: it is a fictional account of the experiences of a 16-year-old boy in the Warsaw Ghetto, cast in the form of a first-person testimony. Whereas a testimony is usually premised on the availability of a person's lived experience for narrativization, in this case Kubert presents an imaginative recounting of the events leading to the Warsaw Ghetto uprising through the eyes of a character who is quite identifiably his own alter-ego transported to a different time and place. As Kubert puts it himself, "It is a work of fiction, based on a nightmare that was fact. There's no question in my mind that what you are about to read could have happened." (Introduction, n.pag.). Thus, it is on the basis of the principle of probability that the narrative claims its value as being an authentic account of the past. Kubert takes care to trace the origins of the narrative in legitimate sources: letters written to his parents by their European friends and relatives who survived the Holocaust, as well as historical records containing references to specific dates, times and places. Thus, by firmly rooting his "story" in historical fact, he claims for the narrative the quality of *truthfulness,* while acknowledging at the same time the fictive nature of the narrative. Interestingly, in this introductory section Kubert also offers a kind of personal biography that goes hand in hand with his schematic chronology of the events preceding and leading up to the Holocaust. By repeatedly emphasizing the fact that he was "lucky" to have escaped being caught in the Holocaust because of his parents' emmigration to the US, Kubert presents himself as a "survivor" – not in the sense of living through the actual horros of the Holocaust but in the sense of having avoided the fate of "millions of others" like him by sheer chance. In fact, he constantly juxtaposes the very

ordinary – and therefore so incredibly lucky – events of his childhood and adolescence with the terrible events happening to his people at the same time in another part of the world:

> In 1939, I was thirteen years old, attending the High School of Music and Art, In New York City. In 1939, Hitler invaded and conquered Poland. Two million Jews were swept up in the net of Hitler's Final Solution... .
>
> [...]
>
> Between 1940 and 1942, I was in high school. Wonderful things were happening to me. My dream of becoming a cartoonist was coming true... .
>
> At the same time in Europe, people were being led into the gas chambers and fed into the ovens. (n.pag.)

His mundane, unremarkable autobiography is thus juxtaposed and contrasted with the horrific "biography" of his race in another continent, and becomes, in this light, the story of a fortunate survivor. It is from this subject position that Kubert assumes the responsibility as well as the authority to project himself in a different setting and narrate a "story" that could very well have been his own life: "The experience was very personal, a little scary, and sort of cleansing. It was something I felt I had to do" (Introduction, n.pag.). The narrative thus accrues its value not just in terms of the research that has gone into its presentation but also of the ethical force that is seen to have led to its creation. By representing himself to the reader at the beginning of the book as a meticulous artist who is also governed by the moral impulse to bear testimony to a past that is intimate yet not personal, Kubert lends to his "fiction" the weight of authenticity and calls upon the reader to bear witness to his "what-if" narrative *as if* it were true.

Like Kubert's fictional testimony, Pascal Croci's *Auschwitz* (2004) is also based on verifiable historical fact but presented by means of fictional(ized) characters who offer narrative focal points for the reader to empathize with the traumatic experiences represented within the text. Croci presents some "Background Information" on the genesis of the book in the form of an interview that is appended to the "main" text (76-80). Interestingly, there is no mention of who the interviewer is, which makes one conjecture if the interview only *assumes* the standard "meet-the-author" format and thereby provides the reader information that the author considers necessary for a correct "reading" of the text and a fair evaluation of his craft. It is a means of anticipating and answering questions that the author thinks would be raised with regard to his work and therefore an exercise in preemptive self-justification. For instance, in the brief write-up that precedes the interview, Croci, referring to himself in the third person as though it were an objective commentary, charts an artisitic lineage for his work. He cites instances of visual representations of the Holocaust – the TV documentary *Holocaust*, films like *Schindler's List*, *Life is Beautiful* and *Journeys*, and the path-breaking graphic novel *Maus* – and locates himself in an emergent line of artists who have offered fictionalized accounts of the Holocaust (76). Thus, Croci seeks to situate his work in an already established tradition of Holocaust representation and justifies his use of fiction as form. As an extension of this attempt to explain and justify his work, Croci also traces an originary moment for it – an exhibition of drawings by Holocaust deportees in 1993 in Paris, where a chance encounter with a survivor, his "first witness", triggered in him the impulse to start working on the project: "I knew that I was taking an enormous risk, but to have done nothing, to have said nothing, would have been impossible for me" (76). He conveys here a sense of moral obligation towards the subject matter, a *responsibility to respond* to the stories he hears from members of "Friends of Auschwitz". It is on the basis of his skill as an artist

that Croci claims to have won the trust of his repondents and is thereby able to perform his role as a responsible witness to the survivors' tale(s):

> I must say that at the beginning, most of them were reticent. Then when I showed them my first sketches, it must have broken the ice, because some of them agreed to tell me about what they had lived through. (76)

Thus, Croci declares and defends his credibility as a participant in acts of testimony (in spite of his status as an outsider in terms of his non-Jewish lineage) by establishing his commitment to his art. *Auschwitz* is not the result of a second generation survivor narrativizing the story of his parents; rather, it is the outcome of interviews conducted by an outsider, "a non-Jew and 'stranger to the Shoah'" (76), with Holocaust survivors. Therefore, it becomes important for Croci to emphazise the bond of "trust and respect" he developed with his witnesses (80). This bond lies at the core of the book but in a sense also surpasses it: Croci reveals that he interviewed his witnesses without censoring his questions but also that "out of respect" he did not put everything they told him in the book (80). As the authorial agent, Croci combines the functions of a diligent reporter/scribe – one who does not shy away from asking painful questions or even supplying information to the witnesses that they themselves did not have – as well as of a sympathetic confidant who exercises discretion in the use of the stories he collects from his witnesses. Thus, it is by means of establishing and proclaiming his competence as well as conscience in dealing with his subject matter that Croci assumes the role of an *intimate* author, one who is both willing to bear witness to the past and capable of representing it sincerely. Simultaneously, Croci also seeks to take his readers into confidence by offering them an insider's view into the process of the creation of the text: the preparatory sketches that he presents alongside the "interview", as well as Croci's explanation for his technique of using realistic, black-and white drawings, are meant to

familiarize readers with the *work* that has gone into the *text* they have just read and thereby turn them into intimate witnesses to the author's world. Croci also reproduces letters written to him by his "main" witnesses (80-81) in order to impress upon the reader the text's testimonial value. The word of the witness/survivor is employed here to lend credibility to the artist's images; "real" experience is invoked to assert the *truthfulness* of "fiction". This element of truthfulness is further emphasized by means of the "References and Inspirations" (82) and the "Bibliography" (85) appended at the end of the book. In a conscious departure from the usual format of a "fictional" text, *Auschwitz* catalogues its "sources" in a way that mimics the form of a historical treatise or a critical commentary, and thereby situates its imaginative/fictional component on a foundation of verifiable fact. By thus showcasing himself and his work strategically vis-a-vis his readers, Croci seeks from them a tacit acknowledgement of the merit and authenticity of the text.

In addition to this, Croci also asserts the moorings of the "story" in hard facts, especially the more extraordinary aspects of it such as the miraculous (but scientifically explained) survival of a girl inside a gas chamber or the existence of a little known special "family" camp. He provides exact dates and cites names of witnesses who have testified to these facts as well as of those on whom he has modelled his characters (78). Having established its historical credentials, Croci highlights the uniqueness of his "story", which he claims is "full of the type of everyday details that historians find less interesting" (78) and one that offers a more nuanced reading of the past by avoiding the "completely black-and-white" portrayal of the situation during World War II (77). In a sense, the author makes a claim here for augmenting history with the details of everyday life, making the story more relatable in human terms. The text accrues the value of uniqueness by claiming to offer a fresh perspective on history; the selection and presentation of "facts" by means of "fiction" is

therefore the author's claim to as well as achievement of a significant contribution to the understanding of the Holocaust. Moreover, he mentions and explains the connection he makes in the narrative between Auschwitz and Yugoslavia and thereby justifies his project in terms of its current relevance:

> The pictures of the Yugoslavian camps showed us emaciated people who were about to disappear. I immediately thought of the Nazi death camps. It was also very important for me to connect this story to the reality of today...so that Auschwitz doesn't remain just a thing of the past. (78)

Thus, the text accrues value not only in terms of what it tells about a traumatic past but also in terms of what it suggests about present horrors. The impluse to bear testimony to a traumatic past is also geared towards the imperative of issuing a warning for the present and the future. Croci employs the Holocaust, particularly Auschwitz, not just as a subject for remembrance but also as a paradigmatic reminder – one that must be discussed seriously in order to ensure that such crimes are never repeated (80). In a sense, the text attempts to generate a cultural memory and knowledge about the Holocaust, one that could possibly dovetail into an awareness of other instances of ethnic violence and trauma and thereby function, in its own turn, as a paratextual frame for interpreting and responding to crimes against humanity elsewhere. The paratext thus serves to locate the text within a larger, more contemporary, global context of bearing witness to trauma and atrocity and ascribes to it a testimonial function and form. I shall return to paratextual elements and the testimonial form in connection with film and digital media in the last section of this chapter.

Paratextual Contestation and Narrative

In this section, I demonstrate, using Spiegelman's *Maus* and Katin's *We Are on Our Own* as instances, how paratexts can be employed by second generation authors of Holocaust

narratives to appropriate their parents' individual memory of trauma as a familial as well as cultural legacy. The paratext opens up a narrative space wherein the second generation author's position as an intermediary inheriting his parents' "story" of suffering and transforming it into a testimonial text is contested and negotiated, even as this transformation establishes links with multiple texts and contexts and the act of bearing witness, even as this transformation establishes links with multiple texts and contexts in the act of "bearing witness"[2].

While Kubert and Croci represent writers who were not, in a personal or historical sense, affected directly by the Holocaust but who nevertheless respond to an artistic and ethical call by re-creating the traumatic experiences of the past for the present and future generations, others like Art Spiegelman, a second generation Holocaust survivor, deal with the Holocaust in their work to grapple with complex and inter-related questions of familial and historical legacies. Spiegelman's *Maus* presents an interesting case of a preface that offers a preliminary glimpse into what is to follow, not by means of any direct exposition or commentary on the "main" text but rather positioning itself in an unusual, somewhat problematic relation with it. Like the final dedication to his deceased parents, Spiegelman's "preface" follows the grammar of the rest of the narrrative by employing a combination of word and image. In fact, there is nothing to set it apart from the "main" text except the fact that it precedes the title page of the first part of the book; in a rare departure from custom, this two-page "preface" does not bear any title and is paginated in continuation with, rather than separately from, the rest of the book. Moreover, it is the only point in the entire book where Spiegelman represents himself as a child going through the normal, unremarkable life of a

[2] I use this term, via Kelly Oliver, to signify the act of witnessing by both the victim, who has experienced trauma first-hand, and the secondary witness, who serves, at a historical distance from that experience, as the audience for the victim's narrative of trauma. Oliver observes, "Witnessing has the double sense of testifying to something that you have seen with your own eyes and bearing witness to something that you cannot see; there is the juridical sense of bearing witness to what you know from first-hand knowledge as an eyewitness and the religious sense of bearing witness to what you believe through faith." (18).

ten-year-old, before his own experience is interrupted and subsumed by his father's story of unmatchable trauma. Perhaps this marks the first instance when Art Spiegelman bears conscious testimony to his father's account of his past, and is therefore presented as a point of entry into the text. This brief piece is then an introduction, a prelude and a preface, all at once, as it not only foreshadows the "main" story (of Vladek's experiences during the Holocaust) that is to follow but also frames its *narration* within the context of the constant negotiation and contestation between father and son. Thus, it establishes a deliberately ambiguous relation vis-a-vis the "main" story by situating itself, structurally as well as thematically, on the fringes of the narrative, yet in continuation with it.

The final, unframed image in *Maus* – that of Vladek and Anja Spiegelman's tombstone – is both a visual sign of a tentative closure to the narrative and a dedication of sorts to the deceased parent(s) whose story Art Spiegelman tells. The fact that Art Spiegelman puts his signature and the dates of composition of *Maus* right under this pictorial representation of the end of his parents' lives suggests that the narrative is for him both a means of consecrating their history as well as a marker of his own responsibility and right to narrate that history; it is a tribute to a past that he has not lived through personally as well as an assertion of the right over its narrativization as his own. The final signature, as well as the mention of the years during which he composed *Maus*, enables Spiegelman to claim *affiliation* with a traumatic past of which he is only a second generation survivor: this final marker of his role as the "author" of the text is veritably an assertion of the fact that he is not merely a secondary witness/scribe of his father's experiences during the Holocaust but a primary *agent* who participates directly and actively in the re-creation of that past for public consumption. Therefore, his subject position, as a second generation survivor, is both determined by his filial ties with his father and negotiated in terms of his authorial intervention into his familial

history.

This double-equation Spiegelman has with his familial history is, of course, problematized by the fact that while his father has at least as much a voice in the narrative as he does, his mother's version of the story is conspicuous by its absence. In fact, her "presence" is felt only as a break in the narrative, when Spiegelman reproduces the unpaginated four-page long comic strip that he had published soon after she committed suicide. Anja Spiegelman is present in the narrative only in terms of her familial relations, as daughter, wife and mother, but never as a survivor of the Holocaust with a voice of her own. Her "presence" in the story is manifested only in terms of the *lack* she represents to the twin narratorial agents, Vladek and Artie – as the dead wife who cannot be substituted by Mala, as the mother whose suicide traumatizes the son in a way that cannot be reconciled within the terms of a recounting of familial history, and as a witness/survivor of the Holocaust whose written testimony (her diaries) never reaches her son because they are destroyed by her husband, to whom it represents too much of an emotional disorder (161). Yet, the inclusion of her tombstone in the final dedicatory image of the book (like the dedication to her at the beginning of the first book) implies Spiegelman's appropriation of her approval of his version of the story. Similarly, the dedication to Richieu at the beginning of the second volume of the book, accompanied by a photograph, is at once Spiegelman's tribute to his elder brother who perished during the Holocaust and a means for him to inscribe himself into a part of the family's history that he never lived through. (I will explore the visual politics of this dedication in greater detail in the next chapter.) Neither Anja nor Richieu enjoy the agency to speak for themselves within the narrative, yet both are constantly present in their absence as referents that are (posthumously) invoked and appropriated to validate and legitimize the narrativization of a past they shared and were direct witnesses to. As Gerard Genette points

out, "The dedicatee is always in some way reponsible for the work that is dedicated to him and he brings, willy nilly, a little of his support and therefore participation" (136). Moreover, a dedication is based on the assumption that the dedicatee deserves to be remembered: s/he thus moves from being defined only in terms of her/his personal relationship/association with the dedicator to becoming a subject who bears a representative/symbolic significance within the larger public context of the subject matter of the text. Conversely, the text assumes legitimacy through the affiliatory bond that the dedication establishes between the author/dedicator and the dedicatee. Together, they constitute a "sign", as it were, that generates and reiterates the value of the text as one that ought to be read not just as a recounting of personal experience/memory but as a testimony to a history that ought not to be forgotten. This is especially true of the memoir which, as a form, is deeply invested in the values of authenticity, reliability and legitimacy, and therefore depends greatly on a demonstration of its lineage/evolution as such. Such "dedications" signify, by means of their inscription into a narrative re-construction of the past, a move towards memorializing personal history in the larger domain of public memory and consciousness. This act of narrative memorialization thus transforms the private and the personal into the public and the political; it purports to speak *of* as well as *for* the dead and thereby claims for itself the prerogative to voice the silenced testimonies of those who do not survive to tell their own story. Genette rightly identifies this as being a "typically performative act", one that is "always intended for at least two addressees: the dedicatee, of course, but also the reader, for dedicating a work is a public act that the reader is, as it were, called on to witness" (134). Like the preface, these dedications are also paratextual indicators of the way the narrative has been constructed to be read as one where the "text" of the personal, familial lineage of Vladek and Artie intersects and overlaps with the context of writing the larger history of the

Holocaust.

Similarly, the use of historical documents, such as photographs and letters, in Katin's *We Are On Our Own* as paratextual material not only lends evidentiary support to her imaginative reconstruction of real events but also locates the author's writing of her mother's "story" within the larger context of bearing witness to inherited trauma. Katin introduces photographs of letters that her mother had written her father at the beginning of the war after the "story" itself has come to an end, offering, as it were, material traces of the traumatic history of a family whose breakdown was symbolized towards the beginning of the narrative by Esther's burning of photographs and personal correspondence. The same holds good for the post-War photograph of herself with her mother that features on the last page of the book. These familial documents, appearing as they do on unnumbered pages, evidently lie outside the "main" text, yet they anchor the "story" in historical reality in their capacity to frame it within a testimonial context. The letters or the photograph do not, in themselves, suggest trauma, but as material possessions of the Holocaust survivors whose "story" we have just read, they function as paratextual devices of identifying and locating trauma. Katin explains, in a brief note accompanying the letters, that though she could "somehow imagine the places and the people" her mother described to her, she could get a "real sense" of her self as a child and of the "reality of the fear and confusion of those times" only after reading her mother's letters. Thus, for the second generation survivor-author, the familial inheritance of trauma, accessed here in the form of personal correspondence, becomes a source of understanding an experience that lies beyond the realm of her own memory; additionally, the inclusion of such material evidence of personal/familial loss and suffering within the bounds of the text frames the narrative within in a testimonial context, wherein the reader is guided to recognize the imaginative retelling of the events described in the "story" as a justifiable means of

representing trauma that impacted *real* human beings. Thus, the paratext functions here as an authenticating device for the "story" it follows and enables both the second generation author and reader to access the personal experience and memory of trauma as part of a historical reality.

In fact, the untitled epilogue that Katin writes at the end of the book also suggests the impossibility of restricting the trauma of the Holocaust to only the experience of the victim herself and reveals the impact it has on the lives of succeeding generations. Thus, though Katin charts her own childhood, adolescence and youth spent in Budapest, Israel and New York in fairly unremarkable terms, she confesses to her reluctance and discomfort in having to "belong [to] and show" her Jewish lifestyle as an adult. The public performance of one's ethnic identity, of which the publication of the book is certainly an instance, is therefore acknowledgd by the second generation survivor-author as being problematic. The traumatic legacy that she inherits is one that she can neither entirely belong to nor allow herself to forget: her inability to believe in the existence of god or to give her children the "comfort of faith" is a symptom of her uneasy relationship with her own Jewish identity and of the persistent, ineradicable nature of trauma. In fact, Katin admits to the fact that her mother, mistrustful of "places, systems and institutions", had apprehensions about the project of turning her experiences into a book, even though there is a larger public discourse about the Holocaust now than ever before. The epilogue thus functions here as not only as a paratextual reminder of the non-containable nature of trauma but also as a metacritical commentary on the memorialization of trauma through testimonial narratives.

Paratexts as (Necessary) Tributes to Memory

Following from the previous section, I now examine the role paratexts play in locating personal and familial accounts of suffering and loss within a larger, popular history of the

Holocaust. Using Lemelman's *Mendel's Daughter* and Jacobson and Colon's graphic novel adaptation of Anne Frank's *Diary*, I demonstrate how the authors of these texts employ paratexts to represent individual "stories" of trauma as being part of a culture of memorialization.

The ethical imperative to reproduce a survivor testimony as part of the larger cultural project of representing the Holocaust to the present and the future generations is deemed to be so great that it sometimes overrides considerations of privacy, as in the case of Martin Lemelman's *Mendel's Daughter* (2006). Based on the transcripts of his mother's oral testimony, Lemelman's text is an instance of a private, familial "interview" published posthumously for public consumption, without the express consent of the interviewee but with an official acknowledgement of her contribution to the creation of the text. Lemelman not only reproduces his mother's unique speech pattern throughout the narrative but also names her as the co-author of the text in the title page (though not on the front cover) – this, in spite of the fact that he himself admits "she would be flabbergasted if she knew that her story would be read by strangers" ("Author's Interview", n.pag.). Thus, Lemelman consciously transports what was purportedly the narration of a private story into the realm of public history. Gusta Lemelman is, in this sense, a reluctant witness, one whose testimony becomes narrativized as a consequence of the authorial agency her son – the inheritor and safekeeper of her story – exercises after her death.

While Lemelman presents the text, predictably, as a form to tribute to his mother's memory, he also assumes the right to tell her story *on her behalf* by virtue of being the secondary witness to it. Gusta Lemelman's own position as a "reticent" witness/survivor is itself complicated by the fact that she was aware of being videotaped while she gave her testimony and was therefore talking not just to her son but also to an "outsider" in the form of

a mechanical device. The presence of a technogical means of recording and reproducing an intimate, familial, testimonial act already implicates it in the possibility of replication and distribution in the public domain[3]. While at a personal level, the act of bearing testimony is represented as performing a cathartic function, for both the primary and the secondary witness – Gusta Lemelman cries for her loss for the first time in 1989 and Martin Lemelman cries when he returns to the video-tape in 2003 – it also establishes a narrative contract between the two. Once the testimonial act has been recorded through a medium and in a form that lends itself to reproduction, its narrativization becomes a matter of ethical responsibility for the author. In addition to "authoring" his mother's testimony, Lemelman also gives voice to those victims of the Holocaust who did not survive to tell their tale – his grandparents, aunts, uncle and cousin. In spite of, or rather *because* of the impossibility of hearing those permanently silenced voices, Lemelman seeks to bear secondary witness to their experiences, thereby ensuring that they are not forgotten. Though Lemelman does not characterize any of these victims in sufficient detail for them to be remembered individually, his dedication to them at the beginning and the end of the narrative functions as a representative catalogue that testifies to the devastating truth of the Holocaust. The refrain-like utterance, "Yes, this happened to me... They gassed us, and burnt us" that accompanies the generic illustration of the victims' covered faces at the end of the book does not add to our existing knowledge about the Holocaust; rather, it reiterates the fact that the Holocaust did happen, forbidding the community of *reading witnesses* to forget what they have encountered in the text.

Another instance of this reiterative textualization of the voices of Holocaust victims as

[3] This becomes evident from the fact that Lemelman has put up an audio clip of the interview with his mother on the companion website that the book has (http://www.mendelsdaughter.com/). Thus, the interview no longer remains within the private realm of the "family" – its *mediation* through technology makes it possible, even necessitates, that Gusta Lemelman's voice be heard by an audience of "strangers". The intervention of technology, first at the site and instance of the actual testimonial act (the 1989 interview) and then following the publication of the "text" in its print and digital avatars (in 2006), puts the primary witness/survivor in a relation of *mediated proximity* with a larger, dispersed audience of secondary witnesses.

a strategic preventive against forgetting is Anne Frank's famous *The Diary of a Young Girl*. Originally written and published in Dutch and subsequently translated into English (1952) and several other languages, it is arguably the most popular book to have emerged from the Holocaust. As a material, historical reminder/remainder of a traumatic past, the diary has not only managed to survive its author but has also become something of a celebrity "text", featuring on numerous must-read lists of the twentieth century and conferring its fame upon both Anne Frank and the "secret annex" where she wrote it. Anne Frank's is perhaps the only recognizable, distinctly individual face amongst the de-humanized mass of millions of Holocaust victims; the house in Amsterdam where she spent nearly two years in hiding during the War has been turned into a museum and has become a site of historical and literary tourism. The manuscript of the diary itself has been preserved at the Anne Frank House and an official website (www.annefrank.org) offers "visitors" a virtual tour of the museum. Evidently, Anne Frank's diary has gained a symbolic cultural currency that exceeds considerations of its textual features and spills over into such extra-literary domains that have together come to constitute the meaning(s) of the signifier "Anne Frank". It is, therefore, possible to consider the various cultural manifestations of Anne Frank as belonging to a network of signs that derive their meanings from the original/originary text (the diary) but also constantly add to it by means of adaptation, commentary, historical cross-referencing, and so on.

The latest addition to this network is the authorized graphic biography of Anne Frank, commissioned by the Anne Frank House and illustrated by Sid Jacobson and Ernie Colon. Published in 2010, the book is an illustrated account of Anne Frank's life, death and afterlife as the writer of a famous text. The book is more than just an adaptation of Anne's diary into a visual medium; it is, in some senses, a biography of both the author and her "work" that

encompasses the "text" of the diary within a larger narrative of how they came to be. Thus, the first chapter of the book traces the family history of Anne, describing the respective backgrounds of both her parents and narrating how they came to meet. Interestingly, alongside this familial history, the narrative also charts the course of European history beginning with "snapshots" of World War I:

> The peace treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919, six months after Otto Frank returned home. Parts of Germany were ceded to victorious nations, other sections were demilitarized, and the imposed reparations proved ruinous to its already strained economy, sowing the seeds of bitterness and resentment for many Germans. (9)

The conjunction of the history of a family with that of a nation, often achieved through reference to dates significant to both, is a narrative strategy employed throughout the book, and serves to map the historical context within which Anne's diary came to be written. The same strategy of juxtaposition is adopted in the "Chronology" appended at the end of the book (143-48), which brings together the life-story of Anne with the history of the decimation of the European Jews during the Second World War. In addition, this "Chronology" is also interspersed with photographs from the family album of the Franks, reminding the reader that the characters sketched on the pages of the book were indeed real people on whose lives the War had a devastating impact. The book can thus be read not merely as an illustrated biography – as the title suggests – but also as a memoir that pays tribute to an iconic victim whose story, over and above the "text" she authored, has come to represent the tragic fate of millions of other nameless victims of the Holocaust. Insofar as the book highlights the intersections between the personal and familial history of Anne Frank and the communal history of the European Jews, it functions as an instance of textual

commemoration of trauma that is both individual and collective. In fact, the illustrators' dedications to their own daughters – "who but for the fortune of time and place could have suffered the tragic fate of the young [Frank] sisters" (n.pag.) – indicate at the very outset that the book is not meant to be merely a recollection or retelling of a well known story but a reminder to its present audience of their own vulnerability to atrocity and trauma. The dedication, as a paratextual device, thus foregrounds the significance of the narrative as one that pays tribute to the victims of the Holocaust as well as cautions the reader against the possibility of the recurrence of such an event. The book, therefore, presents the story of Anne Frank and her diary as being significant in terms of their historical import as well as of their relevance to the present and the future.

Additionally, the narrative charts the evolution of the diary through and beyond the period of time during which it came to be written. Thus, not only does it follow Anne to the end of her life in Bergen-Belsen but traces the genesis of her diary right upto its publication and tremendous reception. The narrative, therefore, turns the diary itself into a subject of public memorialization rather than adapting it simply as a textual record of the experiences of a Holocaust victim. In this sense, the biography can be seen to perform a metatextual function by reflecting upon its own origin and layering and supplementing the "text" of the diary with apersonal, historical information. As an extension of its metatextual role, the book also offers "Suggestions for Further Reading" at the very end (149), which is a list of books written about Anne Frank and websites dedicated to her memory. Thus, by offering references to other "works" that constitute the textual network of Anne Frank's diary, the book reinforces the historical and cultural significance of an already popular instance of Holocaust representation.

Metatextuality

In this section, I further explore the role metatextual devices[4] play in the circulation and reinvention of Holocaust narratives within a testimonial, memorial public culture. Like Anne Frank's *Diary*, Spiegelman's *Maus* is an instance of a popular "text" catapulting its author to literary and cultural stardom and establishing itself as a landmark in the domain of Holocaust representation. The fame and acclaim that *Maus* has garnered has made Spiegelman a cult figure, one who has become almost synonymous with his "work" and has come to be considered representative of second generation Holocaust survivor-writers. It is not surprising, therefore, that twenty-five years following the publication of his path-breaking graphic memoir, Spiegelman should bring out *Meta Maus* (2011), a detailed commentary, a metatextual history, as it were, of the evolution of *Maus* from its author's familial legacy, artistic training, research and preliminary efforts, through its publication down to its popular and critical reception as a significant addition to the body of work on the Holocaust. *Meta Maus* goes beyond its purported objective of offering "a look inside a modern classic": it stands on its own as a document that combines the private and the personal with the public and the historical through a variety of images that supplement the written word. The book serves as a detailed explication of how *Maus* came to be written/drawn and published. Giving the reader access to a wealth of raw material that went into shaping and becoming *Maus*, the book functions as a metatextual device that traces the evolution of its celebrated antecedent. It is obvious that *Meta Maus* depends on the cult status of *Maus* for its marketability: it is a kind of belated introduction to a text that has already attained a certain degree of popularity and critical acclaim. Not surprisingly, a major part of the book is devoted to an extended interview Hillary Chute conducts with the author himself,

[4] Metatexts are those paratexts that serve as critical commentaries on other texts. They often appear after the publication of the "main" text, though it is fairly common in postmodern fiction to find metatextual elements that draw attention to the process of the creation of the main "text" incorporated into its own body.

accompanied throughout with rough sketches from his notes that finally took shape as *Maus*. In addition, the book also contains interviews with Spiegelman's wife and children, none of whom was in any direct way involved in the writing of *Maus* but whose personal association with the celebrity author makes them fit seamlessly into the "meet-the-author" format that is an integral part of contemporary book publicity campaigns. It is undeniable, therefore, that *Meta Maus* partakes of the celebrity status of the text and the author of *Maus*.

Having said that, it is perhaps also useful to remember that the evolution of the author as an artist and the genesis of a literary text have been popularly read in conjunction (since the advent of the printed book and the consequent crystallization of literary ownership in the figure of the author), though the two might not necessarily be coincidental. Insofar as *Meta Maus* gives the reader an insider's view into the workings of the author's mind, by way of information about his personal background and the research he undertook for writing the book, it charts an evolutionary graph for both Spiegelman and *Maus*. By making the reader privy to the process of the creation of *Maus* – so far as it can be captured through a retrospective presentation of the different stages and aspects of making the book – *Meta Maus* seeks to establish a relation of (perceived) intimacy between the author, text and reader. A perceived relation of intimacy between an audience and a popular subject (in this case, both the book and the author) is also a feature of contemporary celebrity culture, the workings of which inevitably inform the production and reception of the kind of companion book *Meta Maus* clearly is.

However, *Meta Maus* also contains elements that reflect critically, though not without irony and humour, upon the celebrity status that has accrued to *Maus*. One of the significant ways in which the book does this is by incorporating textual and visual material that does not appear in any form in *Maus* but offers useful insights into the larger cultural and political

project of representing and responding to the Holocaust. The acceptance speech Spiegelman delivered in 1990 after receiving a prize ("Sonderpreis") for the German edition of *Maus* is a case in point. Titled "Better a Sonderpreis than a Sonderkommando", the speech is an acutely self-reflexive exercise in interpreting the popularity of *Maus*, and by extension of the Holocaust itself, in the context of the post-World War II cultural and political scene. Spiegelman observes, sardonically:

> It's a strange thing for a mouse to receive an award from a gathering of cats, for telling a story of how cats killed mice. It's a strange thing for me as a Jew to be here in Germany, getting an award for describing how your parents and grandparents were accomplices in killing my grandparents and family. (158)

He goes on to joke, tongue-in-cheek, about how he was inflicting Jewish guilt on his audience on "such a pleasant evening" but also suggests that "perhaps guilt is a useful civilizing agent that keeps people from behaving worse than they otherwise might". While the speech does not directly bear upon the text of *Maus*, it does offer valuable insights into the ethical implications and pitfalls of any project involving the representation of the Holocaust. Similarly, the letter Spiegelman wrote to the editor of the *New York Times* upon learning that *Maus* had been listed in the "fiction" category of their bestseller list offers an amusing but serious insight into how the form in which the narrative appears ought to be distinguished from the question of its commitment to historical veracity. With characteristic wit, Spiegelman suggests that perhaps the editor could "consider adding a special "non-fiction/mice" category to [their] list" (150).

The abundance of visuals, not just sketches made by Spiegelman for *Maus* but also photographs extracted from family albums, is a crucial device through which the book extends the project of inscribing a familial as well as a communal history that *Maus*

undertook. Pre-war photographs from Anja's family album, most of which feature people whose identity is irrevocably lost, are reproduced here (223) to put a human face to the incalculable loss of life that the Holocaust caused. These un-captioned photographs bear mute testimony to massive collective trauma in the absolute absence of anyone to narrate or recollect the stories of those whose traces they bear. Similarly, the two family tree diagrams, the first depicting the Spiegelmans before and the other after the War (228-31) create a startling, horrifying impact on the reader as s/he turns the page to realize how the Holocaust practically wiped out an entire family, which was just one of many millions. These textual devices emphasize the reality and the immensity of the loss caused by the Holocaust in *human* terms. Photographs of unidentified people serve to reiterate the fact that beneath the mouse-masks are faces that are identifiably human; they alert us constantly to the terrible reality that lies just beneath the surface of the "comic" narrative structure. Likewise, the companion DVD provided with the book for further reference offers audio clips of Spiegelman's interviews with his father, invoking (like the photographs from the family album), in sensory terms, the irrecoverable loss that constitutes the narrative of *Maus* and reminding the reader/audience that the "story" told by Vladek and sketched by Artie in the pages of the book is one that seeks to articulate the traumatic experiences of *real* people. These representative material "traces" of the loss caused by the Holocaust serve to remind us that beyond the metaphor of Jews-as-mice and Germans-as-cats lies the horrific, undeniable fact of genocide, that *Maus*, or for that matter any instance or form of representation of the Holocaust, can ultimately hope to offer only a partial, figurative mode of looking into the immeasurable trauma of genocide.

The abundant supply of secondary material on *Maus* by means of a book of almost the same volume as the original is, in fact, a metatextual exercise in not only charting and

appraising the life-story of both the book and its author but also reiterating its significance to the larger cultural project of representing and remembering the Holocaust. *Meta Maus* seeks to locate *Maus* explicitly within a historical context that is at once personal and familial as well as communal and national. Thus, the book ends with a section called "Time Flies [A Maus Chronology]" (290-94) that lists out events year-wise, beginning with the birth of Vladek Spiegelman in 1906 and ending with the screening of a European television documentary on Art Spiegelman in 2010; yet, in addition to mentioning dates significant to the Spiegelman family, especially to the course of Art Spiegelman's career as a graphic artist and the publication and reception of *Maus*, this "chronology" also includes references to important dates before, during and after the Second World War, thereby aligning the history of the author, his family and his work with that of the real world in which the Holocaust took place. Therefore, *Meta Maus* not only reveals the process of the creation of a "masterpiece" (as the back cover of the book declares) but, by locating and assessing it within a larger historical and cultural context through a vast amount of "secondary" material, also foregrounds the merits as well as the limitations of any instance of textualizing trauma.

Paratextuality, Film and Digital Media

So far as paratextual tools and strategies go, electronic media offer perhaps the greatest scope for the expansion of the domain of the "text" beyond its original content and intent. The ease with which "supplementary" material can be appended to the "text" of a film by means of contemporary digital technologies renders the borders between the main text and its "peripherals" increasingly permeable. Thus, Jonathan Gray observes that "any filmic or televisual text and its cultural impact, value, and meaning cannot be adequately analyzed without taking into account the film or program's many proliferations" (2). A good example of this process of paratextual expansion of a cinematic "text" is Steven Spielberg's

Schindler's List (1993). The film not only received popular and critical acclaim but was also the starting point of the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, a massive project of collecting, archiving and cataloging over 52,000 survivor testimonies and using them for purposes of education and research. The DVD version of the film, released in 2004, carries exclusive "bonus material" in the form of snippets of interviews with some of the witnesses saved by Oscar Schindler and a short feature on the evolution of the Visual History Foundation.

In the section called "Voices from the List", Spielberg frames the film as well as the project of building up the archive of testimonies within the discourse of personal heroism, citing Oskar Schindler's story as proof of his faith that one person can make a difference (00:15 to 00:23) and the survivors' accounts as showing "how ordinary men and women can transcend circumstance and become extraordinary, how victims can, with courage and fortitude, become victors" (01:03 to 01:13). Thus, the role that blind chance plays in the survival of these witnesses, though acknowledged in the film, is somewhat downplayed here in the light of what they subsequently choose to do with that chance. The miraculous survival of 1100 Jews because of Schindler's (heroic) intervention – that constitutes the basic subject matter of the film – is given an ethical turn here by highlighting how they have chosen to speak about their experiences during the Holocaust and by doing so, have made a significant contribution to alerting the world to the dangers of bigotry and hatred. At the end of this section, Spielberg observes that in hearing their stories we realize that "the scale of the atrocity they witnessed and the burden they carry because of it are simply beyond our capacity to comprehend, but by sharing their experience they helped to inform us all about how hatred is born, how it grows and what it can destroy". He further adds, "That they survived is a miracle; through the Shoah Foundation they've had the chance to survive a

second time, in a sense, to suvive for ever" (01:15:55 onwards). By thus claiming a textual afterlife for the survivors on whose testimonies the film is largely based, Spielberg locates it within the larger project of creating a moral conscience/consciousness around such instances of atrocity and trauma. By acknowledging the limitation of any attempt to capture the traumatic experience of the Holocaust in its totality, Spielberg seeks to offer an ethical imperative rather than an aesthetic justification for "textualizing" the fragments of a historical past, both as a film and as video testimonies, to be witnessed by present and future generations. In fact, the process of making the film itself is represented as being a revelatory experience, since it was while interviewing the witnesses that Spielberg realized that "archiving of testimonies was the single, most important thing we could do to work against the kind of hatred and ignorance that spawned the Holocaust" (00:38 to 00:52). The film is, therefore, represented as a point of entry into an experience that necessitates and demands the extension of its textual domain into the realm of historiography: the film becomes part of a larger project/mission and culture of bearing testimony as an ethically and politically responsible act.

Additionally, the inclusion of video testimonies as part of the "bonus material" lends the film itself a degree of authenticity and credibility. Spielberg himself states that the experience of listening to the survivors is "as powerful, perhaps more so, than any film" (00:54 to 01:00). Introducing the audience to the "raw material" that was subsequently cinematized is used as a paratextual strategy here to validate the film as a historically grounded document as well as emphasize the significance of that material beyond the "text" of the film. Thus, when one of the survivors, Helena Jonas-Rosenzweig (on whom the character of Helen in the film is based) narrates how she was beaten up and thrown down the stairs by Amon Goeth, the Commadant of the camp, for not being able to iron his shirt

properly, and how she bore it all with a straight face "like a rock" (34:12 to 35:08), the audience identifies the sequence in the film as corresponding to the horrifically real experience that a real person went through. The cumulative effect of such moments of identification, occurring every time a witness refers to an incident that is part of the cinematic narrative, results in an appreciation of the film as being factually accurate and simultaneously also in the recognition of the fact that it is only an approximation towards a traumatic experience that exists only in its representation.

It is in recognition of the importance of representing such experiences that another short "bonus" feature, "The Shoah Foundation Story with Steven Spielberg" is appended to the film. Spielberg introduces the Visual History Foundation as resulting from "[his] wanting to continue *Schindler's List* and make the list from 1100 to 52,000" (01:24 to 02:14). There is also a mention of numerous other films made on the basis of the archived testimonies, which have won awards and have been translated into 17 languages. The film is thus represented as having inspired politically meaningful and morally responsible action in real life, as well as having functioned as a point of origin for other texts. The "story" of the VHF thus locates the film within a network of proliferating textuality, one that spills over and into other instances of representation of trauma. In fact, it is in acknowledgment of the film's potential to be read within other, larger contexts of genocidal violence that the "story" opens with a brief series of uncaptioned photographs (presumably) from Rwanda and Cambodia, meant to alert the audience to the continual presence of violence and atrocity in their world. Snippets of interviews with students and researchers using the testimony archives are also provided in order to show how the project has made them more conscious towards other, lesser known but equally inhuman cases of ethnic violence, both in the past and the present, such as the Armenian or the Rwandan genocide. The educative aspect of the project is re-emphasized

through the mention of how interactive educational materials and videos (including a German language CD-ROM) based on the testimonies are being used to teach 1 million students across German schools. The role and importance of the project, one that began with the making of a film, is therefore shown to be far greater than any one particular "text" can possibly capture. It is by means of constant reiteration/re-viewing of the testimonies, in various generic and media forms, that the textual network that *Schindler's List* has spawned will generate a common grammar of interpreting and responding to violence and trauma across the world. In a significant remark, Spielberg likens the process of a student listening to a survivor's testimony as one of adoption, the former as a child adopting the latter as a grown-up (06:30 to 06:34). In this sense, the act of bearing witness becomes one of affiliation, wherein audiences removed historically and culturally from the Holocaust (and other such instances of violence and atrocity) are able to empathize with victims of trauma that is experientially inaccessible to them. The "bonus" material that the DVD version of the film provides thus frames it within a larger understanding of Holocaust textuality as an ethically informed and responsible process (rather than a finished product) of interpreting and responding to instances of atrocity and trauma.

In stark contrast to *Schindler's List*, Claude Lanzmann's documentary film *Shoah* (1985) uses practically no supplementary material – not even archival footage or photographs – or framing textual devices to represent an enormous amount of testimony; rather, the act of recording the testimonies itself becomes the central subject on screen. The film begins with a rolling script that introduces the audience, very briefly but tellingly, to the significance of the interviews that have been brought together as parts of the narrative: "The story begins in the present at Chelmno, on the Narew river, in Poland.... Chelmno was the place in Poland where Jews were first exterminated by gas... Of the 400,000 men, women and children who went

there, only two came out alive: Michael Podchlebnik and Simon Srebnik." This introduction goes on further to describe how Srebnik managed to survive in the camp because of his agility and his beautiful voice and even had a miraculous escape from near-certain death when he was shot through the head by the SS just before they fled from the approaching Soviet troops. As the "story" unfolds, we realize that each of these details mentioned at the very outset encapsulates the narrative strategy of returning, again and again, to certain people and places who/which appear on the screen in the present time but always function as reminders/remainders of a traumatic past. Thus, through the course of the film, Lanzmann repeatedly returns to these two aforementioned witnesses, whose survival seems, in the cold, rational light of the laws of probability, almost as shocking as the deaths of the rest. They are, in a sense, witnesses who have almost literally risen from the dead, who speak of and for the irretrievably silenced voices of the millions of victims of the Holocaust. Lanzmann's conscious refusal to use archival material, combined with his recurrent revisiting of people and places who/which bear only traces of an immeasurably horrific past, suggests that it is only in and through fragments of this kind that we can access historical trauma. The Holocaust represents genocidal violence and trauma of a nature and magnitude so enormous that any attempt at representing it in a comprehensible form must necessarily involve locating it within recognizably human subjects. Thus, the introductory reference to the two survivors from Chelmno assigns a name (and subsequently, the main "text" of the film also assigns a face and a voice) to the victims, the immensity of whose suffering can only be represented, both synecdochically and metaphorically, by these testifying witnesses. Likewise, the reference to an actual, physical site of torture, revisited repeatedly through the narrative, serves to map in territorial terms the violence and suffering that is otherwise abstracted from the present as historical facts and figures. The introduction is, therefore, also a kind of

dedication to those innumerable lives lost during the Holocaust for whom only a few surviving witnesses can speak, whose complete physical extinction can be recorded and remembered, in partial, tentative measures, by repeatedly going back to the people and the places who/which bear testimony to a past that constantly haunts their present, who/which are also, in some sense, spectral traces of that past.

While Lanzmann adopts a narrative strategy of restricting himself to a severely small range of textual signs in order to convey the immeasurability of the horror of the Holocaust, most other texts that combine words and visuals seek to capture the trauma of victims and survivors by employing as great a number and variety of signs as possible. Of particular significance in this context are online databases and memorials dedicated to the Holocaust, which combine a variety of audio-visual and textual material in order to offer a more comprehensive picture of historical trauma to an audience that is far removed, in spatial and temporal terms, from the actual events that constituted it. In addition, by virtue of the nature of the medium in which they exist, these websites are also able to constantly add to the available body of information about the Holocaust and network such data with similar material on other instances of genocidal violence, thereby providing to their audiences a kind of cultural "knowledge" to interpret and respond to historical trauma as members of a witnessing community. Such communities, dispersed though they are in terms of the specificities of their members' geographical and cultural location, are nevertheless unified in terms of shared, universal(izable) notions of human rights. One of the significant ways in which these websites frame the vast range and variety of information on the Holocaust is by stating their agendas and declaring themselves to be committed to the cause of remembering the past for the sake of a better future. For instance, the home page of the *Holocaust Survivors and Remembrance Project* (http://isurvived.org/) states that it is dedicated to

"combing the sacred ground of the Holocaust and the current representations of its tragic legacy". The declaration of the Holocaust as being "sacred ground" is a performative act that invokes notions of uniqueness and sublimity that are so commonly associated with it. A quasi-religious epigraph, inspired by *Isaiah* 56:3 reads, "And to Them I will give, within my walls, a Memorial with an everlasting name "Forget You Not" that shall not be cut off", presents the website itself as a kind of monument that commemorates the victims of the Holocaust. The home page of the website also features a six-minute-long background sombre music piece by the Romanian composer Serban Nichifor, "Cries from Earth to Heaven", which is "destined to become the Hymn of the Holocaust" and further feeds into the idea that the Holocaust is and ought to be treated as something sacred.

Interestingly, another website, *Yad Vashem* (http://www.yadvashem.org/) uses the aforementioned passage from *Isaiah* as an epigraph and in fact borrows its title from the original verse. The website is the virtual extension of the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority based in Jerusalem and therefore assumes some of the notions of sacredness associated with the promised land. A short introductory video states that "as the Jewish people's living memorial to the Holocaust, Yad Vashem on the Mount of Remembrance, in the eternal city of Jerusalem, safeguards the memory of the past and imparts its meaning for future generations". It further declares that "the website enables Yad Vashem to harness technology in the service of memory" by providing easy access to its digitized resources in 18 different languages to audiences worldwide. Thus, in addition to tapping into the religious connotations of a memorial located in a "holy" geographical space, the website also invites a more dispersed and diverse audience to visit the virtual equivalent of that sacralized space and thereby seeks to emphasize its relevance to a larger, global community. By employing these paratextual devices, these websites not only impress upon

their audience the seriousness of the subject matter they deal with but also partake of some of that seriousness to present themselves as virtual portals worthy of visiting, to commemorate the Holocaust as well as to prevent the recurrence of such instances of atrocity and trauma elsewhere in the present and the future. The preservation of memory by means of archiving testimonies and documents is, these websites suggest, significant not only in terms of historiography but also for creating awareness about the danger of more Holocausts happening in the present and the future unless we remember the past. There is, therefore, a repeated use of quotations from survivors exhorting the world not to forget the Holocaust:

> 'The Age of the Survivors is drawing to a close. Before long no one will be left to say, "I was there, I saw, I remember what happened." All that will be left will be books of literature and research, pictures and films, and multitudinous testimony.'
>
> [...]
>
> 'Those of you who may survive, bear witness, let the world know what has happened here.' Aleksander Aronovich Pechersky, leader of the Sorbibor revolt, seconds before the outbreak. (http://isurvived.org/home.html)

The Holocaust Survivors website thus invokes, for itself and its audience, a sense of responsibility towards history, an ethic of remembrance that requires participation in those acts of testimony through which the trauma of the Holocaust can be communicated across time. In fact, in order to indicate the popularity and significance of such a project, the website maintains and constantly updates a virtual clock that records (much like memorials in "real" physical space) the number of users who visit it. Such use of facts and figures is also a prominent feature of *Yad Vashem*, which declares that its archives are "the largest" and "the most comprehensive" in the world, containing 125 million pages of documentary evidence,

films, and 420,000 photographs, as well as 100,000 survivor testimonies (http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/about/documentation.asp). In spite of the obvious fact that one can access only a small portion of this massive archive at any given point of time, the significance of quoting these numbers is in the way they establish the project's pre-eminence in the sphere of Holocaust remembrance and commemoration. These websites also seek to represent the Holocaust in terms of its relevance to the contemporary global geopolitical context and thereby use the decimation of the European Jews as a paradigm case for protesting against genocidal violence elsewhere. Thus, the Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev says in the website's "Mission Statement" that in the current age of "instant communication" and "short memories", it is essential to develop "tools needed to perpetuate the dialogue between past, present and future"; that "[b]y preserving its Jewish character within the universal context, and yet maintaining an authentic voice composed of testimonies, diaries, artifacts and other documentation, Yad Vashem paves the way for a better future" (http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/about/mission_statement.asp). Thus, this paratextual statement of purpose frames the resources of the website within discourses of the role of new media technologies in the preservation of history and, more significanty, the moral implications of any such project for those who "read" such "texts" in contexts removed temporally or culturally from the Holocaust.

Similarly, the home page of the *Holocaust Survivors and Remembrance Project* bears prominent signs that read "Stop Bigotry" and "Unite Against Racism", and even condemns the complicity between the Bush and the Blair administration for "war crimes against humanity with respect of the invasion of Iraq", implying a strategic ethical connection between commemorating the Holocaust and responding to cases of violence and oppression elsewhere. Evidently, these websites address an audience which they assume to be

"informed" with a certain degree of awareness about current affairs, as well as inform them about a historical past that can serve as a warning against the recurrence of political oppression and ethnic violence elsewhere. The material archived on these websites is therefore meant not only to offer points of entry into the Holocaust as an event that had a very real and specific traumatic impact on millions of victims, but also to guide and enable audiences to use the Holocaust as a paradigmatic case for talking about and reacting to other instances of atrocity and trauma in morally responsible ways. Thus, such prefatory textual moves seek to frame the "reading" of the material these websites offer within a historical, cultural and moral discourse of memorialization that requires as well as creates testifying "subjects" as members of a witnessing community, a community that remembers the past to prevent its recurrence in the future.

In this chapter, I have examined how authors of second generation narratives employ paratexts to frame the interpretation of their "texts" within a testimonial context, locating the "stories" they tell within a larger history of the Holocaust and defending their own position as secondary witnesses. In the next chapter, I will closely examine the visual nature of these texts and the significance it holds for the process of accessing trauma that is otherwise far removed from the experiential domain of the second generation author as well as reader.

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Chapter 3

Barbaric Space: Visualizing Trauma

Second generation graphic memoirs, films, documentaries and online memorials dedicated to the Holocaust employ a variety of images, both photographic and otherwise, as a means of re-constructing, however provisionally, an event whose experience is available, to both those who live to tell the tale and those who listen to them, only as traumatic memory. In this chapter, I examine the nature and role of visuals in the representation and understanding of the historically distant trauma of the Holocaust in the current, global context of bearing witness. I demonstrate how the visual representation of trauma is mediated at different levels: first, at the level of authorship, driven by the artistic and ethical need to represent trauma, the photographer/illustrator selects and presents (in other words, plots) the images within a narrative of atrocity; second, at the level of audience/viewership, where spectators participate in the act of seeing these images and thereby bearing collective witness to the trauma of victims; finally, at the level of a larger public culture of bearing witness, where these images circulate within and amongst other narratives of suffering and call for certain ethical and political responses from the audience. I argue that *second generation Holocaust narratives participate in the construction and popularization of the visual field of trauma as a "barbaric space" within a larger, global culture of bearing witness to instances of genocidal violence and atrocity.* This chapter is organized into three sections that deal with the creation of this "barbaric space" in Holocaust narratives through (i) the visual conflation of the past experience of trauma and the present (con)text of its recollection, (ii) the juxtaposition of images as a means of identifying the victims of the Holocaust within an ordinary familial context always already contaminated by the suggestion of violence and trauma, and (iii) the figurative use of visuals as a code to communicate trauma that is otherwise incomprehensible.

Images of/from the Holocaust possess evidential force and serve to authenticate the testimonial narratives or contexts within they appear, but they do not suggest or claim absolute truth-value for such texts. In fact, the visualization of the Holocaust by means of images is a component of a larger culture of memorialization that involves the use of other kinds of textual and generic devices to "re-member" the trauma of the event. What these visuals – which are only one of several other kinds of related "signs" that together constitute testimonial narratives – make available to audiences is not the experience but the memory of a past that signifies an unbridgeable experiential chasm between the victim and the spectator. In this context, Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi points out, following from Theodor Adorno's famous dictum about the barbarity of writing poetry after Auschwitz, that visualizing the Holocaust through images "invoke[s] both dimensions of barbarism, as subject and as artistic principle: Nazism as perverse national ideology and genocidal system and transgressive acts of representation that take place beyond consensual boundaries – acts that in fact test and challenge the parameters of collective identification" (18). The "transgression" Ezrahi talks about here is one that occurs at the moment and in the act of looking at the dehumanized victim of atrocity, when the speechless victim's suffering is introduced to the visual field of the spectator and the safe normality of the latter's space is disrupted by the extreme barbarity of the former's image. It is the selection and arrangement of such images in a particular form, that is, the process and the product of the act of narrativization, that creates a visual field which brings together the victim and the spectator under a testimonial contract/condition.

Building on Ezrahi's observations, Pramod K. Nayar argues that the use and circulation of such images in narratives of trauma creates a "barbaric space", one where "the unacceptable [is] delivered to our visual field mediating the safe space we occupy as spectators and the space of suffering occupied by the victim" (152). The term "barbaric" has

been used here in its etymological sense of one who cannot speak and applies to victims of the Holocaust, since no language is adequate to capture their trauma. If trauma effects a violent rupture in the victim's ability to communicate his/her suffering to another person, it turns him/her into an "Other". The encounter with this "Other" within the frame of the image on the page or the screen constructs the visual field as a "barbaric space" not only because it features as subject(s) the monstrous effects of the systematic dehumanization of victims by the Nazis but also because it seeks to enable a dialogue between the victim and the spectator where speech itself is impossible. Since such dialogues between the victim and the spectator are generated only in and through various narrative contexts and devices, the "barbaric space" of the visual field may be said to be one that is mediated and constructed by employing images of suffering as "signs" that constitute testimonial texts.

The Visual Field of Suffering

In this section, I examine how writers of second generation Holocaust narratives use visuals as a bridge between, as well as a reminder of, the gap between the experience of trauma and its representation. I argue that *the juxtaposition of, and the spatial and temporal shifts between, the past experience of suffering and the present act of narrating it as traumatic memory in second generation graphic memoirs results in the creation of a "barbaric space"* within the visual field of such texts.

In her study of the use of photographs in the popular British and American press soon after the liberation of the camps at the end of the Second World War, Barbie Zelizer offers an instance of how images of Nazi atrocities served more as subjects of collective witnessing rather than means of factual representation. She observes that photographs from the camps were circulated quickly and increasingly, sometimes even interchangeably, without reference to their specific spatial or temporal location: "An individual photo's status as evidence

mattered less than the ability to simply document what the Nazis had done. Photography thereby provided a collective body of visual documentation that facilitated the act of bearing witness to Nazi brutality..." (94). This is not to suggest that images, especially photographs, do not bear any evidential force; rather, this emphasizes the iconicity of such images instead of their indexicality, their significant role as authenticating devices in testimonial narratives which seek, at most, only mimetic approximation and not accurate representation of an event that is anyway available to us only as traumatic memory. The encounter between the victim and the spectator within the barbaric space of the visual field is, therefore, geared towards the creation of collective memory on which a community of witnesses can be founded. While this visual field "generates insurmountable distances between the safe spectator and the injured victim [...], it [also] calls for a more ethical response within this space of encounter as a legacy of that spectatorship" (Nayar 152-53).

Authors of graphic memoirs often put to use the medium's flexibility to go back and forth across space and time to visually indicate the continual presence of trauma in the lives of survivors beyond the historical limits of actual events of the Holocaust. The conflation of the safe space and time of narration with scenes of suffering depicted through the imaginative reconstruction of the past is a strategy that Miriam Katin uses effectively to indicate the "presence" of trauma in the lives of victims in spite of the historical location of the event that caused such trauma in the past. Thus, Katin juxtaposes a telephonic conversation she has with her mother on a snowy day with a "scene" from their story of escape into a village on a similar day during the War (70-71). There is a marked contrast here between the warm and comfortable surroundings of their respective New York homes in which Katin and her mother talk over the phone, and the bleak and stormy weather in which they are depicted (on the facing page) trudging to a distant village. This visual juxtaposition of the "safe" present and

the "traumatic" past is not merely the result of the author's own narrative strategy; it is also a representation of the nature of traumatic memory itself, which is shown to be trigerred by correspondences between the past and the present in terms of something as incidental as weather conditions. Esther is reminded of that stormy day when she reached the village with her daughter several years later, in a different place and time, because of the occurrence of a snowstorm. Thus, at the level of the individual victim's experience and memory, trauma is shown to breach ordinary limits of space and time; for the second generation survivor-author, the actual moment and conditions of communication with the primary witness shape her own imagination and understanding of inherited trauma. The representation of the "present" moment of narration and the "past" events being narrated on facing pages thus creates a visual field wherein the safe "normality" of the reader's own space of spectatorship is intruded upon by the extreme trauma of the victim's past experience. In a similar juxtaposition of images from the present and the past, Katin depicts a scene of escape from her own childhood with another scene from her life as an adult, playing with her son at her New York house (62-63). This is indicative of the second generation survivor's own sense of her traumatic legacy and identity, which is visually contiguous to the space she shares with her own child and is therefore an aspect of her relationship with him. Such conscious juxtaposition of images constitutes the creation of a "barbaric space", which enables the reader to recognize the disruptive, trans-generational nature of traumatic memory.

It must be remembered, however, that the construction of this visual field as a barbaric space is not merely a function of the subject matter it represents; it can also result from the nature of the images used by the author. Thus, for instance, the strategic use of cat-and-mouse imagery in *Maus* serves as an aesthetic and ethical narrative principle that offers a point of entry not into a historical past – for that experience is beyond representation for both victim

and spectator – but into the process of traumatic recall. Spiegelman uses the cat-and-mouse imagery throughout *Maus* as a visual device for bearing witness to his father's "story" as well as to narrativize his own experience of negotiating his own subject position vis-a-vis that story as a second generation Holocaust survivor and writer. The framing of Vladek's oral testimony, reported carefully and authentically in his own peculiar syntax, within the startling pictorial code of anthropomorphized comic-book characters, constructs a visual field for Spiegelman as well as his readers where both the Jews and the Nazis are "othered" insofar as they are made to appear unlike humans. Yet, it is by means of this same visual code that Spiegelman is able to convey the monstrosity of the Holocaust by endowing his characters with behavioral attributes that are identifiably human. The animal imagery thus functions as a system of signs – a language, so to speak – that enables the articulation of an experience that is sublime in its traumatic import and surpasses representation and interpretation. While the text of *Maus* enacts and foregrounds the unbridgeable experiential gap between the victim and the spectator, it also simultaneously creates a visual field where the space of suffering of the former comes into contact with the safe space of spectatorship of the latter.

It is this encounter between the extreme brutality of Vladek's experiences during the Holocaust and the humdrum predictability of his conversations with Artie that constitutes the creation of a barbaric space. The visual field of the individual panels, pages and the book itself frames together the exceptionally violent world of Auschwitz with the utterly quotidian existence of contemporary suburban New York and facilitate the narration of traumatic memory. Since trauma can never be fully assimilated into personal experience or consciousness and can only be accessed in fragments through acts of belated witnessing, the visual grammar of *Maus*, following the generic convention of using panels and gutters as textual building blocks, serves as an appropriate language to capture and narrativize, however

provisionally, the experience of the Holocaust that exists only in the form of memory. The systematic brutalization of the Jews by the Nazis, recollected through Vladek's personal testimony, is thus effectively represented by means of a visual narrative whose structure not only mirrors the spatial and temporal gaps and shifts that characterize traumatic experience but also ironically inverts the dehumanizing principle of the Holocaust by attributing animal characters with human qualities. Thus, within the pictorial frame of the individual panels, and within the larger interpretive frames of the book and the popular genre to which it belongs, *Maus* creates a visual field that serves as a "barbaric space" where Spiegelman as a second generation survivor-author and, through him, his readers, encounter the trauma of Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

However, Spiegelman is acutely conscious of the artifice of his own visual metaphor and never quite allows himself or his audience to forget that it is, after all, only in and through such a figurative language that the victim and the spectator, the primary and the secondary witnesses, can share a narrative space and together participate in an act of collective witnessing of trauma. It is, therefore, not surprising that Spiegelman foregrounds the limitations of this visual metaphor at several points in the narrative by breaking its own codes of use. One of the most significant ways in which he achieves this is through the rare but deliberately unsettling use of photographs. Towards the very end of his testimony, Vladek recalls how after being liberated from the camp he had sent Anja a letter and enclosed a photograph of his as proof of his survival (294). This photograph is reproduced by Artie within the text as an obvious reminder of the fact that the visual imagery is just a symbolic means of accessing and narrativizing the memories of real people, that beneath the mouse face lies a human being who survived the Holocaust. The photograph, or more precisely, the scanned image of the photograph (already at a remove from the "original" document), is

positioned differently from the other illustrations on the page and elsewhere in the book, diagonally superimposed over a darkened empty panel (Figure 1), suggesting that it cannot quite be contained within the visual field that the other boxed drawings offer. Rather, this photographic image, in refusing to fit in with the frame of the panel and the page, and on a larger textual level, within the visual grammar of the book itself, functions as a stark reminder of the fact of human suffering that is fashioned into a narrative featuring comic-book-like characters.

Yet, so far as the photograph's ability to function as an evidential tool is concerned, it calls into question the very possibility of ever documenting the "real" experience of suffering of the victims of the Holocaust. As Vladek informs Artie, the photograph was taken after the War ended, in a studio where he found a set of neat uniforms to wear and pose in front of the camera. This photograph is thus the result of a staged act, one that recalls, through the iconic striped uniform, the suffering its subject had undergone at Auschwitz, but at the same time also points to its own theatricality by inviting both the victim and the spectator (through the eye of the camera and subsequently the editorial intervention of Spiegelman) to participate in what is essentially a collective witnessing of trauma. What the photograph offers here is not a documentary proof captured from a moment in European history of the atrocities perpetrated on Vladek and millions of others like him; rather, it is the absence of such an "original" referent that the photograph highlights. Even if it were a photograph of Vladek captured while he was an inmate of the concentration camp, of the kind on which Spiegelman based an illustration in his original three-page version of "Maus" published in *Funny Animals* in 1972, it would still refer to an experience that can be accessed not as an event but only as memory *belatedly* at the moment of the spectator's encounter with the victimized subject within its visual field. The point here is that the photograph performs a symbolic function by offering a

visual field where the traumatic memory of the experiences of the Holocaust can be co-constructed by the victim and the spectator much after the event itself has occurred. It is not the authenticity of the photograph as a piece of documentary evidence that is of prime concern here; rather, it is its affective capacity to bring the victim and the spectator into confrontation with the traumatic memory of the Holocaust that constitutes its significance.

It is this move from individual suffering to collective witnessing of trauma effected in and through the visual field that is reiterated by another photograph used in *Maus*. The dedicatory page at the beginning of the second volume bears a photograph of Spiegelman's elder brother Richieu who died in the Holocaust (165). While the photograph does not in itself feature any evidence of violence or suffering, its positioning within a testimonial narrative about the Holocaust points to its significance to both the Spiegelmans' familial history and the collective memorialization of the Holocaust. If Vladek's photograph captured a moment after the occurrence of a traumatic event, Richieu's belongs to a time before its occurrence: both, therefore, feature victims of the Holocaust whose suffering does not become apparent from the text of the photographic image itself but emerges from the narrative context within which they are framed. In the act of presenting this photograph, Spiegelman creates a visual field in which Richieu is framed both as a lost sibling and as a Holocaust victim; in seeing the photograph after its subject's death, which has already been narrativized in the first volume of the book, the reader enters this visual field as a witness to trauma. The photograph becomes a means for both the author and his readers to encounter the absence of its referent, since Richieu is just another name in a long list of mute witnesses to the horrors of the Holocaust whose story can be told and heard not in terms of his own traumatic experience but only as a subject of memory and memorialization. The caption that accompanies the photograph "For Richieu and for Nadja and Dashiell", is visually split into

two parts, the first two words above and the other five below the image, suggesting at once a continuity as well as an impossible gap between Spiegelman's familial past and future, represented by his dead brother on the one hand and his two children on the other. The experiential chasm that separates Richieu from Nadja and Dashiell, the victim from the spectator, is one that can never be bridged but also one that nevertheless calls for acknowledgment by means of what Marianne Hirsch terms "postmemory". This is a form of belated, inter-generational recollection of trauma that is not one's own but is adopted "through representation, projection, and creation – often based on silence rather than speech, on the invisible rather than the visible" (220). The visual field created by this dedicatory text (both image and words) is therefore a barbaric space where the survivors and inheritors of trauma – not only Spiegelman and his children, but, through the affiliatory identification of postmemory, also the readers/spectators – encounter and speak about those who have suffered through and have been permanently silenced by the Holocaust. *It is in this visual field where the safe space of the second generation survivors and spectators comes into contact with the space of extreme suffering that the victims of the Holocaust occupy that (post)memory can be constructed and the collective witnessing of trauma can take place*.

The Visual Field, Family and Testimony

In this section, I examine how visuals used in Holocaust narratives serve as identificatory devices to aid the representation and recognition of Holocaust victims as members of ordinary family structures and simultaneously as traumatized subjects. This dual identification of the victim, within the supposedly "normal" context of familial relations and the "extreme" context of genocidal violence, conveys the disruptive nature of trauma and enters into the visual field of the audience as memory that cannot be safely contained within the historical parameters of space and time that define the Holocaust as an event. I examine

the visual codes and icons – both photographic and diagrammatic – used by second generation graphic novelists in representing the unending, uncontainable nature of trauma to illustrate my point.

In addition to the inclusion of actual photographs from their family album, Spiegelman also uses illustrations of photographs to point to the *excess* that the traumatic memory of the Holocaust always presents to any attempt at its reconstruction and representation. Thus, towards the end of his testimony, when Vladek hands over a box full of old pre-War family photographs to Artie, he not only literally bequeaths to his son records of a past that exists only as snapshots but also introduces, if only partially and symbolically, an element of the excessive through images that overwhelm the second generation survivor's (inadequate) capacity to identify and contain this traumatic legacy within the narrative structure of his text. Thus, as Vladek points to several members of the family who perished during the Holocaust, the illustrations of the photographs, which initially overlap the serially arranged panels on the first page, ultimately tumble down in a single pile that threatens to obfuscate the last few panels on the second page (274-75) (Figure 2). Here Spiegelman dramatizes his own encounter with photographic images of his familial past that challenge and reveal the limits of the text's visual grammar and of its larger aesthetic and ethical concern with representing the memory of the Holocaust without trivializing or sensationalizing it. The systematic narrativization of Vladek's testimony that constitutes a majority of the text suddenly seems to fall apart when Spiegelman is faced with photographs of lost family members who are both related to and alien from him. This is especially evident in the panel where Vladek shows Artie a photograph of Anja's brother Josef who was a commercial artist and to whom Artie bears a resemblance. This juxtaposition of a victim of the Holocaust with a second generation survivor, of an uncle whose resemblance with his

nephew, both in terms of his personal appearance and professional inclination, forges a filial bond between the two but at the same time also points to the irrefutable, unbridgeable gap that separates the dead from the living. Within the visual frame of the page, this juxtaposition enacts and symbolizes the collision between the safe space Artie occupies within the regular, horizontal panel and the *almost* parallely aligned illustration of his dead uncle's photograph that can only be viewed in terms of its subject's annihilation. This collision signifies the creation of a barbaric space, one where Artie comes face-to-face with images of his dead ancestors, whose spectral existence in and as photographs is a means for the author-illustrator to trace his own genealogical roots to the Holocaust but at the same time is also a reminder of the insufficiency of his narrative identification with their traumatic past. These illustrations of family photographs haunt the narrative that Artie has created out of his father's testimony – they disrupt the visual order of the panels and spill out of the frame of the page itself, suggesting the impossibility of containing the experience of trauma within a particular representational code. By thus highlighting the limitations of his own visual field, Spiegelman positions himself not strictly or simply in terms of his Jewish identity but aligns himself with his readers as one of the spectators to whom the people in the images are strangers who can only be identified in terms of their status as victims within the context of the Holocaust.

The anonymity of the subjects of such photographic images used in second generation testimonial narratives is not a simple consequence of an accidental lapse of memory or loss of specific information; rather, it is the result of the impossibility of tracing or understanding any meaning of the existence of the people bearing those lost names outside of the traumatic memory of their suffering and death during the Holocaust. Thus, for instance, in *Mendel's Daughter* Martin Lemelman produces several group photographs from his mother's family

album, featuring many of her relations and friends who, unlike her, did not survive the Holocaust to tell their tale (Figure 3). Such photographs, over and above their evidential aspect as representative documents, function as a means of creating a visual field within which the second generation survivor-author encounters his ancestors but cannot identify them. Within the testimonial narrative, these photographs offer a space where the author might seek his own lineage, a filial point of reference for his own identity, but is instead confronted with the impossibility of identifying his existence with the absence of their subjects.

A similar instance of this visual strategy that simultaneously implies familial proximity with, and experiential distance from, the Holocaust is found towards the end of *Meta Maus* too, where Spiegelman produces a page full of uncaptioned, overlapping photographs that bear no markers of the identity of their subjects except the supplemental information that they have been extracted from Anja's pre-War album (223). There is nothing within these photographs to suggest the violent tragedy that awaited the people featured within their visual frame; it is only in the act and instance of their reproduction and re-viewing within the traumatic context of Holocaust memorialization that they signify the total, unfathomable destruction of the order of their existence captured in these images. The ordinary moments of the lives of these nameless dead people that these photographs seemingly "capture" – the subjects that constitute the "text" of these images, so to speak – are irretrievable and incomprehensible, except in the acknowledgment of this absence at the moment and in the context of seeing them as testaments of loss and trauma. The utter normality of the lives of these people contrasts sharply with their extreme suffering and violent deaths in the spectator's retrospective "viewing" of these images as foreclosed within the barbaric visual field of witnessing trauma. Thus, it is not so much the *identity* of the

individual faces in these images that determines the way they are seen: it is their *identification* as victims of the Holocaust that constitutes their significance to the collective memory of a witnessing audience. The visual image is, therefore, a "signifier" that can only point to a missing "signified" and functions as a narrative space that lends itself not to comprehension but to acts of collective witnessing.

The contamination of the safe and mundane normality of the pre-War existence of the victims with the extreme trauma of the Holocaust is staged through the juxtaposition of photographs at the end of the authorized graphic biography of Anne Frank as well. The "Chronology" appended at the end of the narrative not only charts the family history of Anne alongside the history of the Second World War but also supplements such information with photographs from the Franks' family album interspersed with a few that document the violent atrocities committed against the Jews during the Holocaust. Thus, for instance, amidst photographs featuring Anne with her family and friends, there are also a couple of photographs that stand as testaments of the annihilation of the Jews (144-45). The photograph of a synagogue set on fire and another simply of the Star of David badges that the Jews were mandated to wear as markers of their race function as visual signs of the imminent threat to the lives of the human subjects framed within these pages. The conscious juxtaposition of these photographs makes it impossible for the reader/spectator to look at one without looking at the other, and thereby effects the creation of a visual field in which the moments that the family photographs "capture" through the camera's eye are already threatened and doomed by the signs of death and destruction. In a sense, the linear time-line that this chronology seeks to offer by means of cataloguing events in the Frank family alongside those taking place in Europe during the War is challenged by these uncaptioned photographs, since they create a visual field within these pages where the temporality of the ordinary lives of people is

severely disrupted by the images of extreme violence. It is this disruption of the ordinary sense of time and space that marks the experience of trauma and makes it impossible for the victim to assimilate that experience into his/her consciousness and for the spectator to comprehend or access it except as memory created through acts of secondary witnessing.

Besides photographs, second generation graphic memoirs also employ other kinds of visual signs, primarily illustrations, which indicates the crucial role the author's imaginative participation in the testimonial act plays in the creation of a visual field that renders the trauma of the Holocaust accessible, if only through secondary witnessing and memorialization. While re-creating "scenes" from the testimony of the primary witness, these second generation survivor-artists also inform the narrative with their own inherited familial and historical knowledge of the Holocaust, as well as with the aesthetic sensibilities that encode their "viewing" and sharing of traumatic experience with their audience. For instance, quite early in his testimony, when Vladek recounts Anja's postpartum depression and his own attempts at cheering her up, he tells Artie of a private family joke that had made Anja laugh (37). Spiegelman visualizes the scene, following from Valdek's earlier assertion that he was known to look like Rudolf Valentino in his youth (15), in terms of classic Hollywood romance, depicting Vladek and Anja dancing together at a cafe in the backdrop of a huge halo of light that occupies almost all of the background of the panels on the page. Quite significantly, Spiegelman uses the same cinematic visual code again at the very end of the book, to illustrate the scene of Vladek's reunion with Anja at the end of the War, and reproduces Vladek's words, "We were both very happy, and lived happy, happy ever after" (296) for dramatic effect. This conscious and deliberate use of popular visual and verbal codes of Hollywood romance, in which there is a happy resolution at the end, serves to create dramatic irony, for the audience views both the scenes in the light of the traumatic incidents

that were to follow. Both Spiegelman and his audience know that Vladek and Anja will be violently separated from one another by the Holocaust, that there can never be a happily-ever-after ending to their story. The actual experience of joy that Vladek and Anja must have gone through in these scenes is rendered inaccessible to the author and to his audience by the trauma that permanently disrupts that order of existence where such experience was possible. Thus, the contrast between the fairy-tale backdrop of these scenes and the proleptic framing of the experience of their subjects within the traumatic context of the Holocaust creates a barbaric visual field where Spiegelman and his audience confront the impossibility of remembering Vladek's story independently of its framing as a survivor's testimonial narrative. The memory of utterly normal moments of a couple laughing over a joke or embracing after a long and painful separation is offset within the visual field by the extremity of the trauma that is always already present at the margins of the author's and the reader's consciousness as spectators of suffering. The Holocaust effects an irremediable dislocation of "normal" experience, rendering all attempts at the comprehension or representation of pre-traumatic experience impossible, except as memory created belatedly through acts of collective witnessing.

The foregrounding of this sense of dislocation that is both the effect and the symptom of trauma is a feature of testimonial narratives that seek specifically to recreate in visual terms the sites of extreme suffering, most notably the concentration camp. Thus, in Pascal Croci's *Auschwitz*, the illustrations almost never show the horizon in any distinguishable form, in spite of the fact that several of the scenes depicted take place outdoors. Also, it is practically impossible to determine whether these scenes occur during the day or night since almost all of them seem to unfold in a kind of perennially dusky light (Figure 4). This is a conscious visual strategy of representing the camp as a space without limits or fixed

parameters of space and time. While such a strategy obviously reflects what the author assumes must have been the experience of inmates at a place that barely allowed them to register coordinates of space and time as relevant to their doomed existence, it also suggests to the reader the impossibility and ultimate futility of trying to envision sites of such extreme trauma in terms of the parameters that are used to define ordinary events. The spectator is thus offered a visual field in which s/he can only confront unfathomable suffering and witness the breakdown of the order of their own safe, normal existence. Such a breakdown offers a serious challenge to the author in his historiographical role of charting the experience of the survivor as a linear narrative as, for instance, Spiegelman discovers when he attempts to account accurately for the time Vladek spent at Auschwitz doing different kinds of work. The neat time-scale that Artie draws up to impose a temporal order on Vladek's imprisonment at Auschwitz is given the lie by the latter's unconcerned dismissal of the need to measure out time at the concentration camp: "In Auschwitz we didn't wear watches" (228). Visually, the time-scale spans three panels, running down from the top of the page to the middle, but not quite succeeding in imposing any degree of order on the matter being discussed between Artie and Vladek. The historiographical reconstruction of events is thus shown to be inadequate to the task of capturing the "real" experience of trauma: like the time-scale, it can only achieve a partial overlap with the fragments of memory that constitute the testimonial narrative.

In fact, the experience of the Holocaust not only disrupts the sense of ordinary time during the occurrence of violent crimes but also intrudes into the safe space of the survivor's life beyond and after the event itself as traumatic aftermath. Thus, for instance, when Artie reads about some prisoners at Auschwitz killing three S.S. men and blowing up a crematorium and tells his father about it, Vladek adds to this piece of documented history by

saying that the women who had supplied ammunition for this revolt were friends of Anja and were hanged near his workshop and remained there for "a long, long time" (239). The panel shows the legs of the four hanged women dangling from the trees as Artie, Francoise and Vladek drive through the woods. Past and present are visually collapsed here within a single frame, creating a barbaric space where the images of extreme suffering contaminate the safe space occupied by the survivor and the spectators – both Spiegelman and his readers – and bring them face-to-face with the impossibility of locating or containing trauma within definite borders of space and time. Another instance of such visual conflation of the temporal and spatial frames of the events being recounted and the moment of the narration itself is presented when Artie is shown to be lying on the floor, taking down notes from Vladek about his experience as a conscripted Polish soldier. Artie's legs go back into the panel that depicts the young Vladek on the German frontier, whereas the upper half of his body occupies the frame where he is interviewing Vladek in his New York house (47). The visual structure of the comic-book, that lends itself to such conflation of different spaces and times, is thus effectively used here to suggest the persistent, inescapable nature of traumatic memory and thereby create a barbaric visual field where the act of witnessing compromises the safety of the spectator's position as an experiential outsider.

Visual Symbolism

Another significant way in which authors of second generation graphic memoirs ensure the spectator's participation in the act of collective witnessing and memorialization of trauma is through the use of visual symbols. In this section, I demonstrate how second generation Holocaust narratives employ visual symbolism as a means of representing, through suggestion, association, repetition and juxtaposition of images, the experience of trauma that can never be captured or communicated in its entirety.

One of the most iconic visual images is, of course, the swastika, which is used at the very beginning of Miriam Katin's *We Are On Our Own*. The swastika makes a rather cinematic appearance through images of window panes, arranged in two rows of six uniform panels on the third page, whose vista becomes gradually darkened as a flag bearing the Nazi insignia looms into prominence and occludes vision (Figure 5). The panels on the page look like screen-shots from a motion picture that together create the visual effect of a slow overtaking of the scene through the windows – both the illustrated ones and the frames of the panels themselves – by the darkness of the swastika on the flag. As an icon, the swastika conveys the imminent threat to the lives of the subjects whose story unfolds in the subsequent pages. The association of genocidal terror and trauma that this icon bears is visualized literally by the encompassing darkness that is described in theological terms: "And then one day, God replaced the light with the darkness" (5). Thus, this initial visual framing of the narrative within a theological commentary thematically anticipates the story that is to follow as one representing the destruction of an order of existence and faith that preceded the Holocaust. The sacramental text that Katin's mother is shown to be reading out to her daughter in the first page is thus countered on the page facing it by this visual icon of destruction, as through inverting in a kind of distorted mirror image the meaning of God's "text" (his creation) and replacing it with annihilation of all meaning. The book's central concern with the question of religious faith post-Holocaust is thus prefigured in and through this opening visual frame in which the text of God's book collides with the image of Nazi violence and atrocity. The reader/spectator is immediately drawn into this visual field through his/her recognition of both the iconic theological text ("let there be light") and visual image (the swastika) and forced to confront the irresolvable paradox set up by the traumatic conflict between the implications of faith and the consequences of genocidal ideology.

The significance of visual icons in the encounter with and representation of the Holocaust is borne out by a couple of instances in *Maus* too. Towards the beginning to of the first volume, Spiegelman illustrates Vladek's memory of first seeing the swastika on a Nazi flag during a train journey to Czechoslovakia (34). The flag bearing the dreaded insignia, which is visible through the train window from the point-of-view of Vladek, Anja and their Jewish co-passengers, occupies the entire background of four of the six panels on the facing page as Vladek shares stories he had heard about the Nazi persecution of Jews (Figure 6). In fact, as a result of this magnification of the image of the flag, the swastika looks like an enormous version of the sun or the moon in a darkened sky, suggesting an evil and grotesque distortion of the natural/normal order of things. This transformation of what was a component of the scene visible from the train window into the entire background of the panels in which Vladek discusses the terrible atrocities committed against Jews in Germany visually suggests the subsuming of the ordinary lives of the victims by the extremity of the trauma inflicted upon them by the Nazis. The enormity of the experience of this trauma is also suggested later in the narrative when Vladek and Anja are shown to be on the run and at a crossroad which looks like a giant swastika spread out into the horizon (127). The visual transposition of the Nazi icon onto the physical space of the road depicted in this panel turns it into a topographical metaphor for the inescapable situation that Vladek and Anja, and others like them (shown as distant specks on one of the arms of the swastika-road), find themselves in.

While visual symbolism of this kind bypasses the impossibility of faithfully recreating the actual experience of trauma at the time of its occurrence and instead offers a figurative means of accessing the memory of that experience belatedly at the time of its narrativization, second generation authors also confront and foreground the limits of Holocaust representation as subjects of visualization itself. Thus, in *Yossel* Joe Kubert deals with an

issue that is not frequently discussed in Holocaust testimonies: the sexual abuse of Jewish women by Nazi officers. Kubert points to the trauma of these victims when he makes his titular protagonist ask, rhetorically, "Have you ever felt hunger that tore at the pit of your stomach? When you would sell your soul for a potato or a piece of stale bread?" (53). This direct address to the reader/spectator invites him/her not to witness the actual scene of the crime but to contemplate the impossibility of comprehending the physical and psychological trauma undergone by helpless victims of such abuse. The illustration of a Jewish woman, standing with her head bowed down and being inspected by two Nazi officers from a close distance, offers only an indication of what is to follow; the conscious elision, in visual terms, of the scene behind the bars of the window shown in the picture, reminds us that the Holocaust as an event is inaccessible except in fragments, as traumatic memory. Thus, Yossel can only reconstruct the scene partially in visual terms, supplementing it with the information that "on a quiet night, soft music could be heard [from the barracks], punctuated by an angry shout or a scream of pain".

Similarly, in *Auschwitz* one of the central characters, Kazik works as a *sonderkommando* and witnesses the horrific scene inside a gas chamber just after a batch of Jews have been killed. While Kazik is just across the door of the gas chamber during the whole affair, his "eye-witness" account is illustrated only through a series of darkened panels, that literally represent the smoke inside the chamber but, more significantly, symbolize the absolute impossibility of witnessing such a scene even as visual reconstruction in a testimonial narrative. The Holocaust as an event without a witness is thus represented through an absence of any recognizable human subject within the visual field of these panels. By emptying out these panels of any visible meaning, the author-illustrator draws attention to the fact that any visual representation of the Holocaust ultimately has to confront its own

inadequacy and artifice, that it is only through the framing of these images of suffering within a testimonial narrative structure that secondary witnesses – both the author and his audience – can collectively participate in the reconstruction of traumatic memory.

It is this absence of an original referent – an event that can be accurately traced to locate the "real" experience of trauma in a particular place and time – that the self-conscious author posits as an aesthetic and ethical challenge to any project of representing the Holocaust. Claude Lanzmann's documentary epic *Shoah* is perhaps the most notable example of the staging of this challenge. The documentary is marked by the absence of any archival footage, a deliberate omission on the part of Lanzmann meant to emphasize the point that any act of witnessing the Holocaust is essentially restricted by the spectator's inability to ever "see" the traumatic event as it really was at a certain point in history. Instead, Lanzmann bombards the viewer with a seemingly endless and repetitious recitation of memories that are presented in the form of videotaped interviews with survivors, bystanders and even perpetrators of the Holocaust. As Fred Camper observes, such "accretion of detail makes the fact of the Nazi genocide all the more undeniable while at the same time rendering its meaning and consequences even more unfathomable" (110).

It is notable that though Lanzmann evidently takes great pains in tracing survivors spread across various nations and continents, their testimonies do not necessarily build up a comprehensive account of the Holocaust that might in any significant way add to or alter our collective cultural "knowledge" about the event; rather, the form of the documentary itself impresses upon the viewer the fact that the experience of the Holocaust can be reconstructed only in and as fragments of memory constituted by similar, near identical details that are repeatedly invoked by those who lived to tell the tale. Thus, not only do most of Lanzmann's interviewees become familiar faces after a point in the narrative when they keep returning to

the screen, but their stories also seem to echo one another with minor variations, as these survivors recall the physical pain of being cold, hungry and thirsty during the transport to the camps or the emotional trauma of being separated from their family and friends or the sense of helplessness in the face of events so momentous and monstrous that no individual action seemed possible. It is as though the faces and the stories become interchangeable, in spite of the fact that each one bears a distinct, individual name. The mirroring effect that the repetitious stories create is a conscious strategy that Lanzmann employs to drive home the point that traumatic experience can only be accessed by returning again and again to fragments of memory that have been permanently imprinted on, but never entirely assimilated into, the consciousness of victims of the Holocaust. The recursivity that structures the memory of trauma is thus represented on screen by means of this audio-visual looping of the testimonies of primary witnesses.

Another significant way in which Lanzmann foregrounds the impossibility of ever returning to an original referent or event un-fractured by traumatic memory is by staging scenes that mimic the actions of a precarious historical past within the safe visual field of the camera located in the present. For instance, while interviewing one of the survivors, Abraham Bomba, who worked as a barber at Treblinka, Lanzmann films the entire sequence in a rented salon and prompts the witness (who, as Lanzmann informs us, was already retired at the time of the interview) to indicate through gestures how he treated the women who were brought in to him to be shaved (Chevrie and Roux 41). This re-enactment of an experience that took place under extreme circumstances of the concentration camp in the safe environs of a salon in Israel highlights the contrast between the two and draws attention to its own theatricality. The scene presents to the audience a point of entry into the traumatic memory of an individual survivor as well as foregrounds the representational impasse that occurs between

the subjects on the screen and the experience being recounted. Similarly, Lanzmann's tour to Treblinka on a privately hired railway locomotive mimics the journey of million of Jews to concentration camps but at the same time also points to the obvious differences between the nature of the two experiences, one safely orchestrated under controlled circumstances and the other traumatic in its physical and psychological extremity. Again, as Lanzmann interviews Polish people around the camp site who were bystanders during the Holocaust, he asks them to re-enact the hand gesture they used to indicate to those inside the railway carriages that they were going to be murdered. Thus, the visual field created on screen in these sequences is one where the audience encounters trauma not as unmediated experience but as performative spectacle that enables the narrativization of memory within a testimonial context.

In fact, the performative aspect of such acts of visualization is evident in the opening sequence of the documentary itself, where Simon Srebnik, a survivor who was a 13-year-old boy known for and by his voice at Chelmno during the Holocaust, is shown rowing a boat over a stream, singing (presumably) the same song he used to sing when he was an inmate at the concentration camp. The natural serenity of the whole sequence, combined with the somewhat mournful tune of the song itself, offers a sensory contrast to the violence and pain of the scene it invokes through traumatic memory. This shocking contrast characterizes every scene in which Lanzmann re-visits the actual sites of Nazi atrocities and is confronted only by a total absence of any signs or traces of the horrific past they are associated with. The repeated encounter with the absence of material referents of crime and suffering within the visual field of these spaces makes the spectator (both Lanzmann and his audience) realize that *the only means of bearing witness to trauma is to acknowledge the irrevocable loss of its point of origin*. Lanzmann closely examines these physical sites, bereft of any visible markers of suffering, almost with the keenness of a cartographer, arriving again and again to a point

where, for all his exact verification of the facts related to their location within the "map" of the Holocaust, he ultimately faces only an empty space that signifies nothing but the absence of order and meaning that lies at the core of trauma. In a sense, the visual field of the camera "imposes a simultaneous sensation of distance and closeness, a sensation mixing strangeness and something ever more unbearable: the familiar" (Didi-Huberman 115), and thereby implicates the spectator within its barbaric space. Not surprisingly, therefore, the paradoxical absence of meaning in the tangible presence of a visual field also surfaces time and again through the documentary when the interviewees simply stop speaking and merely gaze back into the eye of the camera. These moments represent the incommunicability of trauma, the breakdown of language beyond a point when the memory of extreme suffering cannot be narrativized and, like the empty spaces Lanzmann visits, can only be witnessed collectively without comprehension.

In contrast to Lanzmann's self-conscious dramatization of his own medium's limitations in representing the real horror of the Holocaust, Steven Spielberg's cinematic representation of the concentration camp in *Schindler's List* makes use of certain standard audio-visual strategies to bring out the violent and traumatic conflict between the order of existence within and outside the concentration camp. The sadistic and arbitrary actions of the camp Commandant, Amon Goeth represent the sheer unpredictability of existence at Palszow. In one of the most horrifying scenes of the film, Goeth engages in an entirely one-sided "dialogue" with his Jewish servant woman, Helen, who stands mute throughout, about the possibility of any meaningful relationship between the two and then beats her up in a rage of fury. The scene brings out the impossibility of communication between the victim and the perpetrator within a space where the total subjugation and brutalization of one by the other is the very order of existence. This "dialogue" between Goeth and Helen takes place in the

basement of the former's quarters while a party is on upstairs to celebrate Oskar Schindler's birthday. At the same time, a wedding ceremony of two inmates is shown being conducted by an elderly woman in one of the barracks. The worlds of the Jewish inmates and the German officers collide in this sequence, as the celebratory rituals of a wedding and a birthday party visually parallel and yet sharply contrast one another. Within the monstrous space of the concentration camp, the occurrence of a "normal" social affair like a wedding appears incongruous. The rapid succession in which these scenes alternately flip across the screen as Goeth's murderous violence on Helen reaches a climax visually dramatizes the impossibility of sustaining a "normal" order of existence, where events symbolizing social solidarity like weddings can be celebrated, and the monstrous order of death and destruction at the camp implies the complete breakdown of any "human" contact between victim and victimizer. The visual juxtaposition of scenes of celebration and inter-personal union with that of inhuman torture of one person by another represents the horror of the camp – one which the audience is invited to "see" as housing these irreconcilable conflicts and to encounter as a site of trauma. As though to corroborate this point, Oskar Schindler is shown almost immediately afterwards kissing two Jewish girls who are made to bring in a birthday cake for him on behalf of the Jewish inmates of the camp – an act that shocks not only the girls themselves but also the assembled party, who look on silently but disapprovingly. Thus, an ordinary gesture of polite gratitude becomes, within the barbaric space of the camp, an almost unimaginable transgression, for the very premise of the existence of such a space is the complete dehumanization of the Jews. By acknowledging the Jewish subjects as "human" who deserve to be thanked for their gift, Schindler poses a challenge and a threat to the order of existence of the camp. In another sequence, while music is played on the loudspeakers, Jewish men and women are made to strip and submit themselves to the process of "selection",

and all the children of the camp are assembled and packed off in trucks to the gas chambers as the horrified parents look on. The shocking clash between the background music and the events unfolding on screen makes the audience confront and witness the utter matter-of-factness with which the Nazis conduct the entire affair and the devastating impact it has on those who are the subjects of such action. It is the horrifying mundanity of evil within the space of the camp that the camera seeks to capture within its visual field and present to a witnessing audience as a spectacle of unfathomable trauma.

Unlike Lanzmann's conscious avoidance of emotional identification with the primary witness, Spielberg often taps into a popular cinematic grammar of evoking the audience's empathy with the suffering victim by recreating scenes in a realistic mode. However, there are a few exceptional moments in the film when he relies on a more symbolic visual code to represent the trauma of the Holocaust. One of the most famous scenes of the film, where Schindler sees a little girl in a red coat walk down a street as chaos prevails at the Krakow Ghetto at the time of its liquidation, serves as an instance. Here, the exceptional use of colour in a black-and-white film functions as a stark visual reminder of the singularity of each character, the vulnerability of each life on the screen as we witness their persecution as a group. The preciousness and fragility of life under such extreme conditions is thus brought out by means of this brief intrusion of colour into what is an entirely black-and-white visual field. This deliberate departure from the dominant realist mode of representation suggests that the enormity of the trauma undergone by the victims always escapes the visual field that the film constructs for the collective viewing of its audience. Such visual symbolism enables the viewers to access trauma not in any exhaustive experiential detail but only as a figurative means of confronting its incomprehensibility. Thus, in another instance, the smoke rising from a burnt-out candle on a Jewish prayer table in the opening sequence of the film and

merging, in the next scene, with the smoke emitted by the engine of a railway carriage, immediately invokes, though imaginative association, the memory of the turning of the Jewish people into smoke at the concentration camps. The use of such symbolic visual imagery not only anticipates the events that lie ahead in the plot but also urges viewers to "see" the scene as bearing greater significance than what it frames merely at a literal, visible level by invoking their collective cultural knowledge about the Holocaust. Yet, at the same time, it perhaps also indicates the impossibility, even obscenity, of representing the extremity of the actual suffering of the victims of the Holocaust in that most unrepresentable of all spaces, where living bodies are turned into nothingness – the gas chamber. *The visual field thus created is, therefore, more than what it frames as subject matter by virtue of its associative import and, simultaneously, also less than what it invokes by default of its limited capacity for traumatic representation*.

Though testimonial narratives about the Holocaust mostly depict scenes of deprivation, torture and death, especially when they are set within the space of the concentration camp, memorial websites also include snippet views of the lives of the Nazi officers by way of demonstrating the sheer lack of concern or guilt with which they went about their daily lives even as they actively participated in the mass murder of the Jews. For instance, on the *Holocaust Survivors and Remembrance Project*, an article extracted from the *New York Times* presents a series of rare photographs from Auschwitz featuring Nazi officers at leisure (http://isurvived.org/InTheNews/Auschwitz-SSguards_floric.html). Offering a "stunning counterpoint" to the usual scenes of horror one associates with the concentration camp – emaciated Jewish inmates at work or heaps of corpses lying about – these photographs show the Nazis in moments of relaxation. Thus, in one of the photographs, a large congregation of SS officers are seen singing together, while in others they are seen

sitting together to have drinks or posing after having eaten blueberries. These "ordinary" scenes of men and women enjoying the little pleasures of life (singing, eating and drinking together) offer a stark contrast to the horrors they were actively perpetrating on the Jewish inmates at the camp. However, none of these photographs feature these brutalized subjects of violence: there is little within the visual frames of the photographs themselves to suggest that scenes of inhuman atrocities were unfolding literally on the fringes of these images. It is the absence of any visible marker of violence associated with these men and women that renders these otherwise unremarkable images horrific. The fact that the perpetrators of violence went about their humdrum social lives with utter nonchalance is what shocks the audience into a realization that the Nazis were flesh-and-blood humans who remorselessly killed other flesh-and-blood humans. The mundane nature of these photographs is a reminder of the utterly quotidian nature of violence and death within the space of the concentration camp. It is this co-existence of "normal" human life and extreme, dehumanizing violence that these photographs suggest without actually depicting any element of suffering. The Nazi officers in these photographs embody, in a certain sense, the seemingly paradoxical relation between life and death within the concentration camp. Unlike the victimized Jewish subjects, who bear obvious physical markers of the violence perpetrated on them, the SS officers here do not bear any bodily signs of the atrocities they committed on a daily basis. Yet, it is through the framing of these photographs within a testimonial context – as material proof of the cold-blooded nature of the Nazi genocide – that the juxtaposition of the mundane with the horrific within the concentrationary universe is communicated to a witnessing audience. Thus, these images effect the creation of a "barbaric space" wherein the extreme violence and inhumanity of the Nazi enterprise is introduced into the visual field of the audience through its very absence.

In an obverse instance, *Yad Vashem* displays a series of photographs from the Warsaw ghetto that feature Jewish inmates going about the daily business of living amidst signs of suffering and loss. Thus, in one of the photographs we see an skeletal, old woman selling armbands bearing the Star of David (http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/5854483_12977.html). Here, the seemingly ordinary activity of selling knick-knacks on a street to make a living is rendered horrific by the symbolic significance of the objects the Jewish woman sells. As an iconic visual marker of the racist policy followed by the Nazi administration, the armbands signify the beginning of the process of the dehumannization of the Jews that would culminate in their annihilation. The fact that a victim of such a genocidal state is seen here as trying to subsist by trading in a material symbol of the oppression of her own kind brings home the horror of existence within the ghetto. The implication of the victim in an act that signifies her own brutalization conveys the utterly humdrum nature of suffering within the space of the ghetto. Thus, in another photograph, we see a starving child lying on a street in the ghetto while three other children pass her by, looking on impassively (http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/56017_50044.html). Starvation and death are captured in this photograph as being so ubiquitous inside the ghetto that they go unremarked. This photographic capturing of the mundane nature of suffering that renders fellow onlookers apparently incapable of responding to it with any degree of sympathy intrudes into the visual field of the audience and constitutes it as a "barbaric space".

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how the creation of a barbaric space through the use of visuals in these narratives plays a crucial role in the representation of distant trauma for both second generation authors and readers. In the next chapter, I shall analyze how second generation Holocaust narratives represent and enact negotiations between the voices of primary and secondary witnesses and thereby enable the performance of testimonial acts

between the dehumanized victim and the secondary witness of trauma.

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Chapter 4

Mediating Voice and Agency

The question of voice is of particular importance to the study of testimonial narratives, since they are based on a contract of speaking/listening between a primary victim/survivor of violence and atrocity and a secondary witness of the trauma caused by such experiences, both of whom are often active participants in the act of narration. This implies that the degree to which the witnesses (both primary and secondary) are able to shape the narrative is dependent on the relative subject positions they assume vis-a-vis the experience of trauma. Thus, in the case of second generation Holocaust narratives, the voices of both the primary witness and the author often intermingle and sometimes clash as both play a significant role in shaping the verbal-visual testimonial narrative. Since the recollection of the traumatic experience of the Holocaust is always already removed from the actual time of its occurrence, any testimonial text is essentially only a re-construction of past events effected through the interpretation of narratorial voices in terms of what the audience perceive as their contribution to the epistemological and ethical frames for constructing a history of the event. The agency of the witnesses is, therefore, also dependent on the ways in which s/he is able to construct a narrating "self" that meets certain popular cultural expectations of what a Holocaust testimony should comprise. Thus, the degree to which either the primary witness/survivor or the secondary witness/author is able to control the narrative and use it to claim a voice within the larger historiographic project of representing the Holocaust constitutes their agency.

In this chapter, I examine second generation Holocaust narratives for the ways in which questions of narratorial and authorial voice are negotiated in testimonial texts and demonstrate how the contestation over and appropriation of agency is crucial to the act of

bearing witness to a traumatic event that can only be accessed through narrative re-construction. *I argue that the victim's "self", fragmented under the dehumanizing influence of extreme violence, is reconstituted and identified as human in the process of testifying to trauma; similarly, the reader/viewer defines his/her own position as a sympathetic witness in the act of recognizing the human suffering of the traumatized subject. Thus, for both the primary and the secondary witness, the articulation of and response to trauma within a testimonial narrative context is constitutive of their agency as human subjects and the basis of a shared memory of the Holocaust*. I first explore the contestations over voice and authority in second generation graphic memoirs, as these often include and highlight the communicative act between the primary and the secondary witness within the textual frame of the testimonial narrative they create together. Thereafter, I examine how, in spite of the absence of an overt authorial voice in films and documentaries, the multiplicity of characters and perspectives in such texts is governed by a narrative ethics of recognition of the suffering victim as human. Finally, I study how memorial websites bring primary and secondary witnesses of the Holocaust together in an interactive environment and facilitate a more immediate identification of the victims of trauma as human subjects within a global culture of bearing witness, thereby enabling the reclamation and public performance of narrative agency by both.

The contest between the two narratorial voices in *Maus* is evident from the opening chapter of the book itself. While Vladek recounts the story of his affair with Lucia and his subsequent engagement to Anja quite openly, he asks Artie not to include such details in his book (Spiegelman 25). As a father, Vladek freely shares intimate details about his personal life with his son, but he is also aware at the same time of the fact that Artie is an interviewer who might use such details for the very public business of the making of a book. Vladek has

to negotiate his position vis-a-vis Artie not just as a parent but also as a primary witness/survivor; the relationship he shares with his son, who doubles as a secondary witness, is thus based on trust as well as ridden with anxiety. While Vladek offers the simple logic that the story of his pre-marital affair has nothing to do with the Holocaust and should therefore not figure in Artie's proposed book, Artie reasons that such a story is "great material" that "makes everything more real – more human". The irony is that the story is indeed "real" and "human", yet what is to follow – and here Spiegelman anticipates the narrative – is so horrific that it seems almost unreal and requires humdrum details of an ordinary life to remind readers of its "reality". Also, quite evidently, Vladek's experience is available to the reader not in a direct, unmediated form but only as a testimony that has been created out of the "material" that Artie chooses to narrativize. The "reality" of Vladek's experience is therefore filtered through and contingent upon Artie's editorial discretion and available to the reader in the essentially *constructed* form of the narrative. Thus, there are two different levels at which narrative voice and agency function here: at one level, Vladek and Artie as primary and secondary witnesses, as testifier and scribe, vie for the power to decide which parts of the past experience of the Holocaust ought to constitute the former's "story"; at another level, Spiegelman, the author, represents himself and his father as characters whose interaction itself becomes the subject of narrativization and therefore constitutes the testimonial text. Spiegelman's authorial agency consists in plotting the narrative as one that depicts the process of its own making by foregrounding the constant negotiation between Vladek's and Artie's voices.

Interestingly, Vladek himself has a notion of what a Holocaust testimony should be like and considers the inclusion of such intimate details not "proper" or "respectful" enough for the subject matter. Thus, even as he is speaking to his son, Vladek is aware of his own

position as a primary witness/survivor whose testimony ought to fulfil certain *narrative expectations*, of the fact that Artie functions not only as a mediator between himself and an unseen but presupposed audience but also as an author who might not narrativize his memories the way he wants them to be narrativized. The narrative tension arises precisely because of the difference between what Vladek thinks should constitute his testimony as a Holocaust witness/survivor and what Artie considers necessary for the "story" to have a human appeal. Though Artie promises Vladek not to include these details in his book, he does not keep that promise: in fact, by including this slice of conversation between them, Spiegelman almost justifies the breach of the promise within the text[5]. The performative function of the promise is overridden, out-performed, as it were, by Spiegelman's narrative strategy of telling the reader what he was asked not to tell, and thereby making him/her an intimate witness not only to Vladek's own testimony but also to the process of the creation of the text itself. This is a telling instance of how Spiegelman exercises his authorial agency in plotting Vladek's "story" differently from what the latter deems appropriate for a survivor testimony: not only does Spiegelman break the promise he makes to Vladek but by including the moment of that breach within the narrative, he posits the text itself as a self-reflexive exercise in bearing witness to the Holocaust as an event that ruptures the sense of the "self" and of "history" as being coherent and unitary. Vladek seems unable to reconcile, even within the autobiographical structure of the narrative, his own memories of his pre-Holocaust days as a fairly carefree, debonair youth with his post-Holocaust "identity" as a concentration camp survivor; Artie, on the other hand, considers this episode in his father's life to be "great material" to give his testimony verisimilitude, a minor detail, as it were, to humanize the de-

[5] It is significant to note here that the panel in which Artie makes this promise to Vladek represents both of them as silhouetted figures devoid of any distinct, individualizing features. It is as though Spiegelman offers a visual representation of the fact that the promise, made under duress, lacks the weight of an intimate bond of trust between father and son and is merely a perfunctory gesture that would yield to the demands of the text.

personalized figure of the Holocaust survivor. What is for Vladek a strictly defined "private" domain is thus encroached upon and appropriated by Artie on the grounds of aesthetic requirement. While Spiegelman remains faithful in representing this bit of conversation between him and his father – reporting everything in Vladek's own *voice* – he breaches the promissory contract under which Vladek sought to contain and control his *agency* as the editor-author of the text. This moment of conflict in the text not only brings up questions of authority in second generation memoirs but also poses larger concerns about the significance of personal experience and private memory within the context of public consciousness and history. Spiegelman asserts and establishes the fact that he is not merely a scribe whose function is to report and illustrate his father's words; rather, he positions himself as the author of the text whose prerogative it is to shape the narrative according to what he perceives as being relevant to the testimony.

Moreover, as the narrative progresses, it becomes clear that Spiegelman goes beyond his primary role of presenting a testimony to the past horrors of the Holocaust and offers a glimpse into the aftermath of the actual historical event by representing the trauma he himself inherits from his survivor parents. In fact, the text is as much an outcome of Spiegelman's own attempt to come to terms with the immensity of his parents' trauma as it is of Vladek's recounting of his experiences during the Holocaust. As the pictorial "preface" clearly indicates, the Holocaust looms so large over the Spiegelman family that it is impossible for Artie to match up to its scale with anything he could ever experience for himself. It represents an experiential chasm that divides Artie from his parents and his dead brother, Richieu; an inheritance, as it were, that he cannot own yet which shapes his identity overwhelmingly. By creating *Maus*, Art Spiegelman seeks to bridge that chasm, possess that inheritance: from being identified *as* a second-generation Holocaust survivor by virtue of his

birth, he actively identifies himself, as an author, *with* an experience to which he can only bear secondary witness. It is by means of exercising his authorial agency that Spiegelman effects a move from his *filial* relationship with the trauma of the Holocaust to an *affiliatory* bond with it. By doing so, Spiegelman is able to find a point of entry into an experience that had otherwise been inaccessible to him. By using the narrative to trace his own evolution as an artist, he constructs a "self" that is not merely acted upon by the trauma of the Holocaust but can also act upon its representation. Thus, even as he functions as a faithful scribe to his father and illustrates his story painstakingly, simultaneously he also locates the narrative within the larger context of historical "knowledge" about the Holocaust. For instance, when Artie quizzes Vladek about the orchestra that used to play as the inmates of Auschwitz marched every day, the latter fails to recall this detail. The orchestra, which is clearly visible in the first panel of the page, is made barely visible in the next but is not completely removed even after Vladek's failure to recall its somewhat incongruous presence in the horrific existence at the concentration camp (Spiegelman 214). Here, the basis for this subtle overriding of the testimony of the eyewitness is the fact that the presence of an orchestra in the camp during the march is "well documented". Personal memory of a traumatic experience, subject to selective focalization of the kind Vladek's account represents in this case, is thus shown consideration in visual terms (by relegating the orchestra from a position of clear visibility to near invisibility); yet Spiegelman also displays his awareness of acknowledged historical "fact" by declining to illustrate his father's version of the story in a strictly literal sense. He achieves a delicate balance here between his roles as a sincere witness to Vladek's testimony and as an informed commentator on the subject he is dealing with. Vladek's voice as the primary witness is mediated by Artie, who locates it within a background of historical "knowledge" constituted by several other similar voices. The

narrative that Spiegelman constructs out of Vladek's testimony is therefore not merely an illustrated version of his words but also an instantiation of the "story" of the Holocaust that is, in some senses, already known and shared by the author and his (implied) reader. Thus, while the text purports to capture the uniqueness of an individual survivor's experience, it also seeks to represent that experience as contributing to and representative of a larger, existing body of other such "unique" experiences. The testimony is therefore expected to reflect the personal quality of lived experience while conforming at the same time to a public notion of history as an overarching framework.

Spiegelman attempts to impose historical coherence on his father's "story", which, being subject to the slippages and shifts of memory, does not quite adhere to the logic of chronological progression. The past being recollected and the present in which the act of recollection takes place often intermingle in ways that make a perfectly smooth and linear narrative an impossible task for the author. Not only does Artie have to guide Vladek back to the "story" from his periodic digressions, he also has to impose upon the events being recounted a historical specificity when such details are lacking in Vladek's testimony. For instance, when Vladek fails to accurately account for the ten months he spent at Auschwitz, Artie draws up a calendar of sorts divided according to the time he thinks Vladek would have spent doing the various odd jobs he describes. Interestingly, though he tries to cross-check the accuracy of this "calendar" by questioning his father more closely, he meets a dead end when Vladek declares, quite simply, that keeping track of the passage of time at Auschwitz was difficult considering that no one wore watches (228). This presents an interesting instance of the gaps between individual experience of trauma and its public representation: while maintaining an exact record of days and months at a concentration camp would have been almost impossible and an ultimately futile task for an inmate, in the event of his survival his

experience needs to be mapped along coordinates of space and time in order for it to be counted as a valid testimony. The concentration camp presented an order of existence in which space and time could no longer be perceived by the inmates as being continuous with how they experienced them before (or after) the Holocaust. The Holocaust thus represents a violent rupture in the traditional notion of history as a succession of events related in terms of cause and effect. At this point in the narrative, therefore, both Vladek and Artie face a historiographical challenge: the former because he is called upon to provide a historically rooted account of his experiences for them to be narrativized into a testimony, the latter because he needs to impose a chronological order on events that were experienced on an ahistorical temporal plane without falsifying their traumatic effect. Thus, the authorial intervention of Artie as chronicler as well as secondary witness becomes justifiable and even necessary and constitutes an agential move in that it implies a re-ordering of traumatic experience as a narrative that can be "read" by those who are outsiders to the actual events of the Holocaust. Thus, the narrative presents and justifies the process of its own creation in the self-reflexive manner that marks Spiegelman's method throughout the text.

Spiegelman employs the strategy of self-reflexivity in the text not only as an effective means of commenting on its own position within what has been described as the Holocaust industry but also as an instrument of narrativizing his own trauma alongside his father's testimony. Thus, in the second instalment of *Maus*, Spiegelman offers a satirical account of the media response to the success of the first part (201-02). The deluge of offers to capitalize on the book's success in the form of television and film adaptations and tie-in merchandise is ridiculous in its (exaggerated?) excess, but is also significant for the troubling suggestion that the author runs the risk of being implicated in the mindless commercialization of trauma. In fact, the "success" of the text does not automatically translate into a sense of positive

achievement for the author; rather, it results in a feeling of depression in him. Spiegelman offers a visual explanation for his feeling of depression by portraying himself sitting at his desk over a heap of naked dead bodies with flies buzzing all around. By thus using an iconic image that has immediate resonance in the context of the representation of the Holocaust, Spiegelman seems to suggest that the text exists in a parasitical relationship with those who are dead and therefore incapable of speaking for themselves. It is significant to note that in this and the next few pages (201-07), where he directly confronts the issue of how the Holocuast and its aftermath has affected his own life and work, Spiegelman represents himself as a human wearing a mouse-like mask on his face instead of the anthropoid mouse figure he uses in the rest of the narrative, thereby indicating that his identification with the victims of the Holocaust can only be partial. Thus, the text puts a double-bind on the author: it offers him a route through which he can access and represent the Holocaust but at the same time it also imposes upon him the impossible responsibility of being a representative for those who are permanently silenced. Not surprisingly, then, Spiegelman fails to offer easy answers to the simplistic questions that the press throws at him: the text does not have a "message" to offer, nor does it locate guilt in any single person or community or effect a pugation of the same. Rather, as Spiegelman indicates in some desperation, it is impossible to nail down liability for the Holocaust or contain the consequent guilt to a particular place or time. The suggestion here is that it is impossible to claim a position of innocence for anyone who has *known* the Holocaust: thus, the author as well as his audience are epistemologically implicated by the text[6].

In a brilliantly ironic move, Spiegelman represents his escalating sense of helplessness

[6] Spiegelman's desire for "absolution", represented visually as the demand of a petulant child, is meant to indicate that the sense of guilt that every survivor must contend with is as inescapable as the chasm that divides the living from the dead is unbridgable. The Holocaust implicates *all* its witnesses not necessarily as criminals but as human citizens who ought to respond to such crimes.

in the face of the naive questions and inane offers concerning his text by portraying himself as a bawling kid asking for his mother. While it is the questions that he is being asked and the offers being made to him that sound increasingly childish and reductive, Spiegelman offers a literal, visual inversion of this process of belittling by representing himself as a child incapable of bearing the weight of his inherited trauma and facing the consequences of its narrativization. Yet, he continues to make use of this visual device further as he portrays his own sense of inadequacy in carrying forward the project of writing the second part of the book. (In fact, this is the longest stretch in the narrative where Spiegelman's own story displaces Vladek's completely.)

He represents himself as a child even when he goes to his psychotherapist, Pavel – who is, significantly, also a Holocaust survivor from Auschwitz – for his weekly session. Pavel seems to function as a surrogate father-figure to Spiegelman as well as an intimate critic of his work, one to whom he can openly confess, "No matter what I accomplish, it doesn't seem like much compared to surviving Auchwitz" (204). Spiegelman's contest with his father over the authority to determine the "proper" representation of the Holocaust leads, in the absence of Vladek, to an admission of the text's and the author's incapacity to capture the actual experience of the Holocaust. While Pavel (psycho)analyzes Spiegelman's troubled relationship with his (now dead) father and his sense of guilt for *not* having lived through the Holocaust, and thereby "explains" his position as a second generation survivor, he also doubles as a second primary witness whose testimony and opinions Spiegelman presents within the narrative as raw material for, as well as critical commentary on, the text itself. Thus, while Pavel detects the source of Spiegelman's guilt in the transference of that feeling from father to son and argues cogently that survival at Auschwitz was more a matter of chance than merit, he also tries to offer to Spiegelman accurate details about the actual

working conditions in the camps. The interview between the two is thus an integral part of the narrative insofar as it contributes to the story of the formation of Art Spiegelman's authorial "self" and his negotiation with his own "identity", but is simultaneously also a metacritical exercise in terms of what it says about the nature of the text itself and about books written on the Holocaust in general. The interplay of narrative voices that marks the entire text becomes especially evident here as Pavel and Spiegelman both interrogate and respond to one another in their specialized roles as doctor/primary witness and patient/author. In addition to having the elements of both testimony and confession, the interview is also a self-reflexive critque of the ethical and aesthetic concerns of representing the Holocaust. Therefore, even as Spiegelman admits to feelings of guilt, inadequacy and depression and wonders if there is any point to his project, he exercises his authorial agency in making his own trauma and self-criticism a part of the narrative, thereby making it as much a story of what it means to be a second generation survivor writing about the Holocaust as it is the testimony of a primary witness from Auschwitz.

If being at the concentration camp meant, as Langer has suggested, "to exist *without* a sense of human agency" (199), Vladek's constant schemes for improving his chances of survival may be seen as constituting an attempt at re-claiming that lost agency. Vladek's thrifty, enterprising nature – mocked by Mala and Artie as being stereotypically Jewish (131) – not only serves to personalize his "story" and makes him a believable if not likeable character but also runs through the narrative as a potential source of actions that contribute to, and determine, to some extent, his survival. At various points in his testimony, Vladek narrates how he managed to get through extremely difficult situations by making use of his ability to put his skills and common sense to good use and his willingness to take risks. For instance, even before being deported to Auschwitz, he takes a chance by volunteering to

move from the prisoner of war camp to the German labour camps, where the conditions of living were much better (56-57); later, by using his knowledge of English to get into the good books of the block supervisor at the camp, he manages to acquire a clean set of uniforms and a well fitting pair of leather shoes, and more significantly, access to crucial information from his close contact with the Kapo, which helps him avoid getting "selected" (191-96). Subsequently, he makes use of his basic knowledge of shoemaking to get into a part of the camp where specialized labourers worked under much better conditions than others (220) and even manages to communicate with and meet Anja by befriending the Kapo of the women's block (194-95). Vladek's agency, especially when it comes to his success in re-establishing communication with Anja, consists in his ability to negotiate the power structure of the concentration camp through useful contact with the people around him.

If one of the primary ways in which the order of the concentration camp robbed individuals of their human identity was by breaking up their families, then Vladek's actions may be seen to constitute a transformative agential move insofar as they represent a resistance to and a subversion of that order. It is to be remembered, however, that in each of these instances, Vladek takes calculated risks but at no point is he ever entirely certain of the outcome of his actions. His agency, insofar as the positive outcome of his actions is concerned, is thus never entirely a function of his own behaviour; rather, it is in the act of re-membering and plotting his "story" in the course of the narrative as comprising incidents that turned in his favour that Vladek is able to exercise some degree of retrospective authorial agency in accounting for his own survival. In other words, without comprehensive knowledge of the workings of the concentration camp or any significant degree of power to transform his own position within it, Vladek's agency was essentially limited by the kind and variety of choices he made, which were in any case always subject to luck, a factor that he indeed

acknowledges. It is also interesting to observe that nowhere in his testimony does Vladek claim that any of these actions led to his survival, for he could neither have anticipated their consequences nor have credited them alone for his ultimate escape from death.

The concentration camp, for all its systemic intricacies (which Vladek negotiates so enterprisingly), was a structure of extremity – one where the only certainty was death – where survival must be seen as an exception to the general rule. Thus, in providing minute details of his interactions with several people at the camp, Vladek seeks to re-construct a "self" that consistently follows a shrewd instinct for survival but is never unaware of the precariousness of its existence. Vladek merely offers an account of all he did in his attempt to avoid death and Artie transcribes the story in faithful visual detail. Therefore, it is left to the reader to establish a causal link between the events as they are narrated but always with the awareness that the fact of Vladek's survival cannot be possibly summed up as a result of all his actions put together. Thus, the agency that Vladek and Artie enjoy as narrators is not merely a function of their own voices but also crucially determined by the participation of the reader in the process and the performance of bearing witness that the text so self-consciously foregrounds.

While *Maus* presents the case of a second generation memoir in which the author-son seeks to put forward the story of his own inherited trauma on par with his survivor-father's account of his experiences at Auschwitz, in *We Are On Our Own* Miriam Katin attempts to find a way back into a traumatic past that she shared with her mother during the Holocaust. It presents an interesting case within the genre of the second generation memoir as it is a narrative that is based on the actual experiences of the author as a child during the Holocaust of which she has no distinct memory. Miriam Katin is a Holocaust survivor who is unable to provide direct, personal testimony to her own experiences; she can offer her story only in and

through the version that her mother recounts. The "memoir" tells the story of a past that mother and daughter lived through together, yet one that is accessible to the latter only via the memories of the former and is therefore the subject of narrative reconstruction. The narrative voices in the text emerge from the negotiation between what the mother remembers and what the daughter is able to imagine of their shared past. In spite of the fact that as a child, Katin had been an eye-witness to most of the events her mother recollects, her position within the text is that of a secondary witness who can bear testimony to her own experiences only by means of imaginative participation. The narrative recalls not only the story of their miraculous survival through the Holocaust but also offers brief but telling glimpses into the aftermath of the that experience on Katin's own life. Thus, when she remembers the time when her son was born, Katin says: "Everything *seems* so calm and secure. One can *almost* believe that it can last" (6) (emphasis added). The loss of the sense of certitude, introduced at the very beginning of the narrative, even before the actual "story" begins, foreshadows what is to follow and is yet a consequence of the events that are going to be narrated. By means of juggling between a past she only hears about from her mother and another that she remembers distinctly as her own, Katin infuses the narrative with her consciousness as an adult who can access her experiences only in the light of the trauma that they represent. A degree of fictionality is, therefore, built into the testimonial narrative as Katin, the adult, through the imaginative re-construction of real events, participates retrospectively in her own childhood experience of living through the Holocaust. In characterizing herself as a child unaware of the dangerously grave implications of the experiences she goes through with her mother, Katin appropriates a textual means of finding a voice for herself within her mother's testimony and thereby exercises her agency both as a second generation survivor and an author.

Throughout the narrative, Katin juxtaposes the perspectives of both the mother and the daughter and thereby recreates a past that impacted them, at the time when the events reported were taking place, very differently. Very often, the difference between the mother's and the child's perspective on a situation results in tragic irony, which Katin effectively employs to convey the traumatic nature of the events being narrated. For instance, when her mother is repeatedly raped by a Nazi officer who frequently visits the household they have taken shelter in, the daughter fails to understand the reason behind her tears and tries to console her by assuring her that the man will be back (43). Here, the trauma of the experience is heightened because of the daughter's inability to comprehend the situation and made poignant for the reader not in spite of but because of the inclusion of her "innocent" perspective within the narrative. Thus, though as a child survivor Katin did not experience the events happening around her as being traumatic, as an adult author she participates imaginatively in the past she has forgotten and seeks to recreate the tragedy of that experience without falsifying it. This involves filling in the gaps that would have certainly marked her mother's testimony through a narrative reconstruction of the child's responses to events that appeared momentous to her but were of comparatively little significance to her mother. Thus, when her pet dog is handed over to the Nazis and she is told it died suddenly, she consoles herself privately with the thought that it had gone to a "doggie heaven" (17). Providing a foil to the adult's desperate struggle for survival, the child's grief over the death of a loved creature marks her first encounter with death – an experience that is repeated later in the narrative and invokes authorial commentary. Thus, when her second pet dog is killed, this time shot dead by the German soldiers, she is able to interpret this event in relation to the deaths she had witnessed previously: "Dead like Rexy dead? Like the soldier on the bed? They said that he was dead" (68). Though the actual event might have been only peripheral in

the mother's consciousness and memory, for the child it is of central importance – one that gives her "knowledge" about the sudden, random, irreversible nature of death. Katin slips momentarily into the third-person voice here and comments: "And then, somehow she knew that God was not the light and God was not the darkness, and not anybody at all. Maybe, God was not..." (69). At this point, the reader hears the voice of an adult deeply engaged with the theological implications of a relatively unremarkable incident in a series of more obviously traumatic events, not the voice of a child whose immediate grief at the loss of a favourite pet would have certainly precluded philosophical musings about its greater import. Here, Katin exercises her authorial agency to offer a profound commentary on the significance of her experience as a child; this realization, difficult for a child to think through and certainly impossible to articulate, is introduced in the narrative by means of an event that is incidental to the story of her survival through the Holocaust but crucial to her understanding of the traumatic implications of that experience.

A similar instance where the adult, authorial voice of Katin very evidently shapes the memory of her childhood appears towards the end of the narrative, when her parents are reunited after the war. Katin represents the scene almost entirely though the eyes of the child, who feels alienated in the presence of a stranger introduced suddenly to her as her father (115-19). Katin's portrayal of the child's feelings at this point cannot possibly have been based on her mother's memories, since they perceive the scene separately and very differently. While for her mother it is a moment of unexpected happiness, for Katin, the child, it marks the dawn of a frightening realization in the wake of the experiences she has had – that life and death are not subjects of a divine design but merely arbitrary consequences of circumstances. The final scene in which the child smashes her dolls with a ball (120-21) takes place away from the eyes of the mother, suggesting that this could probably be Katin's

imaginative "adult" intervention into the narrative at a point of crisis in the child's mind. The frames depict the child destroying her dolls with the same indifferent cruelty that she had witnessed in the deaths of things she loved. This scene, created wholly out of Katin's adult imagination of how she would have reacted as a child to the situation, is then a retrospective indictment of God, a reiteration of her father's words that she uses as the title of her book; it exemplifies the way in which the narrative voice is essentially, inextricably intoned with the consciousness of the author as an adult whose job is not merely to illustrate her mother's memories but also to shade in the story of her own journey from innocence to experience.

In some senses, in spite of being a character in her mother's "story", Katin is an outsider, not only because she has no memory of the past she has lived through but also because her experience of that past must have been essentially different from her mother's. This places her in a unique, paradoxical position of being a Holocaust survivor who nevertheless does not quite qualify as a victim, since she did not experience, or at any rate does not remember, the trauma of the events she lived through: she is an insider-outsider vis-a-vis the "story", which she plots by means of the dual (concurrent but never coincidental) voices and perspectives of the mother and the child. It is from this paradoxical subject position that Katin seeks to construct a "self" within and through the narrative that takes her beyond the personal, experiential realm of her identity as a Holocaust survivor to an artistic and ethical domain of responsibility towards her traumatic family history. This becomes most evident at those points in the narrative where she includes memories of her own past experiences as a young mother. By juxtaposing scenes from her (forgotten) childhood with those from her more recent past as an adult, Katin reflects upon the pervasive, insidious nature of the trauma of the Holocaust that shapes her personality and role as a daughter and a mother. Thus, for instance, she remembers how she questions her husband's proposal of

sending their son to Hebrew school, wondering if it will only perpetuate the differences between people that caused the Holocaust. The inclusion of such snippets of her own adult life reveals not only the choices that define her position vis-a-vis her personal/familial history as a Holocaust survivor but also constitutes an agential move towards the representation of that history as one that has no definable resolution or end. Therefore, as the daughter of a Holocaust victim-survivor and as an author, Katin's agency lies in her ability to imaginatively participate in her mother's account of her traumatic past and dovetail that account into her own life history within a single testimonial narrative. The authorial "self" that Katin constructs for herself is thus dependent not only on her identity as a Holocaust survivor but also on her active, self-conscious identification with her traumatic familial past. Ironically, her mother, who managed to survive through the Holocaust by obliterating signs of her Jewish identity is apprehensive of Katin's project and fears persecution even years after the War, whereas Katin herself seeks to re-claim that identity by narrativizing the memory of a forgotten past. Thus, while for the primary witness the testimonial text may be a source of anxiety and an uncontainable reminder/remainder of trauma, for the secondary witness it becomes a means of accessing and comprehending the history of the Holocaust as one that is never entirely extricable from the present.

Whereas Katin seeks integration of her "self" within her familial past as a means of highlighting the presence of the trauma of the Holocaust beyond its specific spatio-temporal location in history, in *Yossel: April 19, 1943* Joe Kubert projects his own "self" imaginatively back into the Warsaw Ghetto at the time of the uprising in order to recreate the horrors of the Holocaust that he escaped only by an accident of history. Though Kubert presents *Yossel* as a fictional, first-person narrative that bears resembles a "real" insider's account of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, the presence of an omniscient third-person narrator is felt throughout the

text, especially whenever Yossel is represented in the act of drawing the pictures that constitute the text. There is a double-layered narration involved here: at the first level, Yossel's drawings represent his perspective on the experiences he goes through; at the second level, the representation of Yossel in the act of drawing the pictures provides a visual frame within which readers are expected to willingly suspend their disbelief and read his story as if it were a "real" account of events narrated by an actual eyewitness. It is by agreeing with the author at the outset to consider the book as a "what-if" narrative that the reader is able to reconcile the dual narrative levels operative in the text. Thus, though we recognize the fact that it would be impossible for an eye-witness at the Warsaw Ghetto to actually put down his experiences in the form of sketches even as the traumatic events were happening to and around him, we do not question the act of visual narration itself on grounds of improbability; rather, as participants in the contract that the text's declared status as a work of fiction puts upon us, we mostly assume the perspective of the first-person narrator but are aware of the presence of other voices.

In fact, Kubert exercises his authorial agency throughout the text to determine the narratorial level at which the "story" is made available to the reader. Thus, for instance, even as the Rabbi narrates the story of his deportment to, and escape from, Auschwitz, we see Yossel visualizing and illustrating this oral testimony. His ability to imagine things in visual terms, which Yossel has already established by this point in the narrative, justifies the superimposition of his own narratorial voice (by means of the illustrations) over the Rabbi's oral testimony. The visuals provide coherence to the narrative, filling in gaps that necessarily punctuate and fracture the recounting of a traumatic experience. Thus, though the Rabbi could not have possibly had direct access to the women's camp, Yossel represents part of the horror of that "unseen" part of Auschwitz through his drawings (52-53). Conversely, in his

capacity as the illustrator, he also exercises the choice of not visualizing some elements of the testimony. For instance, he only indicates the rape of women inmates of the camp by the Nazi officers without actually depicting the scene of the crime (53). Similarly, he consciously avoids illustrating the actual scene of the mass murder of Jews inside the gas chambers which the Rabbi had witnessed (58). This strategy of selective visualization suggests that some extreme forms of trauma are impossible to represent: they mark an epistemological limit for the secondary witness, who is nevertheless bound by an aesthetic and ethical impulse/responsibility to represent the physical and psychological consequences of such experiences. Thus, Yossel, the artist-witness does illustrate the experience of the Rabbi as a sonderkommando forced to bear the physical and psychological trauma of disposing of thousands of corpses with mechanical efficiency (59-64). At these points in the narrative, multiple voices co-exist within the narrative at different levels and degrees of distance from the actual experience of trauma. For the Rabbi narrating his "story" to Yossel and his friends is crucial in order to establish the truth of the existence of death camps; his eyewitness account of the horrors of Auschwitz is thus a representative voice that speaks of, and for, millions of others that have been irrevocably silenced. Yossel's narratorial voice, insofar as it comes across through his visualization of the Rabbi's words, is governed by his need to fathom what he hears in terms of how he sees it. His concurrent visualization of the Rabbi's oral testimony is, therefore, crucial to how he bears witness to the experience of trauma that is not his own but of his own kind. At another level, both these voices are evidently guided by the authorial agency Kubert exercises in deciding which parts of the traumatic experience ought to be given direct representation within the text.

In spite of the fact that the reader is invited into the world of the ghetto "as if" it were being shown by an eyewitness, s/he is never allowed to completely forget that the narrator,

and therefore the very act of narration, is a fictional construct perched precariously on the the edge of the extreme conditions prevalent inside the ghetto. Yossel's drawings are thus not merely an incidental artistic device that Kubert employs to project himself into an experience he never had; rather, the act of narrativizing trauma through pictures is itself foregrounded thematically, perhaps self-reflexively, by Kubert within the text as one that is potentially, if only provisionally, empowering. Thus, for Yossel, the act of drawing intitally serves as a means of escaping from his oppressive surroundings, a fantastic textual resistance, as it were, to the grim reality outside:

> I could create my own world. In outer space... or deep in the center of the earth... or a cowboy in the old West... or an apeman swinging through the jungle trees. And I was there, looking over their shoulders, seeing the things they saw. Seeing through their eyes. When I was drawing, everything else disappeared. Only my drawings existed. Only the characters and the settings. Only they were real. (7)

Gradually, however, he turns to depicting the scenes of horror he witnesses in his drawings, thereby finding a medium and a language for describing the trauma of existence at the ghetto. What was previously a means of escape from reality thus subsequently becomes a tool for bearing testimony to it. In fact, Yossel is even able to make a favourable impression on the security officers at the ghetto with his artistic skill and manages to get occasional scraps of good food as reward for the amusement he provides them with his drawings. More significantly, it gives him access to the quarters of the security officers, a space otherwise taken to signifiy certain death for the Jewish inmates, a privilege that gives him a certain degree of agency that he ultimately puts to use by leaving behind two armed grenades on one of his visits to the officers' quarters and thereby sets off, literally, the events that led to the

Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Thus, Yossel's drawings not only serve to give voice to his traumatic experiences at the ghetto but also function as a means of enabling active resistance to the violence and atrocity which caused that trauma.

Yossel himself explains, quite evidently to the implied reader, that his act of illustrating the Rabbi's words was for him a moral imperative (43), a crucial aspect of the act of bearing witness to his testimony. For the reader, who shares with Yossel the moral imperative to bear witness, the illustrations become an effective means of visualizing what is unseen but deserving attention. In fact, as the narrative progresses, Yossel's sketches become an interface between the reader and the experiences of the inmates of the ghetto. From being a route of escape for Yossel from oppressive reality to comic book fantasy, these sketches gradually become a medium, an instrument, as it were, of representing and witnessing the horrors of the Warsaw Ghetto. Thus, the sketches become a route of entry into the horrific reality that Yossel finds himself overwhelmed with, a means by which he can confront and represent it. In addition, they also enable Yossel to survive in the ghetto and access places, resources and information that would otherwise have been out of bounds for him. Therefore, within the narrative the sketches function not only as a means by which Yossel is able to inscribe and substantiate his experiences but also as the material cause for his privileged "informed" perspective into the workings of the ghetto. In fact, visuals and visualization are central to the text in terms of content as well as form: as a theme, they make the protagonist a credible eye-witness to the Holocaust by virtue of his ability to represent experience in the form of pictures; as a formal concern, they enable Kubert to project[7] his own artistic self onto

[7] This strategy of imaginative "projection" is especially evident at the beginning and towards the end of the narrative, where Kubert employs the present continuous tense to create the sense of events happening as they are being reported. Such concurrence between the act of narration and the events being narrativized also reveal the tacit presence of the omniscient third-person narrator, whose voice can be heard only in the form of the wordless visuals that follow Yossel's death in the final pages of the book (120-21): the last concluding image of the blank sheets of paper picked up by Nazi soldiers indicates the irreversible silencing of Yossel's voice and suggests the impossibility of further narration in the absence of a character on whom the author might project his self.

the fictional character of Yossel and participate imaginatively in the actual trauma of the Holocaust. In the absence of a "real" experience, Kubert's pictorial fiction offers an imaginative perspective into unimaginable trauma. It does not supplement an actual, personal account of the experiences at the Warsaw Ghetto, rather it seeks to recreate, through the eyes of an imaginary witness, the "truth" of the Holocaust that is constituted by and available through a multitude of voices.

Martin Lemelman's *Mendel's Daughter* also embodies a multiplicity of voices as an integral feature of its testimonial and memorial form. As a narrative that combines Lemelman's illustrations with the recorded words of his mother, Gusta Lemelman, a Holocaust survivor, this book presents, like *Maus*, the voice of a primary witness in a testimonial form created by a second generation author. In fact, like Vladek Spiegelman in *Maus*, Gusta Lemelman is also accorded a distinctive voice in the narrative by her son, who reproduces her peculiar English syntax in order to lend a semblance of immediacy to her oral testimony. However, the fact that her "story" is plotted by Lemelman through a careful process of editing, combining and illustrating her recorded testimony with others makes the book an exercise in the memorialization of a historical past that is at once private/familial and public/communal in its traumatic import. Thus, at various points in the text, the narration is taken over by "other" voices – members of the Lemelman family who survived to tell parts of the "story" that would otherwise have been lost. For instance, on two occasions, Gusta's brother Isia takes over the role of the narrator – first, to relate how he and his brother Simon managed to avoid arrest by the German police by hiding in a barn (87-91) and then again to relate how he once chanced upon a few crabapples in a frozen stream while he was in hiding in the woods with his siblings (162-64). While the incidents Isia recounts may in themselves not be of crucial significance to the tale of their survival, the anecdotal nature of his

narratorial participation points to the essentially fragmented and partial nature of the memory at work in the re-construction of a traumatic experience.

Similarly, Gusta recalls hearing from her sister Yetala of the brutal murder of their father by Nazi soldiers and the deportation of the rest of the Lemelman family (119-23). In fact, an unnamed stranger's eyewitness account of how Gusta's aunt, uncle and cousin were murdered is also recollected and made part of the narrative (143-46). Thus, the testimonial form accommodates multiple voices in order to put together in a narrative of grief and loss the history of a broken family, one of millions whose stories were left untold because no one survived to bear witness. In a sense, Gusta bears secondary witness to scenes that she was not physically present at, which, in its turn, are narrativized by her son at a third remove from history, as part of a memorial act that consists in refusing to let the deaths of loved ones go unremarked. In a telling comment, Gusta says, "I didn't believe my father was dead until someone told me" (141). This moral imperative to *tell* is at the heart of bearing witness and constitutes an agential force insofar as it guides both Gusta and Martin Lemelman in their testimonial performances. At a particularly poignant moment of traumatic recall, Gusta mentions each of the individual members of her family who were sent away to the concentration camps and killed: "Yes, they took the Mameh. Regina they also took, and Genny they took, and her husband, Fievel, and their child, Eli, and the grandmother, Baba Bashi. I never see them again. The Nazis, they caught the Jewish people" (121). Lemelman juxtaposes this mournful, almost dirge-like invocation of names not only with family photographs featuring these people but also with an illustration of faces that bear no names. Through a narrative move that conflates the loss of a few recognizable individuals with the annihilation of countless others bearing no names or faces, familial trauma thus becomes communal history. Therefore, while the narrative functions as a means of mourning personal

loss and putting together a family history, it also serves a larger ethical and political purpose by memorializing the millions of Jews killed during the Holocaust.

Pascal Croci's *Auschwitz* offers a contrast to the texts discussed above in that it is not based on the claim of the author on any personal or familial connection with the Holocaust. Instead, Croci, as an experiential and racial "outsider" to the trauma of the Holocaust, presents a case of, and for, participation in bearing witness to historical trauma that is significant for its human import. Through fictional characters based on real survivors, Croci plots a narrative that gives the reader access to one of the most inaccessible spaces within the concentraion camp – the gas chamber – but also foregrounds, quite self-consciously, the aesthetic and ethical limits of representing such trauma. One of the central characters, Kazik bears witness to an exceptional scene: that of the actual gassing of a contingent belonging to the women's camp at Auschwitz, which is of central importance not only to his own recollection of his traumatic experience at Auschwitz but also to understanding how individual agency is negotiated within the space of the concentration camp. Kazik volunteers to become a *sonderkommando* only so that he could see his daughter one last time and manages, quite fortuitously, to do so. Insofar as his choice enables him to meet his daugther and even prolong her life a little after her miraculous survival inside the gas chamber, Kazik exercises some agency as an individual whose familial ties are not completely snapped in spite of his physical separation from his wife and daughter. Yet, as the narrative clearly indicates, any agency that Kazik might have been able to exercise was essentially delimited by the actions of others and by sheer chance and coincidence. His daughter's survival in the gas chamber and his meeting with her are both accidents that only provide an interlude in their final separation through death.

In fact, the possibility of meaningful individual action or even inter-personal

interaction is shown to break under the weight of the inexorable rule of death that governed the concentration camp. Thus, the leader of the Czech family camp, Hirsch living under the illusion of the relative comfort and security, is led to believe that his people will be transported to a better camp at Hydebreck. Even when Rudolf, the Kapo who takes Kazik under his wing, warns Hirsch of the imminent danger of extermination, the latter refuses to believe him and does nothing till the very end (22-23). When Rudolf finally does make Hirsch see the horrific fate awaiting them on the eve of their "transportation" and tries to inspire him to revolt, it only ends in the latter's suicide and the transport of the camp inmates to the gas chambers the following day (26-33). Thus, the only agency that Hirsch is able to exercise in spite of and in response to the information he gains access to is in deciding his mode of death. The concentration camp, as a site where information circulates in the form of rumors (eg. the one about the family camp's transportation to Hydebreck) and grim aphorisms (eg. "you come in through the door, and you leave through the chimney") allows little room for the transformation of such information into useful knowledge, so that there is no scope for individual action that can bring about any significant change in the trajectory of events. The breakdown of communication is thus shown to be a crucial factor in the loss of individual agency.

The depersonalization of the inmates, effected through the tattooing of numbers on their forearms, is visually represented throughout the text by making all the characters look practically alike, with sunken cheeks and protruding eyeballs and clothed in striped uniforms. In a telling instance of how the robbing of one's name causes a sense of loss of human identity, one of the sonderkommandos introduces himself to Kazik as "Number 106144, gravedigger at Bunker 2" (36), thereby indicating the extent to which the process of dehumanization is internalized by the victims themselves. The gravedigger, devoid of a name

and of human agency, only has a voice, in fact, *is* only a voice, as he describes to Kazik what goes on inside the gas chamber:

> You have to imagine the gas as it starts to take effect, spreading bottom to top. And in the terrible struggle that ensues... you have to imagine the lights going out in the gas chamber... it's dark, you can't see anymore, and the strongest strive to climb higher and higher... they must feel that the higher they climb, the more air there will be, and the better they will breathe...a battle breaks out and everyone rushes the door... it's psychological, the door is there... they fling themselves at it as if to break it down! It's an irrepressible instinct. In this fight to the death, the children and the weakest find themselves at the bottom, and the strongest on top... in this fight to the death, the father cannot know if his child is there, crushed beneath him. (38-40)

These words are accompanied neither by visuals of the gravedigger addressing Kazik nor by illustrations of what they communicate; rather, they appear as a kind of disembodied commentary, a voice-over, as it were, that conjures up, proleptically yet from past experience, a scene that is about to unfold as the inmates of the women's camp are shown being led towards the gas chambers. The repetition of the phrase "you have to imagine" points to the impossibility of bearing (eye)witness to this scene of ultimate horror. This impossibility is further emphasized as Kazik looks into the gas chamber and describes what he sees, in words accompanied by panels that are darkened to indicate the smoke inside (42-43). The gas chamber, as both the figurative and the literal realization of the supreme horror and trauma of existence in the concentration camp, as a space where living flesh is transformed into ash and smoke, offers a representational impasse, one that can be described, if at all, in a language of absence – one that is constituted of words without a speaker, for no one, not even an

eyewitness, can faithfully testify to the real horror across the closed door. Thus, in choosing to avoid a direct visual representation of the gassing of victims, the author exercises his own editorial agency to determine how and which parts of the characters' experience can be integrated into the testimonial text without compromising its traumatic import.

Unlike graphic memoirs, in which the negotiations between the voices of the primary witness and the second generation author are often included within the "plot" itself, cinematic narratives like *Schindler's List* represent victims of the Holocaust mostly as silent sufferers, lacking in the power to articulate their trauma within the limits of the ghetto or the concentration camp. The film itself charts the moral and professional trajectory of its eponymous protagonist in ways that the audience bear witness to the sufferings of the Jews almost exclusively from the saviour's perspective. A rare exception to this general rule is the scene where Schindler manages to have a brief conversation with Helen in the cellar of Amon Goeth's quarters (1:34:26 to 1:38:38). Set in the very site of violence and torture in which Helen finds herself trapped, this scene opens up a narrative space for her wherein she is able to address a sympathetic listener and through him an audience who otherwise see her following Goeth's instructions like an automaton. This dialogue between Helen and Schindler thus enables the former to articulate her trauma – even if she only manages to communicate her utter helplessness against the arbitrariness of Goeth's behaviour – and thereby find her own voice, if only momentarily, within a space where it is forbidden to speak. There is an obvious difference here between Helen and Schindler in terms of the degree of freedom they enjoy in conducting this conversation – she can address him only because he allows and encourages her to – and therefore between their respective voices within the narrative. Yet, insofar as Schindler is able to establish a bond of empathy with Helen, he manages to offer her, however provisionally, her identity as a human agent which Goeth denies her, equal to

him at least in terms of her right to be heard if not in terms of what she can do to change her situation. Thus, at the end of the scene, when Schindler kisses Helen on her forehead, the gesture is one that communicates a feeling of empathy shared between two human agents within a space where any meaningful communication between the victim and the perpetrator has been rendered impossible.

The significance of this act of empathetic communication between a Jewish inmate and a German man can be understood when it is contrasted with an earlier scene in which a Jewish engineer tries to reason with Goeth that the barracks being built at the camp would collapse if the foundation are not reconstructed and is shot dead for daring to speak (50:25 to 51:45). The fact that the Jewish woman introduces herself directly to Goeth using her name and confidently declaring her professional credentials suggests that she seeks to claim a certain degree of authority over the work she has been assigned. This is clearly a transgression of the power structure that Goeth enforces on the camp inmates, as it implies an appropriation of voice and agency by an inmate within a space that is supposed to denude her of any individual human identity. Thus, when Goeth orders his subordinate to shoot her publicly, he effectively *performs* his role as the sole arbiter of life and death within the space of the camp and reinforces the order of the concentrationary universe[8] that denies the Jewish inmate her identity as a human agent.

While Goeth represents the Nazi enterprise of dehumanizing the Jews to a degree that neither their labour nor their lives counted, Schindler's attempt to employ as many Jews as he could in his factories represents a recognition of each life saved for its human worth. Thus, when he prepares the list of Jews he intends to save, he recalls them by name from his earlier

[8] The "concentrationary universe" is a term that was coined by David Rousset, a former French political prisoner at Buchenwald, to signify the system of the Nazi extermination camps as being symptomatic of modernity rather than an anomaly. Agamben developed this idea in *Homo Sacer* (1995) and suggested that the concentrationary universe represents a space of terror and destruction of humanity that is structured on (and not an exception to) the conditions of modern political culture.

acquaintance with them as his workers. In according them the dignity of an individual identity through naming, Schindler identifies (with) them as human beings rather than the mere numbers that they have been reduced to under the Nazi regime. In an inversion of the order of existence at the concentration camp, Schindler's factory offers its Jewish workers a refuge from violence: their labour is directed not towards the destruction of body and spirit but is an excuse that preserves their lives. Though Schindler's Jews (as they later came to be known) themselves had very little agency in determining their own fate, their survival was a direct consequence of Schindler's ability to negotiate the power structures of Nazi officialdom with his shrewd business acumen. In purchasing his Jewish workers from Amon Goeth as he would have purchased equipment for his factory, Schindler participates in the transactional economy on which the Nazi bureaucracy was based but acts contrary to the genocidal ideology followed by its administrators. Thus, he is able to make an actual intervention in the workings of the Nazi establishment and exercise his agency as an industrialist whose ethical stance against the killing of Jews is cleverly disguised as the desire to make monetary profit. Within the narrative, the exercise of this agency by Schindler is shown to be significant not in relative terms of the number of lives he succeeds in saving but in the absolute terms of the moral significance of his decision to resist the genocidal ideology of the group he officially belongs to. The protagonist's politics of affiliation to the racialized, silenced "other", charted through the narrative in terms of the his heroic endeavours to save Jewish lives, thus offers the audience a moral point of reference, as it were, in responding to the trauma of the Jewish victims as that of human subjects.

In contrast to *Schindler's List*, *Shoah* seemingly offers the audience a more direct access to the victim's own voice but at the same time also reveals the impossibility of reconstructing past events independently of the testimonial context in which their

interpretation must be located. The structure of the testimony enables the victim to revisit his trauma – sometimes almost literally, as Lanzmann conducts some of the interviews at the sites where specific events of the Holocaust occurred – and narrate his past experience of being subjected to dehumanizing violence, but in the "present" context of the filming of the documentary when he is recognized as a human agent. For instance, though Lanzmann begins his interview with Motke Zaidl, one of the survivors from Vilna, in his house in Israel, the "scene" changes to the site of the mass graves at Vilna as Zaidl proceeds with his account of the digging up of the graves in Vilna in January, 1944. He describes in some detail how the bodies had been laid out inside the funnel-like graves in layers "like herrings, head to foot", so that "each was almost like a flat slab". He goes on to relate how he and his fellow workers were beaten up mercilessly by the Nazi officers when they burst out weeping on first digging up the graves and were forbidden from referring to the bodies as "corpses" or "victims" instead of "figuren" (puppets) or "schmattes" (rags) as the Germans did. This testimony reveals the degree of dehumanization of the Jewish victims by the Nazis: the physical conditions of the disposal of the bodies of the victims suggest the destruction of their identity as human. By refusing to refer to the dead in nomenclatural terms that identify them as humans and by denying the living their right to grieve the dead, the Nazis effectively destroy the possibility of acknowledging either as belonging to the same species as they do. The Jewish victim, living or dead, is thus "othered" to an extent where he himself cannot declare his own identity as human. Yet, in being able to recount the experience of such dehumanization in the presence of an empathetic listener, the victim is able to articulate his trauma and reclaim his voice as a human subject. In testifying to the brutalization of his own body and of many others, the victim engages in an act of remembrance that restores to the victims their identity as humans that they had been stripped of by the experience of trauma.

Thus, when another survivor, Itzhak Dugin, describes how he recognized the bodies of his mother and his three sisters with their children, well preserved under the wintry ground, in one of the graves, he accords the dead, in an act of public mourning, the human dignity of recognition as belonging to a family.

It is also significant that Lanzmann visits the site of these atrocities with the primary witnesses and visually frames the act of testimony as taking place where the trauma itself originated. This constitutes a narrative re-ordering of traumatic memory, as it enables the victim to speak as a human subject of experiences that have no tangible, material trace or proof in the bare landscape except the voice of the eyewitness. Since this testimonial performance is the result of Lanzmann's conscious framing of the victim's voice as the only reminder/remainder of a traumatic past, the narrative itself becomes the means and the form through which the primary witness reclaims his (lost) voice as a human subject and the secondary witness makes an agential move towards responding to the suffering of an "other" human being.

By virtue of their capacity to include a wider range of evidence across various media formats within their domain, Holocaust memorial websites offer both primary and secondary witnesses a narrative space for the articulation of and response to trauma. For instance, *Yad Vashem* offers a series of video testimonies titled "Voices from the Inferno", consisting of eyewitness accounts of the events leading up to the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and following the liquidation of the ghetto (http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/warsaw_ghetto_testimonies/index.asp). This collection of testimonies is significant because it commemorates one of the very few instances of Jewish resistance to the atrocities being committed upon them by the Nazis. Though the uprising was ultimately suppressed, it marks an important chapter in the history

of the Holocaust as the Jewish rebels who masterminded it effectively asserted their identity as human agents capable of offensive action against the Nazis rather than remaining mere brutalized subjects to be confined, tortured and killed. Thus, one of the survivors, Blake B. Schiff, who participated in the uprising, asserts, "It was the first time we were fighting back; it was the first time when I had a pistol in my hand". The recollection of this state of empowerment experienced by a Jewish man within the confines of a space that was supposed to have rendered him powerless marks a move towards the exercise of agency as a human being resistant to oppression. Schiff also goes on to remember the exact date of the first uprising and minute details like the model of the pistol he used, the condition it was in, where it had been procured from, and even the exact number of bullets he had been given. Evidently, the precision of this particular memory is an indication of its significance to the survivor in his portrayal of his own "self" as well as his retrospective knowledge of how the events of the uprising would unfold.

Another survivor from Warsaw, Max Falk, remembers how his cousin had died "a hero's death" trying to kill an SS officer with a knife ("which was all she had") and says he wished it had been him instead of her (http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/warsaw_ghetto_testimonies/resistance.asp). A third survivor, Anna Heilman, who was engaged in the job of putting up anti-Nazi posters on the walls of the ghetto after curfew hours, states that the uprising was not so much about defeating the Germans as it was about the Jews "not going [down] without resistance". The question of finding an identity beyond their existence as passive victims inside the ghetto thus emerges as being crucial to the Jews' sense of their own selves as human. In each of these cases, the survivor testifies to the possibility of the exercise of human agency against dehumanizing violence and characterizes the Jewish rebels as being heroic *in spite of* the

outcome of their actions. Such a narrative reconstruction of events, made possible under a testimonial condition, enables survivors to identify themselves as human subjects rather than merely victims and thereby reclaim their own voice – and sometimes the voices of those who have perished – in the telling of their "stories".

In a comparable instance, the *Holocaust Survivors and Remembrance Project* has a section titled "Heroes and Heroines of the Holocaust", in which the names of several non-Jewish men and women are listed out who have been recognized by Yad Vashem as "the Righteous among the Nations". These are people who chose to help the persecuted Jews at the risk of their personal safety (http://isurvived.org/TOC-II.html#II-4). By acknowledging the courage and humanity shown by these "outsiders" in saving the lives of Jews in a general atmosphere of cold indifference, the website commemorates, like *Schindler's List* does by charting its heroic protagonist's story, exceptional acts of kindness and compassion within an otherwise bleak history of violence and mass murder. The significance of publicly remembering these "heroes and heroines" is to identify the common bond of humanity existing between people belonging to different races; it constitutes a recognition of both the saviour and the victim as human subjects. The conscious exercise of one's moral agency involved in trying to save members of a persecuted group under a genocidal regime is highlighted here as being worthy of remembrance within the larger narrative of the Holocaust. It offers a rare but significant ethical counterpoint to the usual accounts of widespread indifference towards the fate of the Jews during the Holocaust.

These websites also document a series of survivor accounts that not only testify to the trauma experienced by individual victims but, though their representative import in standing in for millions of other "stories" that can never be told, effect a reclamation of the voice and agency of the dehumanized victim. Thus, for instance, the "story" of Pepi Schreier, the oldest

Auschwitz survivor, listed out in the section "Faces and Voices of the Holocaust" on the *Holocaust Survivors and Remembrance Project*, is an account of her miraculous survival at the concentration camp and her resistance to being completely dehumanized even under the degrading conditions of existence there. Her daughter, Judith Becker, who was also imprisoned at the camp with her mother, narrates how Pepi offered some food to a group of Hungarian women who had been deported to the camp, looking "frightened [and] sullen" and unable to communicate with anyone:

> My mother went towards them. We had come into possession of a little extra bread and she went and stroked their cheeks and put pieces of bread in their mouths like a mother bird feeding her chicks. She found one woman who understood German and through her she told them not to worry, that they were going to survive. She changed the whole picture for these women. (http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/10925/oldest-auschwitz-survivor-defies-odds-living-to-tell-her-story/)

The striking use of an analogy from the world of nature is significant here, as it offers a contrast to the conditions of utter deprivation and barbarity existing within the space of the camp that rendered any "natural" human act of communication nearly impossible. Backer goes on to describe how her mother insisted on her daughters washing themselves clean and maintaining their dignity, even though fetching water to the barracks could be a potentially fatal activity, in her attempt to resist the dehumanization they were subjected to by the Nazis. While these little gestures on the part of the Jewish inmate towards holding on to her identity as human are significant to the degree that they enable her to exercise her agency as a thinking, feeling subject, one also realizes that it is only through the retrospective narration of such experience that these actions can be interpreted and remembered as constituting a

resistant move to Nazi oppression. Thus, it is in the act of bearing witness to the past experience of suffering that the victim reclaims her voice as a human subject and effectively exercises her agency in being able to put an interpretive, narrative order on trauma.

In this chapter, I have discussed how Holocaust narratives enable communication between the primary and the secondary witness of trauma and thereby accord them both voice and agency in the representation of trauma. In the next chapter, I will demonstrate how the identification of the victim of trauma as "human" by another witnessing, human subject leads to the emergence of an empathetic testimonial form across these narratives.

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Chapter 5

Empathy, Witness and Testimony

In this chapter, I use contemporary representations of the Holocaust in second generation texts as a case study to demonstrate how the act of narrativizing memories of a traumatic experience is integral to, even the precondition for, the process of creating an epistemological, affective and ethical bond between the victim/survivor, who is the primary witness and the interviewer/author and his audience, who constitute the secondary witnesses. Second generation Holocaust narratives, located historically at the crossroads of personal memory and inherited trauma, present an instance of the *testimonial condition* that lies at the basis of any act/product of narration that involves communicating, however partially and tentatively, a unique experience to an audience in a form that they can collectively access. *I argue that this testimonial condition can be established only through and after mediation at different levels of recollection and narration and consequently the experience of trauma as a subject of "witnessing" is always already removed from the actual event that caused it*. In other words, it is impossible to access the "truth" of a historical event like the Holocaust independently of the narrative structures and contexts that construct it in the act/process of witnessing it. As Shoshana Felman suggests, the testimony is to be understood "not as a mode of *statement of*, but rather as a mode of *access to*, that truth" (16). Questions of the "authenticity" of a testimony are, therefore, rendered secondary if one is to consider the fact that no traumatic experience is available in a pure, whole, unmediated form even to the primary witness; it is only when one testifies to a traumatic experience s/he has gone through in the presence of another that the "truth" of that experience is established. *The testimony is thus a performative, dialogic act, one that brings into existence an experience within the framework of knowledge shared by the teller (a "self") and the listener (an "other") in the act*

of telling/listening, and thereby establishes between them what Dori Laub terms an "empathetic human dyad" (http://www.traumaresearch.net/focus1/laub.htm). In the following sections, I demonstrate how an empathetic testimonial form arises from (i) the identification of the victim's traumatized "self" as human and the collaborative reconstruction of his/her traumatic memory by the primary witness and the second generation survivor-author, and (ii) the recognition of the historical distance between the primary and the secondary witness as well as the identification of the traumatized subject as part of a human community.

Memory/Postmemory

In this section, I demonstrate how the traumatic memory of the Holocaust becomes the subject of narrative reconstruction through the participation of both the first generation survivor and the second generation author in the act of bearing witness. Using Spiegelman's *Maus* as an illustrative case, *I argue that the construction of the victim's traumatized "self" results from the conscious plotting of a life "story" geared towards eliciting an empathetic response from the audience*. I examine how the reciprocal processes of self-projection by the primary witness and editorial intervention by the second generation author result in an understanding of traumatic memory as being trans-generational and lead to the creation of a testimonial text that draws attention to its own making.

Second generation Holocaust narratives are often as much concerned with the impact of the traumatic events of the past on the life of the children of Holocaust survivors as they are with bearing witness to the testimony of the parent(s) who actually survived the Holocaust. In spite of not having personally experienced the horrors of the Holocaust, survivors' children often grow up on "stories" from a traumatic past that is both a legacy and a burden. They occupy a historical space that allows them to bear intimate witness to the trauma of their parents and narrativize their memories into testimonies. Such acts/products of

narration are thus both a *familial responsibility* and a *historical response* to an event whose trauma spills over from the lives of the actual survivors into the memories of their children. For second generation authors, who were born after the Holocaust but into families deeply and inescapably tied to its memories, the trauma of their parents' past informs and shapes their own present and implicates them in "stories" that they can only be secondary witnesses to. Consequently, the conditions under which the survivor parents recall their traumatic experiences to their children are as much a part of the latter's memories of the Holocaust as the events being described themselves.

Marianne Hirsch (2008) identifies this as "postmemory", which signifies the creation of memories about a traumatic experience that the children of Holocaust survivors have not gone through themselves but inherited in the form of stories that they hear from their parents. Postmemory, according to Hirsch, is a "*consequence* of traumatic recall" signalling "more than a temporal delay and more than a location in an aftermath" and constituting the "*structure* of inter- and trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience" (106). It is by means of "imaginative investment, projection and creation" (Hirsch 2008: 107) that the second generation survivor is able to access a past from which s/he is excluded by an unbridgeable experiential chasm but one that s/he seeks to possess, and is also possessed by, through inheritance. In another essay, Hirsch develops the idea of postmemory to include not only children of Holocaust survivors but also other "less proximate groups" who are historically distanced from the event itself but who nevertheless participate in bearing secondary witness to its traumatic aftermath. Hirsch locates this kind of "*retrospective witnessing by adoption*" within "an intersubjective transgenerational space of remembrance, linked specifically to cultural or collective trauma" (2001: 221). Thus, postmemory applies to the identification of traumatic experience by not only the direct

descendants of Holocaust survivors but also by experiential "others" who bear no filial relation to the survivors but relate to them by means of affiliation. This form of secondary witnessing becomes especially crucial to the writing and reading of testimonial narratives about the Holocaust as the last of the survivors die and leave behind only words for future generations to make sense of their momentous trauma. Thus, the narrative construction of second generation Holocaust accounts is of crucial significance to our understanding of how historical trauma transforms from personal experience to collective, cultural memory.

It is not surprising that authors of second generation memoirs often foreground the act of narration in texts that seek to reconstruct, via individual/familial and collective memory, a traumatic past – sometimes even presenting an imaginative account of events based on popular/common history rather than specific, individual experiences. As fewer and fewer survivors from the Holocaust remain amongst us to recount the horrors of that period, second generation authors call upon their audiences to bear witness to how they create "stories" out of dry facts by narrativizing historical trauma. They emphasize and justify the need to bear witness to such accounts of the Holocaust not through claims of exactitude in the representation of historical facts but in terms of the effectiveness of such narratives in establishing a relation of empathy between the subject of narration and the audience. The deliberate, self-conscious positioning of second-generation Holocaust writers as creators of "stories" rather than reporters of facts thus not only strategically preempts debates about the authenticity of their texts but also points to the mounting need to find ways of relating to historical trauma in the absence of survivors and eyewitnesses who could testify to it. They offer what is perhaps a *formal, functional equivalent of the testimony* in an age where no survivors remain to talk about the Holocaust – a hybrid form that is both memoir and history, both fact and fiction, one that reveals the inseparability of memory and experience from its

narrativization. Such narratives both assume and create a body of knowledge about "stories" of the Holocaust shared between the author and his/her audience. Thus, though these narratives do not always rely on the word of a single, individual or personally known source for the traumatic experiences they represent, they do enable audiences to identify with the suffering caused by traumatic events by putting a human face to it through the characters that they construct. Therefore, it is useful to "read" such texts not as testimonies but as *empathetic testimonials*.

Art Spiegelman's *Maus* is a classic instance of how imaginative participation in the primary witness's account of trauma informs the structure of the memory of the Holocaust for the second generation survivor. Spiegelman represents his own relation to his father's story as one that is marked by both continuities and disjunctures. By depicting Artie as a character within the narrative, Spiegelman frames the story of the genesis of the text itself as well as his own evolution as an artist within the story of the Holocaust. By foregrounding the act of recording Vladek's oral testimony, Spiegelman suggests that the memory of trauma is inseparable from the process of its narrative reconstruction. It is only in the presence of a secondary witness that the Holocaust survivor can recount his experiences. Since the events that caused the trauma are themselves neither fully comprehensible to the primary witness himself nor entirely communicable to the secondary witness in any language shared between the two, any act or instance of traumatic recall is inevitably structured by absences and gaps in memory. These gaps not only suggest that traumatic memory is essentially fractured and incomplete but also represent, to both the second generation author and the reader, the limits of representability of traumatic experience. Thus, in order for the primary witness's account to be comprehensible, the second generation author, who functions as the link between the survivor and the reader, must participate imaginatively in what is otherwise an experience

removed from him. In other words, for secondary witnessing of trauma to take place, a condition of empathy must be established between the primary witness and his audience (both the author and his readers), one that enables the transformation of personal memory of trauma, however provisionally communicated, into collective memory. It is this transformation of personal experience into collective memory that second generation testimonial narratives like *Maus* enact and represent.

This transformation happens at various levels of narration and representation: Vladek's own construction of a victimized self as an Auschwitz survivor, Artie's construction of his self as a son and an artist who battles the spectres of a traumatic past that is not quite his own, and Spiegelman's construction of Vladek and Artie as characters bound to a testimonial performance that is simultaneously both personal and public. Thus, from the very beginning, Vladek is as acutely conscious of his own position as a Holocaust survivor as Artie is of his role as a second generation author. The tension between these two subject positions often reveals the limitations of both the former's oral testimony and the latter's visual narrativization of his father's "story". Thus, when Vladek asks Artie not to include the story of his pre-War affair with Lucia since it is not "proper" and "respectful" to the subject of the Holocaust, Artie tries to reason with him saying that the story will only humanize his character (25). While there is evidently a contrast between Vladek and Artie's notions of what a Holocaust testimony ought to be like, they both seek for themselves the audience's empathy in their own distinct ways. For Vladek, the construction of a victim "self" is crucial not only to ensuring that Artie spends time with him but also to evoking the audience's sympathy. Thus, while he is willing to share personal anecdotes with Artie (he even suggests that he could share other such stories with Artie), he is also anxious about the impression the inclusion of such "private" material in the book will have on the readers.

In a sense, Vladek addresses not only his son, who records his testimony as he speaks, but also an implied audience that he anticipates even before his words have taken a final shape as a text. Thus, Vladek's narration of his own experiences during the Holocaust is an active, self-conscious act of the construction of a public "self" based on private memory. Since the construction of this "self" is mediated by Artie's intervention as interviewer and author, Vladek is naturally anxious about the shape his "story" finally takes. Therefore, Vladek's insistence on the exclusion of such personal details from his story is his attempt to project himself as someone whose devotion to his family is unquestionable. Not only is this crucial for him to improve the strained relationship he shares with his son but it is also a means of claiming the audience's sympathy and, perhaps, a kind of justification for his survival. In fact, throughout his testimony, Valdek seems to be at pains to emphasize how he managed to improve his chances of survival at the concentration camp Holocaust because of his pragmatic, enterprising nature. Thus, when his block supervisor at Auschwitz requires private tuition in English, Valdek volunteers for the job – even fabricating a lie about how he used to teach English in Czestochowa – and manages not only to get a regular supply of food and clean clothes but, more crucially, also gets into the kapo's good books and avoids getting "selected" for gassing (191-95). Vladek also narrates how he negotiated with the kapo, at some personal risk, for an extra set of uniforms, a pair of shoes, a belt and a spoon for his bunk-mate Mandelbaum and thereby put him out of his misery, if only temporarily, before he was sent off to the gas chambers (193-94). This is an indicative instance of how Vladek constructs his "story" as that of a person who has his wits about him even under extremely trying circumstances and who not only manages to preserve his own life but also attempts to help others around him by applying his practical intelligence.

In a similar instance, Vladek narrates how he managed to pick up the basic skills of

repairing shoes and landed a job as a cobbler at the camp that was not only far more comfortable than what the other inmates had to do but was also more rewarding in terms of the food he got in return for his labour (220-22). In addition to befriending the kapo by offering him a share of the good food he got, Valdek makes clever use of the paper he gets with some cheese for writing a letter to Anja and getting it across with the assistance of a Polish kapo from the women's camp he had become acquainted with (222-23). In addition to occasionally sending tidbits of food from his own share to Anja, Vladek manages, by such use of his social skills, to establish correspondence with her through letters, which gives her physical and emotional sustenance to bear the hardships of life at the camp. Since Vladek characterizes Anja as physically and emotionally frail and vulnerable from the beginning of his testimony, his attempts at keeping her alive at the camp serve to position him in the role of not just a survivor but also a saviour. Vladek's construction of his own "self" through his testimony, therefore, draws attention to his remarkable common sense as well as his loyal and compassionate nature and encourages the reader to empathize with him. Through his oral testimony, Vladek attempts to convey to both Artie and, by extension, to the implied reader, the trauma of existence at Auschwitz that made any form of human communication between the inmates of the camp extremely difficult and often dangerous. It is his ability to establish communication with those around him, in spite of the barbaric conditions at the camp, that Vladek uses as the central humanizing motif in his characterization of his own victim/survivor "self". The narrative construction of this human self is crucial to the effectiveness of the testimonial performance, since it is through the audience's empathetic identification of Vladek's "story" as that of a fellow being that the trauma of the Holocaust becomes, to an admittedly limited extent, comprehensible.

If Vladek presents his testimony as a "story" of how he managed to survive the

Holocaust through his determined refusal to submit to his circumstances, Artie creates a parallel narrative that charts his own troubled relationship with his father and the effects of his parents' traumatic past on his own present. Offering a contrast to Vladek's valorization of his own thrifty ways, which have clearly persisted beyond the confines of Auschwitz and defined his lifestyle long after the Holocaust, Artie's impatience with his father's obsessive hoarding of seemingly useless things functions as a counterpoint to the former's construction of a victimized self. Artie is clearly dismissive of the long list of complaints Vladek has about the state of his health and about his marriage with his second wife, Mala: he often guides Vladek back into the story of his past while the latter seems more inclined towards discussing his present troubles. In fact, Artie agrees with Mala when she points out that Vladek's miserliness is an inherent trait not necessarily born out of his experiences during the Holocaust and observes that "in some ways he's just like the racist caricature of the miserly old Jew" (133). Thus, the predominant character trait that Vladek uses to define his self as an Auschwitz survivor seems ridiculously out-of-place under the normal circumstances of life after the Holocaust. This conflict between Vladek's traumatic past, which is available only as personal memory, and Artie's response to his present conduct, which often seems unreasonable, indicates the impossibility of ever gauging the exact nature and extent of trauma of the Holocaust on the lives of the both the victim and the second generation survivor. In fact, the Holocaust marks a permanent disruption of the normal order of existence for Vladek, so that he is never quite able to account for his behaviour without reference to his position as a victim/survivor. Similarly, for Artie, communication with his father, however strained and fractured it might be, seems possible only when they talk about the Holocaust. In a sense, both are bound to one another through the trauma of the Holocaust, the former through direct experience and the latter through inherited grief and loss. It is through their

combined testimonial performance – Vladek telling his "story" to Artie, who records and guides the conversation for future publication – that both of them enact and confront their respective positions as primary and secondary witnesses. Therefore, it is imperative for Artie, both as Valdek's son and as the author persona within the text, to bear witness to Vladek's oral testimony empathetically, even as he charts his own struggle to come to terms with his subject position as a second generation survivor.

It is by means of presenting both Artie and Vladek as co-participants in the testimonial performance within the text that Spiegelman achieves a precarious balance between the stories of the victim/survivor and the secondary witness of trauma. A significant narrative means through which Spiegelman manages to do this is by juggling between the past and the present, and occasionally conflating the two, so that the audience is not only alerted to the constructed, fragmented nature of the memory itself but also made aware of the way trauma informs and interrupts the lives of both the primary and the secondary witness long after the event causing it has itself occurred. There are several temporal and spatial shifts within the narrative – Vladek's repeated jumps from his story to his present life in New York and Artie's constant attempts to revert the conversation to his past at Auschwitz, Vladek's rather messy chronological ordering of events during the Holocaust, and Artie's cinematic flash-forward in the second book to the time when Vladek is already dead but his "story" is still only mid-way through within the narrative. The point here is that it is impossible for either the author or the reader to locate the trauma of the Holocaust within a specific spatio-temporal frame. The disruption of the normal order of experience, which is a characteristic feature of traumatic memory, is conveyed in the narrative through such movements across space and time. Spiegelman depicts both Artie and Vladek caught in this constant back-and-forth movement and thereby suggests to the reader the necessity of acknowledging the impossibility of

maintaining a perfectly linear narrative in a testimonial text where both the primary and the secondary witness are represented as being subject to trauma. The narrative is thus structured in a way that encourages the reader to not only listen to the voices of both Vladek and Artie but, over and above that, also to bear witness to the process of the construction of the testimonial text itself. By thus prodding the reader to appreciate how the form of the testimonial text is integral to the subject matter it represents – trauma and its memorialization – Spiegelman brings him/her within the structure of the narrative and offers a point of entry into an experience that is otherwise inaccessible to them. This is a deliberate strategy on the part of the author to enable an empathetic secondary witnessing of the trauma of both the victim and the second generation survivor of the Holocaust.

Empathy, Secondary Witnessing and the Global Memory Project

Following from the trans-generational nature of traumatic memory I have discusssed in the previous section, I now examine how authors of second generation Holocaust narratives bear a relation of both *cultural familiarity* with and *experiential distance* from the actual experience of trauma. The historical gap between the occurrence and the representation of trauma necessitates that these authors maintain a distinction between empathy for the victimized subject and total identification with his/her experience. *I argue that for both the second generation author and reader the process of bearing witness to historical trauma is based on an aesthetic and ethical principle of sympathetic imagination, achieved through the representation and recognition of the victim as belonging to a community of humans even as the specificity of his/her traumatic experience is acknowledged.*

The central visual metaphor that Spiegelman employs is part of the author's narrative strategy of enabling empathetic witnessing. By representing Artie as one of the mice, Spiegelman establishes a visual continuity between the first and the second generation

survivors of the Holocaust. The trans-generational, inherited nature of trauma that Spiegelman seeks to capture finds an apt representation in this visual metaphor: not only does it enable the reader to identify the Jews as distinct group who are tortured and persecuted for being who they are, it also foregrounds the necessity of remembering that the traumatic experience of the victims of the Holocaust can never be comprehensively represented or understood. The cat-and-mouse imagery thus not only points to the reader that a figurative code or language is a helpful textual device for witnessing the trauma of Holocaust survivors empathetically, it also reminds him/her that the nature of traumatic experience and memory is such that it renders the victim "othered", one who needs to be identified but can never be fully identified with. Thus, when Anja commits suicide, Spiegelman represents Artie wearing the iconic striped uniform of the concentration camps (*Prisoner of the Hell Planet* n.p.), thereby establishing an imaginative connection between his own trauma and his parents' past. Here, the author places a premium on conveying the psychological impact of the trauma of the Holocaust that continues to haunt him rather than representing the event in a factually accurate manner. One might even suggest that the striped uniform represents for Spiegelman a *desire* for participation in a past that can never be his own, yet one whose aftermath influences his experience of the present so devastatingly.

Yet, this desire is fraught with anxiety and the troublesome realization on the part of the author that the experiential chasm that separates Artie from Vladek, Anja and Richieu can never be bridged. Thus, when Spiegelman represents Artie's confused and melancholic response to the success of the first book of *Maus* (201-02), he depicts Artie as a man wearing a mask, indicating that his identification with his survivor parents is, at best, only provisional and that he is, in some senses, only an outsider to the traumatic experience of the Holocaust. It is a significant moment in the narrative, when Spiegelman represents the limits of his own

identificatory visual strategy without giving it up entirely. It is crucial that such imaginative (vicarious?) participation in trauma is made possible only through the narrativization of memory: the narrative thus becomes both a product and a means of negotiating traumatic experience through memory. However, this is not to suggest that the act of narrativization provides a sense of closure to, or redemption from, the experience of trans-generational trauma; rather, it stands as a testimony to the impossibility of resolving the paradox that is fundamental to the position of an *intimate outsider* that a second-generation survivor-author has vis-a-vis the Holocaust. The sense of guilt, inadequacy and futility that Artie is overcome with following the critical and commercial success of the first *Maus* book (201-07) is symptomatic of this paradox – to represent the Holocaust in and through narrative is a parasitic act for the second generation survivor, for he is inevitably involved in the business of telling (and selling) his own "story" with that of his parents. Yet, telling that story and listening to it are part of an ethical imperative for the author and his audience because "trauma precludes its knowing" and not knowing is "an active, persistent, violent refusal, an erasure, a destruction of form and of representation" (Laub http://www.traumaresearch.net/focus1/laub.htm).

In fact, the massive body of Holocaust literature in various genres and media is, to a great extent, a function of the cultural impulse and demand to hear the voices of those who suffered but survived through the politics of genocide. The latter half of the 20th century, marked by instances of ethnic violence and genocide in various parts of the world, has seen the emergence of a *global culture of witnessing* – one that has its origins in the paradigmatic case of the Holocaust and is predicated on the assumption of an informed audience willing to bear testimony to narratives of trauma. Representations of the Holocaust have been in constant circulation for a sufficiently long period of time now for the event itself to have

accrued a cultural significance that is almost instantly recognizable; the Holocaust has become, so to speak, an Ur-narrative of which individual "texts" are only re-inscriptions. Thus, as first generation survivors give way to their descendants, second generation authors bank increasingly on a body of cultural memory about the Holocaust that they share with their audiences. In the case of second generation memoirs, the author addresses audiences who are *experiential outsiders* vis-a-vis the actual horrors of the Holocaust, but are *cultural insiders* vis-a-vis the common knowledge that they share with the author, through the myriad representations of the Holocaust. The author functions as a familial link, a mediator between the actual experience of living through the Holocaust and the recollection of that experience; he is simultaneously also a member of the community of his readers who share a common corpus of "stories" about the Holocaust.

This dual relationship that the second generation author has with his subject (the "story" of the Holocaust, which is often inseparable from his own story) and his readers enables both to participate imaginatively in the experiences being narrativized. For instance, Joe Kubert's *Yossel: April 19, 1943* presents an imaginative "insider's" account of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in the form of a pictorial diary, wherein the author projects himself onto a fictional character who narrates the events leading to the uprising as though they were actually happening to him. Here the author is able to represent an event not through the route of the recollection of an individual's "real" experiences but through the imaginative plotting of a "story" that is based on the popular, received "history" of that event. Kubert's Jewish lineage offers him an initial point of entry into the history of the Holocaust; yet, as an American citizen whose parents migrated even before the Holocaust began, Kubert is as much an outsider to the trauma of the Holocaust as anyone else who did not go through the actual experience of being persecuted by the Nazis during the Second World War. Kubert's

subject position as a second generation writer is, therefore, at an additional remove from the trauma of the Holocaust than Spiegelman's.

Nevertheless, Kubert, like Spiegelman, participates in the construction of postmemory, as his narrative is based on real but dispersed eyewitness accounts, historical records and documents about the Holocaust and is, therefore, grounded in fact. Since *Yossel* is a fictional account of a character who was present at the Warsaw Ghetto during the uprising, it is technically not a testimony; rather, it performs a *testimonial function* in that it purports to present, in the absence of a primary witness, an imaginative account of the events seen through the eyes of the central character. Like Spiegelman, Kubert seems to display a desire for insight into the experience of trauma that he knows is inaccessible to him. Thus, he projects his own self onto his fictional *doppelganger*, Yossel and presents an "eyewitness" account of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Like Artie in *Maus*, Yossel is also an artist, though in this case he does not visually transcribe an oral testimony being narrated to him from a safe historical distance but actually represents through pictures horrific events as they unfold around him. Within the fictional world of the book, the narration of the testimony takes place simultaneously with the unfolding of traumatic events which the narrator himself experiences. Thus, the text represents a form of aspirational trauma on the part of the author that overlooks the impossibility of such a narrative act and instead performs a testimonial function in its capacity to suggest, imaginatively, the horror of the Holocaust. The text does not rely on the recollection and reconstruction of personal memory by a single victim/survivor; rather, *it draws upon and generates cultural memory by fictionalizing a traumatic historical event by means of imaginative participation in the past*. The narrative thus becomes a means and an instance of bearing *empathetic testimony* to traumatic events that are otherwise distanced from the witnessing community by the chasm of experience. The

cultural knowledge about the Holocaust not only makes the articulation of such narratives possible but also determines to a very great extent the ways in which they can be read. Thus, a survivor's testimony (even a fictional one) almost automatically evokes the empathy of the audience, who bear witness to what is considered a voice representative of millions of other voices that have been irrevocably silenced.

In a comparable instance, in *We Are On Our Own* Miriam Katin reconstructs events of her childhood that she has no memory of but which are significant to her identity as a Holocaust survivor. Without any personal memory of the events that she had witnessed as a child during the Holocaust, Katin occupies an odd, liminal position as a victim without a trauma to claim as her own. In this sense, her subject position is more akin to a second generation author, though technically she is a Holocaust survivor. It is through her imaginative reconstruction of the "story" of her escape with her mother from Budapest during the War that Katin is able to participate in the traumatic experience belatedly. Thus, Katin literally visualizes a series of experiences that she herself had seen but forgotten on the basis of her mother's memory of those events. The narrative is thus driven by Katin's desire to re-visit trauma that she can neither call her own nor quite dissociate her own identity from: it is effectively an act of re-creation of traumatic memory through imaginative participation in the past. The narrative offers Katin a point of entry into her mother's experience of events that she herself went through without comprehending their traumatic import. It is, for Katin, a re-appropriation of her own past by means of an empathetic identification of her mother's traumatic experience.

Significantly, while Katin represents the series of experiences mother and daughter went through together during the Holocaust, she always maintains a clear distinction between the perspectives of the adult and the child and thereby acknowledges the "otherness" of the

traumatic experience that she can only imaginatively reconstruct. Though Katin is acutely conscious of her own identity as a Holocaust survivor, she is careful to avoid an identification with her mother's trauma. Instead, she includes her own trauma as a second-generation survivor whose worldview has been permanently altered by the Holocaust. Katin juggles between the main "story" of her mother's escape and her present life in New York, where her relationship with her own son is informed by her awareness of her Jewish lineage. The trauma of the Holocaust is thus shown to cut across generations, in spite of the fact that it is rooted in a very specific individual experience that can only be accessed and understood through empathetic identification. The (post)memory generated through the narrativization of personal experiences becomes part of a larger, more collective consciousness – one that will be passed down to Katin's son and, through the book, to the reader. Therefore, insofar as it offers Katin and her readers a means of witnessing personal trauma and facilitates its transformation into cultural knowledge, the text itself functions as a formal equivalent of a testimony. Like Spiegelman, Katin also makes a move from the personal and the familial towards the collective and the communal by means of engaging with the trauma of the Holocaust through affiliation and identification.

It is on the basis of this strategy of affiliation that second generation non-Jewish authors like Pascal Croci are able to participate in the larger cultural project of memorializing the Holocaust. Croci is an outsider, both racially and experientially, to the trauma of the Holocaust, yet in *Auschwitz* he weaves a narrative based on his interviews with several concentration camp survivors. The focalization of the experiences of numerous survivors into the eyewitness accounts of the two fictional protagonists of the graphic novel results in a narrative that, like *Yossel*, is grounded in historical fact but at the same time also effectively conveys the human aspect of the "story". So far as the narrative is a work of fiction, Croci

takes artistic liberty in representing characters who do not have a "real" existence or identity outside the book; yet, insofar as these characters represent the trauma of existence at Auschwitz in a way that is identifiably "human", the text justifies the author's affiliation to the victims/survivors of the Holocaust and enables the reader to access historical trauma in the form of stories. The imaginative reconstruction of traumatic experience, based on testimonies collected from actual survivors from Auschwitz, literally gives a face to human suffering within the narrative. The emaciated, permanently horrified faces of the characters in the book, like the anthropomorphized mice in Spiegelman's text, are almost generic in their appearance, yet they offer the reader a visual locus within which they can recognize the trauma of the Holocaust as "human". The deliberate narrative convergence of the experiences of several Holocaust victims into the "stories" of a couple of characters is, therefore, a process of fictionalizing history into a form that encourages the reader to empathize with them on the basis of a shared "human" quality rather than in terms of their "real" identity. Given the incalculable nature and magnitude of loss and pain, it is possible for second generation authors and readers born after the Holocaust to access historical trauma only as such personalized but representative "stories" that allow for an empathetic identification of their characters' suffering. Thus, in spite of the fact that the characters in the book are fictional, the experiences they represent are grounded in reality and convey the traumatic import of the Holocaust in recognizably human terms. Therefore, the narrative, resulting from the imaginative reconstruction of individual memories, functions as an empathetic testimony to the extent that it enables a secondary witnessing of trauma that is experientially inaccessible to the author and the reader but is rendered identifiable by a process of humanization.

If the authors of second generation graphic novels fictionalize the traumatic

experience of Holocaust survivors in order to enable audience identification, then Lanzmann offers an alternative route to establishing an empathetic bond with the victims of trauma in *Shoah*. Lanzmann's nine-hour-long epic documentary consistently resists a progressive, linear narrative and instead relies on a circuitous series of videotaped oral testimonies of eyewitnesses and his own tours to sites related to the Holocaust. Lanzmann's strategy is to focus exclusively on the remnants of traumatic experience rather than to recreate past events: thus, the documentary is strictly located within the temporal and spatial frame of its filming and eschews the use of any archival footage at all. What is repeatedly emphasized throughout the documentary, by means of the spoken word and the visual image, is the absence of a means of revisiting and recreating past events except through memory. The eyewitness testimonies are not aimed at presenting a comprehensive picture of the Holocaust; rather, they lead to the accretion of details that convey the loss and grief of each individual interviewee while simultaneously also suggesting that their personal trauma is part of a larger genocidal event. This event, or more precisely its traumatic aftermath, can only be accessed through traces that survive today: not only material remains found in concentration camp sites and villages all over Poland but also, in a sense, that small fraction of people who survived the Holocaust and were willing to tell the tale. These witnesses function as human "traces" of a traumatic event that is otherwise locked away in history. Their words, insofar as they articulate the individual experience of pain and suffering, enable the secondary witnessing of historical trauma through fragmented "stories". Just as significantly, their gestures and silences indicate the inadequacy of language to communicate traumatic experience beyond a point.

The witness's visual "presence" on the screen, like the shots of vast, empty spaces that were once the sites of Nazi atrocities, then simply stands in for what s/he cannot express

through language: a human remainder/reminder of trauma that escapes and defies expression. What the audience witnesses here is not merely a temporary break in the "stories" of the Holocaust but the breakdown of communication itself and the insufficiency of the testimonial act to translate the memory of personal trauma into a comprehensive, coherent historical narrative. Yet, confronting these moments in the documentary is crucial to recognizing that the "stories" being narrated are not merely tours through personal memory but an index of the overwhelming immensity of trauma that renders communication between one human being and another impossible. The face of the witness on the screen thus evokes an empathetic identification of his/her trauma as that of a fellow human being, but at the same time it also indicates the impossibility of comprehending that trauma fully. Therefore, the act of secondary witnessing is, as Lanzmann and his audience are forced to acknowledge, beset with its own limited capacity to access historical trauma but also a necessary means of remembering the Holocaust in our own times by means of empathetic recognition of the victims as "human".

In fact, the filming of the documentary itself becomes the occasion for some second generations survivors to hear their parents' account of their experiences during the Holocaust. Thus, for instance, the daughter of Motke Zaidl, a survivor from Vilna, sits by as her father is interviewed by Lanzmann and admits that though she had managed to extract only "scraps of truth" from her father about his traumatic past through her constant questioning, it was only in the process of being a witness on camera that he revealed "the whole story" a second time (14:32 to 15:05). Like Artie in *Maus*, Zaidl's daughter is able to participate in the act of bearing witness to her familial past in and through the narrativization of memory (in this case, initiated by a third party not related to the victim by blood). The transmission of memory as a traumatic legacy is thus enabled and enacted here through the act of secondary witnessing

under a testimonial condition that exists between the victim and the empathetic listener(s). Therefore, for both the primary and the secondary witness, the act of bearing witness to trauma implies the imposition of a certain narrative structure and media form – in this case, a video testimony – to the individual experience of suffering and leads to the emergence of an empathetic testimonial.

The testimonial import of Holocaust narratives does not always arise from the author's self-conscious projection of his/her own subject position as a secondary witness vis-a-vis the traumatic experience s/he represents. In a cinematic text like *Schindler's List*, for instance, the events unfolding on the screen follow a straightforward chronological order within a fictional(ized) narrative that precludes the filmmaker's expression of his own position as a secondary witness to the Holocaust. Unlike second generation graphic memoirs like *Maus*, the film does not frame the act of its own creation within the "plot" by way of foregrounding its testimonial context. However, by positing the protagonist as an eyewitness to the horrors of the Holocaust, Spielberg channels the audience's sympathetic attention to the sufferings of the Jews and engages them in an act of secondary witnessing. Like *Yossel*, *Schindler's List* offers a fictive but seemingly immediate account of the events of the Holocaust as they take place. Yet, Schindler's subject position differs from Yossel's in one crucial way: unlike Yossel, he is not one of the persecuted and therefore he is not an eyewitness of the trauma experienced by the Jews in the way Yossel is. He is an outsider to the actual sufferings of the Jews but at the same time he is also deeply sympathetic towards their trauma. His perspective is thus one that the audience readily adopts as they too are experiential outisders to the experience of trauma but are morally aligned on the side of the Jewish victims.

In fact, Spielberg ensures that the audience follow Schindler's perspective, sometimes quite literally, as in the famous scene where he sees a little girl in a red frock walking down a

street during the liquidation of the Krakow ghetto. As the camera follows Schindler's line of vision, the audience identify the little girl as a symbol of humanity amidst the barbaric acts unfolding all around her. This empathetic response to the sufferings of the Jews is enabled throughout the film through the audience's identification with the protagonist's ethical position vis-a-vis the Jewish victims. Though he officially belongs to the German side, Schindler consciously and persistently attempts to save the lives of as many Jews as he can. His camaraderie with his Jewish accountant, Itzhak Stern, and his sensitivity towards Goeth's Jewish housekeeper Helen are character traits that mark him out as someone capable of empathizing with an "other" as a human subject and therefore a point of reference for the audience in the act of bearing witness to dehumanizing suffering. Schindler enacts and represents an identification of the trauma of the dehumanized Jewish victims through an act of affiliation that transcends his official identity as a German businessman. Thus, though the film does not employ the narrative structure of the testimony, it does offer the audience an ethical code for bearing witness to distant trauma through the narrative lens of a protagonist who is an experiential outsider but a cultural insider to the experience of trauma.

In comparison to graphic memoirs, documentaries and films, online memorial sites and databases offer a significantly greater scope for active participation in the process of bearing witness to the trauma of the Holocaust within a testimonial context. Though the documents used in such websites are often digitized versions of collections from museums and archives that are located in "real" space, their virtual existence offers spectators a more flexible space for commentary and discussion, thereby making the act of witnessing more collaborative than is perhaps possible within the physical space of a museum or a library. Thus, for instance, one of the prominent features of the online photo archive on *Yad Vashem* is the section where victims or their descendants or acquaintances comment on the

photographs, often identifying someone they knew or are related to or even tracing their own history back to a past that exists only as snapshots. One of the survivors, now emigrated to the United States of America, identifies herself in a photograph shot when she was a child in post-War Germany and through it seeks to re-establish contact with the woman who had hidden her during the War and had contributed the photograph to the collection (http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/4071217.html). Thus, in this case, the photographic image becomes not only an evidential means of identifying herself as a Holocaust survivor (she claims to have been unaware of the existence of these images) but also a virtual route for seeking and reclaiming part of her lost past. In another case, a second generation survivor from Uruguay says he is "almost certain" that the man in one of the photographs is his uncle – comparing it with family photographs he inherited from his father – and seeks more information about this lost branch of his family (http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/42695.html).

In a similar feature on another memorial website, *Holocaust Survivors and Remembrance Project*, a gallery of photographs of Jewish children and adolescents, entitled "Remember Me?", invites visitors to identify the people in these snapshots or share them with their family and friends to "help raise awareness about the experiences of these most vulnerable victims of war and genocide" (http://isurvived.org/Frameset4References-4/-USHMM_rememberMe.html). A good number of these snapshots have "updates" on them based on their identification by family members or acquaintances. The fact that these photographs feature children adds to their appeal to the audience's sympathetic identification of their trauma, as children are universally perceived as requiring the security and comfort of belonging to a familial structure. The identification of these victims as members of families serves to restore to them their lost identity as human subjects. These fragments of

personal/familial history, inherited as traumatic memory by second generation survivors, thus assume a more particularized, human significance as their identification and reclamation is staged on a public forum. Additionally, these photographs acquire an evidentiary value only in and through the process of their publication/reproduction and recognition on these websites as fragments of a larger history of genocidal violence and trauma. The web-page thus creates an open visual field in which the anonymous faces in these photographs are humanized through the possibilities of viewers' collective identification and commentary and reveals to a widely dispersed audience the traumatic aftermath of the Holocaust at work in the lives of those who inherited it. This traumatic inheritance goes beyond the personal and the familial and enters a larger cultural domain in such collective acts of bearing witness. The public expression of empathy for the victim thus plays a crucial role not only for the direct descendant of the Holocaust survivor but also for members of a more widely dispersed audience in the act of bearing witness to the trauma of a disenfranchised "Other".

The use of multimedia on such websites also facilitates the testimonial act by seamlessly combining historical evidence with critical commentary, offering the audience a narrative trajectory to make sense of a seemingly diverse and dispersed body of facts. Thus, for instance the audio-visual clip on "The Auschwitz Album" on *Yad Vashem* gives the audience interpretive cues to snapshots from the concentration camp that are uncaptioned in the original document itself (http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/album_auschwitz/multimedia.asp). The presenter imposes on these photographs a chronological, narrative order that is not strictly an aspect of the visuals themselves. Thus, the presenter informs us, through the use of a voiceover, that the Hungarian Jews descending from one of the overcrowded transport carts at Auschwitz in May 1944 are "traumatized and fearful after their horrendous journey".

Though the visual evidence offered by the photographs here is too indistinct to reflect the trauma and fear of the Jews, or for that matter, the horrors of their journey to Auschwitz, the presenter's commentary ascribes to these people feelings that help the audience empathize with their sufferings and thus identify them as human subjects. The presenter also sets the images in context, stating that the Jews in the photographs "have no clue that they have just been delivered to a death factory and that few of them will survive". The anticipation of the imminent, horrific end of these people's lives is thus included in the description, though the photographs themselves do not bear any visible signs of what its subjects were about to experience. The commentary thus "emplots" these photographs (with details about what preceded and what was to follow the moment of its creation) and constitutes an act of narrativization through which the audience can "read" these images as parts of a "story". It also enables the audience to identify and empathize with the Jewish victims as human subjects of violence and injustice, as characters in this "story" of suffering and death.

Additionally, the presenter also quotes Elie Weisel on his experience of arriving at Auschwitz as a teenager and being separated from his mother and sister. By invoking the words of one of the most famous survivors of the Holocaust, the presenter lends to his own narration and to the photographs used for the slideshow the credibility of a recognizable voice in the domain of Holocaust representation. Weisel's words are also accompanied by an audio track in the background that re-creates the "scene" of his arrival (but also that of the very similar "scene" of the photographs displayed here) through an imaginative rendition of Nazi officers announcing, amidst the voices of the Jewish crowd and barking dogs, "Men to the left, women to the right". This re-enactment of an archetypal "scene" from the world of the concentration camp conveys to the audience a sense of being able to re-visit the past, indicating the representative value of these photographs in capturing moments that repeated

themselves over and over again at Auschwitz. On the other hand, by employing an individual's account of trauma at being separated from his family, the narrator humanizes the Jewish subjects in the photographs and particularizes the trauma of the victims who are otherwise seen only as constituting an indistinguishable crowd. This process of the humanization of the victim, achieved through the combined use of words and images, prompts the audience to "read" the resultant narrative as a story of human suffering rather than dry historical evidence and to respond to the trauma of the nameless Jewish victims as empathetic witnesses. Thus, this act of secondary witnessing, enabled by the narrative reordering of an experience that has no record except a collection of snapshots, leads to the emergence of an empathetic testimonial form.

I have thus far explored how second generation Holocaust narratives represent trauma to experiential outsiders by establishing a testimonial condition between the victim and the secondary witness. In the next chapter, I will examine how the personal, embodied, unique experience of trauma is rendered transmissible, though the recurrent use of certain thematic tropes and formal devices, across narratives as an identifiable, reiterable category.

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Chapter 6

Transmitting Trauma

The transmission of trauma beyond the specificity of the individual victim's (embodied) experience of suffering to diverse and dispersed (often unknowable/anonymous, even unsympathetic) audiences is made possible by acts of representation that make the distant pain of an "other" proximate and comprehensible. This is achieved by means of encoding traumatic experience and memory in thematic and generic forms that are replicable across a number and variety of narratives and can therefore be decoded by a witnessing audience as identifiable textual and cultural "signs" of trauma. In this chapter, I examine second generation Holocaust narratives for the recurrent, replicable motifs through which they chart the experience of the victim's suffering and thereby render the victimized "other" into a recognizable human figure and his/her trauma into an epistemological category. In the first section of this chapter, I describe the trauma of the Holocaust, borrowing Bruno Latour's formulation, as an "immutable mobile", a category of knowledge that can be communicated across cultural and historical borders without loss of meaning. In the second section of the chapter, I study these narratives for thematic and formal correspondences that translate the unique, individual experience of the victim's suffering into a legible, reiterable language of trauma and thereby make for a reading of these texts as constituents of an allotropic genre. *I argue that the trauma of each individual victim of the Holocaust is rendered comprehensible and transmissible through the process of its narrativization as immutable mobile and in allotropic forms*.

Immutable Mobile, Trauma and Memory

Second generation Holocaust narratives construct trauma as an "immutable mobile", which Bruno Latour describes as a set of facts or data that can be mobilized so that they do not undergo "distortion, corruption or decay" in the process of transmission and finally become combinable so that they can be "cumulated, aggregated" into a body of knowledge (223). Insofar as trauma is unique and utterly bound to the suffering individual, it cannot be experienced by an "outsider"; yet, the representation of trauma in various narrative forms generates a language or a code through which it is rendered mobile and transmitted across media as a stable, recognizable and reproducible category of experience that can be understood by those not directly affected by it. Like the Spanish navigators Latour cites to demonstrate how information about alien lands was transformed into cultural knowledge in Europe during the Early Modern period, those engaged in representing trauma do so by mapping the experience of pain, loss and grief in identifiably human terms, so that it becomes comprehensible to audiences far removed from the actual physical conditions that cause such experience.

In fact, it is fruitful to borrow from Latour and conceive of representations of trauma as cartographic acts that do not bring to the audience the actual territory of human suffering but only transmit certain aspects of that experience as a map that can be accessed and interpreted in spite of its distance (in both space and time) from the original "site" of trauma. It is by means of identifying trauma in terms of the lowest common denominator of human vulnerability to suffering and pain that eye-witnesses and authors of victim narratives shape their experiences as "immutable mobiles" that can be addressed to, and circulated among, historically distanced audiences who become secondary witnesses. Trauma becomes available for distribution and consumption as an "immutable mobile" because it bears, in spite of

differences specific to each individual victim, the indelible mark of human suffering that is not only recognized by audiences experientially removed from its source but also assimilated into the body of their cultural consciousness and knowledge of human rights and their violation. Thus, private grief and suffering are transformed, through their narrativization, into "immutable mobiles", as they become the subject of narrativization within a larger, public culture of witnessing trauma. In fact, as more and more narratives of trauma emerge within an increasingly globalized society, they feed into the existing corpus of texts that are scripted in what Nayar terms the "grammar of victimage" (148). The production and circulation of such narratives of trauma have a cumulative effect in that they can be read in conjunction with one another because of their essential(ized) yet universalizable *human* aspect(s) and thereby contribute to building up a cultural memory and knowledge of human rights violations. In fact, as Nayar points out, the repeated, cumulative, osmotic circulation of such narratives effects "a narrative reordering of the social imaginary, which in turn calls for and facilitates the production of more such narratives" (132). Therefore, trauma functions as an "immutable mobile" insofar as it lends itself to narrative representation of, and as, human rights violation and demands as well as creates a narrative society that offers a space for bearing collective witness to the pain of others.

In this section, I look at how second generation graphic memoirs, films, documentaries and memorial websites represent the traumatic experience and aftermath of the Holocaust through certain recurrent themes that function as immutable mobiles and mark out these texts as bearing a larger, cultural significance in terms of their testimonial import. Authors of second generation narratives, whether or not they are related by blood to victims/survivors of the Holocaust, are essentially outsiders to the actual experience of suffering that the primary witnesses have undergone. The primary witnesses themselves are

also capable of re-membering and communicating their experiences only to the extent that they employ certain verbal and/or visual codes that are immediately recognizable to their (implied) audience as textual "signs" that constitute a narrative of trauma. *I examine aspects such as the representation of the victim's traumatized body, the concentrationary universe of the camps, the relation between individual suffering and collective trauma, the construction and identification of the victim's "self" and its relation to the particular testimonial performance, as immutable mobiles that enable both the survivor and his/her audience to bear witness to the historical trauma of the Holocaust as members of a community.*

Dehumanization

The process of systematic dehumanization through which European Jews were subjected to Nazi atrocities and crimes during the Holocaust is reconstructed by authors of second generation memoirs by focusing sharply on the ways and means by which they were physically marked out and "othered". Thus, in *Maus*, Spiegelman employs the visual device of using anthropomorphic animal characters to differentiate the Jewish victims from their Nazi persecutors. Though such a visual strategy may seemingly reproduce the Nazi discourse of the Jews as vermin that needed to be exterminated, by assigning recognizably human behavioral traits to his "mice" characters, Spiegelman manages to highlight the barbarity of that discourse by foregrounding the contrast between the images on the page and the real human beings whose story they tell. As Andreas Huyssen points out, "Spiegelman's mimetic adoption of Nazi imagery actually succeeds in reversing its implications while simultaneously keeping us aware of the humiliation and degradation of that imagery's original intention" (34). The deliberate visual distortion of the body of the victim thus becomes an effective narrative means of alerting the reader to the fact that it was real human bodies that were subjected to dehumanizing violence. Additionally, the inclusion of

photographs from the Spiegelmans' family album within the narrative and Artie's self-conscious probing into the limitations of the text's central visual metaphor ensure that the reader never quite forgets that the narrative, for all its careful, self-reflexive artifice, refers to traumatic events and experiences in the lives of real human beings.

In fact, the body of the Holocaust victim is often highlighted as a site on which the sign of trauma is literally inscribed in the form of the roll number that was tattooed on the arms of the prisoners at Auschwitz. Thus, towards the very beginning of *Maus*, Vladek's tattooed arm is foregrounded so that the rest of his body lies outside the frame of the panel (14). The tattooed arm, in its capacity to identify Vladek as an Auschwitz survivor, bears a synecdochic relation to his individual trauma, but at the same time it also stands as a representative of the collective trauma inflicted upon the European Jewish community during the Holocaust (the number is, after all, only one in a long series, and one of the few whose bearers lived to tell the tale). Significantly, this panel also depicts Artie in the background as Vladek says to him, "It would take many books, my life, and no one wants anyway to hear such stories" (14). There is perhaps an implied contrast here between the "many books" Vladek thinks would be necessary to narrate his life-story (and there are indeed many books that tell the life-stories of victims like him) and the partially visible tattoo on his arm, which announces to the onlooker (Artie in the frame, but also, by logical extension, the reader) his identity as a Holocaust survivor even without the particular details of his life that he subsequently furnishes through the narrative. The survivor's marked body is, therefore, both a literal and a figurative link between the personal suffering of an individual and the larger, communal significance of historical trauma. In a similar instance, the cover image of Joe Kubert's *Yossel* is that of a man's tattooed arm set to the background of the stripes of the uniform he is wearing. In spite of the fact that the narrative is primarily about the Warsaw

Ghetto uprising and devotes a relatively small portion to describing the experiences of a man who manages to escape from Auschwitz, this cover image obviously draws upon the iconicity of such visual markers of trauma to frame the audience's reading of the text through their (assumed) cultural knowledge of their significance in the history of the Holocaust. The tattooed or the uniformed body thus becomes an instantly recognizable mark of identity for the victim/survivor as well as a visual shorthand for the audience for "reading" the story of an individual's suffering within the larger cultural context of bearing witness to the historical trauma of the Holocaust[9].

The process of dehumanization is represented in terms of not only the violence inflicted on the victim's body but also of the loss of personal identity resulting from the systematic appropriation of Jewish property by the Nazis. Thus, both in *Yossel* and *We Are On Our Own* the central characters experience the first assault on their identities when they are forced to surrender their material possessions and evacuate their houses to be deported to ghettos. The stripping away of property is shown to be a disorienting experience for the Jewish victims, as they are uprooted from the familiar territory of "home" to the space of

[9] The *New York Times* reported in an article on 30 September 2012 that a few second and third generation descendants of Auschwitz survivors have tattooed the numbers of their parents and grandparents on their forearms as a "sign" of their traumatic legacy. While such physical appropriation of the "sign" of trauma by those who have not experienced the Holocaust directly raises questions of legitimacy, it also points to the iconicity of the marked body within the context of Holocaust remembrance. In fact, it is useful to observe here that though the practice of tattooing numbers onto the arms of prisoners was specific only to Auschwitz and Birkenau, the tattooed arm has acquired, through repeated representation across media, a degree of visibility and recognizability that makes it (like other visual "signs" such as the Star of David and the Nazi swastika) a cultural icon of the Holocaust. If we consider the body of the camp survivor to be a material remainder/reminder of the Holocaust, the replication of the "sign" of his/her trauma by their descendants marks a movement from "lived memory to historical memory". As the last survivors of the Holocaust die, there arises a cultural demand for modes of remembrance of their traumatic past that do not rely on direct testimonial evidence. By literally (re)inscribing the "sign" of dehumanizing atrocity upon his/her own body, the second/third generation survivor turns his/her inherited familial memory of trauma into a larger, collective memory of the Holocaust. The tattoo becomes a code of both remembrance and warning – an iconic visual link between the traumatic past of their ancestors and the dangers of genocide in their present and future. The body is thus employed as a "text" that marks the continuity/continuum of traumatic memory and functions as a transgenerational link between personal and collective history of the Holocaust. ("Proudly Bearing Elders' Scars, Their Skin Says 'Never Forget'" <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/01/world/middleeast/with-tattoos-young-israelis-bear-holocaust-scars-of-relatives.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1&smid=fb-share&> Accessed on February 26, 2013)

extremity in the ghetto. In fact, Katin shows the psychological impact of such action through her own childhood self's reaction to the absence of her pet dog when her mother is forced to give it up to the Nazis. While the loss of a favourite pet devastates the child, the mother is equally traumatized when she has to destroy all her family photographs and letters in order to leave no trace behind before escaping with her daughter. The sense of one's own self – traced by the adult through the material records of her familial history and by the child in terms of her bond with a beloved pet – is thus shown to be damaged by the Nazi policy of denying the Jews their right to personal property.

The authors of these texts document the extreme physical deprivations and torture that prisoners underwent at the concentration camps by way of representing the culmination of the dehumanization of the Jewish victim. Thus, Vladek's account of the harsh conditions of survival at Auschwitz finds a parallel in any number of Holocaust survivor testimonies. The systematic brutalization of the camp inmates through hunger, excruciating physical labour and severe punishments, exposure to cold and to disease that Vladek describes is a story, to use his own words, of how they were given "just enough to die more slowly" (209). Vladek's words have been illustrated in the last frame of the page suggestively: four prisoners are shown eating from their respective bowls, seemingly oblivious to the three corpses that lie sprawled just beside them. While the illustration is not only faithful to the actual material conditions of living in the camp, where the barracks were filled beyond capacity and death from starvation and disease was a daily affair, it is also indicative of how the victims were objectified and brutalized to the point that the difference between a living and a dead body ceased to matter. The words and the visual here together paint a scene where life has been reduced to mere physical subsistence and the living share the same physical space as the dying and the dead. Not surprisingly, under such circumstances, an individual's identity

comes to mean nothing more than whether s/he is alive or dead. In fact, the victim's body was literally stripped of its individuating markers as s/he was made to leave behind all her/his possessions upon entry into the camp, made to wear the (now iconic) striped uniforms and designated a number that would become her/his identity at the camp. Denuded of their individuality, the prisoners at the camp were perceived and treated only as a mass of bodies that was already earmarked for systematic extermination. Spiegelman represents this genocidal process by illustrating Vladek's account with the generic "maus" characters, all of whom look alike.

Pascal Croci uses a similar visual strategy in *Auschwitz*, where all the prisoners are depicted as having pallid, sunken cheeks and vacant or horrified eyes, while Kubert mostly depicts the camp prisoners as very sketchy and indistinguishable humanoid figures. Both Croci and Kubert also visualize the ultimate horror of the concentration camp: a sonderkommando's eye-witness account of the scene inside a gas chamber immediately after a batch of prisoners have been killed. While images of innumerable corpses lying in a heap (just like those of heaped shoes, clothes, dolls and baggage of the Jews) are all too familiar to an audience that has had any exposure to the history of the Holocaust, this final desecration of the human body is made poignant by such "insider's" accounts. The dehumanization and objectification of the victim's body is brought to its logical culmination in such scenes of horror; at the same time, these scenes also prompt the audience to respond with moral outrage and condemnation as they represent an extreme form of the violation of human dignity. The spectacle of the traumatized body, treated with an equal degree of cruelty in life and death, recurs through Holocaust testimonies and represents the breach of the most fundamental social, cultural and moral tenets of belonging to a human community.

In contrast to graphic memoirs, in which the marks of violence and suffering are

rendered visible to a witnessing audience through the victim's body, Lanzmann's *Shoah* is notable for the total absence of any external, physical signs of trauma in the narrative. Lanzmann employs the device of circuitous, non-chronological repetition of the memory of physical pain in *Shoah* to highlight the utter absence of human traces at the "sites" of the Holocaust that any representation of the event must contend with. Thus, practically all the camp survivors he interviews recall their experiences of acute hunger, thirst, cold and exhaustion during their transport and thereafter, each testifying to his/her unique, embodied suffering but only repeating what is a recognizable motif in the narrative of trauma that emerges from witnessing such individual testimonial acts in conjunction. The body of the victim/survivor, or more precisely its image captured on screen, thus functions as the locus of bearing witness to trauma; yet, the experiences that each of these eye-witnesses narrates are shown to have no material evidence except their "presence" as words and images. In fact, though these victims testify to actute physical suffering, their bodies do not bear any outward signs of the experiences they narrate. It is only through their articulation of past suffering within the narrative of atrocity that the viewer is able to identify these "bodies", in the present context of bearing testimony, as victims of trauma. The "mapping" of these traumatic experiences, in terms of Lanzmann's visits to the actual physical sites where the events referred to occurred, reveals a total absence of material signs or traces of the violence committed against millions. The contrast between the obliteration of all physical signs of the human loss that occurred at the "sites" of the concentration camp – the millions of missing/absent bodies – and the additive presence of a few testifying bodies on screen draws the audience's attention to the fact that any act of bearing witness to trauma of this nature and magnitude must necessarily engage sympathetically but cautiously with the representative quality of the victim/survivor's account. The victim's body, so far as it can be represented

through a combination of words and images, thus functions as an immutable mobile that enables identification of his/her pain as human and at the same time also the recognition of his/her story as belonging to and representative of a narrative continuum of testimonial writing.

The subsuming of the victim's body under the law of the concentrationary universe is another aspect of the traumatic experience of the victims that is repeatedly discussed in such narratives. The moment of the victim's first encounter with the camp is often etched out as a significant one in the memory and recollection of traumatic experience. Thus, the largest panel in *Maus* is dedicated to visualizing this crucial moment in Vladek's testimony. The picture is unframed and seems to spill out of the limits of the page (159), suggesting visually a sense of the vastness of the camp and of its horrific sublimity that overwhelms Vladek at this point in time. In fact, the main entrance to the camp with its infamous motto "*Arbeit Macht Frei*", which has now attained iconic recognizability, marks both literally and figuratively the boundary of a space that precludes all hope of redemption. Thus, Vladek says, "We knew the stories – that they will gas us and throw us in the ovens . . . . . We knew everything. And here we were" (159). The process of dehumanization of the victims that begins with their transport to the camp in cattle carts reaches its destination in this moment of encounter when they leave behind hope at the gates of Auschwitz. The vastness of the physical space of the camp is also conveyed visually in *Auschwitz*, where the illustrations are all dull and smoky and the horizon is never distinct in any of the panels. But the camp also represents an order of existence whose rules are unfathomable to the inmates, except that they know they are marked out for death. Though Vladek recounts how he managed to get into the good books of the kapo and fared marginally better than others around him because of his ability to use his skills to his own advantage, at no point is he certain that any of his attempts

at self-preservation will guarantee his survival. In fact, the arbitrariness of torture and the certainty of death are the only rules that are shown to prevail in the camp. One could be flogged for asking for a pair of shoes that fit (186) or shot dead for the sport of the guards (194). It is this impossibility of acting in any predictable way that might ensure a degree of immunity to torture and death for the victim that makes the horror of the camp uncontainable and incomprehensible.

In Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, Helen remarks upon this feature of life at Auschwitz when she is brutally beaten up by the camp commandant Amon Goeth for no apparent reason. In another instance from the film, the utter randomness of Goeth's decision to spare the boy he assigns the task of cleaning his bathtub and then shoot him down as he is walking away suggests that there is no logical explanation for the survival or death of the camp prisoners. The relation between the perpetrator and the victim at Auschwitz is, quite simply, that between hunter and prey. Thus, towards the beginning of *Auschwitz*, when a woman dares to question a Nazi officer for killing a soldier and challenges him with the assertion that she is not cattle, the officer shoots the infant in her arms before killing her (10-12). Vladek recalls hearing about similar incidents of how Nazi soldiers killed crying children by banging their heads against a wall during their transport to the camps (110). Similarly, in *Mendel's Daughter*, Gusta Lemelman recounts how a Nazi officer hit her hard on the head with his rifle for simply refusing to step into the house from which her brother had just escaped (78). In each of these instances, the perpetrator of violence refuses to treat the victim as anything more than a body that was the object of his atrocities. Any sign of resistance from the victim who seeks to assert her/his agency as a human being is, therefore, met with immediate and brutal punishment. Reducing the victims to silent submission and thereby stripping them of the power and the courage to assert their rights as individual agents is thus represented as

being central to the process of their dehumanization. The impossibility of resistance marks the relation between the perpetrator and the victim and is an integral feature of any representation of the trauma of being subjected to the brutalizing order of the concentrationary universe.

Another aspect of the trauma of living in a concentration camp is the sense of self-alienation that many survivors speak of. While questioning or even addressing the perpetrator as another human being was an impossibility for the prisoners, communication amongst themselves was also strained to the limits by the severe physical and psychological hardships imposed upon them. Thus, in *Yossel*, the Rabbi who manages to escape from Auschwitz describes his feelings after being recruited as a *sonderkommando*[10] at the camp:

> I felt that my own body no longer belonged to me. Skin and flesh and bones were no longer mine. They belonged to someone else. I inhabited this body now, but, only for a while. Only until I, too, was fed into the crematorium. (63)

Not only was mobility within the camp strictly regulated, the conditions of living were so harsh and unpredictable that there was hardly any possibility of establishing alliances. Thus, in *Maus*, though Vladek strategically befriends people around him during his incarceration at Auschwitz, he is essentially on his own and manages to survive largely because of his luck. The fact that there was no way of predicting who would live and who would die made it difficult for the inmates to think or act meaningfully as a group. Many of Lanzmann's interviewees in *Shoah* report how all communication within the ghetto or the camp was reduced to rumours and any form of collective action was considered not only risky but even absurd. The same inability to act is expressed by the members of the Jewish Warsaw Ghetto

[10] Literally meaning "special unit" in German, the *sonderkommando* were groups of Jewish camp inmates who were forced to perform the task of disposing of the corpses in the gas chambers. Since they were believed to have access to confidential information about the workings of the concentration camp, members of the sonderkommando were not permitted to mingle with other camp inmates and were periodically gassed, only to be replaced by newer deportees.

in *Yossel* who fear punishment from the Nazis for the infraction of rules even after they have heard the rabbi's tale of horror (84). The process of the dehumanization of the victims thus involved destroying the possibility of any significant communication amongst them and thereby preventing the emergence of any sense of community. The traumatic experience of living at Auschwitz essentially rendered the individual victim isolated to the point that s/he could not resist the process of her/his own brutalization and was left with no sense of her/his own subjectivity.

Communication

If the denial of speech and agency marks the dehumanizing violence inflicted upon the victim, then the re-establishment of the possibility of communication in and through the testimonial performance is crucial to the process of identifying the survivor/primary witness as a victim and bearing witness to her/his trauma. It is by means of speaking about their pain and suffering in the presence of a sympathetic "other", who is an outsider to the experience but is responsive to such narration, that the victim is enabled to reclaim her/his agency as a human being. Speaking about the near absolute objectification of the victim's physical and psychic "self" within the concentration camp becomes, paradoxically, a means of reclaiming the victim's subjectivity. As Kelly Oliver points out, "The content of testimonies of oppression reinscribes the survivor as victim and object while the act of testifying restores subjectivity to the experience of objectification" (98).

Thus, in spite of the troubled relationship Vladek shares with Artie in *Maus*, he manages to construct for himself, through his narration of his traumatic experiences at Auschwitz, an identity that goes beyond his characterization as an eccentric, manipulative, self-obsessed man and reveals him to be a deeply committed husband and father whose great personal losses have left him permanently scarred. Vladek's subjective agency lies in his

willingness and ability to address an audience (Artie, and by logical extension, the implied reader) through the narrative in a way that they bear witness to his "story" sympathetically. The same holds good for the eponymous Yossel, who, in spite of being only a fictional character, functions within the narrative as a locus for the audience's sympathy. Another Holocaust victim – arguably the most famous one – Anne Frank, also evokes the audience's sympathy in the graphic biography authorized by the Anne Frank House because we relate to her subjective experiences and at the same time recognize that her individuality is ultimately subsumed by her fate/identity as a Holocaust victim. In each of these cases, the testimonial narrative represents the individual victim as characterized by traits that make him or her unique and thereby *humanizes* them: Vladek's constant urge to save and to criticise, Yossel's tendency to put his experiences down on paper as pictures, Anne's growing-up pangs and her literary ambitions. Yet, each of these "characters", in their common vulnerability to the violent events of the Holocaust, is identified, over and above all their unique, individual characteristics, as a victim by an audience already aware of the testimonial context within which their stories unfold. The audience participates in a sympathetic witnessing of the trauma of these victims precisely because they are able to identify the victims not as a faceless statistical figure but as a distinct individual subject whose suffering represents pain and loss in *human* terms. Such an affective response to the trauma of the victim is crucial to the testimonial performance and to the identification of the traumatized individual *as* victim. As Sharon Marcus observes about Anne Frank:

> The *Diary*'s pathos derives from the powerful difference between what we know about Anne Frank's fate and what she, as the writer of the diary through which we know her, could not know . . . The painful awareness of her own death, necessarily absent from Anne's own writing, surfaces in the reader who

> must imagine it; and the pathos of Anne's death in and of itself is accentuated by the affect that invests the very act of imagining. (104)

Such an "act of imagining" is essentially moral in nature and involves "a kind of virtual experience through which one puts oneself in the other's position while recognizing the difference of that position and hence not taking the other's place" (LaCapra 722). It is this imaginative participation that lies at the crux of the testimonial performance and allows the reader/audience to identify the human element of pain and suffering that otherwise renders the victim dehumanized and "othered", and thereby enables individual instances of trauma to be represented, transmitted and recognized across texts and genres as immutable mobiles. For instance, in *Shoah*, the numerous victims essentially repeat versions of the same story, which are recognized by the audience as the traumatized individual's reassertion of subjectivity through the act of testimony but at the same time also as constitutive elements of the collective, historical trauma of the Holocaust.

In fact, in each of the texts discussed above, the suffering of the individual victim also stands in for the collective trauma of those who cannot testify. Often, second generation memorial texts trace a familial history of death, loss and trauma through the narrativization of a single individual's suffering. Thus, Vladek's testimony is the only way through which Artie can represent and respond to the murder of other family members, including his mother, brother, uncles and aunts, and grandparents. Similarly, when Gusta Lemelman states, at the very beginning of her narrative, "Sometimes your memories are not your own" (4), she makes an implicit claim for her own testimony as giving voice to her parents and siblings who, unlike her, did not survive the Holocaust to tell the tale. Likewise, each of the survivors who appears in *Shoah* speaks of his/her unique experience of suffering but, in doing so, also lends voice to those "other" millions who have been permanently silenced. The appearance of each

individual survivor, as words or images on the page or the screen, serves as a reminder of the absence of those "others" who cannot participate in such testimonial performances. The individual victim puts a human face on what is otherwise known only as dry statistics in the domain of public knowledge. As Nayar observes, "Every victim narrative . . . spills outside the text into the surrounding narratives, even as the adjacent narratives – often impersonal, dehumanized, statistical – are revivified through the subjective narratives by/of the victims" (153). In bearing witness to these individual victims, the audience bring their cultural knowledge/literacy of the history of the Holocaust to bear upon their "reading" of such testimonies and respond to them with sympathetic imagination, which enables them to "recognize particular cases of violations within their own cultural situations/contexts but also to move beyond these cultural specificities to recognize suffering, pain and oppression" (Nayar 162).

The representation of trauma as being rooted in historical specificity and yet imaginable through "signs" that can be replicated and reproduced across texts and media is evidenced in the way the physical realities of human suffering are depicted on memorial websites. One of the significant ways in which these websites represents the horror of the Holocaust is by employing archival photographs alongside more personal testimonies from the sites of trauma, including, but not restricted to, the concentration camps. For instance, the very first image on the welcome page of the *Holocaust Survivors and Remembrance Project* is that of the entrance to a concentration camp. The iconicity of this image does not require any explanatory caption for the audience to identify its traumatic import. Like Vladek's description of his first encounter with Auschwitz, the image suggests that the audience is about to virtually enter a "space" of unimaginable horror. Similarly, *Yad Vashem* displays in its photo archive images of the construction of the camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau, featuring a

fairly broad range of sites and activities, ranging from the construction of the barracks, digging of drains to the building of the crematoria (http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/103149-container.html). Though these photographs do not, in themselves, bear any "signs" of violence or suffering, their material association with trauma results from the fact that they are used as historical evidence within a testimonial narrative as well as from the audience's mapping of these physical sites within their own knowledge of the history of the Holocaust. These images thus enable, as well as draw upon, a cultural imagination of the concentration camp, at once identifiable across the various details and scenes they capture, as a space of horror that is rendered transmissible as an immutable mobile within the narrative and historical context of bearing witness to the Holocaust.

As already discussed in the case of graphic memoirs and films, the victim's body as the site of atrocity is crucial to the construction of a trauma narrative, as it is not only an actual, physical remainder/reminder of the suffering s/he has undergone but is also, as a marker of the universal human vulnerability to pain, a common link between the primary and the secondary witness. This is borne out by the ways in which memorial websites visually construct the victim's body as a legible "sign" of trauma that is otherwise beyond representation. The photographs of victims from the concentration camps used on these websites are predominantly those that were taken by the liberating armies at the end of the War. These images, therefore, in a strict sense, represent deliverance from suffering rather than the actual experience of it. Yet, the image of the victim's body bears testimony to the violence inflicted on it and stands as a physical reminder of trauma that cannot be contained within strict limits of space and time. For instance, the welcome page of the *Holocaust Survivors and Remembrance Project* displays a photograph from the horror camp at Bergen-

Belsen, featuring two women sitting on the ground and eating some food, while a third is seen lying at the corner; in the background we see a heap of corpses that the women seem to be oblivious of (http://isurvived.org/).

Similarly, on *Yad Vashem*'s photo archive there are several images (in the album titled "Liberation") that feature survivors amidst dead bodies strewn all over the landscape. In one, for instance, we see a mother walking with her two children past the corpses lying at the side of the path. These startling but familiar images not only represent the utter degradation and brutalization of the body (to the extent that the corpses no longer look identifiably human) but also offer a glimpse into the concentrationary universe where death was so common that it went unnoticed by the living. In many of the other photographs, we only see masses of dead bodies surrounded by a few of the members of the liberating armies. These photographs thus bear testimony to the difficulty of distinguishing the living from the dead, the survivors from the murdered, within the space of the camp. The traumatic impact of dehumanizing violence is visualized here, if only belatedly, as one that outlasts the experience of actual suffering. While the survivors are photographed as being "liberated", we recognize that they also represent the ones who are dead, their "presence" within the visual field of the image and in the larger testimonial context of their documentation on a public forum, only a "sign" of the "other" (dead) bodies. The visualization of trauma through the bodies of the victims (both living and dead) thus constitutes them as identifiable "signs" of trauma that can be employed across narratives as immutable mobiles. The representation, transmission and consumption of trauma in Holocaust testimonial narratives thus hinges upon the narrative means by which the victim's suffering body, within the specific context of the concentrationary universe, is re-membered and his/her subjectivity restored through the act of bearing witness.

In this section I have examined how the framing of the individual's personal pain and

suffering within the cultural knowledge and memory of historical, collective trauma is enabled and perpetuated by the circulation of such identifiable narrative themes and devices – the immutable mobiles of trauma. In the following section, I discuss how these narratives render individual instances of trauma available for interpretation and response as variants or allotropes of one another, and thereby make for a reading of these texts as constituents of a larger, composite genre of the atrocity narrative.

Holocaust and Allotropy

In this section, I discuss how second generation Holocaust memoirs, films, documentaries and websites employ thematic and formal tropes that render the suffering of the individual victim identifiable through and within a larger, public understanding of such accounts as belonging to the rubric of the atrocity narrative. Victim narratives of this kind, Nayar suggests, constitute an "allotropic genre", which are "variants of the same theme" and are "located on a continuum [...] even though they possess different cultural features" (152). These narratives, Nayar argues, can be read in conjunction with one another in spite of their cultural specificities, since they enable the recognition of each individual case of atrocity as an instance of the violation of human rights. Each of these accounts of trauma exists relationally along a textual continuum and thereby constitutes an allotropic genre (Nayar 152). I demonstrate the allotropic nature of such narratives by examining the construction of the victim's trauma through notions of the body and of personal and familial identity within the context of extreme, unfathomable suffering.

The Body as the Site of Trauma

As I have discussed in the preceding section, the centrality of the body as the site of atrocity and trauma is recognized in Holocaust narratives by means of certain representational strategies that highlight the brutalization of the individual victim and the consequent

reduction of his/her identity to mere physical subsistence; yet, the materiality of the body is often foregrounded in these texts to emphasize the fundamental *human* identity of the dehumanized subject of genocidal violence. The suffering body of the individual victim, insofar as a combination of visual and verbal signs can reconstruct or suggest the experience of deprivation and torture, functions as a trace of traumatic experiences that cannot be measured only in physical terms as well as a metonymic reminder/remainder of those millions of other embodied lives that are irrevocably lost. The recurrence of the suffering body across texts belonging to different genres and media leads to the construction of a popular, readily identifiable "image" of the Holocaust victim in the collective imagination of a witnessing community – an image that is always already removed from the actual historical event which is the source of trauma but can nevertheless be employed repeatedly, with slight variations, as a "sign" across texts to enable the audience's empathetic identification of/with the subject it seeks to represent. These variations constitute the body of the victim, so far as it can be used in a narrative as an index of inhuman, incalculable suffering, as a means of "locating" the experience of genocidal violence within a unique, individual human subject while simultaneously recognizing that experience as being representative of a larger, collective, historical trauma. The centrality of the victim's body in the field of Holocaust representation thus arises from its employment as a reiterable "sign" across texts; at the same time, the recurrent use of such a sign marks these texts out as dealing with essentially the same subject matter though they might employ different representational methods.

The racialization and brutalization of the body of the "Jew" was carried out by the Nazis at the level of both discourse and action. The projection of the Jewish people as vermin by the popular German media in the 1930s created a discursive atmosphere where the logical, "Final" solution to the "Jewish problem" was the extermination of the entire race. The Jewish

people were thus already dehumanized in the collective imagination of the Nazis even before they began the actual work of killing them en massé. This discursive homogenization of an entire group of people across common markers of difference such as age, gender, class and nationality effected a near total effacement of any signs of individual uniqueness that a Jewish person could possibly lay claim to. It is this effacement of the unique yet common human identity of the Jewish victims that authors of second generation Holocaust narratives seek to represent as well as counteract. One of the chief ways in which they do this is by focusing on *the body of the victim as a site of dehumanizing atrocities while simultaneously also visualizing that body as a physical reminder to the audiences of their own shared, human vulnerability to violence*.

The representation of the victim's body poses a particular challenge to second generation authors because they are experientially removed from the historical context in which the body was subjected to violence. Some, like Spiegelman, turn to visual metaphors instead of attempting a realistic portrayal of the human agents who whose story he narrates through his graphic memoir. The visual strategy of representing the Jews as mice and the Nazis as cats not only circumvents the problem of maintaining verisimilitude so far as the physical attributes of these "characters" is concerned; at the same time, it also enables the author to exercise an economy of expression that is not only essential to the medium of the comic book in which he narrates the story but is also a clever appropriation of the Nazi discourse likening the Jews to vermin. Spiegelman's animalization of the human form mimics Hitler's famous words ("The Jews are undoubtedly a race, but they are not human", quoted at the beginning of *Maus*) but ironically enables him to represent his father's traumatic experiences during the Holocaust with the objectivity and empathy necessary for the narrative to be truthful without being realistic in the literary sense of the term. Visualizing his own

father as well as all his Jewish friends and relatives (including himself) as mice gives Spiegelman (and his readers) a way of following the incidents in Vladek's life in terms of the conventions of reading/viewing a comic strip (where a protagonist is at the centre of a series of events narrated in some sequence) without turning the narrative comedic.

As readers, we recognize the fact that though the narrative traces the experiences of a single individual during the Holocaust, it represents – through the visual homogenization of all Jews as mice persecuted by the Nazi cats – the collective trauma of an entire ethnic group. In fact, Vladek's body is, in a sense, rendered *iconic* through the visual simplification essential to the form of the comic book: he is not merely represented as a mouse, but as a cartoon-ish mouse figure with identifiably unique human attributes[11]. In terms of his physical attributes, Vladek is representative of all Jews in the narrative – he is only one of the innumerable mice who are imprisoned and persecuted by the Nazi cats and the physical deprivations he goes through at Auschwitz are experienced by everybody around him. Yet, Spiegelman is careful to remind his readers that Vladek is an actual human being whose experience of trauma, like anybody else's, is essentially embodied and therefore, is similar to other victims' but also singular. Thus, Vladek's body, in all its particular materiality, is rendered iconic through its visualization as a representative mouse-figure on the pages of the books. The material existence of this body is figured, again visually, at various points in the narrative. Towards the very beginning of the first book, we get to see the number tattooed on

[11] Not only do the mouse figures in the books have a distinctly humanoid form, with only their faces bearing a diagrammatic rather than realistic resemblance to the features of rodents, their thoughts and actions are also unambiguously human. In fact, Vladek is set off from the rest of the mice characters by something else – his unique voice, faithfully transcribed by his son in his peculiar Yiddish-inflected English. Though Spiegelman maintains a distinction between the language used during the actual act of narration and the events of the past being narrated – using his father's odd syntax to represent the present and standard English to represent the past – Vladek's Yiddish-English often breaches this divide and functions at several points in the narrative as a voice-over to the events he is recounting. These moments of "disembodiment" of the voice from the speaker (when we hear rather than see him) suggest the impossibility of containing trauma within strict limits of space and time; simultaneously, this distinct voice, insofar as it frames the narration of the events being described, implies the physical existence, in the "present" moment of narration, of a human agent who speaks from personal experience of past events.

Vladek's arm in one of the panels (Spiegelman 14). This unmistakable sign, itself a cultural icon that marks out the body on which it is inscribed as that of a concentration camp survivor, is a visual reminder of the fact that the body represented here is one that has been subjected to genocidal violence. Notwithstanding his rodent-like facial features, Vladek's body is, as this panel clearly suggests, the physical, human site of traumatic experience. In dramatic contrast to the dehumanizing scarring of his body, Vladek recalls, in the facing page, how people used to remark that he looked like Rudolf Valentino – the cinematic comparison represented in a panel depicting Vladek on his exercise cycle with an enormous film poster in the background (Spiegelman 17). The inclusion of Vladek's casual reference to his own youthful good looks, described in specific relation to a real-life celebrity, reminds us again of the materiality of his body, of the fact that though the characters on the page are very schematic sketches of anthropomorphized mice, they refer back to real human beings. It is also significant that Vladek's physical appearance is visualized here, so soon after we have glimpsed the tell-tale mark of his victimization at Auschwitz, in glamorous, almost exotic terms that are far removed from the brutal reality of his experiences at the concentration camp. Yet, we realize that it is the same person who embodies the ordinary, pleasant experience of being complimented for his looks and the extraordinary, horrifying experience of being marked out for murder. It is this co-existence of the humdrum, normal order of existence with the exceptional brutality of life at Auschwitz, figured here in and through the body of the victim/survivor, that constitutes the narrative representation of trauma.

The embodied nature of trauma is again emphasized towards the end of the narrative, when Spiegelman introduces a photograph of Vladek in concentration camp uniform taken (voluntarily) after the liberation in a studio. Here, Vladek's body, captured through the camera, stands in deliberate contrast to the visual code employed in the rest of the book and

serves as a stark reminder of the fact that the mouse imagery is only a device used to narrativize the traumatic experiences of a real human being. It is also significant that in this photograph Vladek's body does not bear any visible markers of the trauma he has suffered at the concentration camp, with the exception of the iconic striped uniform he wears. His identity as an Auschwitz survivor is figured *prosthetically* in the clothes that he wears; he becomes identifiable as a victim by offering his body, post-Holocaust, for visualization in a way that can only mimic the real suffering it has endured. This belated performance of being a Holocaust victim/survivor is made possible not only because Vladek willingly submits himself to embodying an experience whose traumatic impact cannot be contained within the strict historical parameters of the events that caused it, but also because Spiegelman decides to include this instance of embodiment within the larger frame of his narrative as an overt sign of the fact that it is, in fact, "a survivor's tale".

This strategy of employing photographic images alongside diagrammatic representation of Holocaust victims is employed more consistently by Martin Lemelman in *Mendel's Daughter*. The narrative is interspersed with pictures from his family album, reminding the reader that the "story" they are bearing witness to is that of real human beings. At one point, Gusta Lemelman, the author's mother and the main narrator, names all the members of her family who were killed during the Holocaust; the author includes three family photographs alongside his own sketch of these deceased relatives (Lemelman 121). These photographs, quite evidently dating to the pre-Holocaust period, capture the physical presence of these people within the "normal" context of their existence as part of a family, where their existence was under no (visible) threat. Yet, given the information of their murder by the Nazis (which appears on the same page), these photographs assume testimonial significance as material proof of the existence of human beings who are now, at the moment

of narration, permanently lost. Thus, their bodies, visible here within the frame of the photographs as healthy and unviolated, are simultaneously framed within the narrative context of the story of a Jewish family during the Holocaust and thus transformed into visual "traces" of the trauma that they were to be subsequently subjected to. The "normal" context of the family photographs is rendered traumatic by their framing within the horrifying context of their brutal murder during the Holocaust. Similarly, at another point in her story, Gusta names several of her classmates and friends who were killed during the Holocaust and Lemelman appends photographs of unidentified young women from his mother's album:

> I have many friends in Germakivka. On Shabbos we went shpatzirin, for walks. We have beautiful streets. People are having respect for us. In Poland was beautiful in the time when I grow up. Was antisemitism, too. The friend I go walking with were Etel and Lyncha. Everybody, together, went shpatzirin. But my best friend was Etel. I have another friend Chaya. She, they kill her. I got another one, Nechma. They kill her. And another one, Salya. They kill her. They kill my friends. We was in the same school, the same grade. (46)

As I have discussed in the third Chapter with reference to the strategy of employing pre-War photographs alongside a post-Holocaust narrative of trauma, the juxtaposition of the details of a normal order of existence – where friends go out for walks and attend school together – with the plainly and repeatedly stated fact of murder, of a past that was beautiful and safe with an impending future that was to bring death and destruction for the Jewish people, is the hallmark of traumatic memory, one that is given a visible physical form here by means of the photographs accompanying the words. The fact that these photographs, framed by Gusta's memories of their subjects, are all that remain of these victims of the Holocaust, accords them testimonial value: though the people in the photographs are not individually identified, they

are all *identifiable* as victims of genocidal violence. The photographic representation of their bodies stands as material proof of their lives even as it lends credibility and poignancy to the narrative as one that is about catastrophic events in the lives of real human beings.

Even when the representation of trauma relies strictly on the imaginative visualization of the events of the Holocaust instead of documentary evidence such as photographs, the body of the victim remains a major thematic concern as vulnerability to physical pain is perhaps the lowest common denominator that helps readers/viewers find a point of entry into a (narrativized) experience that is otherwise alien to them. For instance, though Lanzmann eschews the use of any archival footage in *Shoah*, he focuses in large parts throughout the documentary on the survivors' physical experiences of being ghettoized, transported in cattle carts and being imprisoned in the concentration camps. The bodily sensations of cold, hunger, thirst, exhaustion and pain are recurrently recollected and emphasized by the interviewees without any visual aid except their own physical presence on the screen. The survivor's body, no longer subject to the physical hardships s/he is describing, is the only available visual referent to the traumatic experiences being narrativized. The body, so far as it is captured through the camera and framed within the larger narrative context of the documentary and video testimonial formats, stands as material proof of experiences whose impact was more than physical and which affected many more (human) bodies than can be represented on screen. The physical "presence" of the victims essentially puts a human face to the suffering of millions of others whose names and bodies are permanently absent. Similarly, in *Yossel*, *Auschwitz* and *Maus*, the main characters are given distinct faces but are often seen as part of a large, indistinguishable crowd of similar-looking prisoners at the concentration camp. This strategy of visual focalization goes hand in hand with the "plot" in each of these texts, as the narrative follows the events in the life of a single, identifiable individual, whose physical

presence embodies, metonymically, the traumatic experiences of millions of other victims on the fringes or off the frame of the page/screen. Thus, the victim's body, in its capacity to stand as a material site of pain and suffering as well as a metonymic "sign" of trauma that goes beyond the physical and the individual, is recurrently visualized across Holocaust narratives and functions as one of the major thematic tropes that constitute them as an allotropic genre.

Trauma and Self-identity

Another theme that is repeatedly explored across Holocaust narratives is the fragmentation of individual identity and the consequent sense of self-alienation that victims experience under conditions of extreme trauma. Thus, for instance, when the rabbi in *Yossel* describes the living conditions in the barracks at Auschwitz, he does so with almost mathematical precision:

> We were marched to our barracks, one of a number within the barbed wire encampment. More were being built. Each building was approximately 30 meters long by 8 meters wide. Sloped roof, 7 meters high. Darkened windows. Inside were four tiers of beds with a walk-space that divided them into two rows. No heat. No water. A bucket for a toilet.
>
> [....]
>
> The bunks were held up by thick beams that separated the spaces from floor to roof. There was hardly enough space for a man's body between bunks. 500 souls were assigned to each building. No place to move. No place to breathe. (42)

This cataloguing of the architectural features of the barracks only suggests the physical hardships inmates of the camp had to endure and altogether avoids any reference to the psychological impact these deprivations must have had on them. The description here is

accompanied by a sketch of the prisoners huddled together in the barracks, with skeletal faces peeping out of their striped uniform. As well known as this "image" of the camp inmates might be, the representation of the trauma suffered by them under such extreme conditions is significant for the indirect way in which the victims' bodies are figured in both verbal and visual terms. By offering to the reader only estimates of the physical surroundings inside the barracks, the description here invites him/her to imagine the trauma caused to the human subjects who were imprisoned there. In addition, the accompanying visual has a minimalistic quality that makes it difficult to identify the individual inmates as human (their faces looking more like skulls) and thus points to the dehumanizing effect on them of such living conditions. Subsequently, the rabbi describes how the inmates were made to carry heavy rocks up and down a hill all day long for no evident purpose other than to kill them with exhaustion (44). In the visual accompanying this description, the victims look like automatons crawling up a hill, a long line of scrawny arms and legs crushed under the weight of their own unproductive labour. The bodies of the prisoners are thus visualized as being rendered *less than human* by the highly oppressive surroundings of the camp; yet, it is these "images" of extreme physical deprivation that convey to the reader the trauma of being subjected to such torture in their capacity to imaginatively recreate the world of the concentration camp.

The extreme dehumanization of the camp prisoner is exemplified in the figure of the sonderkommando, those Jewish men who were especially "selected" to cremate the bodies of the ones who were gassed. The form of "special" labour that the sonderkommando were forced to perform is seen to not only set them off from their fellow prisoners but also alienate them from their own selves to a degree that they can no longer fathom their own experiences. Thus, the rabbi in *Yossel* describes how as part of the *sonderkommando* at Auschwitz he and a

few of his friends were housed in separate barracks, were given food and cigarettes, blankets and proper shoes instead of wooden clogs (54). Though these privileges could very well mean the difference between life and death under the conditions of severe physical deprivation at the camp, the "work" that thus "sustains" them ironically has a dehumanizing effect that is perhaps the logical culmination of the horrors of the concentration camp. Thus, the rabbi goes on to describe the psychological effect such labour had on him over the course of a few weeks:

> Nothing seemed real. My mind became numbed. I walked as if in a dream. A dream from which I could not awaken (60).
>
> [...]
>
> How many bodies did I carry to be incinerated? How many children? How many had I prodded into the furnace? I lost count. And how was it that I continued to live while so many others died? (62)
>
> [...]
>
> I felt that my own body no longer belonged to me. Skin and flesh and bones were no longer mine. They belonged to someone else. I inhabited this body now, but, only for awhile. Only until I, too, was fed into the crematorium (63)
>
> [...]
>
> In the days and weeks that passed my eyes were open but I saw nothing. I did not look to the right or to the left. Only straight ahead. I forced my vision to blur so what I saw through a haze of my own making. (64)

What is described here is a sense of alienation from one's own actions and experiences, a dissociation from one's own physical surroundings caused by trauma. The labour involved in these actions, unlike those "normal" ones performed by most other inmates of the camp, is

not physically debilitating, yet it has a crippling effect on the consciousness of the individual who performs it. The disintegration of one's sense of "self", symptomized here by the rabbi's inability to fully register his own participation in the events unfolding around him, is an instance of the near total dehumanization of the Holocaust victim caused by massive trauma.

In a similar instance in *Auschwitz*, when Kazik, a *sonderkommando*, discovers that his daughter has somehow survived inside a gas chamber, his capo's immediate response to the situation is to treat this "miracle" as a "problem" (46). Kazik's daughter's survival is an exception to the horrific sentence of death that every person who enters the gas chamber bears: it defies the "normal" logic of the working of the camp, where Jews must be mechanically and systematically killed. Thus, the capo, no longer able to respond normally to a situation where life somehow trumps death, struggles to find a "solution" that does not compromise the order of existence at the camp. Subsequently, Kazik's fellow *sonderkommando* asks him to set fire to the corpses they dump into a pit, as it will be "good" to keep them warm (50). This unnamed victim of the Holocaust represents the internalization of the laws of the camp caused by repeated performance of a form of dehumanizing labour that renders him numb to the horrors of his own actions.

In fact, the process of the isolation and brutalization of victims is often represented in Holocaust narratives as beginning with the implementation of the draconian anti-Jewish laws by the Nazi government during the years leading up to the War. The seizing of private Jewish property, the ban on the entry of Jews in particular public spaces like parks and restaurants, the closing down of Jewish commercial establishments, the edict that all Jews should wear an arm-band bearing the insignia of the Star of David are referred to repeatedly in Holocaust narratives as signs of the policy of brutal extermination that the Nazis were to follow subsequently. The dehumanization of the Jewish people begins, as these narratives suggest,

much before they are ghettoized or transported to concentration camps. Even before they are subjected to physical deprivation and torture, the victims are systematically robbed of their varied identities and homogenized simply as one group in terms of their ethnicity. The material loci of their identities – their personal belongings, houses, shops – are all taken away as part of the genocidal plan of the Nazis. Thus, for instance, in *We Are On Our Own*, the child protagonist deals with the trauma of losing a loved one for the first time when her pet dog is taken away by the Nazis even as her mother deals with the loss of her house and belongings and forges a false identity in order to avoid being sent to a concentration camp. In fact, she herself destroys all family photographs, letters and other documents that could reveal her Jewish identity (Katin 21-22). The destruction of familial history figures prominently in most of these narratives as the victim's identity and sense of belonging is marked, first and foremost, by the "home" territory of the family. *The fragmentation of the family strikes a blow at the (presumed) fundamental unit of an individual's identity and isolates him/her psychologically even as it groups him/her together with other similarly isolated victims*.

In fact, the sense of isolation caused by the trauma of losing one's family can be so great that it overpowers the human instinct for survival. Thus, when Anja comes to know of the death of her grandparents, parents, sister, niece and most crucially, her only child, Richieu, she loses all motivation to live (Spiegelman 124). The breakdown of the structure of the family is, in fact, so traumatic in its impact that it renders most victims incapable of forming any sense of community even within the enclosed space of the ghetto or the camp, where they are forced into physical proximity. In spite of the fact that they were being decimated as a group, the Jewish victims almost always failed to exercise any significant degree of collective agency. Thus, several interviewees in *Shoah*, some of whom were

members of the Jewish committee at the Warsaw Ghetto, recollect repeatedly their absolute inability to perform any act of resistance even in the face of certain knowledge that the "liquidation" of the inmates was merely a euphemism for mass murder. Similarly, in *Auschwitz* the leader of the Czech family camp pays no heed to the warnings of another kapo, Rudolf, and refuses to believe that his people will meet the same fate as the rest of the Jews in the camp (22-23). This apparent abdication of human agency, of the will to live, is indeed an aspect of the traumatic impact of Nazi atrocities on Jews that renders them not only physically vulnerable but psychologically defenseless against the inexorable forces of genocide. The process of dehumanization of the Jews is thus charted in Holocaust narratives not only in terms of their physical brutalization but also of their psychological alienation from a sense of self and of community. The fracturing of the victim's identity, as an individual and as a part of a family and a community, surfaces as a central theme in the representation of trauma across Holocaust narratives. The degradation of the body and the fragmentation of self-identity recur across these texts as themes that represent the traumatic effects of the Holocaust.

In addition, it is the impossibility of returning to a fully re-integrated family structure even after the Holocaust that is foregrounded in many of these texts as a significant effect of trauma. This implies that the trauma of the Holocaust is not containable within the specific spatial and temporal limits that define the historical events that caused it. Thus, second generation survivor narratives focus particularly on the transgenerational nature of historical trauma and represent the Holocaust as a subject of not just personal memory but of familial inheritance. Thus, for instance, in *Maus*, Artie is shown as being forever trapped in a losing battle with his elder brother Richieu who died during the Holocaust. His relationship with his father is always strained by the burden of the latter's traumatic experiences at Auschwitz,

which constantly overshadow the mundane experiences of his own ordinary life in New York. Thus, at the very outset, even before the main narrative begins, Vladek is shown to dismiss the young Artie's tiff with his friends by subjecting the notion of friendship itself to scrutiny: "If you could lock them together in a room with no food for a week... then you could see what it is, friends!" (6). Vladek's inability to respond to his child's momentary grief without referring to his own traumatic past is symptomatic of the relation between the two and anticipates, in the form of this visual prologue, the narrative's concern with the transgenerational nature of Holocaust trauma. Vladek is forever playing the role of the victim, unable to give up the extreme frugality that helped him survive at Auschwitz, even decades after the Holocaust is over. For example, he grudges Artie an extra match to light a cigarette after he has made coffee on the stove (180) and even manages to return a half-used packet of cereal to the grocery store by informing the owner that he is an Auschwitz survivor (250). In fact, one of the major causes of tension between him and his second wife, Mala (herself an Auschwitz survivor), is his miserliness. Thus, Vladek, perpetually anxious about saving every scrap of material resource that would have been invaluable at the camp but which does not make any significant difference in the post-Holocaust world of his New York home, is unable to establish normal familial relations. This inability of the victim to return to a "normal" order of existence, exemplified even more tragically in *Maus* by Anja's suicide years after the War, suggests that the trauma caused by the Holocaust is continual in nature and is therefore disruptive in its lingering presence in the families of survivors. In an instance similar to the Spiegelman family in *Maus*, Kazik and Cessia in *Auschwitz* are not able to reconcile themselves to their daughter's death at the concentration camp years after the Holocaust. In fact, even as they face death in Bosnia in 1993 (when the narration takes place), they recount their individual experiences of surviving in the camp, re-creating a two-part account of

horrific events whose memory still haunts them. As Kazik observes, the silence they have maintained for years on their traumatic past has only sustained the illusion of normalcy after the Holocaust: "Since our return we have only been half living [...]. We have become the living dead" (6). Similarly, in *We Are On Our Own*, Katin and her mother are unable to fully rest in the safety of institutions like the family or religion after what they have gone through during the Holocaust (6, 84). The traumatic past they share, albeit differently in terms of how much of that traumatic experience each remembers, deeply influences how they perceive their present surroundings and informs how Katin decides to bring up her own son (101, 103). The memory of the Holocaust is thus represented in these texts as colouring familial relations and being passed on by the first generation of survivors to their children as a traumatic legacy.

Individual Memory and Sublime Trauma

In fact, what these narratives offer the reader are subjective accounts of the traumatic experience of living through the Holocaust. The "stories" these survivors narrate are always similar but never quite identical, for each of them speaks of an experience that is essentially unique to the individual and limited by his/her personal memory. Thus, though Vladek's experience of living through the prolonged, near starvation conditions at Auschwitz may be different, in essential physical terms, from Katin's experience of being repeatedly exploited sexually by a Nazi officer, both speak of trauma that arises from the brutalization of the victim's body. Yet, in spite of their individual thematic and formal variations, these narratives articulate the trauma caused by a historical event that is sublime in terms of both the sheer number of people it affected and the very nature of the atrocities committed upon them.

It is this unfathomable nature and magnitude of the Holocaust that is most commonly represented by the individual victim's (and sometimes even the perpetrator's) implication

within the space of the concentration camp. Though the camp is limited spatially in terms of its physical location and structurally in terms of its detailed, meticulous organization, it is also a domain of existence that defies comprehension in any familiar human terms and is, therefore, sublime in its traumatic import. Thus, several of the interviewees in *Shoah* remark on the vastness of the camp, to the repetitious, meaningless nature of their work, to the sense of disorientation (both in terms of space and time) that they experienced while they were imprisoned there. The camp represents a space where death is the rule and life an improbable exception: not surprisingly, many of the survivors cannot come to terms with the fact that they ultimately managed to escape death while so many others around them did not. Even when the narrative presents the perspective of the perpetrator, as in the famous scene in *Schindler's List* when Amon Goeth looks through his rifle and shoots down prisoners, it is the arbitrariness of his actions that emphasizes the fact that there cannot be any logical explanation to survival in Auschwitz. Later in the film, when Goeth carries on a one-sided conversation with Helen, speaking on behalf of both himself and her and attempting a sophisticated defense of his own sexual attraction for her, he ultimately resorts to physical violence as he cannot sustain a dialogue in which the co-respondents have already been cast in the roles of master and slave, murderer and the murdered. Similarly, in another sequence, even after he pardons a young boy for not being able to remove bloodstains from his bathtub, Goeth changes his mind for no apparent reason and shoots him dead as he is walking away. The victim's total lack of agency in influencing or even predicting his/her own fate makes him/her subjugated to the order of the camp – one that s/he can only participate in but never control to any significant degree.

Thus, even when Vladek describes throughout *Maus* his persistent efforts to keep himself and Anja alive at Auschwitz, he recognizes (as does the reader) that his actions were

never sufficient cause for his survival. The concentrationary universe of Auschwitz defies representation except in terms of the inmates' inability to resist or comprehend the laws of its working. Any individual account of life at the camp is, therefore, essentially limited by the victim's provisional understanding of its rules; yet, at the same time, in terms of what the victim's traumatic experience of the horrors of the camp can suggest about its nature, such narratives are important for the testimonial function they perform. In fact, the repeated allusion to the physical horrors of the camp – acute shortage of food and water, unhygienic conditions of living, back-breaking labour, harsh weather, rampant disease – all serve as indices that map a space whose murderous machinery affected more than just the bodies of its victims. Thus, in *Shoah*, Lanzmann tours many of the physical sites where such atrocities were committed (including the camp) not to uncover material evidence of the past but to emphasize the non-containable, ever-present nature of the trauma resulting from those events. Though Auschwitz is no longer the actual, physical site of a concentration camp, it locates and symbolizes, through its recurrent reconstruction through memory across Holocaust narratives, the trauma suffered by those who were once part of it. In fact, as Oren Baruch Stier observes, the very name "Auschwitz" has become, though repeated use within the discursive framework of Holocaust representation, an icon – "a verbal image that partakes of the mystery of the whole, stands for it, represents it, and even presents it for memorial consumption" (45). Every individual survivor account marks, reiteratively, the inhumanity at the core of the experience of being at a concentration camp, though none can claim to offer a comprehensive picture of the same. Thus, the concentration camp signifies a space of sublime horror that must however be represented through the identifiably limited human experience(s) of it.

In contrast to the sublimity of the experience of being subjected to the ultimate horrors

of the Holocaust, the representation of the "normal", identifiably human order of things, preceding and following the Holocaust, also plays a significant role in the construction of the narrative of trauma. Locating the human subject within the fundamental unit of individual and social identity – the family – is, as I have discussed above, one of the chief ways in which trauma is configured in Holocaust narratives. The breakdown of this (supposed) fundamental unit/category of human identity is often represented on memorial websites through the display of family albums. For instance, on the Yad Vashem photo archive there are several collections of pre-War photographs that feature members of a family spending time together in utterly humdrum and domestic surroundings. One of the albums, consisting of photographs of the Horowitz family from Lodz, features siblings laughing together and parents standing by their children (http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/103224-container.html). Another album consists of photographs of Polish Jews from Vilna engaged in various games and sports (http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/12279-container.html). In each of these instances, the ordinary activities of spending time with family and friends are visualized within the historical context of the horrific events that were to soon unfold around these people. These "scenes" of togetherness, of the sheer normality of parents, children and friends engaged in leisurely activities, are foreshadowed by the knowledge of the impending disruption the audience brings to the viewing of these photographs. It is the absence of any visible threat to the integrity of the familial structures framed within these images that communicates to the audience the tragedy of the experiences that their subjects were about to experience. The affective import of employing such images to remember the past arises from our present knowledge that the Holocaust represents an irreparable breach between what is seen in the photographs and what we, as viewers, anticipate. Thus, by putting up these photographs as historical evidence and framing them

within a testimonial, memorial context, the website represents the breakdown of the family structure as an aspect of representing trauma. In this, the website adopts a proleptic narrative strategy similar to Lemelman's use of pre-War family photographs to accompany his mother's testimony.

If pre-War photographs function as narrative signs that represent the trauma of being separated from one's family, they are also employed on memorial websites as a means of identifying victims as being part of a filial structure. Thus, both *Yad Vashem* and the *Holocaust Survivors and Remembrance Project* dedicate pages to the recovery of the names of victims and survivors through the use of unidentified photographs. While such a strategy makes for the participation of second and third generation survivors and witnesses in the act of recognizing the individual, human loss suffered by each Holocaust victim, it also suggests the impossibility of ever restoring fragmented families back to a wholly integrated, un-traumatized state of being. While the naming of the victims of the Holocaust is a significant step towards recognizing them as individuals rather than numbers, it is also a grim reminder to the survivors (both direct descendants of victims and non-Jewish members of the audience) that the reconstruction of a *human* bond between those who experienced trauma first-hand and those who did not must be an act of affiliation rather than filiation.

These texts thus function allotropically in generating specific thematic codes for representing and recognizing trauma and in recursively creating a cultural imagination of the Holocaust as an event that defies comprehensive narrative representation but one that nevertheless necessitates comprehension in human terms. In the next section, I will discuss how these texts are formally structured in ways that allow for them to be read relationally as allotropes within a larger genre of the trauma narrative.

Allotropic Forms

In the previous section, I have discussed some of the recurrent thematic features that constitute Holocaust narratives as allotropic texts. It is important to remember that in addition to sharing a set of identifiable, reiterable tropes that mark them out as belonging to a common genre – that of the atrocity narrative – these texts also belong to a wide range of literary and media forms across which the trauma of the Holocaust is represented, all of which co-exist in the public space and call upon their audiences to bring to them a set of interpretive strategies. While these interpretive strategies may differ from text to text depending on the generic and media form in which it is available, they are not unique or exclusive to any one particular form. In fact, *what these narratives of trauma generate as well as demand is a set of reading practices that frame all of these texts, over and above their distinct formal features, as belonging to an allotropic genre*. In other words, what makes these texts allotropic is not only the recurrence of certain themes of trauma – the brutalization of the body, self-alienation and fragmentation of the victim's identity, the conflation of the mundane with the horrific in the victim's memory – but also the transmission and reception of such experiences by audiences who "read" such narratives *in relation to* one another and as part of a composite genre. Thus, though each of these texts bears characteristics of genres like auto/biography, *bildungsroman*, testimonio, diary, memoir, it is possible and even necessary to read them alongside one another as parts of a narrative continuum[12]. The allotropy of Holocaust narratives is, therefore, not only a feature of their thematic concerns but also a function of the cultural conditions in which audiences bear witness to such representations of atrocity and trauma.

[12] Holocaust denialists present a special case here: since they question the very fact that the genocide of the European Jews happened at all, their version of "history" categorically denies any legitimacy to the testimonies of thousands of Jewish victims and even German bystanders and former Nazis. While their arguments range from the lack of sufficient evidence to Zionist conspiracy theories, what Holocaust denialists fundamentally challenge is the value of memory as a valid means of corroborating historical events. Thus, they implicitly deny the very potential of testimonial narratives of victims to constitute a genre of writing and reading history.

Thus, an examination of the narrative conventions of multiple and often intersecting generic and media forms that structure the "reading" of these texts is crucial to understanding how historical trauma necessitates as well as exceeds allotropic representation.

Second generation Holocaust narratives best exemplify not only how a multiplicity of generic protocols informs the ways in which trauma gets represented across media but also how such representations are then interpreted by an informed audience as allotropes of the same larger text. For instance, the narrative in Spiegelman's *Maus* is built upon a tension that arises from the juxtaposition of Vladek's account of his experiences at Auschwitz and Artie's account of how he records his father's "tale" – a tension that alerts the reader to the necessity of reading the text as both a Holocaust survivor's testimony and an artist's autobiography or, more precisely, a künstlerroman. Throughout the narrative, Vladek and Artie jostle for space to tell their own "stories" as the trauma of the Holocaust spills over from the former's lived experience to the latter's inheritance of its memory. The nature of the comic book format that Spiegelman chooses allows for this narrative tension to be played out, quite overtly, across the panels that function as the units or "signs" that constitute the text. Thus, while Spiegelman takes care to reproduce Vladek's distinct voice wherever he narrates his experiences of the Holocaust, he also combines this with Artie's sketches to illustrate the events being recollected. In fact, by including both the eyewitness survivor (Vladek) and the interviewer (Artie) frequently within the visual frame of the same panel, Spiegelman constructs what Candida Rifkind calls a "collaborative auto/biography" that has close correspondences with the Latin American form of the *testimonio* (401). In retaining Vladek's unique syntax instead of translating his words into standard English, Spiegelman foregrounds the orality of the testimonial process – Artie records his father's testimony on audio tape[13] – and thereby creates

[13] The audio tapes of Spiegelman's interviews with his father were released as a CD-ROM by Voyager Company in 1994 and later again as a bonus feature with *MetaMaus* in 2011. While *Maus* does not depend on the audio tapes for its effectiveness as a text, the publicization of a private "voice", enabled and mediated

a semblance of immediacy wherein the primary witness's "voice" reaches out to the audience; at the same time, by employing the unusual visual code of comic book animal characters – one that Vladek has little knowledge of or interest in[14] – he also emphasizes the crucial role of the interviewer in constructing the narrative.

What is significant is the fact that while the equation between Vladek and Artie does bear some resemblance to that between an eyewitness and an interviewer in a testimonio, the process of the interview itself is made available to the audience as both are "seen" and "heard", within the visual frame of the panels of the comic book, to engage in a dialogic performance. The comic book format makes it possible for readers to witness the act of testimony itself as one in which both the primary and the secondary witness co-respond and thereby draws their attention to the telling of the story as much as to the tale itself. As Rifkind observes, "Just as the collaborative process between informant and cartoonist opens up visual possibilities unavailable in prose auto/biographies, it also accommodates self-reflexive representations of the process of making the comic" (401-02). This self-reflexivity, achieved in an important way through the author's conscious and deliberate externalization of his own "self" as one of the characters on the pages of the book, makes the reader aware of the constant negotiation that takes place between Vladek and Artie through their conversations. Through Artie, his narrative "self" in the book, Spiegelman not only performs the role of recording, editing and illustrating his father's "tale" but also weaves in the story of his own lifelong struggle to come to terms with his identity as a second generation Holocaust survivor. Thus, while Vladek's account of survival at Auschwitz is central to the recognition of the text as a victim narrative, Artie's story of how he comes to shape his father's

by technology, locates the experience of historical trauma within an identifiable body even as it disseminates that voice to a dispersed audience.

[14] Typically, in a testimonio, the victim/eyewitness is either illiterate or socially marginalized and therefore lacks knowledge of the cultural codes and means to directly report his/her experience of violation and trauma. The interviewer performs the role of a cultural intermediary in such cases and brings individual or local accounts of atrocity and trauma to the public space of mainstream, official domains of law and history.

experiences into a text is equally crucial to an understanding of the nature of traumatic memory itself as being transgenerational.

In fact, while the experience of living through the Holocaust creates an unbridgeable chasm between Vladek and Artie, it is the memory of that traumatic experience which, paradoxically, functions as a patrimony, a familial inheritance, as it were, that brings them together as participants in a narrative contract. In fact, almost every time Vladek digresses from the narration of his story of surviving in Auschwitz to complain about his failing health or his marital problems with Mala, Artie redirects the conversation to the Holocaust. The possibility of any meaningful communication between the two thus seems to be restricted to and by the traumatic memory of the Holocaust that they collaboratively reconstruct. In a sense, both Vladek and Artie are able to define their identity only in terms of their relation to the trauma (whether directly experienced or inherited) of the Holocaust: their individual stories, as victim and second generation survivor-author, bear a somewhat derivative relationship to the traumatic memory they share. For Vladek, all his present troubles are simply the after-effects of his traumatic past – one that he quite unabashedly invokes to defend all his eccentricities even at the cost of straining his relationship with his wife and son. On the other hand, for Artie his parents' traumatic memory of living through the Holocaust always overshadows his own experiences and achievements, so much so that he experiences survivor guilt at the very moment when the first volume of *Maus* receives critical and commercial success. In a telling instance of visual symbolism, Artie, faced with a barrage of questions and offers from the media, is shown to shrink in size till he becomes a wailing baby, unable to confront the repercussions of his own public performance of authoring the text and craving to return to the unattainable safety of his mother's care (202). This inability to bear the responsibility of representing an experience that is not his own, resulting in Artie's

infantilization at the very moment of his coming-of-age as an artist, signifies the impossibility of containing the trauma of the Holocaust to a single generation or a particular victim narrative.

The "stories" of Vladek and Artie, their auto/biographies, emerge as narrative strands that draw upon the trauma of the Holocaust and together constitute the testimonial text. They call upon the audience to "read" these biographical accounts as corresponding (though never identical) narratives deriving from and referring back to the same event – the Holocaust – but never quite exhausting its traumatic potential. The recognition by the reader of the text's alignment of the features of auto/biography, testimonio and *bildungsroman* comes necessarily with an acknowledgement of the inadequacy of any of these formal aspects to function independently of the others. In other words, the various generic features that the text combines, never seamlessly but always in correspondence with one another, are allotropic in nature – each represents the trauma of the Holocaust as being transgenerational and its memory being subject to/of (essentially partial) narrative reconstruction. In bearing witness to this process of narrative reconstruction, by "reading" traumatic memory in terms of the generic conventions of different kinds of life narratives, the audiences invest such Holocaust narratives with meanings that resonate across individual texts and constitute them as parts of a larger allotropic genre.

This becomes especially evident in the case of certain fictional narratives about the Holocaust, which lay claim to the truthfulness of the experience of trauma rather than historical fidelity to past events that are anyway available to us through narrative reconstruction. Thus, for instance, at the very outset of *Yossel*, the author asks his audience to read the narrative as one that "could have happened". Once this narrative contract has been established between the author and the reader, the story of the titular character becomes

available for interpretation as though it were an account of events that were witnessed by a "real" person and not a fictional character. While the events described in the book are based on historical facts relating to the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, it is Yossel's responses to the horrors unfolding around him that give the audience an identifiable human locus to locate the trauma of the Holocaust. As a life narrative, Yossel's story has formal elements of genres like the diary and the eyewitness report. The sketches that constitute the narrative are those that Yossel draws while he is hiding underground from the Nazi soldiers at the Warsaw Ghetto after the uprising. Like Spiegelman, Kubert foregrounds the role of the author-illustrator in the creation of the text by including him as one of the main characters in the narrative. Throughout the book, Yossel, Kubert's fictional doppelgänger, is shown periodically in the act of drawing the pictures that make up the narrative. This kind of self-reflexivity suggests to the audience the importance of remembering that the horror and the trauma of the events being described in the story are available to them only in and as words and pictures on paper (like the pages of the book itself) that capture the experience in fragments. Also, these illustrations have a semblance of immediacy, as they are purportedly drawn as the events leading to, and following, the uprising unfold around Yossel, who records them as sketches even as they impact his own life profoundly.

In fact, as Brad Prager observes, Kubert departs from the standard practice of comic book artists in using rough pencil sketches instead of inked illustrations: these sketches, unlike the perfectly printed words that caption the drawings, "signify immediate rather than prosthetic Holocaust experience, memory rather than postmemory" (118). This sets up a fruitful contradiction between word and image on the page: while the pencil sketches purportedly suggest a raw, unmediated quality about the experiences they represent, the sophisticated artifice of the accompanying text (it does not, after all, look like handwriting)

points to the belated, constructed nature of the narrative. Thus, the narrative is structured both as an eyewitness report and a fictional diary, reminding the reader that the text is only a representation of the traumatic experience of the Holocaust and not the experience itself. Since Yossel performs the roles of both participant and scribe vis-a-vis the experiences he narrates, he combines, so to speak, both Kubert's backward projection into a past that he can only imagine and his conscious urge as an artist to testify to what he sees. Yossel bears witness to the scenes of horror around him not only in the sense of being physically present there but also in the sense of recording them. In fact, from the very outset, Yossel's need to save his scraps of paper and his drawing pencils is shown to be as pressing as his struggle for survival. Thus, at the beginning of the story, even as Yossel and his friends seek refuge in a cellar, "like cockroaches in the darkness scrambling away from a crushing boot", he still feels relieved to find that he has not lost "prized possessions" – his paper and pencil (2). As the narrative progresses, Yossel's sketches accrue significance not only in terms of their documentary value but also as part of his own response to the traumatic experiences he undergoes. Thus, his drawings evolve from his initial, adolescent involvement with the world of comic book superheroes as a fictional refuge from the world outside to a more mature and realistic depiction of the loss, pain and suffering he witnesses all around.

While this evolution marks Yossel's coming-of-age as an artist and thereby codes the narrative as a künstlerroman, it also draws attention to the fact that the suffering individual's "story" of his own traumatic experience is available to the audience only as a subjective response to, and not as a perfectly organized factual account of, the events that cause it. Thus, even as readers recognize and interpret Yossel's "story" as an eyewitness account presented in the form of a visual diary, they are also, at the same time, participants in a testimonial performance that requires them to identify the victim narrative as representing the very nature

of trauma as being fragmented, incomplete and always already reconstructed through memory. In fact, though *Yossel* is not structured as an interview like *Maus* is, it is characterized by shifts in narrative time, between Yossel's memories of his pre-War days and his current troubles at the ghetto. This is suggestive of the non-linear, recursive nature of memory that informs the organization of events in the narrative. Moreover, the entire "story" is narrated in the past tense, though the visuals seem to suggest, somewhat impossibly, that the events are being put down as sketches almost concurrently with their occurrence. This is especially evident in the section of the narrative where the rabbi who has escaped from a death camp recounts his experiences to Yossel and his friends. This enmeshing of temporal frames is a vital clue to the reader of the role memory plays in shaping the narrative in spite of the apparent immediacy with which the events comprising the plot are reported.

It is useful to note here that the opening words of the narrative, "I am going to die here", may be interpreted both as Yossel's anxious prediction of a fate he knows he cannot escape and a framing statement that is meant to suggest that the ensuing narrative is one that must be read belatedly in a memorial context. In this sense, the narrative invites the audience to respond to the text as one that captures the memory of a victim who is survived by his "story" about a particular momentous event in his life – as a memoir, as it were – even though they already know that the central character is only a fictional construct. The history of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising is vivified, so to speak, when the fictional narrative is read as though it represents the traumatic memory of a real individual through multiple, overlapping generic forms. Thus, in this case the representation of the Holocaust in fiction mimics the structure of individual traumatic memory and invokes protocols of reading various kinds of life narratives. The allotropy of the text is, therefore, as much a function of the author's conscious structuring of the narrative as a memory text as it is an effect of the informed reader's

willingness to bear witness to it as a victim's testimony.

In fact, the second generation author's own reading practices determine, to a great extent, the nature of the memory text, even though s/he may not have any familial or even racial connection with the trauma of the Holocaust. The transgenerational nature of trauma implies, as Marianne Hirsch suggests, that the Holocaust can be memorialized not only by the descendants of victims/survivors but also by those who are culturally less proximate to the actual historical event (221). Pascal Croci's *Auschwitz* is an instance of such an act of memorialization, since the author's response to the Holocaust is based neither on a familial history of trauma (like Spiegelman) nor on racial affinity (like Kubert). Thus, Croci's reading of the Holocaust is determined by the facts he is able to gather by interviewing members of a group called "Friends of Auschwitz" (76). What Croci presents are not these interviews themselves but the "story" of a Jewish couple at Auschwitz constructed by combining details from the testimonies of several eyewitnesses (78). Thus, though his central characters are fictional, the traumatic experiences that constitute their "story" are based on real events. This narrative focalization of the real experience of many survivors onto a couple of fictional characters is indicative of the author's reading of historical trauma (as distinct from the factual details about the events that constitute the "history" of the Holocaust) as one that can be accessed and represented not as a whole but only in parts as the stories of identifiably human victims. The narrative thus combines the historical specificity and cultural legitimacy of testimony with the representative potential of fiction. The audience reads the narrative as one that captures, if only partially, the horror and the trauma of being imprisoned at Auschwitz but at the same time also recognizes that the stories that constitute it are the result of reconstruction through memory.

In fact, the narrative is structured as a set of two complementary stories, hitherto

untold, exchanged between Kazik and Cessia as they stare death in the face on charges of treason in former Yugoslavia in 1993[15]. As Kazik and Cessia bear witness to each other's stories, working through their memories of being transported to Auschwitz and losing their daughter there, it becomes evident what they testify to are not only slightly varying accounts of the same set of events but also a kind of traumatic experience that is prototypical within the domain of Holocaust representation. Thus, even though the survival of their daughter inside the gas chamber is nothing short of miraculous, her death from typhoid just a few days before the liberation of the camps is an all too familiar story – one recalls here the most famous child victim of the Holocaust, Anne Frank – in Holocaust narratives. Similarly, the reference to the "family" camp of the Theresienstadt Czechs, who were allowed to stay together with their families and even retain their personal belongings for months before being led to the gas chambers like everybody else at Auschwitz, only serves to emphasize the fact that exceptions like these only prove that extreme suffering, disease and death were the absolute, inevitable rule in the concentration camp. The narrative of trauma in *Auschwitz* is, therefore, one that Kazik and Cessia are shown to collaboratively construct as co-respondents, but it is also one that corresponds with, and in fact derives from, testimonial accounts of camp survivors. Thus, while the audiences read the text as a testimonial narrative that can be ascribed to fictional characters who function as mouthpieces for real victims/survivors, they also recognize that the experience thus represented is prototypical in what it suggests about the trauma of being subjected to the rules of the concentrationary

[15] It is significant that the dialogue between Kazik and Cessia is set, spatially and temporally, in a country whose recent history has been marked by ethnic violence and political turmoil. Their precarious "present" position as traitors on the run frames, as it were, the narrative of trauma and loss that they create from their memories of Auschwitz, and thereby sets up a narrative correspondence between Germany during the Third Reich and Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. The audience is thus prompted to "read" the Holocaust not as a historical anomaly but within a larger, global context of genocidal violence, atrocity and trauma. The text invokes as well as generates a form of cultural literacy that enables the audience to bear witness to different instances of violation of human rights across historical borders simultaneously and in relation to one another and thus makes for an allotropic reading of historical trauma.

universe of Auschwitz. In bearing witness to the trauma that such "fictional" accounts of the Holocaust represent, the audience necessarily identifies the prototypical aspects of victim narratives and reads them in conjunction – as allotropes – with non-fictional, testimonial and historical accounts of the same. In other words, though the narrative emerges from the organization of memory that is subjective, fragmentary and personal, it becomes, in its public avatar as a text, one of the many interrelated representational forms through which the historical trauma of the Holocaust is made the subject of collective imagination and witnessing.

While authors of trauma narratives recognize the centrality of personal memory, even in cases where the victimized subject is a fictional construct or a composite character created out of the experiences of many individuals, they also ensure that the text itself is coded in generic terms that help the audience identify and respond to it as a public document in the domain of Holocaust representation. For instance, both Lemelman's *Mendel's Daughter* and Katin's *We Are On Our Own* are highly personalized accounts of Holocaust survivors' traumatic experiences recorded and illustrated as graphic memoirs by their children. Both the texts are similar to *Maus* in that they are the result of the narrativization and publication of a private interview between the eyewitness survivor and the second generation author. Yet, both narrate experiences that represent, unlike Vladek's story, not collective suffering at a concentration camp but the isolated trauma of Jews who managed to avoid incarceration but who went through the pain of losing their families and homes all the same. These are narratives of escape from death but not from trauma. Katin's mother recounts how she was sexually abused for months by a Nazi officer who knew she was a Jew on the run, while Lemelman's mother narrates how brutally she was hit by a German soldier for helping her brother escape (78) and subsequently how she and her brothers had to hide in a pit in the

woods with very little food or water for two years during the war (147).

While instances of such physical deprivations resonate with the extreme conditions of survival in the camps – the reader is reminded of the rabbi's account of rapes at Auschwitz in *Yossel* (53) and the famous scene in *Schindler's List* in which Amon Goeth beats up Helen – it is the traumatic recall of the memory of these experiences that is the generic feature of these second generation Holocaust narratives. Thus, for Miriam Katin, it is the absence of personal memory about experiences that she had undergone as a child with her mother that drives her to revisit her traumatic past; for Martin Lemelman, his mother's testimony gives voice to not only her own trauma but that of several of her family members and friends who did not survive the Holocaust. For both Katin and Lemelman, their parents' memory of trauma is not only a familial inheritance that they lay claim to as part of their own identity, but it is also a means of representing that traumatic experience as part of a larger, momentous historical event. In deciding to illustrate and publish these personal interviews as testimonial documents, both Katin and Lemelman make a conscious move from the private space of the family to the public position of authorship. This implies that while both the narratives, like *Maus*, are auto/biographical in their intent and chart a lineage for the author to a traumatic familial past, they are also directed towards an audience who are expected to read these accounts not merely as the publicization of personal memory but as testimonial texts that necessitate a collective understanding of the "history" of the Holocaust as comprising not just statistical records of the mass displacement and murder of Jews but the stories of isolated victims too.

It is the importance of bearing witness to individual victims' traumatic "stories" – fragmented as they are by the very structure of memory but always referring back to the same set of historical events – to the project of "humanizing" the history of the Holocaust that

works like Lanzmann's *Shoah* emphasize. Lanzmann includes a wide range of testimonies within the documentary framework of the film, creating a veritable polyphony of voices that offer myriad perspectives on the Holocaust. Thus, the audience gets to see and hear camp survivors, leaders of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, Nazi doctors, bystanders from villages near the camps, and even a couple of former SS officers (one of whom has been secretly videotaped). Though the traumatic import of the testimonies of Jewish survivors is obviously different from the accounts of bystanders and perpetrators, it is Lanzmann's conscious refusal to organize the interviews in any discernible thematic or chronological order that catches the attention of the audience as one lacking the traditional plot structure of the beginning, the middle and the end. Thus, Lanzmann resists offering a linear narrative of the history of the Holocaust and instead confronts the audience with a set of testimonies that signify only the fragmentary, subjective nature of memory and the impossibility of arriving at any greater, coherent "truth" about the Holocaust.

The numerous testimonies that constitute a good part of the narrative are often recursive in nature, with the camera returning over and over again to many of the interviewees and the "stories" themselves sounding increasingly familiar with only slight variations in detail. In a sense, the testimonies seem to refer to one another and do not result in the emergence of any larger, more comprehensive "story" of the Holocaust. While Lanzmann does not use any archival footage throughout the nine-and-a-half-hour long film, he does visit the actual physical sites where the torture and killing of Jews had taken place[16]. The fact that the film is firmly rooted in the "present" (that is, the moment of its production)

[16] Dominick LaCapra (2007) argues that Lanzmann's rejection of archival material cannot be absolute, since "the scenes of the present state of camp and ghetto sites will themselves be haunted by afterimages of films and photographs that almost everyone of a certain age has seen, including Lanzmann's witnesses" (201). Assuming an informed audience, LaCapra implicitly points here to the fact that any "reading" of the Holocaust must be allotropic, since the framing of individual memory within a (public) testimonial context essentially sets each such instance of narrativization in dialogue with others. What becomes the subject of bearing testimony, both for the author-interviewer and the reader, then, is the process of traumatic recall rather than the event that caused the trauma itself.

serves to indicate that the "past" events of the Holocaust can be witnessed only through the remembrance and re-enactment of their traumatic aftermath. In a sense, the images present on screen – those of the faces of the witnesses and of the physical sites of the Holocaust – function only as memorial "signifiers" of the permanently absent "signified" of the event or source of trauma itself[17]. The absence of any visible trace or material proof of horrific events of the past on screen, coupled with the overwhelming mass of words that testify to the trauma caused to human subjects by those events, prods the audience to "read" these multiple stories as speaking *to* one another rather than *of* any larger objective "truth" independent of memory. In other words, these testimonies function relationally as cross-referential or allotropic variants of an experience that has no corresponding tangible referent outside of the narrative. This is not to suggest that the Holocaust is not "real", only that it can be responded to only through the narrativization of memories that are by their very nature partial, inconclusive and yet typical. It is the aesthetic and moral necessity to bear witness to these different "types" of memories as allotropic testimonies but not as additive components of a grand narrative that *Shoah* foregrounds.

In contrast to *Shoah*, *Schindler's List* follows a more linear narrative trajectory, focusing on the events in the life of its eponymous protagonist. While the film adheres to the formal structure of a biopic, it also accommodates the voices of a few other significant characters, namely, Amon Goeth, Itzhak Stern and Helen. These characters represent different perspectives on the events unfolding around them, as they each experience the Holocaust

[17] It is the psychological truth of a victim's testimony that is more important than the question of its historical accuracy. In this context, Dori Laub refers to the case where some historians took issue with an Auschwitz survivor's claim that she had witnessed four of the chimneys of the crematorium being blown up by a few rebellious Jews. The historians pointed out that only one of the chimneys was blown up and therefore discounted the victim's testimony on grounds of historical inaccuracy. Laub argues against this kind of reading of testimony and suggests that one needs to realize that in spite of the vagaries of her memory, what this particular eyewitness was testifying to was not the number of chimneys but the fact of Jewish rebellion within the framework of the concentration camp where such an act was practically unimaginable (60). Thus, it is the psychological truth of the witnesses' memory of trauma, with all its gaps and silences, that is the real subject of testimony.

differently. Helen's articulation of her acute sense of pain, confusion and despair at being the object of Goeth's sexual attraction as well as racist hatred and violence derives its testimonial worth from her unique position within the concentration camp. As the housekeeper of the camp commandant, she is at once immune to the risk of starvation and death that the other Jewish prisoners face every day, yet simultaneously she is at a greater risk of being targeted by Goeth because of her proximity to him. Thus, when she speaks to a sympathetic Schindler, her analysis of her situation is one that comes from a position of being able to observe her perpetrator from close quarters but also from her awareness of the impossibility of predicting his behaviour with any degree of certainty. Essentially, Helen's exchange with Schindler is a victim's articulation of her suffering – an eyewitness testimony, as it were, literally from the site of trauma. While the inclusion of this exchange in the narrative of the film serves to demonstrate the protagonist's humanity in treating the victim with compassion and dignity, it also adds to the story's testimonial import. Similarly, by creating enough narrative space for the complexity of Amon Goeth's character to come across, the film offers a relatively rare insight into the impact of violence on the psyche of the perpetrator himself. Goeth's struggle with his attraction for his Jewish maid manifests itself through more cruelty towards her rather than mercy, suggesting that the infliction of violence on another human being finds its defence and sustenance only in greater violence. On the other hand, Schindler's friendship with his Jewish manager, Stern, reveals the possibility of affiliation in spite of racial differences. In fact, at the end of the film, when Stern and the other Jews gift Schindler a ring engraved with a Talmudic quotation, they not only express their gratitude towards him for saving their lives but also perform a public declaration of this affiliatory bond between the two. Each of these narrative strands thus explores the nature of traumatic experience and the impact of violence on human relations and offers the audience different perspectives on the

same set of events. The film is the biography of a heroic man, but it is also simultaneously the life stories of these other characters whose paths cross his during the Holocaust. The testimonial worth of the narrative emerges from the audience's interpretation of these multiple "stories" within the larger context of bearing witness to the same set of events that constitute the Holocaust.

The multiplicity of voices and genres involved in the act of bearing testimony to the Holocaust is perhaps most evident on memorial websites, as they employ a wide range of textual, electronic and digital material to build a narrative of trauma. Thus, for instance, the *Holocaust Survivors and Remembrance Project* has a section dedicated to paintings made by concentration camp inmates, in which the victims give artistic expression to their own sufferings. These rare documents have the obvious testimonial value of being articulations of trauma from within the ultimate site of Nazi atrocities. Moreover, they are significant because they display a degree of self-reflexivity that allows the audience to "read" them as narratives of trauma alongside the testimonies of other victims. One of the paintings, for example, by the German-Jewish painter, Felix Nussbaum is a self-portrait in which he draws himself holding an photo-identity card with "Jew" written on it in three languages (http://isurvived.org/TOC-VI.html#VI-4A). The painting suggests the artist's sense of entrapment – it is a painting within a painting, in which he is as much held by the identity card as much as he holds it. The additional information offered to the viewer about the killing of the artist in a gas chamber in 1944 adds to the testimonial import of the painting, as it stands as a visual reminder of the permanent absence of the subject it portrays. Other paintings by concentration camp survivors appear on the same page, depicting scenes of horror that are all too familiar to an informed audience – the cruel medical experiments being conducted on the camp inmates, Jews being gassed and forced into death marches. These are

followed by lists of Holocaust poems, including not only famous instances such as Paul Celan's work but also poems by relatively unknown writers. For instance, the website hyperlinks a collection of poems by nameless poets referred to as the Ghetto Poets, stating the significance of the preservation of such work: "The Nazis were destroying [...] Jewish literary treasures and their creators. Here and there a poem survived, unsigned, or provided with an initial. The names of the poets perished with them" (http://isurvived.org/Frameset4References/-GhettoPoetry.html). Though these testimonies appear in the form of poetry and painting, they refer to the same kind of traumatic experience as encountered in any number of victim narratives from the concentration camps, several of which the website links on the same page. Such testimonial material is thus intended to be interpreted and responded to as allotropic texts rather than as independent narratives.

Similarly, *Yad Vashem* offers its visitors a virtual tour of some of the paintings and sculptures exhibited at its museum, with biographical information and specific details of the survivors' traumatic experience appended to each of the paintings reproduced on the site (http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/virtues_of_memory/virtual_tour.asp). For instance, the write-up accompanying a painting entitled "Muselmann" by a Czech survivor, Yohuda Bacon, states that the painter was deported with his family to Auschwitz in 1944, where he worked as a "*Rollwagenkommando,* charged with transferring possessions, corpses and ashes". This information establishes a direct experiential link between the painting and the survivor's experience of trauma, asserting its worth as a testimonial document. Additionally, we are informed that immediately after liberation, Bacon started drawing sketches of the crematoria, which were subsequently submitted as evidence in the Eichmann trial (http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/virtues_of_memory/bacon.asp). The credibility of the survivor's personal testimony, in this case expressed in the form of visual

art, is thus established by means of locating its significance within the larger history of the Holocaust. The public documentation of such evidence, by means of digital technology, effects a popularization of such narratives, as they can be read concurrently with other audio and video testimonies that the website lists together under the section "Multimedia". By putting up testimonial texts in various generic and media formats within a shared, hyperlinked virtual space, the website guides the audience towards reading such narratives in conjunction with one another as allotropes.

Thus, each of these texts, irrespective of whether it is located at the fictional or the documentary end of the representational spectrum, deals with the role of personal memory of trauma in the creation of a collective imagination about, and language for, representing the Holocaust. All of these narratives function relationally and recursively as variant expressions or "signs" of that language of trauma, and thereby serve as allotropes for the representation of the Holocaust within a larger social context of bearing witness to instances of the violation of human rights. In the next chapter, I shall discuss how such reading practices result in, as well as call for, the emergence of a narrative society – a community of readers who define and defend their own identity as an ethical witnessing public through their response to the suffering of others.

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Chapter 7

Narrative Society

In the previous chapter, I have discussed how the representation of trauma in Holocaust narratives generates and perpetuates a grammar of victimage that victims use to encode their experience of suffering. The allotropic themes and forms that trauma assumes serve not only as narrative devices for representing suffering that is deeply personal and rooted in individual experience, but also to prepare the ground for the reception of such representations by culturally informed and competent "readers". Such narratives of trauma are sentimental rather than statistical (Nayar 145), since they offer a reconstruction of an individual victim's memory of suffering rather than a factually accurate or comprehensive account of events: the victim recollects and reconstructs the historically rooted and embodied experience of suffering by reclaiming his/her identity and agency as a human subject who feels pain; on the other hand, the reader (the second generation survivor-author being the first reader) responds to such accounts of trauma with the "appropriate" feeling of empathy and thereby becomes a participant in a testimonial act that is predicated on his/her ability to *feel* for an "other". The experiential chasm between the victim/primary witness of trauma and the reader/secondary witness is thus bridged by means of this shared currency of feeling or *affect* generated by such narratives in the process of bringing the two together in the testimonial context. This testimonial process can therefore be thought of as requiring as well as enabling an acculturation of both the victim and the witness into a system of narrative signification wherein the affective representation of and response to trauma is central to defining their identities in relation to the Holocaust.

The affective narrative of trauma is, in fact, also dialogic and performative, in that it enables the victim to re-enact his/her pain in the (sometimes implied) presence of a

sympathetic audience within a testimonial context/culture. This staging of affect – by the victim as memory of past experience of pain and by the audience as a feeling of empathy with that experience – makes it possible for them to collaboratively perform their roles as victim and (secondary) witness within and through the narrative. Thus, affect becomes a means for both the victim and the witness of defining their subject positions vis-a-vis historical trauma and thereby generating a shared knowledge of the Holocaust. "Feeling" is thus an aspect of "knowing" trauma within a testimonial context where the subjects involved are informed by, and identified through, an *ethic of affective witnessing* and are therefore members of a sentimental narrative society. The construction and perpetuation of such a narrative society hinges upon the transformation of personal/individual experience of pain and suffering into public/collective memory of trauma. Such a transformation, effected through the reading of these narratives with "sympathetic imagination", also implies an appropriation of the traumatic memories of individual victims/survivors beyond the specificities of their experiences and into a larger discursive and cultural context of responding to the Holocaust as a paradigmatic case of the violation of human rights. As Nayar observes, "What the sympathetic imagination enables us to do is to recognize particular cases of violations within their own cultural situations/contexts but also to move beyond these cultural specificities to recognize suffering, pain and oppression" (162).

Historically, it was in the wake of the events of the Second World War that instances of human rights violations gained global recognition through the institutionalization of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations in 1948. Notwithstanding the unprecedented scale and the unsurpassed horror of Nazi atrocities against the European Jews, the Holocaust has become, through repeated and sustained representation across media over decades, a universalizable (if not universal) meta-text for the interpretation of, and

responsible action towards, other cases of human rights infringements worldwide. In spite of ardent claims made for the uniqueness of the Holocaust, the Jewish victim has become an archetypal figure[18] of human suffering and the Nazi perpetrator that of violence against mankind, capable of invoking strong sentiments of empathy and condemnation from (secondary) witnesses far removed from the actual historical event and beyond its immediate cultural context. It is this global affective currency of the Holocaust that renders it, in some senses, ageographical and atemporal and enables second generation witnesses, irrespective of their racial or national identity, to experience a cultural familiarity with and affiliation towards the *human* subject of violence and trauma.

In a sense, bearing witness to the Holocaust involves partaking of the cultural memory of the event that has been and continues to be generated and added upon by the publication of individual narratives of trauma and necessitates a sympathetic "reading" of the same as an ethical response to/responsibility towards the violation of human rights. Thus, such acts of secondary witnessing entail (i) the textualization of private grief into a public document (ii) the constitution of a collective, cultural memory of the Holocaust through the accretion of narratives of such private grief (iii) the appropriation of such cultural memory as a marker of the "reading" public. Second generation witnesses of the Holocaust, whether bearing a familial or racial relation to the victims or otherwise, define and declare themselves as members of a community of witnesses by participating in an ethical reading of such narratives of trauma. Therefore, the narrative society thus constituted is predicated upon its members' participation in the testimonial process of creating, preserving and defending a public, cultural memory of the trauma of the Holocaust. In fact, the memorialization of the

[18] The Nazis persecuted not only Jews but also other minority groups such as Romanian gypsies, homosexuals, Jehovah's witnesses and people with mental disabilities during the Holocaust; yet, it is the figure of the Jewish inmate of the concentration camp that has become almost representative of the human suffering and loss caused by the Holocaust. The homogenization of the image of the Holocaust victim is indicative of, and perhaps also essential to, its becoming a popular, readily identifiable and recitable symbol of trauma caused by genocidal violence.

Holocaust effected through the circulation and consumption of traumatic narratives is essential to the creation and conservation of a public – one that defines its public-ness through its performance of bearing witness to historical trauma and thereby contributes to the perpetuation of a collective memory of the Holocaust.

In this chapter, I shall discuss how second generation Holocaust narratives employ affect not only as a humanizing sign of the traumatic experience of the victim but also as a marker of the empathetic response (of the second generation survivor-author and by extension, of the reader) to such accounts. It is through the sharing of this language or code of affect between the primary and the secondary witnesses, I argue, that *the private grief of an individual victim becomes available for narrativization into a public testimonial document and enters the domain of collective cultural memory of the Holocaust*.

The narration of traumatic experience by the primary witness, which is essentially a process of re-membering the past, is characterized by a combination of the factual and the emotive. In fact, the very act of recounting past events in the presence of a sympathetic listener can be traumatic for the victim-survivor and is therefore often marked by an emotionally charged and subjective description of facts. Thus, in *Maus*, Vladek's narrative of his experiences during the Holocaust is punctuated by his frequent hysterics over the most insignificant disruption in his carefully ordered New York house. For instance, quite early in his account, as he describes his experience of cleaning up a stable at a pre-War labour camp, Vladek notices that ash from Artie's cigarette is falling on the floor and screams, "You want it should be like a stable here?" (54). It is a significant moment, for it is symptomatic of the rather permeable divide between Vladek's traumatic past and the present context of his conversation with Artie. The safety and normality of the immediate setting of the interview is shown to be too fragile to withstand even the slightest encounter with Vladek's traumatic

memory. In another significant moment, at the end of the book, Vladek, exhausted both physically and emotionally from narrating his story, calls Artie Richieu by mistake, confusing the name of his living son with that of a dead one. In fact, these are only a couple of the several instances in the narrative where Vladek seems unable to maintain a clear distinction between his traumatic past and his normalized present. This confusion between the past and the present represents the difficulty of containing the trauma of the Holocaust within specific historical limits of space and time and the nature of traumatic memory to affect present experience. In another crucial instance, Vladek admits to destroying Anja's diaries in a moment of severe despair following her suicide (161).

While Vladek's somewhat melodramatic reactions at moments of crisis during the narration of his story represent the affective fallout of a testimonial performance of this kind, Artie's own emotional outburst in this last instance (he calls his father a murderer) reveals that the process of bearing secondary witness is never entirely immune to the affective excess of traumatic memory. Anja's suicide, committed several years after the Holocaust, is proof of the persistent, contaminating presence of traumatic memory, and Vladek's act of burning her diaries is a desperate, doomed attempt on his part to liberate his present from his traumatic past. If both Vladek's and Anja's responses to their traumatic memories are excessive in terms of their consequences, Artie's violent reaction to Vladek's admission is also overwrought with emotion and represents the trans-generational nature of trauma in its potential for affective disruption of a normalized order of existence post-Holocaust.

The narrative, which is always under the strain of the uneasy personal equation that father and son share, comes to an abrupt halt at this moment (in fact, it marks the end of the first volume of *Maus*) as both Vladek and Artie face an emotional crisis, the former unable to rationally defend his act of destruction and the latter failing to accept the impossibility of ever

knowing his mother's side of the story. Yet, the affective responses of both Vladek and Artie at this critical juncture in the narrative define their subject positions vis-a-vis the traumatic memory of the Holocaust. While Vladek's attempt to escape from his past by destroying a textualized reminder of the Holocaust can be understood as a survivor's emotional defence against trauma, Artie's fury at missing the chance of reading his mother's diary is a symptom of the second-generation survivor's frustration at being unable to access his parents' traumatic past. In fact, Artie's anger is directed towards Vladek also because he feels he has been cheated out of his rightful inheritance, since Anja had meant for Artie to read her diary when he grew up. As the son of Holocaust survivors as well as an author seeking to transform his private, familial history of suffering and loss into a public, testimonial document, Artie's claim on his parents' traumatic memories is thwarted at this point. Thus, for the victim/primary witness, traumatic memory becomes too much of a burden to bear in the present, whereas for the second generation survivor-author it becomes the only means of defining one's identity in relation to the past. (Not surprisingly, throughout the narrative, Artie directs Vladek back from his frequent digressions from his narrative into lamentations about the state of his health or his marriage with Mala.) As readers, we recognize and empathize with both Vladek's and Artie's affective reactions to traumatic memory, since it is their subjective, often conflicting struggles with the past that brings them together in a testimonial act and reveals the aftermath of the Holocaust in *human* terms.

In fact, the act of bearing witness is shown to affect Artie just as deeply as it does Vladek, though the actual events of the Holocaust that originally caused the trauma were experienced only by the latter. Thus, in a striking parallel to many of Vladek's own hysterical outbursts, at the beginning of the second volume of *Maus* Artie is shown to descend into a child-like state of helplessness and petulance, unable to confront the implications of his own

participation in and authorship over the process of turning his father's private grief into a public memorial text. The act of remembering the traumatic past is thus shown here to have as much of an affective impact on the secondary witness as it has on the primary victim. Artie's desire to retreat into an infantile state of being – represented in exaggerated visual and verbal terms – echoes Vladek's act of burning Anja's diary, since both seek to avoid confrontation with massive trauma through an excessively emotional reaction. Such individual hyper-emotional reactions are transformed into identifiable affective signs of trauma when they are included in a testimonial text as an integral aspect of memorialization. Affect thus becomes both a visible marker of, and a strategic narrative defense against, the overpowering impact of traumatic recall during a testimonial act. In encoding both Vladek and Artie's closely interwoven "stories" in affective terms, Spiegelman marks out the narrative as one that deals with human loss and suffering over and above the historical co-ordinates of space and time that emplot the events being recounted. As readers, we recognize this affective aspect of traumatic recall, for both the victim and the second generation survivor, and in doing so, also participate in an act of secondary witnessing ourselves that constitutes us as a sympathetic audience. Since it is in and through the process of the narrative (re-)construction of traumatic memory that the private trauma of the individual Holocaust victim becomes available to be publicly testified to and memorialized, affect becomes a crucial means – a common denominator of sorts – for representing and responding to the human essence of pain and suffering that is otherwise embodied and highly personal. Thus, texts like *Maus* enable the public memorialization of trauma by bringing together primary and secondary witnesses as members of a narrative society who share a common currency of affect.

The transformation of personal or familial history of trauma into a public document

plays a crucial role in the memorialization of the Holocaust in texts like *Mendel's Daughter* and *We Are On Our Own* too. At the very outset, Gusta Lemelman, the primary witness in *Mendel's Daughter*, is quoted by her interviewer-son, "Sometimes your memories are not your own" (4). This statement functions throughout the narrative both as an interpretive dictum and an ethical defence for the act of bearing witness that essentially brings the text into being. At various points in her story, Gusta narrates the traumatic experiences of her parents, siblings, relatives and friends, many of whom perished during the Holocaust. She is, in a sense, speaking of her own experiences but also for those who did not survive to give voice to their own traumatic memories. For instance, she gives a second-hand account of how her father was shot by Nazi soldiers in front of his daughter, Yetala (who later reported this incident to Gusta), even as she had to run for her own life (123-24). Yetala herself came to know from a bystander that her father had been lying mortally wounded all day, begging for a little water that no one offered him, before finally succumbing to his injuries (128). Thus, though Gusta did not actually witness the horrifying spectacle of her father being killed, the traumatic impact of the incident, reported to her belatedly, becomes part of her own memory, which she subsequently passes on to her son and through him, to a wider audience of empathetic readers. In this sense, the traumatic memory that Gusta narrates here is deeply personal and yet not entirely her own: it is the subject of narrative transmission from an eyewitness through her and her author-son to a community of readers.

Similarly, Gusta remembers and speaks for several of her immediate family and friends who lost their lives during the Holocaust, even though she was not an eyewitness to each such individual's traumatic experiences. The murder of a Jewish man or the destruction of a Jewish family are hardly exceptional facts in the historical context of the Holocaust; yet, it is the identification of these victims in terms of their familial relations with the primary

witness that humanizes their (reported) experiences and turns them from being mere numbers in the list of the millions who perished during the Holocaust to persons whose loss ought to be mourned and remembered. In publishing Gusta's testimony, Martin Lemelman also brings into the public domain the stories of these individual victims who would otherwise have remained nameless, faceless statistical figures in the history of the Holocaust. The reader's identification of and with these victims' traumatic experiences is also based on "common" human feelings of loss and grief over losing one's loved ones rather than on an experiential familiarity with the exceptional circumstances of violence that caused such feelings. The cultural knowledge about the trauma of the Holocaust thus generated through a reading of such testimonial texts is thus affective rather than empirical. The textualization of private, familial memory into a testimonial document is therefore an ethical act of public commemoration that calls upon readers to respond empathetically to the trauma of the victims *as humans* and leads to the formation of an affective rather than a statistical narrative society.

Like *Maus* and *Mendel's Daughter*, Miriam Katin's *We Are On Our Own* deals with the subject of the trans-generational nature of trauma and enacts the narrative transformation of private grief into public memory. Since Katin uses her mother's testimony to reconstruct events of her own childhood that she herself has no memory of, the resultant narrative not only visualizes the trauma experienced by her mother when she was on the run during the Holocaust but also enables her to inherit her mother's trauma as part of her own personal and familial history. In a sense, Katin participates in a process of memory-creation, since she revisits her own past by means of this testimonial performance. She can define her own position and role vis-a-vis the Holocaust as a second-generation survivor-author only by partaking of the personal memory of her mother and transforming it into a "story" in and

through an act of public documentation. Thus, like *Maus* and *Mendel's Daughter*, the narrative not only becomes an outcome of the familial inheritance of trauma but also a means of creating and preserving a common cultural memory of the Holocaust. In choosing to publish her conversations with her mother in the form of a testimonial text, Katin not only declares herself to be a Holocaust survivor but also includes her readers in the act of bearing witness. Katin's imaginative participation in the "scenes" of the events her mother recounts are a narrative means for both her and her readers to bear witness to trauma that is intensely personal and private. Thus, for instance, when we see, through the eyes of the young Katin, Esther burning all her family photographs and letters to ensure that her true identity remain concealed (21-22), it is the grief of having to destroy one's own familial past that we find deeply moving. Similarly, when Esther has to submit to being sexually exploited by a German officer who suspects her real identity, the pain and humiliation she experiences on being comforted by her daughter's well intentioned assurance of her tormentor's return (43) makes us recognize the tragedy of her situation. Since Katin offers the perspective of a child's naive, uncomprehending reactions to events that are traumatic in their import to her mother, the affective potential of such memories is heightened in their narrative reconstruction. As readers we empathize with the trauma experienced by Esther not in spite of, but because of, her young daughter's oblivious acceptance of the horrifying events unfolding around her as normal. For Katin too, participating in her mother's testimony as a character herself is a means of laying claim, through the process of the narrative reconstruction of memory, to the traumatic past that is also her own. In a sense, Katin experiences the trauma of events she was herself a part of *belatedly*, as an adult trying to construct her own retrospective memory of the Holocaust through a public testimonial performance. Correspondingly, her readers also bear witness to this process of returning to past events and, in doing so, participate in the act of

creating a shared memory of the Holocaust. Since this process of remembering is represented by means of Katin's own "re-vision" of her feelings towards her mother's experiences, the reader is also prompted to empathize with the same and thereby achieve an affective recognition of trauma. The act of secondary witnessing is, therefore, one that depends on, as well as calls, for the emergence of a cultural code or currency of affect shared between the second generation survivor-author and her readers.

In fact, it is this cultural currency of affect that enables even those beyond the experiential realm of trauma to imaginatively participate in remembering the Holocaust. Kubert's *Yossel* represents such an imaginative reconstruction of the trauma of the Holocaust by an "outsider", in that it builds upon an already existing body of cultural memory about the event by means of a fictional rather than a real human locus of affect in the shape of its titular protagonist. As readers, we empathize with the sufferings of Yossel not because we believe he is a real victim of the Holocaust but because his responses to his circumstances (at the Warsaw Ghetto) have the emotional credibility and identifiability of human suffering. The testimonial value of the narrative does not arise from the empirical verifiability of Yossel's experiences but from their affective appeal to common human sentiments of grief and loss. Thus, for instance, when Yossel is taken away by the Nazi officer who spots his artistic talent, we empathize with his parents' terrible fear of losing their son forever. This trauma of helpless fear that his parents suffer is captured both visually and verbally: "I will never forget the look of awful dread on Mama and Papa's faces, as I followed the Nazi officer. What was going to happen to me? Would I ever see them again?" (24). The focus on the actual, physical manifestation of emotion ("awful look of dread") not only marks the acute trauma of the experience but also appeals directly to the reader's very fundamental human instincts for preserving the lives of one's children and resisting permanent separation from one's parents.

Similarly, when Yossel comes to know from the rabbi that his parents and sister had been killed at Auschwitz (80), his inability to shed tears is indicative of the severity of trauma that prevents a natural physical reaction to grief and conveys to the reader the immensity of human loss not through an expression of emotion but by means of withholding it.

Though the extraordinary circumstances of existence at the Ghetto described here are alien to the experience of most readers, it is the common human impulse to preserve and defend the basic unit of survival and sustenance – the family – that comes to be threatened by the traumatic experiences of the inmates depicted here and consequently leads to an affective recognition by the secondary witness of the pain and suffering of these victimized "others". The lack of an outward emotional reaction to circumstances of extreme horror is shown to be symptomatic of massive trauma caused by violence and torture, of which the concentration camp is the exemplary site. Thus, the rabbi describes how he became numb to his own sensory experiences and his immediate physical surroundings when he started working as a sonderkommando at Auschwitz: "Nothing seemed real. I walked as if in a dream.... In the days and weeks that passed my eyes were open but I saw nothing. I did not look to the right or to the left. I forced my vision to blur so what I saw was through a haze of my own making." (60-64). This withdrawal into a mechanistic, dehumanized order of existence – so commonly shown to characterize the actions and behaviour of the archetypal Holocaust victim at the concentration camp – paradoxically draws attention to the intensely human aspect of suffering and prompts the reader towards an affective identification of and with the experience of trauma. The inability to fully register or grieve over loss is a marker of trauma, and it is only in the process of re-membering of that experience through its narrativization that its affective import for both the victim and the secondary witness is realized. Thus, it is necessary for the rabbi to find an audience for his tale of horrors after escaping from

Auschwitz, even though he ultimately takes his own life. Testifying to his own dehumanizing experience of trauma in the presence of sympathetic listeners enables him, to some degree, to communicate to them not only hard facts of a reality they find almost too horrifying to believe but also to affectively share the memory of experiencing it. Similarly, Yossel's story too conveys to the reader the traumatic experience of the Holocaust not empirically but affectively, offering a fictional but nevertheless identifiably human subject as a locus of empathy for, as well as memory of, traumatic experience. It is the affective potential of such testimonial texts for drawing a sympathetic audience to a recognition of the victims of trauma as being essentially human, in spite of their dehumanization under circumstances too far removed from their own experience, that enables them to create a sentimental narrative society of witnesses.

The constitution and preservation of such a witnessing public depends on the participation of culturally informed and ethical readers in testimonial acts, even if the traumatic experiences described in Holocaust narratives may not necessarily be ascribed to a real individual. For instance, in *Auschwitz*, the protagonists, Kazik and Cessia, are fictional characters based on several real victims of the Holocaust. As in *Yossel*, the characters here function as embodiments of human pain and suffering rather than real eyewitnesses offering a factually accurate account of the horrors of the concentration camp. Like the rabbi in *Yossel*, Kazik and Cessia also recount their individual experiences of trauma in the presence of a sympathetic listener (in this case, each to the other) in order to work through their lifelong feelings of grief and despair at losing their daughter[19]. Since this dialogic testimonial

[19] Significantly, the actual act of narration is shown to take place at a time when both Kazik and Cessia face the danger of imprisonment and probably violent death at the hands of Yugoslavian soldiers on charges of treason. The testimonial act here is thus charged with a certain moral urgency ("We've only been half living... Are we going to die like this too?" says Kazik to Cessia (6)), marking the significance of bearing witness in acknowledging and confronting trauma as a condition that persists beyond its immediate experiential context. By finally talking about their traumatic experiences at Auschwitz, Kazik and Cessia approximate towards reclaiming their agency as humans, even as that agency is shown to be under immediate threat of violent dissolution.

performance is narrativized in and through the book, the reader also simultaneously witnesses these victims in the act of testifying. In fact, the traumatic experiences of these fictional characters become part of the readers' collective, cultural consciousness and memory only in the act of reading the narrative. Thus, in responding to the human pain and suffering embodied by these characters, the reader participates in an act of bearing witness and becomes part of a larger public that comes into being through the consumption of such narratives of trauma. The emergence of a common, ethical way of reading such traumatic narratives is made possible only when the reader recognizes the experiences of the characters as representing human suffering in spite of the fact that they are themselves, historically and experientially, far removed from the events of the Holocaust. Thus, at the beginning of the narrative, when Kazik recalls how a woman and a baby were ruthlessly murdered by a Nazi officer when they first arrived at Auschwitz (12), we do not respond to the incident as a mere additive detailing of the horrors of a death camp but as a shocking destruction of human life. The killing of a baby in a mother's arms affects us as being a violation of fundamental norms of human existence not because of, but *in spite of*, the fact that mechanical mass murder was indeed the only rule governing Auschwitz. It is in such instances of the recognition of the traumatized subject (even when that subject is a fictional construct) as being essentially human in nature, in spite of his/her abject dehumanization through persistent and extreme violence and torture, that the reader decodes the narrative in affective terms and gains access into an order of experience otherwise alien to him/her. It is this same sentiment of empathy that we feel when Kazik discovers that his daughter has somehow managed to survive inside a gas chamber and pleads with his capo to let her live (45-46): it is a father's desperate attempt to protect his child's life against the inexorable rule of death at the concentration camp that affects us as the crux of the tragedy of the situation. It is in this exceptional

moment of hope amidst horrific physical surroundings of extreme violence that the essential *human* loss represented by just one of millions of other nameless victims of the Holocaust is recognized by the emotionally responsive and responsible reader. By "reading" the trauma of the victims in terms of its affective import rather than its empirical verifiability, the audience mark themselves out as being part of an ethical witnessing community and define their own public-ness through their common sympathetic response to the human suffering caused by the Holocaust. Since affect functions as a means for the representation of individual, embodied trauma beyond its immediate experiential context and enables a historically removed audience to recognize and respond to it in human terms, it may be said to constitute a common cultural code or an *ethics of reading* the Holocaust and thereby contributes to the formation of a narrative society. The existence of such a narrative society therefore depends on its members' participation in the act of collective witnessing by means of "reading" these narratives of trauma as affective rather than statistical accounts of the Holocaust.

The fact that affect becomes an important means of creating and preserving a cultural knowledge and memory of the Holocaust is borne out by the circulation of certain easily identifiable figures of victim-hood in the public domain. Anne Frank is a case in point. The numerous media avatars in which this celebrity-victim's story has been re-told to a global audience since the first publication of her diary is testimony to her iconicity in the domain of Holocaust representation. The latest of these avatars is the authorized graphic novel based on her story, which presents her life as a visual biography rather than merely illustrated passages from her own diary. What this form of visualization achieves is not any significant addition to what is already popularly known of Anne's life; rather, it re-introduces an already familiar character by literally offering a perspective into her experiences as a young girl growing up in the shadow of the Holocaust. The graphic novel charts Anne's life-story as a linear narrative,

beginning with a description of her parents' family backgrounds and of their lives before her birth, through the aggravating circumstances leading up to the War, their hiding and capture, her death at the concentration camp, to finally the publication of her diary. Thus, in terms of plot, the narrative, with its distinct chapters dealing with each phase of her life and after-life (as arguably the most well known victim of the Holocaust), constructs a history that includes but is not limited to the traumatic experiences of an individual. Rather, it positions Anne's experiences within the history of a family as well as within the larger, public context of her posthumous renown. The narrativization of her experiences in this form thus constitutes the process of the transformation of individual and familial trauma into a collective memory of it. In a sense, Anne's story functions as a cultural point of reference in the public memorialization of the Holocaust. Her story might not have been exceptional in the historical context of the Holocaust, but its repeated circulation in the public domain has turned her into a locus for a global audience's identification of and with the trauma of the Holocaust. In fact, one of the main reasons for Anne's universal appeal is the fact that she died as a child "[l]acking the rights and responsibilities of [adult] citizens" and was therefore more easily able to transcend the cultural and political barriers of race and nationality in public memory (Marcus 102-03). The fact that Anne's story, narrativized here as a movement towards adulthood, is thwarted abruptly by a violent end, makes the reader empathize with her experiences, which she recorded with the usual enthusiasm, hopes, doubts and anxieties of an adolescent but without the knowledge of her own impending death. The universal appeal of Anne Frank arises from the fact that readers respond affectively to the tragedy of the unrealized possibilities of a young girl's life that ended prematurely. The private experiences of an adolescent girl are thus imbued with traumatic import as a result of their narrativization in the form of a memorial text. Thus, in reading her diary in myriad forms, we do not merely

lend a sympathetic ear to the thoughts of a young girl living during the Holocaust but also participate in a collective, public act of bearing witness by investing her life story with a traumatic significance that goes beyond her own experience or knowledge of it. Therefore, an affective response to the story of Anne Frank becomes a means for the reader to share a cultural memory and consciousness of the Holocaust itself and a marker of their own ethical position vis-a-vis its traumatic import.

Another instance of an iconic figure whose story has become a focal point in the popular cultural representation and memorialization of the Holocaust is Oskar Schindler. Unlike the second-generation memoirs we have discussed thus far, *Schindler's List*, Steven Spielberg's hugely popular film based on the eponymous character's experiences during the Holocaust, is not primary a victim narrative; rather, it is the tale of a German industrialist who is not only sympathetic to the plight of the Jews but is actively involved in almost single-handedly rescuing over a thousand of them from the clutches of the Nazis by recruiting them as workers in his factories. The film is primarily a heroic narrative of a man's attempt to save the lives of Jews at great personal risk and expense and easily commands the audience's ethical approbation of the protagonist's actions. It is Schindler's sense of empathy with the Jews that functions both as a moral marker of and a driving character trait behind his *humane* actions in the film. The narrative performance of his humanity, which Schindler shares with those "others" he saves, humanizes both and prompts the audience to a feeling of empathy with the victims of the Holocaust. Thus, in the scene where Helen talks to Schindler about Amon Goeth's unpredictable, lethal cruelty towards the Jewish inmates of the camp, he offers a narrative opportunity to the audience of hearing the voice of the traumatized victim by the very act of listening to her. In a sense, he opens up the possibility of an empathetic identification of the victim as a human subject within the highly restrictive, brutalizing space

of the concentration camp. In the famous scene with the little girl in the red dress, Schindler's perspective offers the audience a point of visual entry into the utter horror of a child walking down a road amidst violence and murder. It is the common human instinct for protecting children from harm that draws Schindler, as well as the audience, in this scene into a recognition of the barbarity of the Nazi's actions and the immensity of the trauma of the Jewish victims. It is this shared feeling of empathy for the pain and loss suffered by the Jews that brings the audience to bear witness to Schindler's story as that of one human being trying to save others. Similarly, when Schindler bids an emotional farewell to his factory workers towards the end of the film, his bitter regret over not being able to save more lives makes the audience recognize the value of each of the lives he did manage to save as well as acknowledge the fact of the immeasurable human loss and trauma caused by the Holocaust. The audience is thus called upon not only to bear witness to the significant human achievement of a man who fought for the lives of others but also to remember those countless others who were killed during the Holocaust. Like the Jews shown at the end of the film, paying homage to Schindler at his grave, the audience constitutes a community of witnesses: one brought together by and in the act of expressing a moral solidarity with and recognition of the *nature* of his contribution to humanity rather than the proportional *extent* of the difference he could make to the decimation of a race as a whole. The audience thus participates in an act of memorializing the Holocaust by responding to the film as a narrative that conveys the trauma of millions through the depiction of one man's struggle to save a few. The ethical imperative to remember the dead is thus enacted by the audience by bearing witness to an individual's heroic *human* achievement in preserving the lives of a few; thereby, the audience demonstrate their moral commitment to the preservation of the memory of the Holocaust and define themselves as being part of a narrative society.

This moral commitment to the preservation of memory has been expressed publicly through an increasingly urgent demand for and attempt towards the archivization of survivor testimonies, especially as the last survivors of the Holocaust pass away. While institutional efforts at memorializing the Holocaust have led to the constitution of museums such as Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and archives such as the Fortunoff library of video testimonies at Yale University, narratives of trauma circulating independently in the public domain also contribute to the formation of a popular, collective consciousness about the Holocaust. Claude Lanzmann's monumental documentary film *Shoah* is a case in point. The film presents a long series of eyewitness accounts of the Holocaust presented in the form of interviews but also interspersed with the filmmaker's visits to the actual physical locations where the killing of the Jews took place. By situating the testimonial process entirely in the present, Lanzmann emphasizes the importance of acknowledging that the Holocaust can only be "known" through traumatic memory, generated through the process of bearing witness to the people or places associated with the event. An ethical response to the historical trauma of the Holocaust must, therefore, be one that calls upon the audience to perceive themselves as members of a community of witnesses brought into being by the testimonial narrative *in the present time* rather than as memory sleuths who can go back in time to revisit the actual experience of trauma. Lanzmann thus focuses on the conditions of bearing witness as being an integral part of the traumatic memory resulting from the process and thereby draws attention to the crucial role the secondary witness, with his own narrative expectations and biases, plays in the formation of a common cultural notion of victim-hood. In this context, Lanzmann's interview with one of the only two survivors from Chelmno, Michael Podchlebnik, offers an interesting counterpoint to the usual, expected mode of emotional expression during the process of remembering traumatic experience. Unlike most of the other

victims, who either bear a sombre expression or often also reach a point of visible emotional agitation during the act of testimonial narration, Podchlebnik smiles calmly throughout his interview. When he is asked the reason for this, he responds, "What do you want [me] to do... cry?". It is the ironic incongruity between the traumatic import of the experiences the victim recounts and the affective mode of his narration of that memory that unsettles the author-interviewer as well as his audience into a recognition of the sheer abnormality of that experience. The persistent presence of trauma in the victim's normalized order of existence post-Holocaust is acted out here in and through the course of the testimonial process. Podchlebnik's reaction makes the audience acutely aware of the fact that they cannot, *ought not to*, presume to indulge in a "vicarious or surrogate victimage" but at the same time also open themselves to "empathetic unsettlement", which is "a desirable affective dimension of inquiry that complements and supplements research and analysis" (LaCapra 722-23). It is also significant that Podchlebnik expresses a reluctance to talk about the past and says he does so because of the interviewer's insistence. In this case, the victim's affective response to and his narrative intent towards the act of bearing witness seems to defy the norms of testimony; yet, the fact that Lanzmann chooses to include this particular interview in his film suggests that the experience of the trauma caused by the Holocaust is so massive and unique that there cannot be any one normative means or form of remembering it. Subsequently, when he is asked about his feelings on unloading the first batch of victims from a gas van, Podchlebnik breaks down and recalls how he asked to be killed when he had to put his wife's corpse into the mass grave. The spectacle of the victim's emotional distress at this point is rendered all the more affective because it contrasts so dramatically with his earlier tone of (apparent) equanimity. What we bear witness to here is the disruptive power of trauma, brought about by the act of the articulation of memory in a seemingly safe, historically distant

physical setting. It is within the testimonial context of the film that such varying outward expressions of affect can be interpreted as signs of deep-seated trauma and become a means of memorializing the Holocaust. Dori Laub observes that the hearer of the testimony is included in the process of the creation of knowledge that constitutes the traumatic event – s/he is "a participant and co-owner of the traumatic event" (57). It is only through the exercise of sympathetic imagination that the audience can bear witness to the multiplicity of voices that constitute a major part of the narrative. In fact, Lanzmann also includes interviews of bystanders and even clandestine video recordings of conversations with a couple of Nazi officers in the film, offering a diversity of individual "stories" that become the subject of the audience's collective witnessing. Each of these individual experiences, in their narrative reconstruction, constitutes but never quite exhausts the representation of the traumatic impact of the Holocaust; in participating in the act of bearing secondary witness to these recorded interviews, the audience also identify the generic similarities as well as the particular differences in these individual accounts and thereby acquire as well as demonstrate a degree of cultural literacy in "reading" these testimonial "texts". It is the emergence and performance of a common cultural code or ethic of witnessing trauma through this public process of remembrance that enables the audience to perceive themselves as being members of a narrative society.

The public nature of bearing witness to distant trauma becomes most evident in the case of memorial websites, as they offer a greater scope for audience participation than narratives in print and electronic forms by virtue of the more flexible and open structure of the medium in which they exist. In fact, while the ethics of bearing witness is asserted in the texts discussed above in terms of how the audiences respond to the suffering of others, in the case of memorial websites, the act of contributing to the testimonial "text" itself is configured

as being ethical in nature. Thus, for instance, *Yad Vashem* invites its visitors to nominate people for being included in its "Righteous Among The Nations" database. The criteria for such nominations are listed out by the website and are worth quoting in full:

> Signed and notarized testimonies by survivor and other witnesses of the rescue attempt. Testimonies should include all known personal data on rescuers and survivors, a detailed account of the rescue attempt (how the contact with the rescuerwas made; the form of rescue; places and dates of rescue; what arrangements or agreements were made between rescuers and survivors; how did the danger to the rescuers manifest itself; any other details that may shed light on the nature of rescue. Testimonies can be written in Hebrew or any European language.
> (http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/how_to_apply.asp)

It is significant to note here that the website offers the audience a narrative structure for describing the rescue of Jewish victims for the nominee to be considered eligible to be included in the list. The website further states that any post-war diaries, testimonies or personal correspondence between the rescuer and the rescued should also be appended to such narrative accounts. Though the parameters for determining the testimonial import and validity are laid out by the website, the inclusion of the audience as active participants in the creation of such narratives and in the larger project of commemorating the humanity and bravery of the "righteous" constitutes the act of bearing (public) witness as being ethical. The website also seeks the audience's help in identifying the people in some of the photographs of those who have been rescued. The act of creating a testimony is thus based upon a process of authentication by multiple witnesses, each of whom is thus involved as a member of a community participating in an essentially ethical, narrative enterprise. By declaring that such

accounts will be "preserved in Yad Vashem's archives for perpetuity and serve the purposes of research, education and commemoration", the website enacts a transformation of private memory into public history – a process that involves members of the audience as collectors, collaborators and witnesses in the act of building a cultural knowledge base about the Holocaust. In another instance, the website invites friends and families of the six million Jews killed during the Holocaust to register as volunteers for "The Shoah Victims Names Recovery Project" and offers them a list of instructions regarding training and forming networks with other volunteers (http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/remembrance/names/volunteers.asp). Thus, the act of bearing secondary witness, if only through the recovery of the names of the millions of Jews who died in the Holocaust, is geared towards the building of a community – one whose participant members not only contribute to the creation of an archive but also involve more people in the process. The creation, identification and preservation of such a morally conscious and proactive community of witnesses thus emerges as both the object and the consequence of these narrative acts of memorialization.

Similarly, the *Holocaust Survivors and Remembrance Project* lists out numerous archives and databases of Holocaust victims, survivors and rescuers in the chapter titled "Descendants of the Holocaust" (http://isurvived.org/TOC-VIII.html#VIII-3), effectively tracing a family lineage between those who experienced the trauma of the event first-hand and a more widely dispersed community of Jews who are willing to identify themselves in terms of their racial inheritance. It also includes testimonial accounts and creative works in art and poetry by second generation survivors, charting a virtual ground for the creation of a trans-generational memory of trauma within a public domain. These narratives serve as a means of expressing a cultural affiliation to inherited trauma and thus constitute public performances of identity. In fact, it is not only the direct descendants of Holocaust

victims/survivors but also a larger community of non-Jewish audiences that such websites address by way of preserving and perpetuating a collective, cultural memory of the Holocaust. Thus, the *Holocaust Survivors and Remembrance Project* offers a link to the latest updates on the memorialization of the Holocaust, ranging from news items on the unearthing of new evidence of atrocities committed on the Jews during the War – like the finding of mass graves in Romania (http://isurvived.org/InTheNews/JewishMassGrave-Romania.html) to how the United Nations Holocaust Outreach Programme and the Anne Frank Centre, USA, recently organized an Anne Frank campaign on Twitter with a view to "help young people make a meaningful connection to the Holocaust through the words of a courageous young girl". The campaign, we are informed, is part of the organization's annual programme of developing "new information materials in partnership with civil society to raise awareness of the Holocaust and its underlying causes, to help prevent genocide" (http://isurvived.org/InTheNews/AnneFrank-twitter_campaign.html). Evidently, such measures are directed not only towards remembering the past but also to emphasize the significance of the Holocaust for the present and the future. The website makes the Holocaust "current" by adding to the already existing corpus of freely available public knowledge about the event as well as by pointing its audience to directions they can follow themselves to participate in its memorialization. The technological ease of transmitting such "knowledge" across the World Wide Web makes for a (potentially) more dynamic, popular culture of bearing witness. For instance, the Yad Vashem photo archive offers its viewers the option of "sharing" the images on Facebook and posting them on Google Buzz. The digitization of such archival material thus enables the individual member of the audience to not just be a passive onlooker (as s/he would be in a museum environment) but an active agent in the public documentation of historical evidence. This form of secondary witnessing also represents the

individual's own political and ethical position vis-a-vis the Holocaust and is therefore a performative marker of his/her identity as a member of a culturally informed and responsible community. Thus, such memorial websites morally align their audience to the project of remembering the Holocaust as being significant to their own cultural memory and understanding of violence and trauma. they seek to engage their audience as members of a networked, "informed" community whose collective participation in bearing witness to trauma is constitutive of their own identity as a public. This results in the formation of a narrative society, whose members define themselves in ethical terms of their participation in, and response to, the processes of the public documentation of traumatic memory, and thereby provide further impluse to the generation of more "stories" about the Holocaust.

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Chapter 8

Conclusion

This thesis has examined second generation Holocaust graphic memoirs, films, documentaries and websites as an instance of the ways in which the narrativization of individual experience of suffering and loss transforms distant, historical trauma into collective, cultural memory within a global culture of bearing witness to the violation of human rights.

In Chapter 1, I have traced a schematic history of the representation of the Holocaust across literary genres and popular media, examining the increasing prominence of the Holocaust in visual media within a global cultural context in which audiences are historically distanced from, but morally aligned to, the witnessing of atrocity and trauma. I have also charted the terrain of Holocaust scholarship and criticism, focusing on theories that explore the social rather than the psychological aspects of trauma and its representation. This introductory chapter also defines the aim and scope of my thesis.

In Chapter 2, I have studied the paratextual strategies that authors of second generation Holocaust narratives employ to declare and justify their relation to traumatic memory as well as to chart the evolution of the text and locate it within a larger cultural project of inheriting and writing history. I have analyzed how paratexts function as authenticating devices for second generation authors writing testimonial texts, facilitate the appropriation of individual memory of trauma by second generation authors for public documentation, offer commentary on the evolution of the text itself as constituting the memorialization of the Holocaust, and enable secondary witnessing of trauma for a dispersed, global audience. I have thus demonstrated how paratexts state the thematic, generic and cultural parameters of writing and reading such texts and thereby function as interpretive

frames for responding to these narratives within a testimonial context.

In Chapter 3, I have proposed that the use of visuals in these narratives introduces the extreme horror of the Holocaust victim's experience into the safe space of spectatorship occupied by the audience, and thereby creates a "barbaric space". I have demonstrated how visuals effect the conflation of the past experience of suffering and the present context of recollecting trauma, and the quotidian aspects of pre- and post-War life and the horrific conditions of existence during the Holocaust. I have also examined how visuals are employed to represent the un-containable nature of trauma that spills over spatial and temporal frames and across generations, as well as to suggest massive, incalculable trauma through the symbolic and associative aspects of individual memory. I have also examined the constitution of the visual field as a "barbaric space" at the various levels of mediation trauma undergoes in the process of its narrativization – that of the author's encounter with inherited trauma, of the reader's viewing of "scenes" of extreme suffering, and of the larger cultural domain of bearing collective witness to historical trauma.

In Chapter 4, I deal with questions of voice and agency in second generation Holocaust narratives. I argue that the articulation of trauma by the Holocaust victim in the presence of a sympathetic audience constitutes the reclamation of his/her agency as a human subject; at the same time, for both the second generation author and reader, the recognition of the victimized "other" as *human* represents their own subject position vis-a-vis historical trauma as ethical witnesses. I have studied how voice and agency are subject to narrative contestation and negotiation, processes crucial to the establishment of a testimonial contract between the primary and secondary witnesses of the Holocaust. I have explored this through a close reading of the narrative exchanges for authority over the "telling" of the "story" in second generation graphic memoirs, the implicit ethical principle at work in the "viewing" of

trauma in films and documentaries, and the potential for public performance of bearing witness to distant trauma on online memorial sites.

In Chapter 5, I have proposed that second generation Holocaust narratives enable and enact a dialogic, testimonial performance between the victimized subject and the secondary witness of trauma. The collaborative act of bearing witness to trauma demands a recognition of the Holocaust victim as a human subject but also resists identification with his/her experience of suffering. I have examined this dual aspect of bearing witness by studying second generation Holocaust narratives for the ways in which they enable the primary witness to reclaim his/her identity, in the act of re-membering trauma, as a human subject, and prompt, on the part of the secondary witness, an empathetic identification *of*, but not *with*, the victim's experience of suffering. I have argued that this leads to the emergence of a formal, functional equivalent of the testimony – the *empathetic testimonial* – in the context of secondary witnessing of historical trauma.

In Chapter 6, I have studied how the distinct, subjective experience of trauma is rendered transmissible as a recognizable, repeatable category of "knowledge" through the narrativization of individual "stories" of suffering as immutable mobiles and in allotropic forms. I have argued that the distant trauma of the Holocaust victim is rendered comprehensible and communicable to a sympathetic audience through its inscription in essentialist terms of human vulnerability to suffering. I have proposed that the recurrent use of identifiable tropes like the brutalization of the body of the victim, the concentrationary universe of the camps, and the fragmentation of personal and familial identity, constitute trauma as an experience that can be represented across texts without loss of meaning, that is, as an "immutable mobile". I have further argued that these texts can be read, in spite of their specific thematic and formal variations, in relation to, and not in isolation from, one another

as constituents of a larger "allotropic" genre – that of the narrative of human rights violation. I have examined the allotropy of these narratives in terms of the thematic and generic correspondences that exist, over and above their distinctive features, between individual accounts of trauma that has collective import.

In Chapter 7, I argue that the transformation of the individual experience of suffering into collective memory of trauma through its textualization as a public document leads to the formation of a narrative society – one whose members (both second generation authors and readers) are bound by a shared cultural knowledge of, and moral responsibility to towards, bearing witness to the Holocaust. I demonstrate how the "feeling" of empathy for the victim of trauma is an integral part of "knowing" the experience that caused it. Thus, the readers/viewers of these second generation Holocaust narratives define and defend their own identity as members of a community of witnesses by means of responding to them with empathy. They are, therefore, participants in the construction of what can be termed a *sentimental narrative society* – one that generates and is sustained by a cultural currency of affect vis-a-vis the historical trauma of the Holocaust.

Though I have focused exclusively on representations of the Holocaust in contemporary print, electronic and digital media, it is possible to undertake this kind of study in the case of other instances of historical trauma. Since the Holocaust offers a historical and critical paradigm for the representation of and response to trauma in a universal(izable) context of human rights violations, the arguments put forward in this thesis may well be applied to examine how other instances of ethnic violence, atrocity and state-sponsored terrorism are popularly perceived by a globally networked community of witnesses. While this study does not deal with the politics of victim-hood, whereby the suffering of some groups of people receives considerably more media attention than others, it could lead to

research in the strategic means by which minority groups lay claim on the discourse of human rights and thereby seek recognition of their individual and collective histories of persecution within an already existing public culture of witnessing trauma. For instance, it might be possible to examine the life-writings of the Dalits in India as constituting a move towards the scripting of a collective history of trauma, wherein the individual victim of caste politics is enabled to bear witness on behalf of an entire community. The creation of a narrative society in such cases becomes, for these victimized subjects, a crucial aspect of claiming social and cultural rights over and above their political safeguards. This thesis could also point to a more detailed study of the effects of the pervasiveness of visual media in contemporary public culture in the popular perception of certain traumatic events. Instances like 9/11 are perceived, even orchestrated, as visual spectacles and enter and circulate in the public imagination as images. While this thesis does not explore such trajectories of research, it offers a framework that can be used to study how trauma itself can be represented and communicated across historical and cultural borders through acts of "story-telling" that determine the identities of both the victim and the witness as human subjects.

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Figure 1: Limits of Visual Metaphor (*Maus*)

Figure 2: Inheritance of trauma (*Maus*)

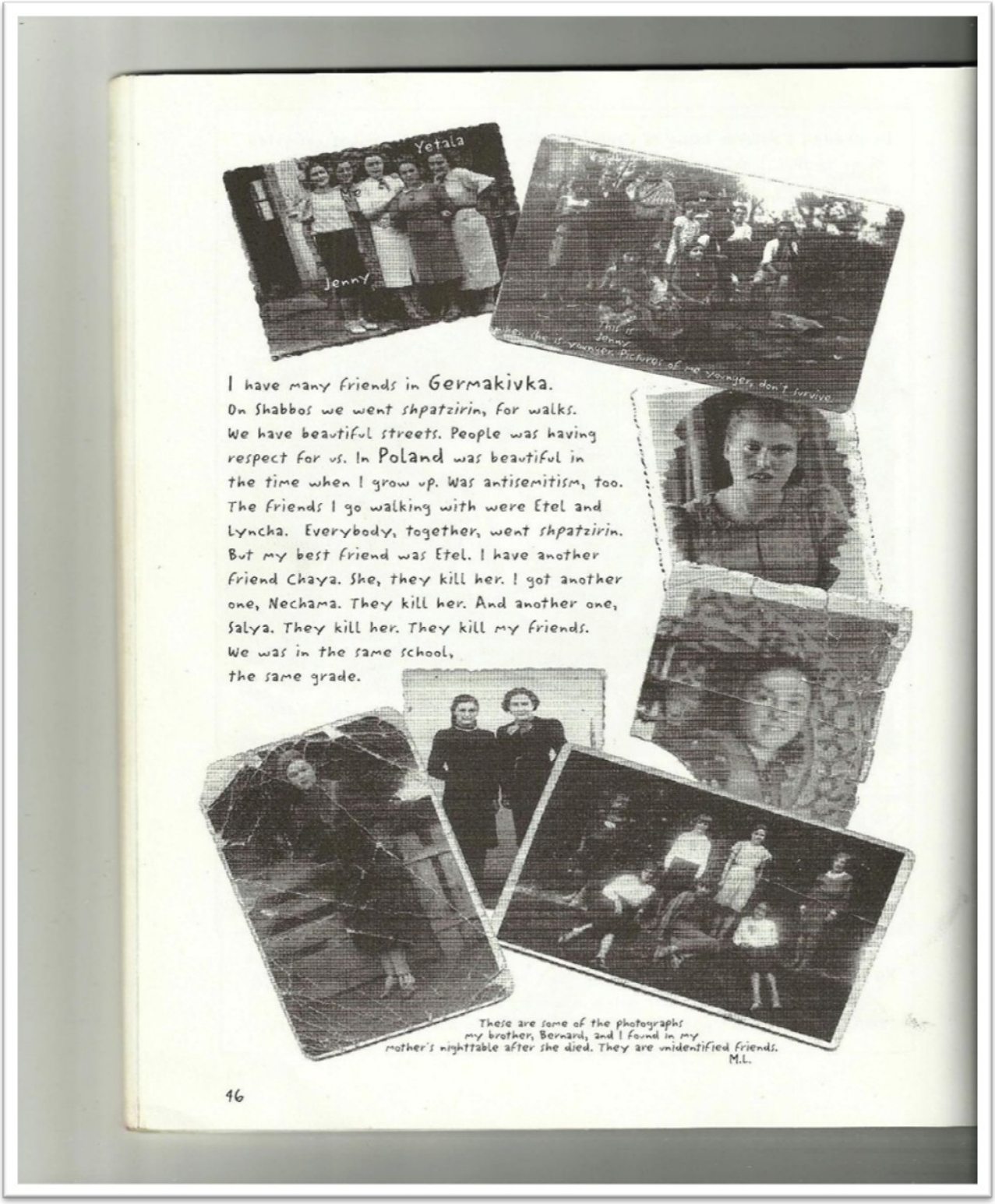

Figure 3: Mute Testimony: the photographic image as a trace of trauma (*Mendel's Daughter*)

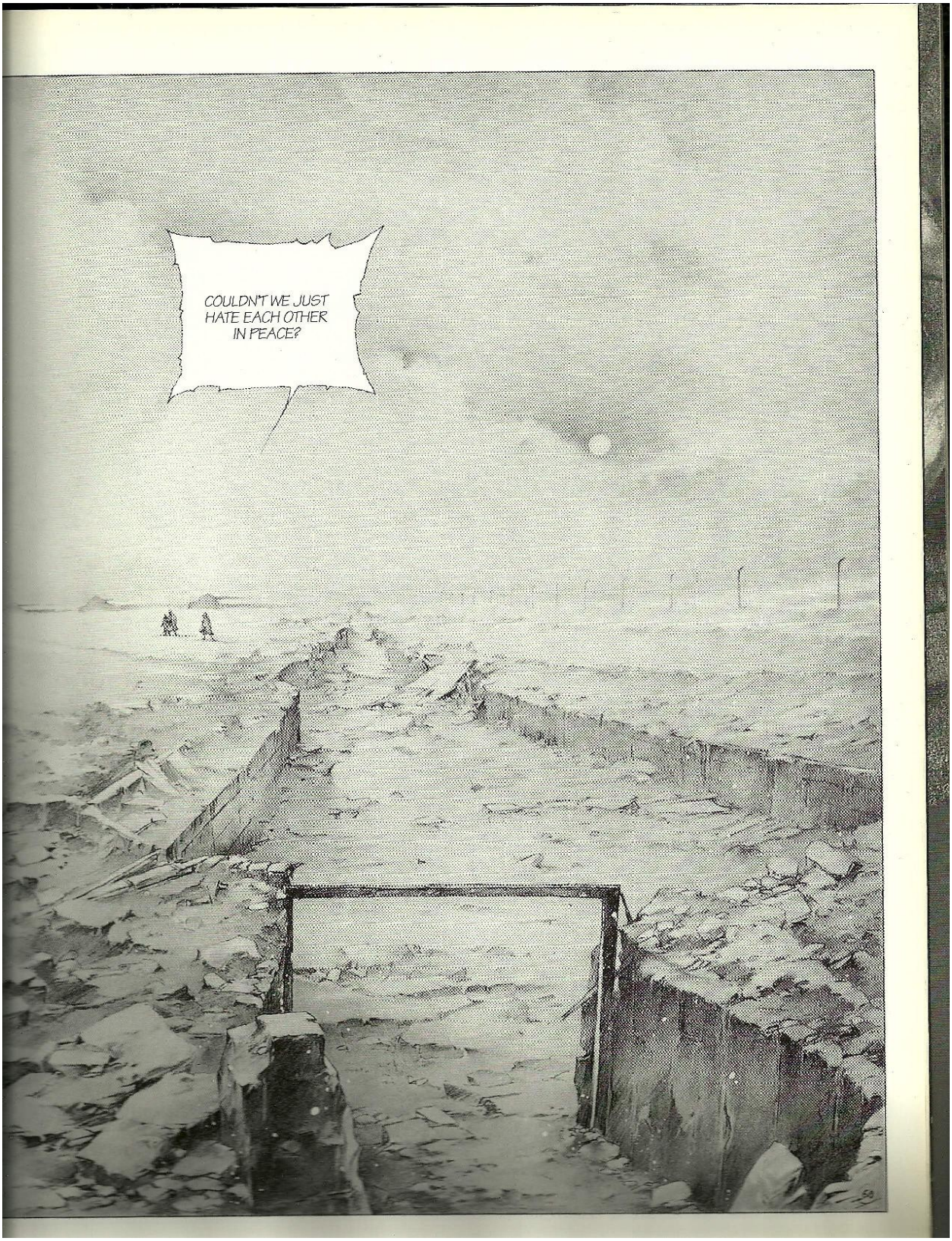

Figure 4: Limitless Horror of the concentration camp (*Auschwitz*)

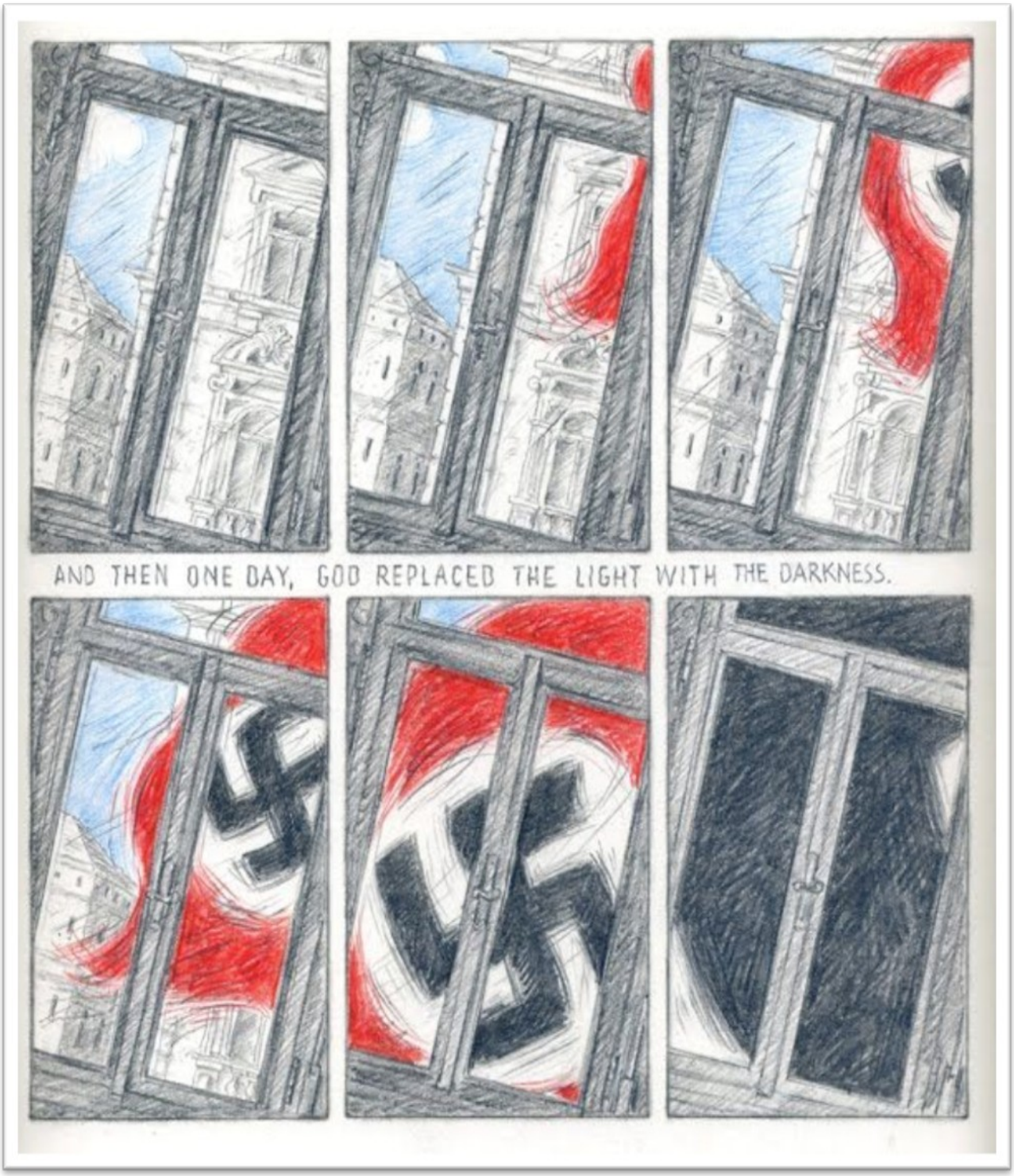

Figure 5: Iconicity of Trauma (*We Are On Our Own*)

Figure 6: Landscape of Horror (*Maus*)