SPOTLIGHT OF HITLER:
NEVER-ENDING TRAUMA IN ART SPIEGELMAN’S GRAPHIC NOVEL
MAUS

Abstract

Art Spiegelman is one of the world’s prominent graphic novelists. He published autobiographical two-volume book Maus A Survivor’s Tale I: My Father Bleeds History in 1986 and Maus A Survivor’s Tale II: And Here My Troubles Began in 1991, and then combined them in a single book in 2003. In these books, he tells his own ‘trauma’ of ‘holocaust’ within his father’s, Vladek who survived Hitler’s death camp Auschwitz. He uses animals for his characters and draws Jews as mice, and Nazis as cats. Additionally, he depicts Poles as pigs, Americans as dogs, British as fish, Gypsies as moths, and Swedes as reindeer. By using interesting chapter titles and metaphors, he successfully tells how ‘holocaust’ affected him. One of his strong metaphors is the spotlight that seen throughout the novel which is interpreted here as Hitler’s torch that projected onto victims, survivors and even their sons and daughters. Obviously, Spiegelman wants to stress that for survivors and their children, forgetting ‘holocaust’ and living without it is impossible. This paper studies the never-ending trauma through metaphors and characters in the above-mentioned graphic novel.

Keywords: Art Spiegelman, Graphic Novel, Holocaust, Trauma
HİTLER'İN SPOT IŞIĞI: ART SPIEGELMAN'IN GRAFİK ROMANI MAUS'TA HİÇ BİTMEMEYEN TRAVMA

Öz


Anahtar kelimeler: Art Spiegelman, Grafik Roman, Holokost, Travma

Now, if one were to determine what attribute the German people share with a beast, it would be the cunning and the predatory instinct of a hawk. But if one were to determine what attributes the Jews share with a beast, it would be that of the rat. The Führer and Goebbels’ propaganda have said pretty much the same thing...

-Col. Hans Landa

Introduction

It would be best to start with defining the terms ‘trauma’ and ‘holocaust’, and set their connection in this article. According to The Oxford English Dictionary, ‘trauma’ is “a psychic injury, especially one caused by emotional shock the memory of which is repressed and remains unhealed; an internal injury, especially to the brain, which may result in a behavioural disorder of organic origin” (1989, p. 441). As this article’s title may suggest, this ‘emotional shock’ is ‘holocaust’, and in The Oxford English Dictionary again, ‘holocaust’ is defined as “complete consumption by fire, or that which is so consumed; complete destruction, especially of a large number of persons, a great slaughter of massacre” (1989, p. 315). These two words have been used since the Second World War in order to mean ‘the extermination of Jews in the war’. Spiegelman terms this ‘trauma’ as “the central trauma of the twentieth century” (Dreifus, 1989, p. 34).

1 The character played by Christoph Waltz in Quentin Tarantino’s Inglorius Basterds, 2009.
For Hitler, “the Jewish community was only a useful enemy so as to unite and clamp the supporters around the party strongly” (Aslan, 2017, p. 378). During the World War II, Hitler exterminated millions of Jews. Calling it ‘the Final Solution’, he put them into concentration camps and gas chambers. One of the worst of the camps was Auschwitz. In *Understanding the Nazi Genocide*, Enzo Traverso states that “Auschwitz is anti-Semitism: not so much Hitler’s anti-Semitism, but above all and essentially the Germans’ anti-Semitism” (1999, p. 92). According to him, every German is responsible of this genocide.

Like Traverso, Theodor Adorno underlines the fact that “to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric” (Adorno, 1981, p. 18). Adorno, to some extent, is right since literature and arts give pleasure to people and reading a novel about genocide might be enjoyable without thinking about the sufferings of witnesses and survivors of the ‘holocaust’ as “representing the horrible events of ‘Jewish Genocide’ could change the meaning of it into a domesticated, familiar and even tolerable form by shearing away part of the horror” (Howe, 1989, p. 182). If there should be a respectful silence about ‘holocaust’, who has the right to speak? (Witek, 1989, p. 98). Spiegelman, as a quasi-response to this, published a ‘graphic novel’ which tells a ‘holocaust story’. If writing a poem after Auschwitz means barbarism, what should a ‘graphic novel’, which uses animals instead of humans for its narrative, mean?

This paper analyses Art Spiegelman’s *Maus*, in which he tells the story of his father who survived Holocaust, in terms of trauma by referring to some important motives in the book.

**Narrating Reality via Commix**

‘Comic books’ or ‘graphic novels’ are, to some extent, more powerful than normal books or novels since they integrate words and pictures into a more flexible literary form which enable writers to use wide range of narrative effects (Witek, 1989, p. 3). Spiegelman abstains from using ‘comics’ because of its ‘childish’ connotation. He says that “the very word comics ‘brings to mind the notion that they have to be funny’, rather than comics, I prefer the word ‘commix’, to mix together, because to talk about comics is to talk about mixing together words and pictures to tell a story” (Spiegelman, 1988, p. 63). About Spiegelman’s using comics to draw Holocaust, Marianne Hirsch points out the problematic representation of it:

Spiegelman’s use of photographs in his hand-drawn text raises not only the question of how, forty years after Adorno’s dictum, the ‘holocaust’ can be represented, but also how different media –comics, photographs, narrative, testimony- can interact with each other to produce a more permeable and multiple text that may recast the problematic of Holocaust representation and definitively eradicate any clear-cut distinction between the documentary and the aesthetic (1993, p. 11).

Spiegelman encountered another problem when the first volume of the book, *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale*, subtitled *My Father Bleeds History* was published in 1986. It made a splash in America, won a ‘special’ Pulitzer Prize in 1992, drew worldwide attention as ‘the Holocaust comic’ (Witek, 1989, p. 96) but brought a classification problem together. In 1991, when his book gained a ranking in *New York Times* bestseller list of fiction, Spiegelman wrote a letter to tell them that it was not a fiction and he made them move *Maus* over to nonfiction list. He published his second volume, *Maus II: A Survivor’s Tale and Here My Troubles Began* in 1991.
Both two volumes have been translated into sixteen languages and there are nearly 400,000 copies in print (LaCapra, 1998, p. 140).

Art Spiegelman tells his own story within the story of his father, Vladek, who, with Spiegelman’s mother Anja, survived the Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz, and lost nearly all of his relatives and his son, Richieu. Maus is not a biography of Art Spiegelman’s father, Vladek; it is an autobiography of Spiegelman’s himself. Joshua Brown says that “Maus is an oral history account and also an account of an oral history. Vladek’s history is framed and often disrupted by the relationship between the teller and the interviewer” (1993, p. 1669). It is very obvious that Maus is an autobiography because it does not begin with Vladek; instead, it begins with one of Spiegelman’s painful memories about his childhood. He, with two of his friends, plays ‘rotten egg’, and he falls down and his friends leave him alone (Spiegelman, 2003, pp. 5-6). These two pages, at the very beginning of the book, are first prominent means of evidence that it is an autobiography of Art Spiegelman’s, and he says in this context that “Maus is not what happened in the past, but rather what the son understands of the father’s story... [It is] an autobiographical history of my relationship with my father, a survivor of the Nazi death camps, cast with cartoon animals” (1988, p. 196). It is seen on the last page of the book that Spiegelman ends his book by signing under Vladek and Anja’s tombstones together with the dates ‘1978- 1991’ (Spiegelman, 2003, p. 296). This period is the writing time of the two volumes and it signifies that this book is an autobiography and Artie fulfilled the duty of telling their ‘holocaust’.

Spiegelman tries his best to be totally realistic from the very beginning of the novel. He says on the last page of chapter one:

Vladek: But this what I just told you- about Lucia and so- I don’t want you should write this in your book.
Artie: What? Why not?
Vladek: It has nothing to do with Hitler, with the holocaust!
Artie: But Pop, it’s great material. It makes everything more ‘real’ more ‘human’. I want to tell your story, the way it ‘really’ happened.
Vladek: But this isn’t so proper, so respectful. I can tell you other stories, but such private things, I don’t want you should mention.

What makes this ‘comic book’ more ‘real’ and more ‘human’ is Artie’s not keeping his promise. Spiegelman uses maps, sketches, photographs to make it reliable. He never takes a side or blames the others who were responsible for this awful tragedy, always stay ‘neutral’. In an interview with National Public Radio in 1986, he says that “One of the things that was important to me in Maus was to make it all true” (as cited in Witek, 1989, p. 102). To emphasize the remained pains and sufferings of ‘holocaust’, Spiegelman uses capital letters when he tells his father’s story, and prefers small letters for his own story. Each chapter begins and ends in today, and between them, he makes Vladek talk about his story. This makes chapters like ‘therapeutic interventions’ during which the reader, the survivor and his son are taken back to the time of pain and difficulty but then returned, safely, to the present (Banner, 2000, p. 138). Art Spiegelman wants to write in a chronological order and warns his father that “Wait! Please Dad. If you don’t keep your story chronological, I’ll never get it straight... Tell me more about 1941 and
Hitler’ in Spot Işığı: Art Spiegelman’ in Grafik Romanı Maus’ta Hiç Bitmeyen Travma

1942” (Spiegelman, 2003, p. 84). For a ‘perfect realism’, when he learns that Vladek has already burned Anja’s diaries, he even shouts at his father that “God damn you! You, you murderer! How the hell could you do such a thing!!” (Spiegelman, 2003, p. 161).

Bestial Representations, Real Characters

Art Spiegelman uses animals instead of human beings to tell his ‘holocaust’ story. He portrays Jews as mice, and Nazis as cats. Additionally, he depicts Poles as pigs, Americans as dogs, British as fish, Gypsies as moths, and Swedes as reindeer. Both two volumes have ironical quotations. In *Maus I*, there is an epitaph by Hitler which says that “The Jews are undoubtedly a race but they are not human” (Spiegelman, 2003, p. 10), and in *Maus II*, there is a quotation from a newspaper article from Pomerania, Germany of the mid-1930s, which says that “…Away with Jewish brutalization of the people! Down with Mickey Mouse! Wear the Swastika Cross!” (Spiegelman, 2003, p. 164). Bearing these quotations in mind, he feels and believes that a human being cannot do such a ‘horrible holocaust’, they must be animals and it is a disgrace of humanity. Spiegelman, when he was asked in an interview, summarizes very briefly why he uses animals:

> If one draws this kind of stuff with people, it comes out wrong. And the way it comes out wrong is, first of all, I’ve never lived through anything like that –knock on whatever is around to knock on- and it would be counterfeit to try to pretend that the drawings are representations of something that’s actually happening. I don’t know what a German looked like who was in a specific small town doing a specific thing. My notions are born of a few score of photographs and a couple of movies. I’m bound to do something inauthentic.

> Also, I’m afraid that if I did it with people, it would be very corny. It would come out as some kind of odd plea for sympathy or “Remember the six Million,” and that wasn’t my point exactly, either. To use these ciphers, the cats and mice, is actually a way to allow you past the cipher at the people who are experiencing it. So, it’s really a much more direct way of dealing with the material. (as cited in Witek, 1989, p. 102)

Spiegelman obviously thinks that events are more important than people and uses animals instead of humans. If this depiction is considered in regards of ‘power relation’, it is easily understood that ‘mice’ are the enemies of ‘cats’ and ‘dogs’ hate ‘cats’, and also the ‘extermination of mice’ by the enemy ‘cats’ is seen in some chapter titles such as ‘Mouse Holes’, ‘Mouse Trap’, and ‘Mauschwitz’ (Witek, 1989, p. 112). Joseph Witek points out that “…the Jews and Nazis are mice and cats only in relation to each other; the metaphor is a way of seeing humans, not a literal characterization” (1989, p. 112). It is completely true and this truth is seen when Anja sees real rats:

> Anja: There are rats down here!
> Vladek: Shh, calm down, stop screaming. Those aren’t rats. They’re very small. One ran over my hand before. They’re just mice!
> Of course, it was really rats. But I wanted Anja to feel more easy (Spiegelman, 2003, p.149).
And also, Spiegelman does not draw her French wife, Francoise, as a frog, he depicts her as a mouse like himself (2003, p. 171). So, it might be said that he uses the animal metaphor to evoke general associations of predation, extermination, and bestiality, not to assign a set of allegorical meanings to his text (Witek, 1989, p. 114). Additionally, Spiegelman portrays himself as a human when he is ‘real author’ not Artie in the chapters ‘Time Flies’ and ‘The Prisoner on the Hell Planet’. There is an identity problem in the novel because sometimes Spiegelman portrays them in masks, for example, Jews wear pig masks when they pass for Poles (2003, p. 140), Artie uses a mouse mask when he is in a television interview, and the interviewers also wear masks (2003, p. 202), and it is not clear if there are human faces beneath the masks (LaCapra, 1998, p. 163). The animals feel themselves like real human beings, for example, Mandelbaum says that “…I hold onto my bowl and my shoe falls down. I pick up the shoe and my pants fall down...But what can I do? I only have two hands!” (Spiegelman, 2003, p. 189).

Vladek, Art’s father, as the protagonist of the book, symbolizes the survivors of the ‘holocaust’. Spiegelman depicts him as a self-centred, obsessive and money-conscious man, and reader might think him as a ‘fictitious’ character until he is seen in a souvenir photograph. He wears a camp uniform, and in the frame next to this photograph he says that “I passed once a photo place what had a camp uniform- a new and clean one- to make souvenir photos” (2003, p. 294). People generally have their photographs taken in order to signify that they have this experience, in other words to say that ‘We went to that city, we saw that castle...’ In this photograph, Vladek makes himself into the hero of his own story, the commander of his own destiny and a portrait of repression of ‘holocaust’ is seen here (Budick, 2001, p. 389). Dominick LaCapra underlines the fact that he is a difficult character since he is a victim who must be respected but he is not likable (1998, p. 170).

At the very beginning of the novel, Spiegelman draws his father Vladek as an ‘unconcerned’ father. In the prologue, which takes place in Rego Park in 1958, when his little son, Artie, comes to his father crying, Vladek does not give a pause to his work and neglects his eye drops and says that “Artie! Come to hold this a minute while I saw” (Spiegelman, 2003, p. 6). He is opportunist and pragmatic before and after the war throughout the book. He breaks up with Lucia, his girlfriend, to get married to a rich girl, Anja. When he is invited to dinner by Anja’s parents, he goes to check her room, he sees pills and says that “But what’s this- pills?!...If she was sick, then what did I need it for?” (Spiegelman, 2003, p. 21). He even pays just one dollar for six dollars’ worth of food and tells how he deceives the manager of the store that “He helped me as soon as I explained to him my health, how Male left me, and how it was in the camps” (Spiegelman, 2003, p. 250). When they take a ‘black guy’ into the car, driving to home from the supermarket, Vladek gets angry with this situation and begins to use bad words in ‘Polish’. Francoise, maybe on behalf of all the readers, utters the discontent against Vladek by saying that “That’s outrageous! How can you, of all people, be such a racist! You talk about blacks the way the Nazis talked about the Jews” (Spiegelman, 2003, p. 259).

In addition to the characters in the novel, the two volumes have also ‘interesting’ chapter titles. For instance, the first chapter’s title of the first volume is The Sheik, which is a 1921 silent movie. Vladek likens himself to Rudolph Valentino, the actor in this movie, and says in front of the movie poster that “People always told me I looked just like Rudolph Valentino” (Spiegelman, 2003, p. 15). The second chapter’s title is The Honeymoon. It is impossible that the honeymoon is for Vladek and Anja because they have already got married and even have a baby. In this regard, Gillian Banner stresses the point that ‘honeymoon’ refers ironically to the period
between Hitler’s takeover of power in Germany and the effects upon the population in Poland of German policies towards the Jews (2000, p. 137). Honeymoon, normally for a marriage, is the beginning and here it is used here for a new era. It is seen that in this chapter, they see a Nazi flag for the first time and Vladek tells how it is:

Right away, we went. The sanatorium was inside Czechoslovakia, one of the most expensive and beautiful in the world. I remembered when we were almost arrived, we passed a small town. Everybody, every Jew from the train, got very excited and frightened. It was the beginning of 1938 - before the war - hanging high in the centre of town; it was a Nazi flag... One fellow told us of his cousin what was living in Germany... He had to sell his business to a German and run out from the country without even the money. It was very hard there for the Jews, terrible! Another fellow told us of a relative in Brandenberg. The police came to his house and no one heard again from him. It was many, many such stories, synagogues burned, Jews beaten with no reason, whole towns pushing out all Jews, each story worse than the other. Let’s hope those Nazi gangsters get thrown out of power. Just pray that they don’t start a war (Spiegelman, 2003, pp. 34-35).

Also, Spiegelman calls the last chapter of the second volume as The Second Honeymoon. In this chapter, ‘honeymoon’ means happiness. In today’s narrative, Mala and Vladek reunifies, and Vladek agrees to move to Florida, and in regards of past’s narrative, Anja and Vladek come together again.

**Trauma that Never Ends**

One of the most important themes in the book is ‘trauma and memories’, and how they are ‘transferred’ into this day. One, without opening the book, can understand this ‘transfer’ by just looking at the back cover of the book. There are two maps; one is divided Poland of World War II, the country in which Vladek survived the ‘holocaust’, and the other is today’s Rego Park, New York, in which Vladek lives. Artie and his father Vladek are seen like talking about a ‘very serious thing’, and Spiegelman, knowingly and willingly, draws these two maps together with ‘father and son’ image in order to underline the fact that ‘holocaust’ still survive today. Also, in the prologue, Spiegelman depicts himself, little son Artie, as a crying boy and this suggest that the impact of the ‘holocaust’ may have fallen more heavily on the son of the survivor rather than on the survivor (Banner, 2000, p. 136). As James Young says, Spiegelman does not attempt to represent events he never knew immediately, but instead portrays his necessarily hyper-mediated experience of the memory of events (1998, p. 669).

In the novel, there are two Vladek; one is the man who survived the ‘holocaust’, the other is the man who tells his survival to his son. Two physical manifestations of the same character, young versus old, seem to be an ideal method for demarcating the differences between ‘holocaust’ experience and the contemporary lives of the survivor and his son (McGlothlin, 2006, p. 67). Artie has a ‘ghost’ brother, called Richiue, who was killed in ‘genocide’. Throughout the novel, a portrait of him is seen on the wall of his father, Vladek’s bedroom, and the last sentence of both Vladek and the novel is that “I’m tired from talking, Richiue, and it is enough stories for now...” (Spiegelman, 2003, p. 296). It is one of the most important evidence that ‘trauma’ never ends and one cannot easily forget his ‘memories. Helen Epstein puts forth that “a parent, who is a survivor of the ‘holocaust’, is frequently incapable of connecting with his or her children because of unresolved grief over lost ones, because of survivor guilt and because of a psychologi-
cal block or lack of affect” (1988, p. 92). And according to Spiegelman, ‘being a child of survivors’ is that

You grow up as a survivor kid... You are playing baseball or whatever and you break a window and then your mother or father says “Ach, for this I survived?” ... I was in rebellion against my parents from an early age and had a very difficult time coming to terms with them (as cited in Staub, 1995, p. 40).

The most traumatic event in the novel is the suicide of Anja. This shows the reality and result of ‘never-ending trauma’. Spiegelman illustrates this event in four-page comic strip, Prisoner on the Hell Planet: A Case History, and puts it into Maus (2003, pp. 102-105). He uses here real humans, not animals. This section is much darker than the rest of the book. For the first time, a photograph of his mother and himself is seen in this section which was taken in Trojan Lake in 1958. He wears stripped pyjamas, like a Jew in a concentration camp, and he is put into a mental hospital, and accuses his mother of murdering him by killing herself. In the second frame of this chapter, he is seen as a suspect under a spotlight, and behind him there is a growth chart, and he says that “In 1968, when I was 20, my mother killed herself. She left no note!” (Spiegelman, 2003, p. 102). In these following two frames, Spiegelman gives specific dates, 1958 and 1968, a ten-year gap, and wants to show the fact of ‘growing’ by standing in front of that growth chart. In spite of ‘becoming a mature’, he cannot still forget ‘holocaust’ which he hasn’t survived. His stay in the mental hospital indicates that “Art has been damaged by the ‘holocaust’, and the Nazis continue to torture Jews a generation after the fall of the Third Reich” (Witek, 1989, p. 101). In the last frame, Arthur – Spiegelman calls himself as Arthur in this chapter – blames her mother by saying that “... Congratulations!... You’ve committed the perfect crime... You put me here... Shorted all my circuits... Cut my nerve endings... And crossed my wires!...”, and in the meantime, another man in the ‘mental hospital, says that “Pipe down, Mac! Some of us are trying to sleep!” (2003, p. 105). According to Macmillan Dictionary, Mac is “used when talking to a man whose name you do not know” (2017). The man, who wants to sleep, and Arthur do not know each other but since they are in the same ‘mental hospital’, it can be said that they are the prisoners of ‘holocaust’, and he wants to forget the ‘memories of holocaust’ for a while by sleeping. Besides, that Arthur is not alone in this ‘mental hospital underlines the fact that there are not ‘a few traumatic people’ and this holocaust story is not just Spiegelmans’.

Spotlight of Hitler

One of the most important images used in the novel is ‘spotlight’. Although, from the beginning to the end, this ‘spotlight’ is often seen in the book, just a few critics pay attention to this image. One of them is Gillian Banner. She suggests that “this light may have a metaphorical relationship with the ‘holocaust’” (2000, p. 142). I, here, add to Banner’s comment about this ‘spotlight’ that it is the cursed torch of ‘unseen’ Hitler which he holds on the characters, especially on Vladek. This spotlight is used as a metaphor of the fear and the ‘unending holocaust trauma’. Hitler is never seen in the novel except for the front cover. He is seen here in the centre of the ‘spotlight’ together with a swastika. In front of this Nazi flag, there are Vladek and Anja, two survivors of the ‘Jewish genocide’. Spiegelman depicts Hitler as a skull. Hitler is dead, survivors are still alive but they have Hitler; in other words, ‘never ending trauma’ is behind them.

In the novel, this ‘spotlight’ is seen not only before the war but also during and even after the war. In the first volume, under the title of My Father Bleeds History, Vladek and Anya dance
in front of a white and blank ‘spotlight’ before the war (2003, p. 9), and in the first chapter, The Sheik, Spiegelman draws Vladek when he tries to get rid of Lucia in front of a blank ‘spotlight’ (2003, p. 11). For the first time, the ‘spotlight’ is filled with a swastika and becomes a Nazi flag in chapter two, The Honeymoon (2003, p. 27). In this chapter, Jews are beaten under this ‘spotlight’ Nazi flag (2003, p. 35), and Vladek and Anja dance in front of the ‘spotlight’ when they are in sanatorium (2003, p. 37). In the third chapter, Prisoner of War, Spiegelman draws Vladek with a blank ‘spotlight’ as if he tries to carry it on his back (2003, p. 45), and when Vladek reunifies with his wife, there is a ‘spotlight’ behind them (2003, p. 68). There is a very ironic frame in the chapter five, Mouse Holes. Nazis come to the cellar to find the Jews and use ‘real torches’, but they fail to hold ‘real spotlight’ on them (2003, p. 113). In the sixth chapter, Mouse Trap, there is a ‘spotlight’ behind Vladek and Anja, and they are seen on a mouse trap with long shadows (2003, p. 131). If the light comes from a long distance, shadows become longer, and indeed, Vladek and Anja move away from their ‘fear of getting caught anytime’ for a while by leaving Srodula for Sosnowiec. In the last chapter of the second volume, The Second Honeymoon, the ‘spotlight’ is seen again. In front of it, there is a city from today’s world, a plane in the sky, and a palm tree (2003, p. 279). The plane may signify the transference of the ‘trauma’ into a new city, and also Vladek and Anja come to the USA by plane from Sweden. The palm tree may have a connotation with silence, comfort and peace, and for this reason, the existence of the ‘spotlight’ here underlines the fact that ‘holocaust’ never ends. On the last page of the book, there is the last ‘spotlight’ when Anja and Vladek embrace each other (2003, p. 296). Vladek, in front of the ‘spotlight’ says that “More I don’t need to tell you. We were both very happy, and lived happy, happy ever after” (2003, p. 296). But two frames below, the tombstone of Vladek and Anja is seen; therefore, it means no more ‘spotlight’ since they do not live anymore.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Art Spiegelman writes an autobiographical two-volume book, Maus and tells his own ‘trauma’ of ‘holocaust’ together with his father, Vladek. In an interview, he says that “It is one of the banes of so-called Holocaust literature that when you are reading it you hear violins in the background, and a soft, mournful chorus sobbing” (as cited in Witek, 1989, p. 102). Since he does not want to do the same things that have already been done, he chooses animals for his ‘commix’ book, and gains a very good popularity. He seeks reality; even he addresses his own father, Vladek, as ‘murderer’ since he burns his mother Anja’s dairies. By using interesting chapter titles and images, he succeeds in both entertaining his readers and push them into thinking deeply about ‘holocaust’. His main aim in this novel is, obviously, to prove that for survivors and their sons and daughters, forgetting ‘holocaust’ and living without it is impossible.

He shows the fact that ‘holocaust’ is writeable ‘after Auschwitz’ although Adorno says that it is barbarism. In fact, he invalidates this argument by using his father photograph. Vladek says that “I passed once a photo place what had a camp uniform, a new and clean one, to make souvenir photos...” (2003, p. 294). If even a survivor of Auschwitz has a ‘souvenir’ photograph taken, ignores completely his painful memories, and derides his ‘holocaust past’ by putting himself into his old concentration camp stripped pyjamas, how can poetry mean barbarism after Auschwitz?
REFERENCES


