

**MODES OF REPRESENTING THE HOLOCAUST: A DISCUSSION OF THE USE
OF ANIMATION IN ART SPIEGELMAN'S *MAUS* AND ORLY YADIN AND
SYLVIE BRINGAS'S *SILENCE***

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Abstract

Since Theodor Adorno's famous dictum that 'to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric', the issue of whether it is ethical to represent the Holocaust in art, and if so, the means by which it is ethical to do so, has constituted one of the major polemical discourses of our time. Prominent questions such as 'Who has the right to try and represent the Holocaust?', 'How should we represent the Holocaust?' and 'How can we address the issue of responsibility in a post-war world?' have motivated artistic representations and the critics who discuss these representations. In this essay, I aim to consider the success of two works which employ the somewhat controversial format of animation in dealing with aspects of testimony, trauma, language and responsibility. The first, Art Spiegelman's 1984 comic book strip *Maus*, anthropomorphised Germans into cats and Jews into mice in order to narrate events experienced by Spiegelman's father, Vladek, during the war and the postbellum father-son relationship. Although *Maus* was initially criticised for its use of the comic book format, traditionally viewed as adolescent, it later went on to receive the Pulitzer Prize for its literary success and as such provided a benchmark for the potential of animated formats. The second, Orly Yadin and Sylvie Bringas's 1998 animated short film *Silence*, combines two styles of animation and a small amount of archival footage to tell the story of Tana Ross, a child survivor of Theresienstadt (Terezin) who, hidden by her grandmother during the war, escaped Auschwitz.

Introduction

One would be hard-pressed to find an academic appraisal of representations of the Holocaust which does not make at least a passing reference to Theodor Adorno's famous dictum that 'to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric'. Although the rationale initially developed in Adorno's text has since been reconsidered (notably by Adorno himself), it could be argued that the emphatic rejection of artistic representation compounded therein has achieved polemical status in its ability to simultaneously evoke the complex range of discourses surrounding this subject.

One reason for this is its implicit assertion of taboo as an ethical necessity while addressing the Holocaust in art - of delineating a sacred space, which would be disrespectful to speak of or to represent, such as the interior of a gas chamber. As such, the ethics of representation constitute an integral part of any discussion we may have, and breaching the implicit tenets of representation becomes an ethical as well as an artistic issue. A second generation of artists, survivors and citizens have re-articulated the specific questions raised by the taboo as they begin to approach the subject: who has the right to speak about the Holocaust? Who has the right to attempt its representation? How can we ethically represent those murdered? How can we address the issue of responsibility in a post-war world? How can we represent the un-representable and speak the unspeakable? How can the world of the human represent the world of the inhuman?

An early indication of the latter question is found in Adorno's partly revisionary essay 'After Auschwitz'. Commenting that 'in the concentration camps it was no longer an individual who died but a specimen', Adorno draws our attention to the dehumanization of the individual before conceding that 'perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream' (Adorno, 1973, 362). Reflecting on the pertinence this comment has to autobiographical and biographical representations, it is evident that the need to reassert one's humanity in the face of inhumanity becomes paramount, and is inextricably linked with individuation against deindividuation. With this in mind, I will consider two works whose authors make the unusual choice to employ animation as their mode of expression, and examine the way in which this format facilitates the themes it addresses, thus enabling humanity to uniquely permeate the text through the individuation it engenders.

Maus

Art Spiegelman's 1987 comic book *Maus* was heavily criticised on its release for its use of a format which many found upsetting, on the premise that it was too flippant to deal with the weight of the subject matter. As the son of a survivor whose story formed the impetus for the work, the depiction of Spiegelman's own struggle also belongs to the body of survivor discourse, and in this sense was accepted as an ethical engagement with the subject. Yet, the animated format remained a stumbling block for many critics in recognising the value of work. Gradually, however, the critical tide turned and the work went on to receive the Pulitzer Prize for its artistic success. Spiegelman remained unapologetic about his mode of expression, justifying his choice of format with explanations along the lines of the following:

[I]t's the language I feel like I can speak best. Drawing or writing are like second languages...Comics are the way I actually think. Even though it's a lot of work to get it expressed that way, I feel like I'm sort of coming from closer to my center. (Robinson 2004)

Spiegelman's comments highlight the simple but fundamental point that, as his artistic format is that of the comic book, it is natural that he would want to approach the representation of his subject matter in that genre. As such, the problem of finding a language with which to address the events of the Holocaust becomes not so much a question of reaching a communal consensus about an appropriate linguistic domain, but of finding one's individual language to express 'the center'. Equally, in the context of ongoing debates amongst survivors regarding the struggle to find an appropriate language in which to express oneself, it is important here to note the unusual distinction that Spiegelman makes between the *two* languages of drawing and writing. With this in mind, we may further postulate that the expressive - and, significantly, emotive - 'center' is negotiated from these two linguistic reference points. This 'space of the in-between' is also what I view as one of the format's great successes, for while a conventional narrative creates a level of mediation between the narrated events and their reader, the comic book has an almost filmic quality which plunges the reader inside the text, bringing them face-to-face with the events portrayed. The empathy which this inevitably evokes contributes to the readers' experience of the work's humanity, which is ironic, since it depicts a world of anthropomorphised animals. Although we are shocked to find ourselves laughing at a work dealing with the Holocaust, moments such as that in which Vladek throws out Artie's 'old shabby coat' are ones which most people can relate to on some level:



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In his 1987 essay 'Holocaust *Laughter?*', Terrence Des Pres discusses the humour in *Maus* as part of a discussion addressing the question of laughter in Holocaust literature. He concedes that although he initially found the idea of a comic book about the Holocaust upsetting, the use of this unconventional format is effective, despite its breaching contemporary representational conventions. The humour in the tale also contributes to the work's effectiveness. Des Pres

prescribes and explicates a 'class' of conventions before moving on to consider one in particular, writing that 'The Holocaust shall be approached as a solemn or even a sacred event, with a seriousness admitting no response that might obscure its enormity or dishonor its dead' (1988, 217). His argument results in a positive assessment of the use of humour despite its breaching of the tenet above. Nevertheless, he lauds *Maus's* faithfulness to actual circumstance as retaining the sanctity of the subject. Even Spiegelman's use of an unconventional format and humour, he says, reaffirms the sanctity of the subject:

In Spiegelman's book, laughter is used to dispel and to embrace, a kind of comic ambiguity that diffuses hostility, on the one hand, and on the other prompts charity toward those who suffered, those who remember, and also those who might simply wish to know. (Des Pres 1988, 233)

Although I agree with Des Pres's analysis in its articulation of the various ways in which the humanity of the text impacts on the reader, I believe he is mistaken in his view that it functions to dispel, embrace and diffuse hostility. Rather than engaging the cathartic element which Des Pres seems to suggest, the humour in fact heightens the effect of the traumatic moments in the text. By deconstructing the boundaries of conventional representation it brings the reader into the text, into the space between the languages of writing and drawing, and there we remain through the moments of horror and humour alike. This reading work performed by the reader on the text is thus an integral part of the textual impact and, whilst *Maus* ostensibly tells the story of the experiences of Vladek during the Second World War, it is in fact much more than that. It is the story of Vladek telling the story to Art, of Art reconciling this story with his own, and of the relationship between the past story and Vladek's 'present' story, in fact also past.

The complex narrative and temporality of this structure are no less intricate than the form they take. Michael G. Levine has recently conducted an in-depth analysis of the form of *Maus* and demonstrated the multi-layered nature of its diction and artwork. Quoting an interview in which Art Spiegelman identifies a further space specific to the comic book, he discusses the visual semantics specific to the 'language' emerging within the comics medium:

Comics are 'a gutter medium; that is, it's what takes place in the gutters between the panels that activates the medium'. Thus, it is ultimately not the panel itself, whether infinitely expanded in rows or infinitesimally broken down in a series of panels within panels, that constitutes the true unit of 'historiographic' analysis for the commix artist. That unit, never directly named in this series of definitions, is instead the gutter *between* frames (Levine 2006, 25).

Levine's description of the 'gutter' is reminiscent of film montage and yet, unlike the merging of diverse animation styles which we will see used in *Silence*, the reader/viewer can see the space in between panels/shots, and the meaning they gain from the text is determined by the way in which they read the extract. The effectiveness of this becomes most marked in the scenes of horror which Vladek relates:



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The depiction of horror takes place on a number of levels here. Firstly, there is the explicit nature of the panel which the reader views in shock, only to have the events confirmed by the accompanying text. In contrast with the graphic nature of the panel, the text describes events indirectly, thus contributing to the psychological effect on the reader. Although it is clear what takes place, the reader must nevertheless place her or himself in the text. Despite the apparently small change in the movement of the guard between the two latter frames – he appears to move no more than an inch – the difference for the child is that between life and death, and it is within the gutter that the full impact of the irrecoverable void left by the guard's momentary action of sadistic violence hits the reader. In turn, this gap is reflected on the textual level by Vladek, whose commentary moves from a descriptive function in the third panel to a reflective one in the fourth, the implicit language that he uses maintaining a respectful boundary around the space of the child's brutal death. The technique of amassing moments such as these, which the format allows, ultimately enables Spiegelman to create the cumulative and progressively heavy effect of Vladek's experiences. Each individual episode forms both a singular instant and part of a greater whole. This space of the in-between where psychological engagement occurs constitutes an identifiable site of what Sara Horowitz (after Berel Lang) compares to *midrash*¹ in an essay on second-generation writing. In this analysis, Holocaust fiction 'claims the space of what remains unuttered in other modes of narrative, offering a vehicle to express, think through and sometimes resolve the complexities that underlie the critical discourse' (Horowitz 1997, 290).

The availability of a space of engagement within the text becomes especially pertinent in the case of second-generation writers such as Spiegelman who, by virtue of temporal distance and

¹ *Midrash*: A homily on a scriptural passage derived by traditional Jewish exegetical methods and consisting usually of embellishment of the scriptural narrative'. Collins English Dictionary (2003, 1032).

perspective, are inevitably writing in response to first-generation writers on some level. The manner in which the comic book format allows for direct speech brings the two generations into direct dialogue with one another with effective results:

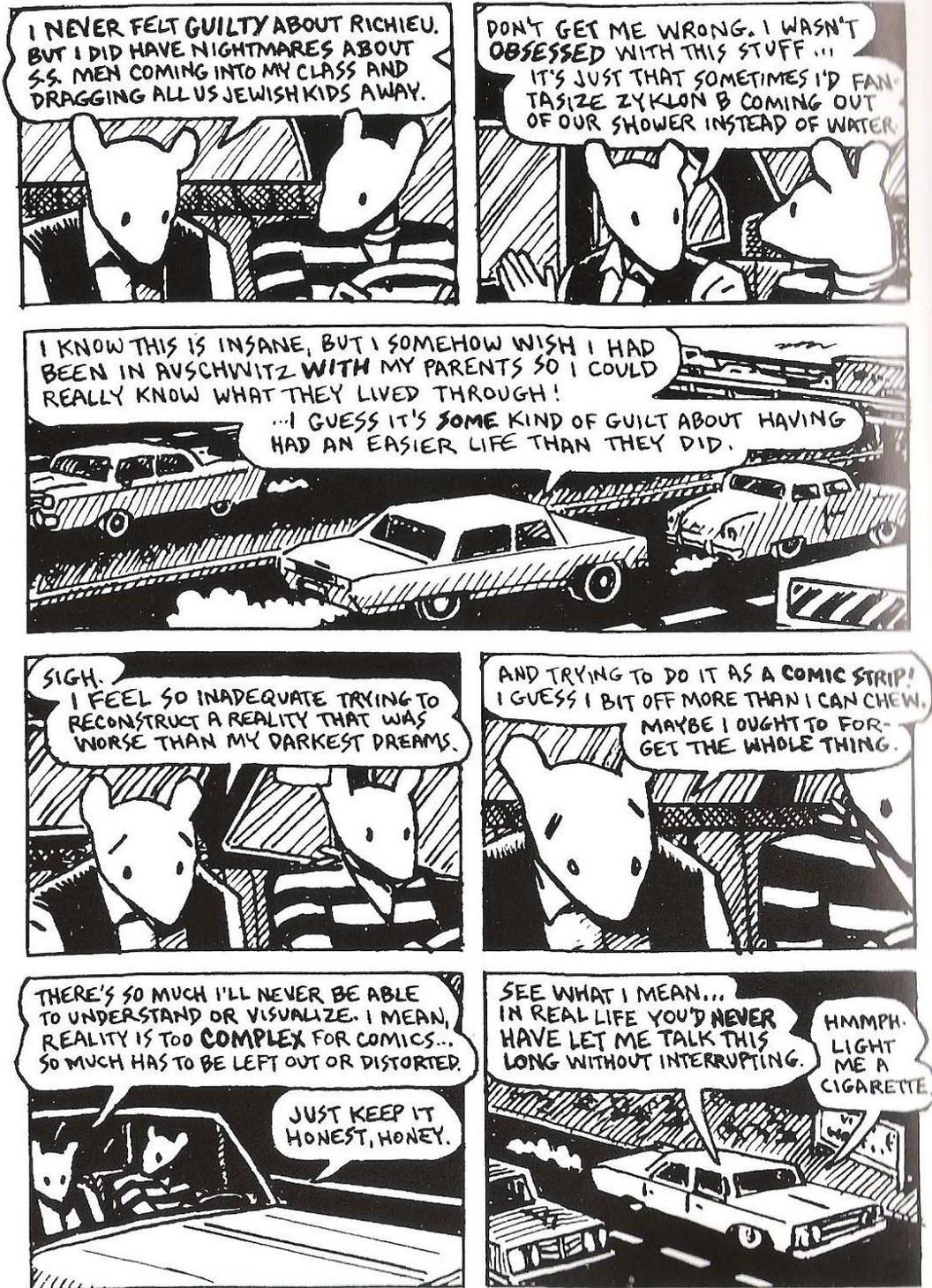


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The encounter between the irrationality which prompts Art to interpose his disbelief and the father's subsequent explanation of the logic behind his actions ostensibly brings the worlds of wartime ir/rationality and post-war rationality into direct conflict, the voice from the future serving to underline the inexplicability of that which *Vladek is* able to find the language to explain. The drawings here support this inversion through the black-and-white shadow format which the 'present' narrative takes in the panels where *Vladek* explains this logic. Much like how the in-between white space functions for the reader, the different temporal perspectives of first and second generations are shown to converge in *Maus*, their psychology explored in tandem with the problems of representation referenced by the work and assisted by the multi-layered narrative. Despite this, the discordance between these worlds becomes necessarily problematic in Art's personal struggle to understand and to represent. As Horowitz illustrates:

The second generation writer feels the biographical and psychological imprint of the events of the Holocaust as immediate and present. At the same time, the experiential and temporal distance creates a blankness, a cognitive gap at odds with psychological knowing (Horowitz 1997, 290).

The most extended passage of this type occurs after Art and Françoise drive home having left *Vladek* in the Catskills:



Art's inherited 'flashbacks' and accompanying guilt are widely acknowledged in psychological studies as being typical of survivor's children². In the same passage we see him lamenting the fact that there is so much he will never be able to imagine or visualize. In stating that reality is too complex for comics he confesses his own perceived inability to deal with the subject in the artistic format personal to him, the obvious irony being that he expresses this inability through the comic book format and even goes so far as to stress the word 'complex' in the text. Equally ironic is the manner in which the reader is lulled into this sense of false pretence, until the jolting mention of 'real life' reveals the character's awareness of his own artifice and reminds us of the same. Nevertheless, the honest discussion of representational problems in this section has a touching humanity which engenders sympathy for Art's situation whilst widening the reader's understanding of the reality of Holocaust representation, again allowing us choice as to the extent to which we enter into the text. In addition, a further layer of irony comes from the overriding paradox between the character agonizing about the accurate representation of reality, and the fact that that character is depicted as a mouse. Spiegelman's use of anthropomorphism allows him to stress the senseless horror and illogicality of the events, to remove all appearance of humanity in an inhuman situation and to convey the bare facts whilst inverting Nazi propaganda campaigns such as those depicting Jews as vermin, and others depicting Germans as the 'cats' whose natural predilection it was to wipe out the mice.

Silence

Orly Yadin and Sylvie Bringas's 1998 animated short film *Silence* combines two markedly different animation styles with a small amount of archival footage in order to tell the story of Tana Ross, a child survivor of the Theresienstadt (Terezin) ghetto. Ross repeatedly escaped deportation to Auschwitz through the efforts of her grandmother, who sacrificed most of the little food she had to bribery, and who hid Tana in a laundry basket when a deportation took place. When the two arrived in Sweden as refugees after the war, the five-year-old was asked to remain silent about her experience, and this was a silence which she subsequently imposed on herself for the larger part of her adult life.

In 1995, one of Ross's friends was helping to curate an exhibition which incorporated a number of paintings by children in the Theresienstadt ghetto; this became the catalyst which led to Tana breaking her long-held silence (Ross, 1998). She recalls how, after seeing the pictures, she felt compelled to do something herself on behalf of those who no longer had a voice and this took the form of a tone poem named 'Through the Silence: for Cello and Survivor', for which Ross wrote and performed the spoken element, and her friend and collaborator Noa Ain composed and performed the cello accompaniment (Ross, 1998). After the two women performed the piece in New York, Ross describes how requests flooded in for repeat performances elsewhere - yet she had only ever wanted to do one performance. To solve the dilemma, she approached her friend and director Orly Yadin, and *Silence* was the result (Ross, 1998).

Whilst animation may not have been a historically conventional film format with which to represent the Holocaust, the combination of the diverse animation styles used to represent Tana's experiences during and after the war is an extremely effective and appropriate mode of representation. It facilitates the exposition of the psychological effects of the war from a child's perspective in a manner which a more 'realistic' film technique could never achieve. In an article entitled 'But is it Documentary?' director Orly Yadin argues that 'all forms of documentary are

² See, for example, M.S. Bergman and M.E. Jucovy, (ed.s), *Generations of the Holocaust*, New York: Basic Books, 1982.

merely *RE-presentations of reality* and in that sense, an animation film is no different from any other film style' (Yadin 2005, 172). Although the field of Holocaust representation in film is vast³, the number of animated films produced is comparatively limited. It is fair to say that until recently, the potential of this format had been largely ignored in both academic and artistic circles. At a Holocaust film screening event organised by the UK Jewish Film Festival at the School of Oriental and African Studies on the occasion of Holocaust Memorial Day in 2008, three films were chosen with this specific theme in mind: Alain Resnais's polemical documentary-format *Nuit et Brouillard* (*Night and Fog*), which formed an obvious point of comparison with Jes Benstock's *The Holocaust Tourist*, as well as Yadin and Bringas's *Silence*. Whereas *Nuit et Brouillard* employs some of the most explicit archival images of the Holocaust ever seen in the public domain, Benstock's film divides its composition between 'real film' footage and tourist map-style animation, and *Silence* combines two diverse animation styles with a small amount of newsreel film footage. The foregrounding of the emerging role of animation in representing the Holocaust was evident, in contrast with previous cinematic uses of realist and modernist styles; I would argue that this is indicative of a contemporary shift in the boundaries of those modes of representation considered appropriate. Remarking on the pervasiveness of the themes of absence and silence in the films, panellist Annabelle Sreberny offered that animation becomes a useful form of representation when combating the problems inherent to historical documentary: specifically, that much archival footage was taken by the Nazis, and that competing forms of representation, such as photos of the liberated camps, were taken by Allied forces and as such are also tainted with a political agenda (Sreberny, 2008). As no images taken from the point of view of those in the concentration camp exist, the silence and absence of those people whose lives were taken away by the Nazi regime have no means of self-representation in forms contemporary with the Nazi images and so, in Yadin's words, animation becomes an effective way to 'enter the realm of imagination' (Yadin 2005, 173).

It is important, however, not to confuse this imaginative representation with fiction. As Ilan Avisar points out, the gap between fact and fiction propagated in the Nazi era renders the historical accuracy of any representations essential (Avisar 1988, 3). Yadin's choice of format resulted in part from a reluctance to employ other somewhat exhausted forms of representation, due partly to a lack of available sources which were not Nazi propaganda (Yadin 2005, 173). Echoing Sreberny's comments, this reluctance is evocative of arguments against the use of Nazi archival footage, such as that of the critic Lucy Dawidowicz, who rejects the presentation of this footage as 'objective historical evidence' in her argument that '[the footage] replicates their point of view - their ideology and propaganda aims - on the victims. It thus positions the spectator as a victimizer, potentially eliciting a voyeuristic or sadistic response (Dawidowicz 2004, 72). Dawidowicz's argument draws attention to two separate issues: firstly, that of the attribution of responsibility, achieved through the focalisation of the film and consequent point-of-view constructed, and secondly, the original value attached to the conception of the images. The artistic, the historical and the personal coningle. These separate but interconnected factors can, however, be treated in such a way as to invert their value.

Silence begins with newsreel film footage from a Nazi parade, digitally treated to create an atmospheric rather than a factual effect (Bringas 1998, 3). As child-survivor Ross tells her story, noise from the cheering crowd is interposed with Noa Ain's accompaniment to 'Through the Silence (Concerto for Cello and Survivor)'. By preceding the animated scenes with these images the film's audience is grounded in the historical reality of the events being narrated. More

³ For an overview, see Annette Insdorf *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust*. (3rd Ed.) UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

importantly, the *mise en scène* of the narration with the images dramatically juxtaposes the joyous support for the Nazis with the consequences of that support. Thus, the role of collective responsibility towards the individual is foregrounded, and a contextual frame of reference is provided for the viewer before moving from the collective to the personal. The animation may be interpreted as a representation of a personal memory, indicated in the archival imagery by the colouring of the yellow star on what is otherwise a black-and-white reel of film. This detail highlights the aspect of the film personal to the narrator and points towards the role of animation as a subjective tool of memory. In corrupting the original image, the animation not only re-appropriates that image as the possession of the survivor, but also presents a stark reminder of the way in which the survivor herself was marked with that symbol as one amongst millions of Jews. Equally, the fact that it is the survivor herself who narrates the film, and that the accompanying music is not chosen for aesthetic or cathartic purposes but was composed in collaboration with a text she wrote, allows the point of view of victim-survivor to master the representation, and to question the role and responsibility of the cheering crowds. Sylvie Bringas explains that 'the delivery of the voice-over by Tana was always planned as a self-conscious performance [...] tightly constructed according to the chemistry of the words with the visuals, and keeping in mind the particular tone of delivery which Tana would use' (Bringas 1998, 5).

Just as the animation draws attention to its own artifice and individuation, so, too, does the voice-over. This conscious emphasis encourages the audience to search beyond the artifice in order to discover what lies in the ellipsis between the spoken and the unspoken. Just as in *Maus*, we find that this is reflected in the distinction between the speaking subject and the representation of that speaking subject in the work. As such, *Silence* at once combats the problem of representing the space of the survivor's memory and acknowledges the problem of the unreliability of memory through the conscious artifice of its format. Unlike realist or modernist representations, animation is consciously representational and subjective. The viewer understands that he or she is watching an artistic interpretation rather than a re-creation of the event which the suspension of reality in film can often produce⁴. Equally, the fact that the audience does not self-identify with an animated character avoids a cathartic emotional response; instead, the image is invested with the emotional memory of the survivor through the different animation styles. The representation thus becomes the site of meeting between speaker and listener, and rather than the audience member constituting a receptacle of emotive response (and therefore the focus of the speaking process), s/he is forced through her/his attempts to interpret the visual and aural signifiers to invest the piece with their own interpretive work, and to contribute a personal understanding of the representation, echoing the 'gutter effect' seen in *Maus*. According to Yadin, 'One of our main concerns was not to spell everything out and to leave space for the viewer to bring something of themselves to what they saw and heard' (Yadin 2005, 172). In this way, the transmission of human experience enables meaning to be established outside of the concentrationary universe as well as inside it, and the story of the survivor's dehumanizing experience can find a place within that of the non-concentrationary.

Yadin and Bringas's underscoring of the visual and the aural as occupying separate places in the viewing experience follows an integral concern with these factors in filmic representations of the Holocaust. As such, the technique of *mise en scène* seen in *Silence* forms an interesting contrast when juxtaposed with the combination of the somewhat problematic 'voice-of-God' narration (the detached and anonymous voice presenting the images) and background music in Resnais's

⁴ Yadin argues that 'The honesty of animation lies in the fact that the filmmaker is completely upfront about his or her intervention with the subject and if we believe the film to be true it is because we believe the intention was true' (Yadin 2005, 173).

Nuit et Bruillard. The narrator gives us information far exceeding that which is contained in the images, and his words have an expository rather than an indicative aim, permitting the documentary maker both affective and informational manipulation of the images. This oft-criticised aspect of Resnais's film has, however, recently received an interesting defence from critic Joshua Hirsch who argues that *Night and Fog's* representation of memory relies on a split between the visual and the sound tracks – between the image of the site of memory and the disembodied commentary (Hirsch 2004, 67). From Hirsch's point of view, the incoherence is thus a positive and intentional representational choice, and it is this very *discordance* among image, commentary, and soundtrack which forms the basis of what he considers 'post-traumatic memory', or the inability to speak of remembered events and the insufficiency of the forms which attempt to do so. He argues that 'the post-traumatic discourse provides a discursive space, a language with which to begin to represent the failure of representation which one has experienced and use it in order to move towards a collective response' (Hirsch 2004, 18). Where *Night and Fog* seeks to highlight the impossibility of representation as a historical record for the collective, its target is clearly the non-survivor population as its expository manner and graphic images – too familiar, painful, and at the same time insufficient for a survivor – indicate. Thus, the discursive space of post-trauma speaks neither to nor for the survivor but constitutes a historical testimony of lack, or what Sara R. Horowitz calls the 'void' (Horowitz 1997).

In contrast, Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* emphasises the importance of testimony elicited from within that void, and has been termed the 'return of the voice' by Shoshana Felman (1992). That is, the form of the film permitted eyewitnesses to testify from the space of the void, and asserted the irreducible authenticity of the personal testimony. 'The crucial task and the concrete endeavour that separates *Shoah* from all its filmic predecessors is, precisely, the attempt to witness from the inside', asserts Felman (1992, 205). She then goes on to elaborate the consequences of such a testimony:

Testifying from inside a death camp would mean, at the same time, equally impossibly, the necessity of testifying from inside the absolute constraint of a fatal secret, a secret that is felt to be so binding, so compelling, so terrible that it often is kept a secret from itself (Felman 1992, 228).

Felman characterises Lanzmann's questioning as essentially 'desacralizing' because both the questions and the answers which they elicit break down the boundary of the secret and the unspoken. Yet, one important aspect of Lanzmann's technique (as noted by many commentators) is the retention of the footage in which this boundary is broken. The unwillingness to speak and to return gradually erodes onscreen in the testimonies of Abraham Bomba and Jan Karski, for instance. As they struggle to testify their silence constitutes, under the conventions of the interview, an *absence* of speech, and under the gaze of the spectator they re-enact what they experienced (post-trauma); past and present intertwine as language emerges from the void.

As the central subject of *Silence*, this silence, as well as the trauma and post-trauma which cause the secret to remain sealed, are conveyed not through the breakdown of language but through visual metaphor and the merging of discordant animation styles. Significantly, the moment in which the first animated sequence begins is the moment in which the child is parted from her mother, and the genuine onscreen photograph of mother and daughter rotates away to reveal a small animated girl flying over a real-image town with a suitcase in her hand. The significance of the representational space at this moment is twofold: firstly, there is no documentary evidence to testify to *her* memory; secondly, it signifies the moment at which the child's caretaker is stolen

away from her and the child's point of view takes over the circumscription of her world. The suitcase which she carries later becomes the suitcase which she climbs into—one of her many hiding places in Theresienstadt—and we see this motif again in the post-war scenes in Sweden, where she climbs into a suitcase as an adult: '20, and I was still the best at hiding' (Yadin and Bringas, 1998).

The suitcase thus becomes an onscreen signifier of both trauma and post-trauma, and a metaphor for the survivor continuing to return to the bound space of the unspoken and the unseen. The format thus has the opportunity to depict silence in a unique, non-verbal way by representing silence and memory in a concrete visual format and negating the need for representation using an onscreen subject. This enables the film to avoid what I consider to be one of the problems of *Shoah*, that is, the status of its onscreen interviewees. For example, the numerous critical references to 'the Abraham Bomba scene' have given that scene and its participant a somewhat iconic status, which some may argue should not be the aim of Holocaust representation. As spectators, we come to pay more attention to the interviewee as a spectacle. This problem is avoided with an off-screen narrator. With animation 'there is no danger of being uncomfortably voyeuristic...adopting to use animation is a gesture of respect by the filmmaker towards the subject' (Yadin 2005, 173). Equally, much like Charlotte Salomon's *Life? Or Theatre?* (1998), from which the colour sections take their inspiration (Lingford and Webb 2005, 173), the use of a range of media creates a distance between Tana as narrator and Tana as subject⁵. Indeed, the importance of the dual role of authentic eyewitness testimony in *Silence* cannot be overestimated. When the survivor tells her story she speaks of the past, speaking from the void and bringing it back to the present. The film ends in the present tense ('It took me 50 years to tell this story'), authenticating the representation of trauma developed by the animated visuals.

The animation of *Silence* is split into two styles: a gritty black-and-white style, which animator Ruth Lingford compares to woodcuts (Lingford and Webb 2005, 173), and a style which, as has been mentioned, takes its inspiration from the work of Charlotte Salomon and is drawn in colour, each shot having been created as a small gouache painting (2005, 173). Unlike other forms of animation, where the background is constructed as a separate layer, each colour shot is thus formally complete (2005, 173). The animators explain that the black-and-white/colour opposition allows them to contrast the war scenes with the post-war scenes (2005, 173), a technique which not only serves as a metaphor in itself (a life without colour) but visually emphasises the trauma of flashback in the sequences where the present becomes the past. Hence, when the doors of the train taking Tana and her grandmother to Sweden open, and a train attendant opens the door of their carriage, the carriage turns into a cattle cart and the young girl sees a Nazi camp guard in place of the attendant. This stresses the autobiographical aspect of the film as drawn from Tana's personal memories, rather than those of her grandmother. Sylvie Bringas comments that 'there was something usefully confrontational about the dissimilarities between these two styles, and the fact that these aesthetics didn't seem to 'belong' together was interesting, and resonated with Tana's story (Bringas 1998, 3). Unlike in *Nuit et Bruillard*, the discordant feature of the work is *internal* to the representation – it is within the animation itself. Thus, just as *Maus* creates discordance both within its panels and between its respective 'languages', *Silence* creates this through the incompatibility of its animation styles. This enables the

⁵ For a further discussion on Salomon's status as both actor and creator in her own work see Judith C.E. Belinfante 'Theatre? Remarks on a work of art' pp.31 – 40 in Charlotte Salomon *Life? Or theatre?* London Royal Academy of Arts, 1998. 'All the means [Salomon] uses – colours, actors, texts, music and film – serve one goal: to create for the audience a certain distance between herself as the subject of her own life story and herself as the story-telling artist... a paradox in which the internal contradictions strengthen the total work'

film's representation of the concentrationary universe as that of the ungraspable void. As the animation styles in no way mirror each other, there is nothing in the black-and-white style which corresponds to the world of the non-concentrationary, and thus nothing of 'reality' may be found there. In contrast, the world of the concentrationary becomes a 'reality' which continually returns to grasp something of the present.

The opportunity for metaphor provided by this transformation is not limited to flashback; it also demonstrates the psychological scars through imagined sequences. In a scene where Tana's voiceover states 'I didn't want to be "exotic": I wanted to be like everybody else', she runs to join the crowd to watch the Christian St. Lucia's day procession. However, in her psychological representation of the scene, the devilish figure at the end of the procession, which recalls Nazi propaganda images of Jews, turns into a rat which Tana then chases as the crowds disappear. Although she wishes to become 'like everybody else', she is scarred by her construction as 'verminous' and an 'other', and continues to be isolated within her present space. In the next sequence, Tana is falling and a menorah falls away from her before she is back in her room, observed by her aunt looking into a triptych of mirrors whilst the voiceover comments, 'I had become a *Swedish* child'. The emphasis on 'Swedish' and its appropriation of her person with all that that entails stresses the forced forgetting and the silence which she has been obligated to accept, enforced in the film by her aunt's repeated insistence on forgetting the past: 'we must never speak about it, never', 'promise, promise'. The question of responsibility that is foregrounded here moves to a dramatic climax at the end of the film, when Tana's conductor uncle performs on stage to rigorous applause. Gradually, the aesthetic beauty of the music breaks down, the inside of the theatre is transformed to represent the inner walls of Theresienstadt, and the audience's faces become the empty windows of a town where a lone cellist is the only one left to play the song.

In his essay 'Charlotte Salomon's *Life? or Theatre?* A 20th century song of innocence and experience' Norman Rosenthal considers Judith Herzberg's scholarship on Salomon's paintings—specifically the influence of musician Alfred Wolfsohn's unpublished manuscript 'Orpheus, or The Way to a Mask'. One of the themes which he cites as being central to her work is the idea that the voice of the infant has close relations with the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice (Rosenthal 1998, 12). In the colour sections of *Silence* inspired by Salomon's paintings, we continually see the child being told not to look back. We may infer from the representational choices here that to look back, implicitly to the realm of her mother, is to look into the realm of the unreturnable – the realm of death. Thus in the final section of the film we see the multifaceted exposition of the falseness of previous myths, such as these, in treating anything that came with, or after, the Holocaust. As much as one sings and tries not to look back, the past is not erased; neither is one's responsibility as a member of the human race to remember. Here we recall the complexities of representation evoked by Adorno's dictum.

Conclusion

In conclusion, animated forms of representation not only allow artists to represent aspects of the Holocaust in new and original ways, this originality facilitates the re-individuation of its subjects, whilst also enabling the reader/viewer to engage with the work in a way that provokes an individual, rather than a collective, reaction from the second generation. I hope to have illuminated the works discussed in such a way as to demonstrate how this is specifically achieved through the forms of the works themselves, which, by deconstructing the boundaries of conventional representation, bring the reader into the space of the in-between and, by invoking the realm of the known, pull the reader into the unknown moments of horror and humour alike.

I would hope for the need for artists to be encouraged in finding new ways to represent, in order that the emerging third generation does not forget.

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