

# Beyond MAUS

The Legacy of Holocaust Comics



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# **BEYOND MAUS**

The Legacy of Holocaust Comics

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Sarah Lightman

## Forward (And Backwards)

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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

Ole Frahm, Hans-Joachim Hahn and Markus Streb

## Introduction

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

## Transmission

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

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

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

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

6 *Ibid.*, p. 31.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

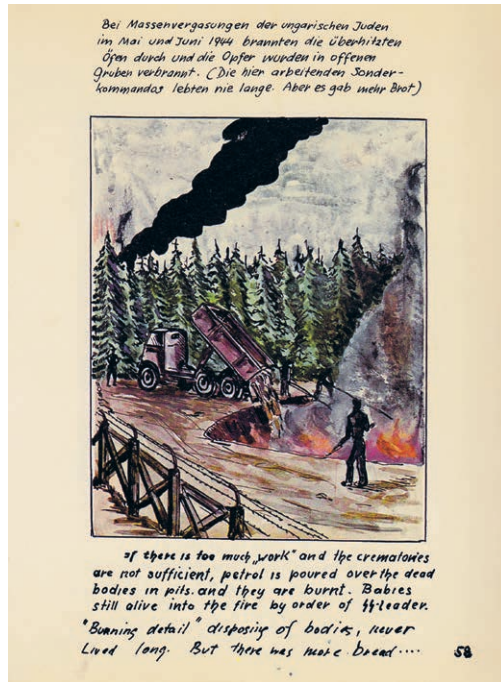
13 Spiegelman, Art: *MAUS. A Survivor's Tale II. And Here My Troubles Began...*, New York 1991, p. 72.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

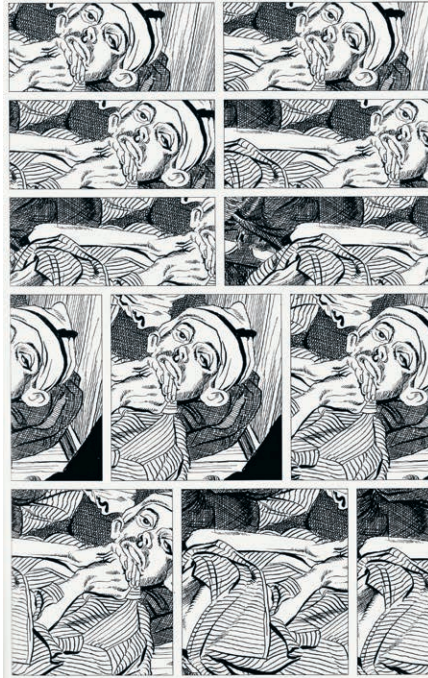
21 See for example Baskind, Samantha (ed.): *The Jewish Graphic Novel. Critical Approaches*, New Brunswick, NJ 2008; Palandt, Ralf (ed.): *Rechtsextremismus, Rassismus und Antisemitismus in Comics*, Berlin 2011; Chapman, Jane/Ellin, Dan/Sherif, Adam (eds.): *Comics, the Holocaust and Hiroshima*, Basingstoke/New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

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

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

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

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



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

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

26 Sim, Dave: *Judenhass*. Kitchener 2008.

## Drawings

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

### Stereotypes, Masks, and Antisemitism

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Forgotten Comics

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

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

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

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

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

## International Comics

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

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

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



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

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

### Figures of the Holocaust

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 44 Niles, Steve/Santoro, Matt/Wachter, Dave: *Breath of Bones. A Tale of the Golem*, Milwaukee 2014. Klein, David G.: *The Golem's Voice*, n.p. 2015. See Frahm, Ole: Mickey und der Golem: Reflexionen des Holocaust im Comic, in: Bannasch, Bettina/Hahn, Hans-Joachim (eds.): *Darstellen, Vermitteln, Aneignen: Gegenwärtige Reflexionen des Holocaust*, Göttingen 2018, pp. 215–256.
- 45 Frahm, Ole/Streb, Markus: No one wants to draw the *Muselmann*? Visual Representations of the *Muselmann* in Comics, in *The Journal of Holocaust Research*, 34, 3 (2020), pp. 241–261.
- 46 Holocaust first appears 1995 in Lobdell, Scott/Cruz, Roger/Epting, Steve: *X-Men Alpha*, 1, New York: Marvel 1995.
- 47 O'Neil, Dan/Adams, Neil: *The Night of the Reaper*, in *Batman* 237, New York: DC 1971; Milligan, Peter/Aparo, Jim/DeCarlo, Mike: *The Golem of Gotham*, in *Detective Comics* 631, New