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Declaration of Authenticity

I confirm to have conceived and written this paper in English all by myself. Quotations from other authors and any ideas borrowed and/or passages paraphrased from the works of other authors are all clearly marked within the text and acknowledged in the bibliographical references.

Signature

Abstract

Using a comic in order to teach the Holocaust in an EFL classroom might be considered to be unusual. This thesis however, is intended to prove that the use of a comic like *The Complete Maus* by Art Spiegelman can serve as a useful tool in order to teach the Holocaust applying CLIL as the methodological framework. To show that this is a valid approach to the Holocaust as well as working with the medium comic I considered national (Austrian) and international concepts approaching Holocaust Education. Austria's role during the World War was ambivalent and the development of a national Holocaust Education has been problematic. This year, the whole world celebrated the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. At the same time, anti-Semitic attacks all over Europe are hitting Jewish institutions. This is one reason why Holocaust Education is so important and why teachers must take responsibility to make their students aware of what has happened and what consequences these happenings caused. The effects are still visible in our society today. The graphic novel, that is introduced in this thesis to assist teachers and students, in order to deal with the Holocaust in an unusual way, was written by Art Spiegelman and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1992. The story about Vladek, an Auschwitz survivor who tells his story to his son Art, can have a major impact on Holocaust Education in the EFL classroom as it fosters discussions, makes aware of the ramifications of the Holocaust, encourages the involvement with one's own (family) history, initiates the acquisition of media competences as multimodal skills are developed and draws students' attention to historical facts about the Holocaust. All in all, the main aim of this thesis is to argue for the usage of *Maus* in the EFL classroom.

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Abbreviations

AHS – Allgemein bildende höhere Schulen

BHS – Berufsbildende höhere Schulen

FPÖ – Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (Austrian Freedom Party)

ITF – Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research

IHRA – International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance

DÖW – Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes

bm:bwk – Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur (2000-2007)

bmukk – Bundesministerium für Kunst und Kultur (2007-2014)

BMBF – Bildungsministerium für Bildung und Frauen (seit 1. März 2014)

NSDAP – Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei

PEGIDA – Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes

1 Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to point out that a Holocaust comic like *Maus – A Survivor's Tale* by Art Spiegelman, is a valid resource for teaching English as a foreign language.

Using a comic in order to teach the Holocaust is an unusual method. In fact, dealing with any comic in the school context is an uncommon practice, although comics are used in a wide range of exercise books with a supporting function. However, using a graphic novel in order to acquire language skills, social competence as well as historical expertise is a rather different approach since comics are often considered to be a minor medium of literacy and not worth examining in an academic way. This has changed during the last 20 years. An event that contributed to this valorisation was the awarding for the Pulitzer Prize in 1992 of *Maus – A Survivor's Tale* by Art Spiegelman. *Maus* is a graphic novel that operates on various levels, depicting the author creating the comic.

Maus comprises numerous themes and relevant issues but the main topic is the Holocaust. The importance of Holocaust Education was elaborated by the German philosopher Theodor Adorno in 1966 in his speech "Education after Auschwitz" where he claimed that not only it must be prevented, at all costs, that Auschwitz will ever happen again, but that a concise Holocaust Education is strongly needed. Holocaust Education can happen anywhere, in museums, in exhibitions, etc. but as a teacher we have the responsibility for approaching the Holocaust at school. Naturally, it is believed that this topic is bound to be taught in History classes but as this thesis will prove, it is absolutely necessary to work on it in various subjects. I strongly argue to make the Holocaust a subject of address in language classes as it offers multiple controversial discussion topics that are relevant for students today including racism and integration. The importance of such topics cannot be more relevant to the current situation than today. Holocaust Education attempts to make students aware of the impact the Holocaust had on history and points out the relevance for today. Apparently, dealing with the Holocaust is not an easy task. It is difficult to balance the need for personal involvement against an essential distance to the topic. Teachers have to face plentiful challenges when applying Holocaust pedagogy in their classrooms so that they have to prepare carefully in order to avoid overloading themselves or their students.

Holocaust Education has evolved in numerous international approaches. While scholars in the US or Israel are much more eager to account for the past, in Austria and Germany there is more restraint attitude towards research about the Holocaust. It took Austria a long time to start investigating the role it played in the Holocaust. The founding of the DÖW (Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes) in 1963 however, attempted to change this restraint attitude. Many scholars like Werner Dreier, who promotes Holocaust Education in Austria as he runs the project “erinnern.at” of the BMUKK, have contributed to the work of the DÖW. Nevertheless, during the last decade it has become noticeable that some Austrian students are not dealing with the past as intended by Holocaust Education. Various incidents involving statements of political parties still show a soft-line approach with the right-wing scene. This thesis calls for a responsible approach towards Holocaust Education in Austrian schools in any subject but especially in language subjects. Within the CLIL methodology a topic like the Holocaust can provide numerous opportunities to learn a language embedded in the communicative approach.

In my opinion, the combination of comics and Holocaust seems to be a beneficial mixture to be applied in the EFL classroom. This is also due to the marvellous work of Art Spiegelman, who created a piece of Holocaust literature that is absolutely valuable and suitable in the classroom because of its complex scheme, its portrayal of the manifold characters and its detailed depiction of the persecution and destruction of Jews. The use of postmodern techniques such as reflexive chapters of the animal metaphor add to the impression that a comic is not necessarily a simplified piece of literature but, on the contrary, that it needs a high level of literacy in order to be able to read a multimodal text such as *Maus*.

This thesis is basically divided into three parts. Part I outlines the concept of Holocaust Education. In chapter 2, I will explain the term Holocaust, as well as Holocaust Education and will then draw attention to the importance of it in the school context. The applications of this approach in schools, as well as the challenges teachers have to face, are discussed in detail. Holocaust Education in Austria is introduced in chapter 3. It contains Austria’s Holocaust Education development, the investigation of the national curriculum and a discussion about certain challenges and difficulties that emerge specifically in this country. Furthermore, Holocaust Education is brought into the

classroom by investigating in how far Holocaust plays an important role in the curriculum for English as a Second language and the very last section of this chapter deals with the CLIL methodology which legitimises teaching the Holocaust in an EFL classroom. The 4th chapter the relationship of the Holocaust and literature is briefly touched upon. The next section examines the comic in terms of its history and also provides a short outline of the comic-terminology. In this thesis I decided to use the term comic and graphic novel in order to talk about *Maus* or the usage of the medium. The terminology of comics and graphic novels, comic books, however, is explicitly discussed in section 4.2.2. Furthermore, historical comics and their benefits for students are laid out. Finally, typology and classification of Holocaust comics are being discussed.

Part II analyses the most important aspects about *Maus* that might be relevant for the EFL classroom. First of all, a brief introduction of the comic is given. It gives insights about the author's life and provides a short summary. The next section deals with *Maus* as a comic, explaining special narrative and visual techniques that contribute to the greatness of *Maus*. The most crucial aspects that will be discussed in this thesis according to its suitability in the EFL classrooms include "Identity", "Languages in *Maus*", and "Limits of Representation". Identity comprises not only a detailed discussion about the animal metaphor, but also a character study of the protagonists and their relationship. Furthermore, it investigates the aftermaths of the Holocaust and its consequences for other generations. As languages play an essential role in *Maus*, I believe that it is an appropriate topic to be studied in an EFL class. The section "Languages in *Maus*" deals with the importance of languages regarding their functions in terms of survival and deception but also makes migration and integration a subject of interest. The final section of the analysis deals with the limits of representation which include textual as well as graphical aspects. Finally, the end of *Maus* is addressed in the last section of the analysis.

Part III connects Part I and Part II and applies to Holocaust Education and the comic book in the EFL classroom. This last part strongly argues for the application of *Maus* in the EFL classroom with a CLIL methodology. Considering *Maus* in the classroom, there are various aspects that are beneficial for students ranging from acquiring social competences, language skills and historical expertise. Various activities are suggested

in Part II but the focus is to outline the competences students will develop if *Maus* is the basis for Holocaust Education in the EFL classroom.

In this thesis, all bold words alongside with all stresses and emphasises, are quoted like in the original, if not stated otherwise.

Part I

2 Holocaust Education

“The objective of teaching any subject is to engage the intellectual curiosity of students in order to inspire critical thought and personal growth” (IHRA). Especially in Holocaust Education this statement is true. The critical thought and the self development seem to be the ultimate learning objectives. However, there is far more to explore about the concept of Holocaust Education. The various aspects of this special pedagogical issue will be laid out in the following chapter.

In the light of current events such as the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz on January 27th 2015, it can be assumed that there is an awakening interest in the topic Holocaust. This new interest is reflected by the increasing availability of Holocaust Literature. The authenticity of movies and documentaries contribute to the fact that Holocaust representations have recently been well-received by the audience which also includes Holocaust survivors. Hence, high qualitative material makes it easier for teachers and students to access the topic Holocaust nowadays. In addition the global occurrence of xenophobia and racism emphasises the urgency and importance of this topic ever since (Lenga, 52). This thought goes along with the sustaining anti-Semitism which can still be found in our society. Although it is the state’s responsibility to cater for a society, which is not shaped by defamation and sedition, and although school as an institution is not solely accountable, it is still in charge of educating students about the ongoing anti-Semitism on a societal and political basis. Werner Dreier (*Antisemitismus*, 168f.), who is responsible for the platform *erinnern.at: Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust: Gedächtnis und Gegenwart* which organises workshops for teachers and students and provides material for Holocaust Education in Austrian schools, suggests three learning objectives which are the basis for a Holocaust Education that fosters fighting anti-Semitism.

Firstly, it is essential to learn about Jewish culture and appreciate it. Secondly, and for this thesis most important, it is vital to study the persecution of Jewish people and object to it. Lastly, Dreier proposes to recognise the abnormality of anti-Semitism and racism in general and to overcome it. These objectives do not only require teachers and students to learn facts but rather they suggest a discourse of values and a development of a socially responsible behaviour in order to shape historical consciousness (see Dreier, *Antisemitismus*, 169). In other words Holocaust Education includes the

prevention of anti-Semitism in Dreier's opinion and only then can students develop critical thinking about the Holocaust itself. While I appreciate this approach I also believe that it is not enough to limit the learning objectives to the prevention of anti-Semitism but to enlarge the aim to fight racism in any context. Racism and xenophobia are relevant topics in our society so that students must be assisted to develop awareness for minorities in today's society. It is vital to discuss contradictory topics such as stereotypes and the practices of racism which are still dominant today. Holocaust Education and fighting any form of racism go hand in hand. However, there are far more aspects about Holocaust Education which will be discussed in the following sections.

2.1 What is the Holocaust?

The Holocaust, [...] is defined as the sum total of all anti-Jewish actions carried out by the Nazi regime between 1933 and 1945: from stripping the German Jews of their legal and economic status in the 1930s; segregating and starvation in the various occupied countries; the murder of close to six million Jews in Europe (Yad Vashem)

Although "[p]olitical and historical factors [...] influence each country's definition of the Holocaust" (Balodimas-Bartolomei, 31) and this thesis is written in an Austrian context, I stay with the definition given above by the Yad Vashem, the World Center for Documentation, Research, Education and Commemoration of the Holocaust. The terms Holocaust (greek: 'burnt offering') and Shoah (Hebrew: 'extinction', 'catastrophe') are used respectively in order to describe the genocide of Jews as well as the horrors of Auschwitz.

Furthermore, the Holocaust is also described as being "part of a broader aggregate of acts of oppression and murder of various ethnical and political groups in Europe by the Nazis" (Yad Vashem). The Hebrew word Shoah is used equivalently. As mentioned above, there are various interpretations of "Shoah" and "Holocaust" so that these two words in this thesis refer to the persecution of European Jews during the National-Socialist era.

In terms of defining the events that lead to the murder and persecution of Jews, Lindquist (*Instructional Approach*, 118) points out that "studying the Shoah does not necessarily lead to definitive conclusions about why it occurred or what meaning, if any, can be made of it". This suggests that the Holocaust as such is hard to grasp in any sense. Nevertheless, Holocaust Education aims at educating students of any age in

order to learn something about the Holocaust and its contemporary relevance in terms of advancing knowledge about the event, memorising the suffering and reflecting upon the implications of the Holocaust. The question of why Holocaust Education is important and should be an inherent part of any national curriculum will be discussed in the following section.

2.2 The importance of Holocaust Education

Holocaust Education deals with the concept of teaching the Holocaust in a pedagogical, didactical, and reflected way within or without a school context. Thus, Holocaust Education is a broad term for various ways of imparting knowledge about the Holocaust. It does not follow strict guidelines but it is commonly defined as a discourse concerning teaching about the extermination of Jews during the Second World War (see Peham & Rajal, 40). For the purpose of this paper it is necessary to add that Holocaust Education is not only a way of learning *about* the Holocaust but that it also includes gaining certain insights and objectives. In other words, it is not enough to learn *about* the Holocaust but to learn *from* the Holocaust. These learning objectives reach from supporting a democratic and non-prejudicial way of thinking to preventing the happening of any kind of genocide ever again (see Balodimas-Bartolomei, 2).

Adding to that, according to Lindquist (*Necessary Holocaust Pedagogy*, 21) it is crucial for teachers to comprehend that they are not only supposed to teach the Holocaust but to *confront* students with it. The way of thinking about teaching the Holocaust as an example which is never to happen again was reasoned by Adorno's concept of "Education after Auschwitz"¹. This concept includes Adorno's premier demand upon all education which states that what happened in Auschwitz is not to be repeated under any circumstances (see Adorno in Tiedemann, 48). Adorno claims that Education after Auschwitz is not necessarily something to be done for the first time at school but Holocaust Education can already take place within early childhood education. Children should be provided with universal enlightenment so that they can integrate themselves into a responsible society that will not allow Auschwitz ever again (see Adorno in Tiedemann, 51). Therefore, it is essential that Holocaust Education is not limited to the school context but it must be installed to concern every member of society. However, I believe that only if students are encouraged to get involved in

¹ „Erziehung nach Auschwitz“

Holocaust Education at school, can they be part of a society where an intellectual, cultural and social climate is predominant. This also includes giving reasons for the subject of study. As suggested by the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) it is important for teachers to “consider the reasons for their lessons on the Holocaust” because only then will teachers “be more likely to select content that speaks to their students’ interest and that provides a clearer understanding of a complex history”. Although Holocaust Education’s aims and Adorno’s premier demand that Auschwitz is never to happen again are the same objectives, Adorno refuses to give any justification *why* teaching the Holocaust. On the other hand, educators are eager to give various, universal and prospective reasons why Holocaust Education is crucial (see Peham & Rajal, 42).

There are several reasons why to teach the Holocaust. In terms of learning objectives the IHRA presents a thorough compilation on its webpage (<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/node/315>). The objectives make clear that since the Holocaust has had impact on people all over the world it is a global and intercultural topic. The development of responsible citizens includes realising the abuse of power by organisations and nations and the violation of human rights. Other crucial aspects of Holocaust Education are to become aware of the consequences of prejudices, stereotypes, racism, anti-Semitism and the social disparity of minorities. Living and participating in a pluralistic society also consists of studying how to critically engage with media and popular culture. Furthermore, it is crucial to raise awareness for the complexity of historical events and processes that develop from decisive social, religious, political and economical factors. Finally, Holocaust Education helps students to develop a responsibility by demonstrating “the danger of remaining silent and indifferent in the face of the oppression of others” (IHRA).

Now that the question why Holocaust Education plays an important role in our society has been discussed, I want to draw attention to important factors that have to be taken into consideration when it comes to the practice of Holocaust Education.

2.3 How to Apply Holocaust Education in Schools

The IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) suggests that Holocaust Education should

- “Advance knowledge about this unprecedented destruction
- Preserve the memory of those who suffered
- Encourage educators and students to reflect upon the moral and spiritual questions raised by the events of the Holocaust and as they apply in today’s world” (IHRA)

There are several objectives which must be taken into consideration when teaching the Holocaust. One of the most important aspects about teaching the Holocaust at school is that the classroom is perceived as a place which is characterised by a trustworthy climate (Dreier, *Antisemitismus*, 178). This is also enforced by the IHRA. According the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, “[a] trusting atmosphere is important in order that such issues [the Holocaust] may be openly addressed and discussed”. Thus, an open learning environment as well as a student-centred teaching approach is useful so that students can develop an understanding about the Holocaust.

Peham and Rajal (55f.) suggest reflecting on one’s own prejudicial concepts about other people and history itself. Lenga (53) enhances on this thought by considering that Holocaust Education is supposed to challenge students’ perceptions of themselves. Furthermore, they are given the possibility to observe and reflect upon their own development in terms of humanity. They might also become intuitive to the complexity of human nature, reaching from stereotypical concepts to morality and responsibility (see Lenga, 53). This suggestion is not limited to the students. Also the Holocaust Educator herself/himself has to reflect upon her/his own attitude towards Jewish people, Jewish history and anti-Semitism. In addition to self-reflection it is necessary that teachers have studied the Holocaust historically, socially, psychologically and theologically so that they are provided with a broad knowledge about this topic (see Peham & Rajal, 51). Also Dreier (*Antisemitismus*, 179) proposes that there must be possibilities to reflect with someone on one’s own views, opinions and thoughts about the Holocaust so that the individual historical consciousness is shaped.

In conclusion, Holocaust Education should be perceived as an approach that is not only aiming at knowledge acquisition but also as a concept that “looks to facilitate personal growth, self respect and responsibility, promoting in pupils a commitment to the value of

human life and dignity” (Lenga, 53). There is certainly a risk of taking the students on a journey that is too personal and emotional for them but, on the other hand, a topic such as the Holocaust cannot possibly leave students unmoved or unchanged (see Lenga, 53). It is crucial to comprehend that the Holocaust is a topic which triggers emotions such as fear or it could also even generate trauma. However, drawing parallels between historical events and the students’ personal (everyday) lives, their interests and consternation *can* be a possibility to make the topic more relevant for students (see Peham & Rajal, 56). As Holocaust victims should not be perceived as a “faceless mass of victims but as individuals” (IHRA), using diaries, letters and other testimonials for case studies, can help to personalise history. The use of personal testimonies emphasises the individual’s history and helps teachers to make the topic more engaging for students.

This goes hand in hand with the suggestion by the IHRA to provide students with primary sources since a critical analysis of diaries, letters etc. is crucial in understanding people’s actions, feelings and motivations. It must also be made clear to students that, apart from documents that were created by victims, the majority of sources that are used to reconstruct the historical process were produced by the Nazi-regime itself so that it is necessary to study these documentations even more critically and carefully. Teachers must use appropriate material in a way that students do not get shocked but moved or agitated by the horrors of it. A sensitive and balanced approach that ensures a worthwhile learning experience is crucial in order to engage students with the topic. Within this critical media analysis teachers should also encourage students to engage with different interpretations of the Holocaust in our popular culture such as movies, novels, memorials, etc. Students should become aware that “[e]ach interpretation is influenced by the circumstances in which it is produced and may say as much about the time and place in which it was made as it does about the events it is portraying” (IHRA).

Finally, Lindquist (*Instructional Approaches*, 117) draws attention to factors such as resources, time, the general school environment and the difference between school age and maturity level of students which can influence the way Holocaust Education is taught and perceived. These factors must be taken into consideration when choosing an appropriate approach of Holocaust Education. Furthermore, there are certain challenges that teachers have to face when teaching the Holocaust.

2.4 Challenges

Taking into consideration what requirements Holocaust Education is confronted with it is also important to acknowledge that there are certain limits to the effect of Holocaust Education. There are various challenges Holocaust Educators have to face in order to teach this sensitive topic. Especially at school Lenga (54) observes that “teachers will continue to encounter difficulties in teaching the Holocaust. Limited time allocation, compared to the enormity of the subject, squeezed into heavily content-laden national curricula, together with the tricky nature of the subject will continue to create obstacles to effective teaching.” This section will expand on certain challenges which teachers have to face when teaching the Holocaust.

First of all teaching Holocaust issues can trigger various emotional reactions reaching from shame to sorrow to shock. Hence, within Holocaust Education it is important to look after these emotions and to react to them. As already suggested, students should become familiar with their own emotions, before talking about the Holocaust (Peham & Rajal, 49).

Secondly, another challenge could be the controversially discussed usage of oral history. Although Lindquist (*Instructional Approaches*, 123) suggests that oral history serves the purpose of personalizing the Holocaust by emphasising the human factor and therefore making it more relevant for students, Holocaust Educators must be aware of the fact that using talks of contemporary witnesses or a visit to a memorial site such as Mauthausen cannot replace a thorough involvement with and a conscientious study of the topic (Peham & Rajal, 52). In addition to the controversial approach to oral history Dreier (*Lehren & Lernen*, 12) concludes that students nowadays hardly ever have the opportunity to talk to Holocaust witnesses face to face due to the aging survivor population.

A crucial aspect about Holocaust Education is the way how students are confronted with the topic. Very often students complain about being confronted with the issue too intensively (see Peham & Rajal, 47). Dreier (*Antisemitismus*, 177) proposes to consider this phenomenon and scrutinise closely if this refusal could be a defence mechanism since confronting the Holocaust can cause indignation and horror or evoke questions about one's own identity. This is also suggested by Balodimas-Bartolomei (29), who claims that “[t]he presentation of Austrian history often evokes indifference

with some students feeling as if they are descendents of perpetrators". This underlying accusation adds to the problem of balancing the burden of history and the individual's perception and is also reflected in the following challenge, which deals with the (inaccurate) fragmentary knowledge about the Holocaust which some students already have before studying it at school. Very often they were provided with knowledge from family stories. There are two aspects about this issue. Firstly, in the beginning it is important that students learn to drop charges and abandon thoughts about accusations. Socially biased constructions about victims and offenders must be deconstructed so that students are able to reflect on their own family history without feeling prejudiced or discriminated against. The IHRA also suggests teachers to use language accurately and precisely so that the language of the perpetrators is avoided. For example a term such as "Final Solution' may be cited and critically analysed but should not be used to describe the historical event" (IHRA). Since students come into the classroom with preconceived ideas, it is important not to enforce misconceptions about the Holocaust. This thought leads to another aspect which arises with the idea of a pre-knowledge about the Holocaust. A student's political view is usually determined by the family's perspective on the Holocaust (see Peham & Rajal, 47). This perspective is often unimpeachable for the students because it is highly emotional. Dreier (*Antisemitismus*, 178) proposes that it is much easier for students to accept the Holocaust as such if family members were part of the resistance than if they supported the National-Socialists. Austria was officially declared to be Hitler's 'first victim', however, this is a contradictory declaration. Bischof (215) states that family memories are quite distinct from the collective memory, which explains why there is such a gap between the content that is conveyed at school and the stories told at home. It is not surprising that students struggle to position themselves between these viewpoints. In addition to that, Peham & Rajal (47) describe that Austrian students who developed a strong identification with their (great-) grandmothers and (great-) grandfathers were often provided with inaccurate and belittled information about the Holocaust.

These memories and stories are intensely emotional. When confronted with the horrors of the Holocaust at school, these students tend to retreat or develop an aggressive attitude towards Holocaust Education. It is also problematic to ignore this aspect about personal history because it can trigger emotional barriers towards Holocaust Education. Thus, it is crucial for teachers to cater for each individual's need

on a professional basis by giving priority to the Holocaust as a discourse rather than testing facts (see Peham & Rajal, 48).

An additional challenge is detected when looking at right-wing extremism, which is a wide-spread phenomenon among young people nowadays. It calls for a solution for which society as a whole is responsible. Nevertheless, school plays an important role too. It has to take responsibility in trying to prevent students from generating right-wing ideas. However, it must be taken into consideration that school and more precisely teachers cannot be held accountable for eliminating any thoughts about anti-Semitism or racism (see Peham & Rajal, 43f).

Lastly, there is one aspect about the challenges of Holocaust Education which is predominant in Austria and Germany. Especially in these countries, some supportive perspectives on National-Socialism and anti-Semitism are unfortunately still very problematic and simply wrong which makes it even more difficult for educators to teach about Holocaust. Therefore, a debate about the different views on the Holocaust in society is inevitable (Peham & Rajal, 50). Accompanying these divergences in society, media plays an important role. The very distinctive processing of the National Socialism and the Holocaust in media such as newspapers, magazines, TV, radio and the internet requires students to be able to critically deconstruct ideologies, detect prejudices and judge whether a source is reliable or not. The danger of an uncritical consumption by students must be faced when teaching the Holocaust. This includes that teachers should avoid confronting students with authentic texts or pictures in the way of presenting them uncritically. Rather, texts and pictures which promote Nazism must be discussed thoroughly, intensely and above all critically. Teachers are also encouraged to use reports of survivors in order to comply with the need for authenticity in the classroom (Peham & Rajal, 52f). Scholars (Klösch, 5; Dreier, *Antisemitismus*, 170) emphasise the role of family, friends, the media and society as a very important factor that shapes students' thoughts and attitudes towards the Holocaust. Usually, this is more influential than what is being taught at school. Still, school is a place for socialisation of generations of children so that teachers are responsible to teach essential societal problems and discourses. Since school is also the place where children usually get into touch with National Socialism most intensively it is where the Holocaust should be taught and reflected upon carefully (see Peham & Rajal 43f).

Finally, it must not be forgotten that teachers frequently feel deterred from performing Holocaust Education because they question their own knowledge about the subject due

to the event's complexity. Additionally, educators might restrain from dealing with the Holocaust in the classroom because they do not feel confident enough to teach the Holocaust in a way that "does justice to the topic" (Lindquist, *A Necessary Holocaust Pedagogy*, 23). Hence, it is absolutely necessary for all teachers to be trained in Holocaust Education, no matter what subjects they are supposed to teach. Teachers need to be provided with possibilities to fight those doubts and to become confident Holocaust educators.

3 Teaching the Holocaust in Austria

Due to Austria's ambivalent role in the Second World War, the situation of teaching the Holocaust in an Austrian classroom is rather special. There are numerous factors that have to be considered when teaching the Shoah in an Austrian school including Austria's role during and after World War II, its historical obligation as well as current politics.

3.1 Austria's Holocaust Education History

After the Second World War, Austria was not particularly interested in coming to terms with its own history (and its guilt) which also explains why Holocaust Education was not part of the national curriculum until 1970. This is due to the insufficient de-Nazification within the schools as well as the general society's attitude towards the past during the post-war era. The curriculum after the Second World War was the same as during the interwar era and stated that the main goal was to raise students to become loyal and able citizens. It was only after 1970s that the curriculum pointed out the necessity for mature citizens who were able to form an opinion. Still, history education usually ceased after the First World War so that Holocaust and National-Socialist topics were simply ignored and not dealt with. Additionally, teachers were not educated in contemporary history. This changed however, when the DÖW (Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes) opened in 1963, the department of contemporary history was founded at the University of Vienna in 1965, and when the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture released the Act (1972) to integrate civic education at school (see Dreier, *Lehren und Lernen*, 12; Klösch, 5f.).

In the 1980s Austria was convulsed by the Waldheim Affair. Kurt Waldheim, who was Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1971 to 1981, was accused of being involved with the NSDAP. Despite his role during the National-Socialist times in Austria he was elected to become Federal President. According to Vocelka (350) and Dreier (*Lehren und Lernen*, 15) the Waldheim affair was discussed in Austrian society very vividly and led to a rethinking of Austria's victimhood. However, as proposed by Vocelka (303, 330), it was probably only after the student revolt in 1968, the Waldheim affair in 1986 and the government participation of the FPÖ (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs – Austrian Freedom Party) in 2000 that people started debating increasingly about politics

as well as Austria's precarious role of victim, and perpetrator during the Second World War.

Various scholars (Peham & Rajal, 38, Bastel et al., 58) have commented on the change in Holocaust Education in Austria starting in 2009. There were a number of incidents which led to a demand for a concept of Holocaust Education in Austria. These incidents include various occasions when children or teenagers attracted negative attention by anti-Semitic actions. First of all, as reported in *Der Standard* by Hans Rauscher in April 2009, students were sent back home from a school trip to Auschwitz due to anti-Semitic utterances. Secondly, as Gerhard Marschall reports in *Der Standard*, in May 2009 dark hooded juvenile Neo-Nazis shouted "Sieg Heil" and "Heil Hitler" during a memorial event in the former concentration camp Ebensee in Upper Austria. These were only two instances which supported the demand for Holocaust Education in Austria. Although a rethinking of Austria's role during the Holocaust was initiated in the 1980s, the process of adapting curricula et cetera only began in the 2000s. And the complex situation of Austria during the National-Socialist era adds to the fact that the process of reflecting and accounting for the past is still in progress.

On an international basis, Holocaust Education research gathered steam in the 1990s, which is clearly evident as international institutions were founded in order to support teachers and educators. In 1993 the "United States Holocaust memorial Museum" in Washington D.C opened and in 1998 the "Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research" (ITF) which in December 2012 became the "International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance" (IHRA) was established. Furthermore, other intergovernmental and international organizations have been eagerly supporting Holocaust Education in the 2000s. The Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe promoted a "Day of Remembrance" which was established by the United Nations some years later as the International Holocaust Remembrance Day taking place on 27th of January. Other associations like the "European Network against Racism and Tolerance", the "European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights", and the "Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe" also promote Holocaust Education by developing methods and approaches that support teachers and students (see Balodimas-Bartolomei 3). This rising interest in Holocaust Education also had an impact on Austria. The influence of the international developments in terms of Holocaust Education in Austria is evident as there have been foundations of various institutions

such as the “National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism” in 1995. This supports the idea that Austria was beginning to rethink its role during the National-Socialist era. The most important established institution in Austria was initiated in 2000 by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture and is called “erinnern.at: Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust: Gedächtnis und Gegenwart”. This association has been helping teachers to do Holocaust Education by working on didactical and methodological competence development (see *erinnern.at*).

3.2 Today's Situation

Bastel et al. (58f.) attempt to provide evidence for Austrian society's perception of Austria's role during the Second World War and the precarious status Holocaust Education holds by investigating historical memorials in Vienna. Firstly, they discuss the Heldenplatz as being one of the most important but at the same time most “macabre” squares in Vienna. It not only was the square from where Hitler announced Austria's annexation to Germany but also where Pope John Paul II celebrated mass in 1983. Furthermore, 350 000 people demonstrated against the FPÖ and its xenophobic politics in 1993 (“Lichtermeer”). Another demonstration was held after the ÖVP and FPÖ formed a coalition in 2000. Other controversial activities take place at the Heldenplatz each year such as the day of the National Army on October 26, or the meeting of right-wing groups on May 8. However, the Heldenplatz was also place of event when children participated in the event “A letter to the stars” in 2003. This project was initiated by the association “Verein Lernen aus der Zeitgeschichte” and engages students in various projects concerning the Holocaust. Recently an event took place at the Heldenplatz in order to fight anti-Semitism, racism and misanthropy and to celebrate the liberation of Auschwitz 70 years ago. Austrian politicians and Holocaust survivors called attention to the still existing danger of radicalism by reading texts and commemorating the victims of the Holocaust as well as the 12 murdered people in connection with the terror attack on the newspaper “Charlie Hebdo”. Furthermore, Bastel et al. (60-62) discuss the importance of two main equestrian memorials on the square, connecting the memorial of Archduke Karl to the German-Austrian nationalism and concluding that the monument of Prince Eugene of Savoy² “reflects Austrian society's traditional fear of

² Inscription: (“The victor against Austria's enemies”)

danger from the East" (61). All these aspects about Austria's history can be connected to the present situation that manifests itself in a widespread xenophobia. Hence, as reported by Bastel et al. (70), "[w]hile the Holocaust and nationalism are different phenomena, in Austria, they are intricately interwoven", and it is essential to take this into consideration when teaching the Holocaust in Austria. Austria's glory of the Habsburg era as well as its complex and troublesome role during the Second World War "are deeply rooted as collective memories, forming a national identity that tends to respond to unconsidered areas of populism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia" (70). Thus, Bastel et al. call for a reflexive conception approaching the Holocaust in Austria that incorporates "personal, national and collective memories" (70).

Nevertheless, platforms like *erinnern.at* or events such as "A letter to the stars" also draw attention to the slow process of reflexion within Austria's society. School plays an important role since it is the place where Holocaust Education explicitly takes place. Although Dreier (170) claims that media, family and friends have much more influence on the historic consciousness of young people, I am of the opinion that school is the place where students have time, space and resources to learn about and reflect upon the topic. Additionally, teachers are able to monitor what and how children learn and therefore, they can be influential in the students' perceptions of the Holocaust.

The process of putting the reflection and the rethinking about Austria's role during the Second World War into the foreground has made it possible that students are nowadays confronted with the Holocaust by the time they are 14 not only in the subject of History (Dreier, *Lehren und Lernen*, 12). Klösch (6) claims that also subjects such as German and Religion explicitly deal with the Holocaust. Usually students start learning about the Second World War and the Holocaust during their 4th year of Lower Secondary in History and Political Education. In the curriculum for the 4th year it is ordered to teach:

- "Entstehung und Bedingungen diktatorischer Systeme, Methoden totalitärer Herrschaft: Faschismus, Nationalsozialismus, Kommunismus; Bezüge zu modernen Formen des politischen Extremismus. Der Nationalsozialismus als Beispiel eines totalitären Systems - Ideologie, Propaganda, Mobilisierung der Jugend, Verfolgung, organisierter Massenmord, Widerstand
- Entwicklung und Krise der Demokratie in Österreich - Verfassung, Parteien, Wehrverbände, autoritäres System, Bürgerkrieg, NS-Zeit.

- Erinnerungskulturen und deren Wandel; Erinnerungen an jüdisches Leben vor und nach dem *Holocaust*“ (S.4)

Since the Austrian school system is quite complex after compulsory school has been completed, there are numerous curricula for each type of Secondary school. Nearly all BHS (bildende höhere Schule) include Holocaust Education in their curricula within the subject History and/or Political Education (see BMBF). There is only one BHS which does not explicitly include the Holocaust in its curriculum (Schule für Sozialbetreuungsberufe). All the others (Höhere Lehranstalt für Kindergartenpädagogik und Sozialpädagogik, , Höhere Lehranstalt für wirtschaftliche Berufe, Höhere Lehranstalt für land- und forstwirtschaftliche Berufe, Höhere Lehranstalt für Mode, Höhere Lehranstalt für Tourismus & Höhere technische und gewerbliche Lehranstalt) state that the Holocaust, its development and consequences must be subject of study. For example, in the curriculum of the BAKI (Bildungsanstalt für Kindergartenpädagogik) it says

- Entwicklung und Erscheinungsbild von Parteien, Entstehen und unterschiedliche Formen von Diktaturen in Europa und deren Auswirkungen (insbesondere Nationalsozialismus, **Holocaust**, Widerstand und Verfolgung)
- die Entwicklung Österreichs in der Zwischenkriegszeit, Ursachen, Verlauf und Folgen des 2. Weltkriegs“ (BMBF, 43)

and in the curriculum of business schools the content of what to teach in History includes

- Totalitäre Ideologien und Systeme (Ursachen und Grundlagen, Politik, Verfolgung, Widerstand); Antisemitismus, Faschismus in Österreich. Krise der Demokratien. Nationalsozialismus, **Holocaust** und Zweiter Weltkrieg (BMBF, 14).

Likewise the school for forestry states to cover

- Nationalsozialismus, **Holocaust**, Zweiter Weltkrieg, Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft und Kultur (Inflation, Weltwirtschaftskrise, Wirtschaftslenkung, Wissenschaft, Landwirtschaft) (BMBF,10).

and the BHS for design and fashion contains to study

- Kunst und Kultur. Gesellschaft. Wirtschaft. Politik. Nationalsozialismus und **Holocaust**. Widerstand und Verfolgung. Zweiter Weltkrieg und Nachkriegsordnung,

while the school for tourism requires students to learn about

- Krisenherde und -regionen – politisch, religiös, ethnisch; Genozide und **Holocaust**.

Finally, the school for technical professions incorporates the Holocaust on two occasions, in form 3 and 4:

- 3rd form: Entstehung und Entwicklung des Kommunismus; Faschismus in Europa mit den Schwerpunkten Nationalsozialismus und Antisemitismus. **Holocaust**.
- 4th form: Politische Konflikte; der Erste Weltkrieg und seine Auswirkungen; humanitäres Völkerrecht; der Zweite Weltkrieg in Verbindung mit dem **Holocaust**; das Erbe Österreichs; bipolares Weltsystem; Transformationen und neue Strukturen der Weltpolitik (*schule.at*,16).³

It must not be forgotten though, that in BHSs, History is by far not a subject of importance as this type of school serves as a vocational education which requires more specialised skilled students. A democratic understanding of Austria is part of any curriculum so that Holocaust Education should be connected somehow to the development of Austrian history even if not explicitly stated. Still, History is part of the curriculum and Holocaust Education is mandatory in most BHS.

Likewise, in the AHS (Allgemein bildende höhere Schule) Holocaust is part of the curriculum. Various topics are connected with the Holocaust so that a varied discussion can take place which might provide students of an AHS with more time and resources to deepen their knowledge than students studying at a BHS.

- Ursachen und Verlauf des Zweiten Weltkrieges (Friedensverträge; Völkerbund; soziale und ökonomische Rahmenbedingungen)
- demokratische, autoritäre und totalitäre Staatensysteme und ihre Ideologien (Systemvergleiche; Kommunismus, Faschismus, Nationalsozialismus; Radikalisierung des politischen Lebens in Österreich 1918-1938)
- nationalsozialistisches System und **Holocaust** (Entwicklung; Österreich im Dritten Reich; Widerstands- und Freiheitsbewegungen) (S.4.)

In addition to the standardised curriculum Klösch (6) estimates that around 80% of all students in Austria visit the concentration camp memorial in Mauthausen. Other

³ my highlighting

activities in Austrian schools that perform Holocaust Education include witnesses' talks, which the former ministry of education bm:bwk (39) considers to be "one of the most important forms of passing on experiences". Additionally, schools have visited theatre performances, exhibitions, museums, synagogues and concentration camp memorials and discussed Holocaust literature. Usually, schools also tend to use project-oriented teaching in order to provide students with a connective view on the Holocaust (bm:bwk, 39).

Furthermore, the study conducted by Balodimas-Bartolomei in 2012, which investigates in how far member countries of the ITF are concerned with Holocaust Education, provides some insights of Austria's role within the Holocaust Education discourse internationally. According to Balodimas-Bartolomei (10) Austria is aware that "[i]n Austria [...] Holocaust instruction offers insights for remembering the past and for recognizing the role and responsibilities that all individuals, organizations and nations have in preventing future genocides" (Balodimas-Bartolomei, 10).

3.3 Problems of Holocaust Education in Austria today

One very significant challenge of Holocaust Education in Austria is that it needs to be discussed within the framework of the perception of Austrian society during the past few decades. This perception is characterised by two views on Austria's role during and after the Second World War. Firstly, Austria was a victim. Secondly, Austria was a perpetrator. As Dreiser (*Lehren und Lernen*, 12f.) acknowledges "[b]oth theories have a foundation in history". The first theory of Austria being a victim has a legal basis in the Moscow Declaration in 1943 and also in the Austrian Declaration of Independence in 1945. On the other hand, it can neither be denied that Austrians cheered at Hitler in March 1938 nor that 700 000 Austrians were actually members of the National Socialists. In fact, many of the most prominent perpetrators were Austrians such as Adolf Eichmann, Ernst Kaltenbrunner or Adolf Hitler himself (see Dreier, *Lehren und Lernen*, 13). In spite of this, it must also be acknowledged that Austrian civil people were in fact also victims:

200,000 Austrian Jews, of whom 65,000 were murdered, 9,000 to 10,000 Austrian Roma and Sinti, 1,500 Austrians executed as deserters or conscientious objectors, 4,000 to 5,000 victims of political persecution, 25,000

to 30,000 victims of the Nazi euthanasia programme, thousands of victims of the forced sterilisation programme, and 100,000 persons imprisoned for political reasons... (Dreier, *Lehren und Lernen*, 13).

Indeed, it can be said that “Austrians were victims and perpetrators at the same time” (14). This makes it even more challenging and difficult for teachers as well as for students to discuss the Holocaust from an Austrian perspective.

Considering Holocaust Education within the Austrian school system it should not be forgotten that “Holocaust Education is strongly influenced by the structure of the educational system, along with its administration, governance and national history” (Balodimas-Bartolomei, 31). Thus, although by the time when students are around 14 years old they are supposed to have learnt about topics such as National Socialism, the Holocaust and persecution (bm:bwk, 5), Klösch (6) points out that the quality of teaching varies a lot. It seems that it is subject to the individual teacher in how far the Holocaust is discussed and investigated.

Although the former BMUKK (bm:bwk, 5) claims that students are provided with sufficient teaching material dealing with the Holocaust such as books, publications, audiovisual media, Dreier (*Antisemitismus in der Schule*, 171) criticises that the Holocaust per se is only mentioned in history books. If anti-Semitism is mentioned at all, it is dealt with alongside National Socialism but not as an ideological movement itself which dates back to the 19th century.

Another challenge in the Austrian school system is that teachers have more roles than just being a conveyor of knowledge. At the same time teachers also have to assess their students. Dealing with such a problematic issue as the Holocaust, it is difficult to evaluate for teachers whether aims and objectives have been reached. Likewise, students will be careful with giving their opinions in public because they fear they might not conform to the teacher’s view. Hence, it is essential to create a trustworthy atmosphere where students can be at ease to express their feelings and thoughts (see Dreier, *Antisemitismus*, 178).

3.4 Teaching the Holocaust in an EFL Context

Usually, students learn about the Holocaust in the subject of History (see Balodimas-Bartolomei, 1;3). Nevertheless, this thesis deals with Holocaust Education in the subject

English as a foreign language (EFL). This suggests a totally different context which is in need of different approaches in order to discuss the Holocaust. As a starting point I would like to embed the topic of Holocaust into the national curriculum of English as a Second language.

3.4.1 English as a Second Language

Although the Holocaust is explicitly mentioned in the curriculum for the subject of History and Political Education in Austria, there are some hints and traces of teaching sensitive issues like the Holocaust in other subjects. For this paper the relevant subject is English. Looking at the First Foreign Language curriculum for Lower Secondary grades the only connections that can be drawn to the Holocaust are:

- Der Prozess des Fremdsprachenerwerbs bietet auch zahlreiche Möglichkeiten der Auseinandersetzung mit **interkulturellen Themen**. Das bewusste Aufgreifen solcher Fragestellungen soll zu einer verstärkten **Sensibilisierung der Schülerinnen und Schüler für kulturelle Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede** führen und ihr **Verständnis für die Vielfalt von Kulturen und Lebensweisen** vertiefen. Dabei ist die **Reflexion über eigene Erfahrungen und österreichische Gegebenheiten** einzubeziehen.
- **Fremdsprache ist Ausdruck von Kultur- und Lebensformen**. Der Erwerb einer Fremdsprache dient ua. dem **Kennenlernen von Fremdem**, der bewussten **Auseinandersetzung mit kultureller Verschiedenheit** und diesbezüglichen **Wahrnehmungen und Wertungen** (1)⁴

Looking at the Holocaust as a cultural (among others) tragedy is valid in my opinion. This indicates that the national curriculum suggests incorporating (historical) cultural issues into the lessons as well as discussing and debating stereotypes, cultural differences and the effects of prejudices.

In Upper Secondary classes there are even more topical connections to Holocaust Education:

⁴ my highlighting

- Darüber hinaus kommt dem Fremdsprachenunterricht die Aufgabe zu, einen wesentlichen Beitrag zur Entwicklung dynamischer Fähigkeiten (Sachkompetenz, Sozialkompetenz, Selbstkompetenz, methodische Kompetenz ua.) zu leisten. **Sozialen Kompetenzen in multikulturellen Umgebungen** ist dabei besonderes Augenmerk zu widmen.
- Die **vorurteilsfreie Beleuchtung kultureller Stereotypen und Klischees**, die bewusste **Wahrnehmung von Gemeinsamkeiten und Verschiedenheiten** sowie die **kritische Auseinandersetzung mit eigenen Erfahrungen** bzw. mit **österreichischen Gegebenheiten** sind dabei anzustreben.
- Durch die Auswahl geeigneter fremdsprachlicher Themenstellungen ist die **Weltoffenheit** der Schülerinnen und Schüler sowie ihr **Verständnis für gesellschaftliche Zusammenhänge** zu fördern. **Konfliktfähigkeit, Problemlösungskompetenz und Friedenserziehung** sind auch im Fremdsprachenunterricht als zentrale Lehr- und Lernziele zu betrachten. (S.1)
- Zur Erlangung eines möglichst umfassenden lexikalischen Repertoires sind verschiedenste Themenbereiche zu bearbeiten (wie zB Sprache und ihre Anwendungsmöglichkeiten; **Rolle der Medien**; Arbeit und Freizeit; **Erziehung**; **Lebensplanung**; **Einstellungen und Werte**; **Zusammenleben**; **aktuelle soziale, wirtschaftliche und politische Entwicklungen**; **Prozesse der Globalisierung**; **kulturelle und interkulturelle Interaktion**; Umwelt; aktuelle Entwicklungen in Technik und Wissenschaft; Kunst in ihren Ausdrucksformen Literatur, Musik, bildende Künste). Spezielle thematische Schwerpunkte sind jeweils im Einklang mit individuellen Interessenslagen und Bedürfnissen der Schülerinnen und Schüler sowie mit aktuellen Ereignissen zu setzen (S.4)⁵

The national curriculum for Upper Secondary classes goes even further in cultural education, requiring students to critically deal with cultural clichés. Discussing prejudices and stereotypes is one of the main aspects of Holocaust Education. Objectives such as approaching conflicts carefully and acquiring problem-solving competences can be achieved by Holocaust Education as well. To sum it up, the national curriculum for Secondary classes attempts to cover a wide range of cultural topics.

⁵ my highlighting

The general educational aims are described by the BMUKK (allgemeiner Teil) without explicitly stating something about Holocaust Education. However, there are general pedagogical aims that can be achieved by studying the Holocaust at school such as:

- Die Wahrnehmung von **demokratischen Mitsprache- und Mitgestaltungsmöglichkeiten** in den unterschiedlichen Lebens- und Gesellschaftsbereichen erfordert **die Befähigung zur sach- und wertbezogenen Urteilsbildung** und zur **Übernahme sozialer Verantwortung**.
- Die Würde jedes Menschen, seine Freiheit und Integrität, die **Gleichheit aller Menschen** sowie die **Solidarität mit den Schwachen** und am Rande Stehenden sind wichtige Werte und Erziehungsziele der Schule. (2)
- Das Verständnis für **gesellschaftliche** (insbesondere politische, wirtschaftliche, rechtliche, soziale, ökologische, kulturelle) **Zusammenhänge** ist eine wichtige Voraussetzung für ein befriedigendes Leben und für eine **konstruktive Mitarbeit an gesellschaftlichen Aufgaben** (3)
- Es ist bewusst zu machen, dass **gesellschaftliche Phänomene historisch bedingt und von Menschen geschaffen sind**. (4)
- Der Unterricht hat aktiv zu einer den **Menschenrechten verpflichteten Demokratie beizutragen**. **Urteils- und Kritikfähigkeit sowie Entscheidungs- und Handlungskompetenzen** sind zu fördern, sie sind für die **Stabilität pluralistischer und demokratischer Gesellschaften** entscheidend. Den Schülerinnen und Schülern ist in einer zunehmend internationalen Gesellschaft jene **Weltoffenheit** zu vermitteln, die vom **Verständnis für die existenziellen Probleme der Menschheit** und von **Mitverantwortung** getragen ist. Dabei sind **Humanität, Solidarität, Toleranz, Frieden, Gerechtigkeit, Gleichberechtigung und Umweltbewusstsein** handlungsleitende Werte (4).⁶

All these general pedagogical objectives are connected to the Holocaust as Holocaust Education can provide students with numerous competences which will make them responsible members of their society.

⁶ my highlighting

3.4.2 CLIL

Since English has become *the* medium of communication in our globalised world it also requires constant improvement in terms of teaching it. Thus, “[w]ith the growing interest in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)” (Bruton, 587), methodological frameworks and resources need to be developed continuously since new media like the internet are predominant knowledge providers for our students. “Consequently, English should not only be conceived as an object of study but also as the vehicular language to access cultural, sociological, economic and other sources of information” (Ravelo, 2). The following section deals with the CLIL approach, which provides the methodological framework for teaching the Holocaust in the EFL classroom. In this thesis the subject of History is taught in English.

CLIL is not easily defined and cannot be pinned down to one definition. Rather, it “has established itself as an umbrella label in Europe and elsewhere over the last years” (Dalton-Puffer & Smit, 8) in order to describe so-called content subjects being taught in a foreign language. However, according to Dalton-Puffer & Smit (8) there are some features and advantages that all interpretations of CLIL have in common. Firstly, CLIL “creates conditions for naturalistic language learning” (8), which indicates that language learning is not as institutional as in conventional language classes. Secondly, CLIL lessons provide a purpose for learning languages. Since teaching is based on a communicative approach to language teaching nowadays this ties in neatly with the fact that in CLIL “learning about subject content is construed as possessing a kind of meaningfulness that is believed to be absent from typical language instruction” (8). Thirdly, Dalton-Puffer and Smit suggest that CLIL classes are simply efficient: two school subjects are covered within one lesson. In addition to that, in CLIL classes there is much more exposure to the target language than in regular language classes. Additionally, combining language and content seems to provide more possibilities for communicative events than traditional language teaching. Therefore, the “development of Communicative Competence, a notion widely regarded to be the ultimate aim of second/foreign language learning” (9) is one main aspect of the CLIL approach. This is also recognized by Dale and Tanner (11), who add that the development of communicative skills is “[t]he most obvious benefit of CLIL for learners”. Alongside with this, they also emphasise that CLIL learners are motivated because they might feel

challenged by the fact that a maybe not so interesting topic is taught in a foreign language (11). Furthermore, Dale and Tanner (13) claim that CLIL learners develop cognitively because the subject is learnt under more complex conditions than usually. They also develop a certain cultural awareness due to the fact that in CLIL classes students are exposed to international perspectives since the material they are using often contains certain information about culture and attitudes. Nevertheless, Ravelo (6) emphasises that “the CLIL approach requires conscious decisions to be made by the teacher” which indicates that teaching a content subject in a foreign language calls for thorough planning.

In terms of history taught in English, Dale and Tanner (60) propose that in CLIL history lessons students are required to learn how to evaluate sources and interpret past events from various perspectives. During the development of gaining knowledge about the past they study the language of historians until they themselves talk and write as historians do. Furthermore, Dale and Tanner (60) suggest examples of input such as:

- teacher explanations, instructions and demonstrations
- written texts: primary sources – e.g. written accounts of historical events such as letters, diaries, newspaper articles, (auto-)biographies; secondary sources – e.g. reference books
- video or audio input: online games about history, documentaries, podcasts of a famous speech
- performances: dramatisations of historical events
- hands-on work: visiting historical places, museums
- visuals: photographs, tapestries, paintings, objects, pictures, maps.

The variety of input material in History is endless so that teachers are given the opportunity to choose from a wide range of straight-forward resources they can use in order to teach history in an EFL context. In terms of language teaching Dale and Tanner (60f.) point to various language functions, genres and text-types that can be integrated into CLIL classes. The terminology of History recounts, describes and informs, explains, persuades, discusses and uses special vocabulary. It also includes the usage of the

tenses (past simple, present perfect tense, past perfect tense), the passive, process verbs, words to indicate when something happened, specialised terms, etc.

The importance of Holocaust Education has been laid out in 2.2., so that the question “why teach the Holocaust” has already been answered. Nevertheless, I would like to emphasise the benefits of teaching the Holocaust in an EFL classroom. As seen above, the national curriculum for second languages deals only remotely with Holocaust Education. One of the ultimate goals of language teaching is for students to achieve communicative competences by developing listening, reading, speaking and writing skills as suggested by the CEFR (Common European Frame of Reference). Communicative competence can easily be developed by dealing with the Holocaust as it is a topic that requires students to reflect, recount and discuss sensitive issues. In addition, students need to acquire special words and phrases as well as historical vocabulary. Speaking and writing skills help students to advance on their opinions which they will develop steadily. Lenga (56) for example points out that since dealing with a sensitive topic such as the Holocaust triggers emotions it might be a good idea to express these feelings and share them with peers and/or the teacher. Thus, it could be beneficial for students to write a journal, blog or reflection during the study of the Holocaust and keeping track of their own emotions in writing can improve their literacy skills in English. Apart from expanding linguistics skills students will also benefit in terms of cultural awareness. Cultural variety and the different perceptions of the Shoah serve as a resource for debating and discussing cultural awareness and developing cultural consciousness.

Although CLIL serves as the methodological framework for this thesis in order to teach History in English and vice versa, the Holocaust is a topic that can be dealt with in a variety of ways, approaches and subjects. Correspondingly, the IHRA argues that a cross-curriculum approach can help teachers and students to deal with the Holocaust in a more varied way and should be studied from multiple perspectives. Likewise Lindquist (*Necessary Holocaust Pedagogy*, 27) points out that Holocaust Education can be incorporated into other subjects. Within this discussion, in my opinion literature takes a significant role. To encapsulate,

[t]he narratives of the Holocaust illustrate the extremes of human behaviour, of hatred and cruelty but also of courage and humanity. Learning about the Holocaust

through history evokes powerful emotions that poetry, art, and music can help students express creatively and imaginatively (IHRA).

Therefore, the importance of literature in Holocaust Education is outlined in the following section.

4 The Holocaust and Literature

As the purpose of this thesis is to discuss the use of Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, a Holocaust comic, in the EFL classroom, I want to draw attention to the relationship of the Holocaust and literature in the following sections. This chapter begins by discussing Holocaust fiction. It is followed by the introduction of the medium comic. Furthermore, the historical comic is examined and finally, the chapter ends with the discussion of the Holocaust comic.

4.1 Representing the Holocaust

According to Kokkola (1), although understanding the Holocaust is "beyond the powers of human imagination", there have been attempts during the past 20 years to teach the Holocaust via literature. She (1) suggests that in terms of representation two factors seem to be exceptionally important when talking about Holocaust fiction. Firstly, the Holocaust was unique "in the sense that it was a state-instituted systematic programme of murdering one nation" (2). Although the Holocaust was not the only horrifying event taking place at that time, nor were Jewish people the only victims, in children's literature non-Jewish victims like Slavs, Jehovah's Witnesses, Catholic priests, handicapped and others are rarely represented (5-6). Secondly, since the phenomenon of Holocaust denial is still around us, Holocaust literature has a greater responsibility towards presenting the event historically accurately. It must under all circumstances avoid readers to become encouraged to deny the Holocaust. Hence, children's Holocaust literature includes a combination of historical, ethical and literary factors (47). One of the main issues when talking about Holocaust literature is the friction between fact and fiction. Within the discourse whether such a horrifying event as the Holocaust can be represented at all, Adorno initiated a certain attitude of suspicion towards Holocaust literature. Hence, although art and literature are held in high esteem in our Western culture, the topic of the Holocaust is met suspiciously. The suspicion emerges from the opposition between imaginative discourse and historical discourse (see Alphen, 16). Thus, one of the main problems of Holocaust fiction is the balance between fact and fiction (Kokkola (1)). Within this discussion Kokkola points to the fact that nowadays it is more likely that students do not recognize the authenticity of Holocaust literature, because they question the reality of the Holocaust. However, as already discussed

above, it is an ultimate objective not to encourage Holocaust denial so that any teaching on the issue of the Holocaust has to be done with great caution. Although the assumption that Holocaust Literature “affects children’s ability to think about the Holocaust and that it may lead them to consider how they act when confronted with, for example, anti-Semitic or racist comments, or peer pressure, or a combination of these factors” (Kokkola, 12) is true, it is still up to the individual reader to get the most out of the book. Since literature is a very effective representation-tool, it is based on a complex communication system that is not supposed to amuse the readership but on the other hand, is inclined to be “exciting” in terms of being a page-turner (23). So it can be said, that Holocaust literature has a more important moral responsibility in terms of historical accuracy than literature that deals with past events that were less horrifying (Kokkola, 3).

In order to discuss Holocaust literature in terms of comics, the following sections are discussing the medium comic, its origin and the development of historical comics.

4.2 Comics

The definition of comics as presented by Scott McCloud stands in opposition to the general opinion that comics are “those bright, colourful magazines filled with bad art, stupid stories and guys in tights” (2) which are “usually crude, poorly-drawn, semiliterate, cheap, disposable kiddie fare” (3). In fact, comics are defined as “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” (9). The attempt to find a definition for comics is difficult. Spiegelman himself describes comics as “a narrative series of cartoons” and confirms that “no definition can be all embracing and inclusive” (Spiegelman *MetaMaus*, 166).

4.2.1 The History of Comics

According to Hesse (21) comics, picture books and graphic novels present pictures which “are commonly seen as expressions of the human experience and are thus as universal as stories”. The visualisation of culture is obviously attractive to children and adults alike. Semantically, the term comic is misleading since it suggests that comics are habitually comical. This misconception is due to the fact that comic strips emerged

around 1900 in US newspapers and were more of a slapstick sort of comic (see Näpel, *Das Fremde*, 52). However, the origin of the comic dates back much earlier in history. The earliest traces of human being include cave paintings (30 000 B.C.), tomb painting (1500 B.C.) or tapestry (Bayeux 1000 A.D.) which were the forerunners of our modern comics (see Hesse, 25). Originally, the tradition of the modern comics was initiated by William Hogarth (1697-1764), Rodolphe Töpfer (1799-1846), Gustave Doré (1832-1883) and Wilhelm Busch (1832-1908) who created *Max und Moritz* in the 19th century (see Munier 21). These authors already created a narrative which included picture and text. Later on, it was extremely popular to include comic strips in newspaper supplements in the US in the 19th century in order to increase sales figures because many people were not able to read or had a limited command of the English language (see Dittmar, *Comic-Analyse* 21). *Yellow Kid* by Richard Felton Outcault was one of the most popular comic strips around 1900. In Germany Heinrich Hoffmann's *Struwwelpeter* was published in 1847 so that the question of which comic was the very first one is difficult to answer. However, the production of comics continued and although heroes and settings from novels and high literature were overtaken by the medium comic (Tarzan), the comic itself created heroes who again were adapted by other media such as film and novels. A legendary comic strip which emerged during the 1930s was Harold Foster's *Prince Valiant* (Prinz Eisenherz). Later on, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster created *Superman* (1938) and Bob Kane invented *Batman* (1939). Walt Disney established a global empire capitalising *Mickey Mouse* (1940). In 1954 Frederic Wertham published a book, pointing out that mass media, especially comics, were the reason for the coarsening of the youth. Subsequently, a Comic Code was released which forbade comic writers to include vulgar language and depictions of drug consumption (*Lucky Luke*'s cigarette was changed into a straw) or sexual relationships. Furthermore, criminals were to be the bad guys who were destined to lose. Obviously, this code was a fierce restriction for all comic writers which also affected the comic industry severely. After the 1968 however, superheroes were considered to be unreal, leading a life which was dedicated to moral uprightness. They were despised and only in the 1990s the superhero comic experienced a revival (see Munier, 21-32) which sustains until today. Hence, the comic has been established as an important part of popular culture around 1900 and is still a typical medium of the 20th century (see Pandel, 340). The comic industry has grown quickly so that nowadays, a great variety of

comics are published continually. Many different comics are available to readers in various shades of quality and form now.

4.2.2 Terminology

The question of defining types of comics is complicated since there are many different opinions on this topic. In general, three types of comics are distinguished: picture books, comic books and graphic novels. Picture books are characteristic of their pictures which are absolutely necessary in order to understand the text (Sendak's *Where The Wild Things Are*). The difference between graphic novels and comic books is challenging as they are not distinguished by genre but by format. They both are a medium that tell a story using sequential art. Graphic novels, however, are described by *Get Graphic*, a project initiated by the Family Literacy Library and the New York State Library as "generally stand-alone stories with more complex plots". There are various types of graphic novels including Mangas (Tsugumi Ōba's *Death Note*), Superhero Story (*The Dark Knight Returns*), Personal Narratives (*Fun Home*) and Non-fiction (Art Spiegelman's *Maus*). The term graphic novel was shaped by Will Eisner who published "A Contract with God" in 1964 (see Hesse, 26). Later on, *The Dark Knight Returns* and *Maus* established the term in popular culture. The appearance of a new terminology influenced the comic market in so far, as more and more comics were bought, due to the revaluation of the comic by adopting the term "graphic novel" (Näpel *Das Fremde*, 47). Some publishers might try to sell comics under the term "graphic novel" because they are likely to increase their sales figures. Still, other people such as artists or researchers might think differently about the terminology (Art Spiegelman uses the term comic in order to talk about *Maus* in *MetaMaus*). Thus, it must not be forgotten that distinguishing types of comics is inherently connected with the issue of labelling.

In this thesis I use the words comic and graphic novel as synonyms, as both of them describe a visual narrative. *Maus* and the term "graphic novel" are inherently connected with each other because when *Maus* was published, it "took comics mainstream and made the term "graphic novel" common currency among librarians, booksellers, teachers, movie executives and curators" (Adams, *The Globe and Mail*). In other words, *Maus* has had a major impact on the comic industry as it helped to re-establish the term "graphic novel" and promoted reading comics.

4.3 Historical Comics and their Benefits

Recently, the release of various successful comics (*Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, *Palestine* by Joe Sacco, etc.) demonstrates that comics are not only suitable to convey humoristic and funny stories but that they also work well when presenting historical and socio-political contents. Historical comics are described as a subgenre by Mounajed (46). He argues that a historical comic contains a plot that took place in the past. Hence, historical comics in this sense are not, as one might suggest, sources, but representations of history. There are, however, also historical comics which are considered to be sources of a past era such as the superheroes-propaganda during World War II. Munier (81) goes even further and says that it is not enough to put a plot into the past to make it a Historical comic. A historical comic can also support a development of the reader's historical consciousness in terms of constructing a sense for the present and the future.

Comics that carry a historical content are aimed at a readership with a common cultural memory. The role of the mass media consumption plays an important role. Hence, mass media take care of historical content in various shades of quality. Additionally, it is very important to involve the audience emotionally so that a kind of identification is possible. History and identification depend on each other: on the one hand the individual's identity is drawn from history and on the other hand history serves as a presentation tool to represent the individual's identity. Thus, memorising and remembering is shaped by the individual's perceptions so that this development in turn affects the cultural memory of a society (see Dittmar, 420). Hence, especially for children and young adults historical fiction can be a possibility to enhance the interest in historical events since it usually depicts young characters living within a certain historical period. Getting involved with the lives of others who are the same age in the past also initiates intercultural learning (see Hesse, 42).

The acquisition of intercultural communicative competences is one of the main aims of foreign language learning defined by the CEFR (Common European Frame of Reference). This aim is approached by reading children and young adult literature in general because the readers are encouraged to get engaged with the characters, so that they reach a valuable understanding of their own identity and life. Although

identifying with a character in a book is often regarded as an unsophisticated way of dealing with literature, our identity determines what and how we read. The reading process is a natural and common one so that identification is simply the main aspect about reading (see Eaglestone, 23). Talking about simplicity, it must be said that identification is not a simple process at all. The fact that it happens does not necessarily explain how it happens. However, this deep and personal affection contributes to the intensity with which we read a text (24). According to Eaglestone (81) “this complex intersection between identity, the past, memory, and culture [...] concern the process by which identification takes place and then is developed”. Historical comics provide a variety of aims ranging from learning about past events, acquiring literacy and communicative competences as well as gaining historical consciousness, intercultural competences and responsibility.

Among others, one of the main benefits that Holocaust comics (or other Historical/Political comics) provide is the fact that knowledge is not only conveyed by words but also by pictures and symbols. They make it possible to explain very complex settings/situations very easily and recognisable. However, it is not certain that the intended context is perceived correctly. This is due to the fact that words, unlike pictures, have a clear definition which can be looked up in any dictionary. Thus, pictures and especially symbols are highly complex due to the distinctive interpretations that can be drawn from looking at pictures from various perspectives (see Dittmar, 419f). By deconstructing pictures and comics students learn to comprehend that history (and many other aspects of life) itself is constructed so that they are forced to consider it from various perspectives and finally form an opinion of their own. Students also learn how to narrate (history) but also to express their own emotions and feelings towards more sensitive topics. Foremost, students learn about the topic itself (see Mounajed, 149-155). In studying historical fiction they get involved with historical facts and with language that conveys the content so that reading Holocaust fiction provides useful competences that students can acquire during working on the Holocaust in their English lessons.

4.4 Holocaust Comics

The classification of Holocaust comics is not straightforward. Within the biographical/autobiographical classification Frenzel (210) distinguishes between a

retrospective type which can be either autobiographical (Art Spiegelman's *Maus*) or biographical (Pascal Croci's *Auschwitz*), a direct-biographical type which is written by Holocaust survivors themselves (Charlotte Salomon's *Leben? Oder Theater?*) and the mixture of both types, which uses alienation effects (Horst Rosenthal's *Mickey im Lager Gurs*). Due to this complex typology it is also possible to classify Holocaust comics in terms of the target audience or the content (Frenzel, 211):

- The direct representation of the Holocaust (Art Spiegelman's *Maus*), and the indirect representation of the Holocaust where the events of the Holocaust rather serve as a mere background than being an important part of the story line; Another indirect representation are comics that deal with the loss of Jewish culture and the preservation of Jewish remembrance (see Frenzel, 228; 260, 268).
- The classification of people into victims, perpetrators and spectators. Naturally, there are some overlaps between all these categories and especially in analysing victims, perpetrators and spectators it is difficult to draw straight boundaries or to explain the complex interaction between victims and perpetrators. This kind of comic seems to combine different narrative levels, varied perspectives and a complex narrative technique of a multi-dimensional representation of these roles so that the individual person is put into a historical, cultural and political context. It should not be forgotten that the Holocaust comic is also a political comic which does not only encourage feelings for the victims but which also animates the reader to think and contemplate so that ideally empathy and ratio are combined (see Frenzel, 211, 260).

Furthermore, Holocaust comics can appear in various forms of representations whether they are short stories (Bernie Krigstein's *Master Race*), comic books (Jack Kirby's and Joe Simon's *Captain America*), comic albums (Pascal Croci's *Auschwitz*), graphic novels (Art Spiegelman's *Maus*) or Mangas (Osama Tezuka's *Adolf*) (see Frenzel, 211, 271).

The typology of Holocaust comics is very complex so that an individual analysis of each comic is necessary in order to comprehend them. Nevertheless, Holocaust comic is only *one* way of representing the Shoah so that it is solely one part of Holocaust Education. Other parts could be visits to museums or Holocaust memorials,

movies, theatres, a thorough study of the historical events and Jewish history, talks of contemporary witnesses, etc. (see Frenzel, 278). Furthermore, it is essential that Holocaust Education embeds Holocaust comics into a broader context that considers didactic teaching approaches, education policy and media education concepts (see Frenzel, 278).

The question whether a horrifying event such as the Holocaust can and should be subject of a comic calls for divergent responses. In 1951 Adorno argued in his essay “Cultural Criticism and Society“, that no poem should be written after Auschwitz (see Tiedemann, 205) and likewise, it seems that people from Germany or Austria are more reluctant to cope with a comic written about the Holocaust. In contrast to that the readership of Holocaust comics in the USA or Japan seems to be bigger. Art Spiegelmann said in an interview: “In Germany there was much more concern about the propriety of using comics. At one point, I remember being interviewed and asked: ‘Do you think it’s bad taste to have done a comic about the holocaust?’ I said: ‘No, I think the Holocaust is bad taste.’ “ (Frenzel, 210). The way in which Spiegelman copes with the topic reflects the attitude towards sensitive topics such as the Holocaust in the USA (210). Nevertheless, as Frenzel (278) suggests it is totally valid to represent the Holocaust in comics just like movies, theatre and literature do. There is no trivialisation of the Holocaust per se, it is important to analyse the individual comic in order to evaluate whether a Holocaust comic is suitable for Holocaust Education.

During the 20th century the first Holocaust comics began to emerge. Hergé’s *Tintin* already dealt with the National-Socialism in the 1930s in *Le Sceptre d’Ottokar*. Other comics that nowadays became increasingly popular again include the series about *Captain America* who fights in 1941 against Hitler and his followers, and Superman who put both, Hitler and Stalin on trial of the World Court in 1940. Until today the US-American tradition of superhero fiction – whose authors were predominantly of Jewish origin – enjoy great popularity (see Frenzel, 211-214). However, the comic as a graphic novel has enjoyed a rising popularity lately. When Art Spiegelman published *Maus* he created a milestone in comic history. He was not only a Pulitzer Prize winner in 1992 but he also established the genre as an accepted literary art form (see Hesse, 26).

The Holocaust comic can be characterised as a subgenre of the political comic which roots back to the USA where there has always been a tradition of political comic

strips. The Holocaust comic can be characterised as a branch of political comics. However, the Holocaust comic is not solely a political comic but also a historical comic when it represents history such as *Asterix* by René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo. Since Holocaust comics do both (representing history and politics) it must be seen as a mixture between historical and political comics. It is not possible to write apolitical Holocaust comics. Either comics tell a story about the Holocaust in a way that despises it (Art Spiegelman's *Maus*) or that oversteps the boundaries of good taste (Philip Vuillemin's *Hitler=SS*). Thus, Holocaust comics can never be apolitical and should always be seen as an influence of nowadays culture and society (see Frenzel, 209-210). What is more is that most often Holocaust literature is about Auschwitz and how people survived or died there (see Vice & Bodger, 15). Unfortunately, Holocaust literature is often only focused on survival and death in the camp but themes such as hiding or the life in the ghettos is often neglected. Hence, the culture of remembrance in media such as literature, movie, theatre and comics is an important factor when working with Holocaust literature. All media representations are subjective and thus altered. It is important for students to acquire competences to find out about these aspects.

In addition to that, it is essential not to forget that the majority of Holocaust comics were written by authors from the US, France or Belgium so that representations of the Holocaust were written from different perspectives. Since Näpel (*Das Fremde*, 563) claims that until 2010 there has been a lack of German or Austrian Holocaust comics, it can be assumed that there is hardly any representation of the Holocaust from a German or an Austrian perspective. Hence, the students who live in Austria study an event that took place in their country by reading comics that were written by US-authors. This has to be taken into account when planning lessons since this could lead to a conflict between the author's perspective and the reader's view. In addition, Näpel (*Fremdheit und Geschichte*, 114) draws attention to a main problem of Holocaust comics: the fact that most Holocaust comics represent the events from the perspectives of victims or resistance fighters is problematic since this is not applicable to the majority of the German/Austrian population during the Second World War. Germans are very often depicted as one-dimensional and simplified, and motives of German/Austrian people are not questioned. The reader can only identify with the victims or the resistance fighters, which Näpel (*Fremdheit und Geschichte*, 115) points out, could be a problematic approach for the upcoming generations. In addition to that, he says that “

'simple' remembrance of the victims of the National Socialism may be enough for other nations but for the German collective culture it is not" (my translation). Näpel is certainly correct when he says that it needs more to accounting for the past in Germany and Austria than just to remember victims. However, especially in Germany and Austria dealing with the Holocaust is a sensitive topic that always needs to be considered in terms of the socio-political situation of the country at a certain time. It is also crucial to realise that students are not involved too much with the Holocaust than 20 years ago because there is no biographical relationship anymore. Since it is not possible to divide people into victims and perpetrators collectively anymore, Education after Auschwitz becomes even more important in order to establish the events of the Holocaust as a part of the collective memory (see Näpel, *Fremdheit und Geschichte*, 119).

Part II

5 Analysis

The following sections provide a brief outline of the life of Art Spiegelman as well as a short summary of the story. Then, an examination is provided that looks into the question how *Maus* works as a comic. Later on, the most interesting aspects with regards to the usage of *Maus* in the classroom are analysed. This analysis includes elements that seem most relevant for the school context such as identity, character study, the role of languages in *Maus*, the interpretation of images and, the limits of representation. Unfortunately, it is not possible to describe all aspects in detail within this thesis. However, since numerous scholars have commented on this comic book I would like to give a short account of what I have not included in my analysis and what I think could also be interesting aspects of *Maus* in terms of using this graphic novel in the classroom.

Since the topicality of the gender-discourse cannot be questioned, it is also an important aspect in language teaching. In her article “Representing Others: Gender and Subject of Autobiography” (1994), Nancy Miller connects Spiegelman’s self-portrayal in *Maus* to autobiographies written by female authors. The relationship between Art and his parents and especially to his (absent) mother is reminiscent of the tradition of women’s autobiographies. Although this article was written 20 years ago it still argues for a strong feminist perspective on *Maus*. Andrew Gordon (2005) examines the aspect of Jewish identity in terms of Art and Vladek’s relationship and draws attention to Vladek’s negative traits as well as the psychological and emotional element in *Maus*. The religious aspect about *Maus* is investigated by Stephen Tabachnik in his article “The Religious Meaning of Art Spiegelman’s *Maus*” (2004) which focuses on the Jewish belief in *Maus* that “point[s] to the presence of a divine hand in Vladek’s and Anja’s survival” (1). The trauma and psychological consequences of the Holocaust in *Maus* is discussed by various researchers. In her article “The representation of the Shoah in *Maus*: History as Psychology” Janet Thorman (2002) argues that “*Maus* is a psychoanalytically aware text, informed by Spiegelman’s dramatization of the Oedipus complex, sibling rivalry, the guilt-inducing pressures of family relations and the maternal superego” (136).

Unfortunately, this review is not complete by far. Hye Su Park however, provides a comprised overview of other topics in her bibliographic essay on *Maus* (“Art Spiegelman’s *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale: A Bibliography Essay*” 2011).

5.1 Introducing *Maus*

5.1.1 Art Spiegelman

Art Spiegelman, the author of *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale*, was born in 1948 in Stockholm, Sweden to Anja (Zylberberg) Spiegelman and Vladek Spiegelman who were Polish Jews. Both of his parents survived the Holocaust which has made him a survivor child and has influenced his life and work ever since. Spiegelman’s parents had another son before him who was called Richieu but died during the Shoah. In 1951 his family immigrated to the United States and lived in Queens, New York. Art started drawing comics from an early age, so that he created comic strips for newspapers and magazines when he was still in high school. However, as Horowitz (401) argues, the “serious commitment to art rather than financial success remained with him even as he attained wide recognition” so that Spiegelman mostly drew comics for underground comics. In 1968 he suffered from a mental breakdown and was taken to a mental health hospital. After that he stayed with his parents in Rego Park. However, after his return his mother committed suicide. Later on, Spiegelman took part in the underground comics movement “which produced avant-garde, stylistically innovative, and politically radical cartoons and comic strips, or comix” (Horowitz 402). Thus, the term “comix” refers to comics which are self-published or which are published by small presses. They are particularly interested in political or intellectual issues so that, as opposed to mainstream comics, comix are satirically and socially significant. Spiegelman, however, uses the term “commix” in order to talk about mixing words and pictures to tell a story (see Horowitz, 402). Young (74) discusses the aspect about Spiegelman’s commix in terms of meaning, as he points out that “the commix-ture’ of words and images generates a triangulation of meaning – a kind of three-dimensional narrative- in the movement between words, images, and the reader’s eye.” This more advanced definition of comics mirrors the complex nature of Spiegelman’s work.

After publishing a number of graphic novels and teaching comic history and aesthetic classes at university, Spiegelman created *Maus I: A Survivor’s Tale: My father Bleeds History* in 1986. The second volume *Maus II: And Here My Trouble Began* was

published in 1991. In 1992 *The Complete Maus* won a special Pulitzer Prize. It was the first time a comic won such a renowned prize. The success of *Maus* was remarkable so that it was translated into more than 16 languages and was suggested to be turned into a movie which Spiegelman rejected vehemently. However, in 2011 he published *MetaMaus* which provides a CD-Rom with the taped interviews with Vladek's, transcripts of them, sketches, photographs and background material (see Fischer & Fischer, 230 & Horowitz, 400 – 407).

In 2001 Spiegelman and his wife Francoise Mouly began to work on a comics anthology for children, called *Little Lit*. Inspired by the events of 9/11 he created the comic *In the Shadow of No Towers* which was released in 2004 as a book. In 2008 Spiegelman published *Breakdowns: Portrait of the Artist as a Young %@&*!*, a collection of Spiegelman's memoirs (see Ray). His latest publication was *MetaMaus*, a concise analysis of *The Complete Maus*.

Spiegelman married Françoise who also appears as a character in *Maus* in 1977. They have two children, Nadja Rachel and Dashiell Alan, and live in New York. (see Fischer & Fischer, 230 & Horowitz, 407).

5.1.2 The Story

Maus is the story about Vladek Spiegelman, a Jewish Pole who was taken to Auschwitz during World War II and survived the Holocaust. The comic, however, is not only a story about Vladek the survivor, but also about the process of creating the comic and the relationship between Vladek and his son, Art. Hence, "[a]s much as *Maus* is about a representation of the Holocaust, it is also about a story of one family whose image is reflected through this historical representation" (Park, 147). While *Maus I* focuses on the development and establishment of the Nazi regime alongside with its consequences for Jews such as the Spiegelman family, *Maus II* deals with Vladek's and Anja's stay at Auschwitz. Also, Spiegelman addresses the creation process of the graphic novel. *Maus II* finally ends, depicting Vladek on his deathbed in 1982.

In order to make it easier to understand that Art Spiegelman and Art, the character in the comic book, are not the same person I will always refer to the author of *Maus* as "Art Spiegelman" and to the literary figure in the comic as "Art".

5.2 *Maus* as a Comic

The medium comic is considered to be unsuitable to represent a serious topic such as the Holocaust by many people and also Spiegelman's *Maus* "is associated with the madcap, the childish, the trivial" (Doherty, 71). It seems inappropriate to use a medium that generally lacks seriousness to tell a story about the Shoah but Art Spiegelman proves that this is a wrong assumption. Compared to other media such as novels Banner (132) argues that the instrument comic "permit[s] Spiegelman to draw the reader's attention to discontinuities and connections which are difficult to render in prose". Moreover, Doherty (71) notes that "the cartoon medium possesses a graphic quality well-suited to a confrontation with Nazism and the Holocaust". Indeed, the medium comic allows Spiegelman to arrange historical facts, personal history and time layers in a way that is comprehensible and meaningful. Numerous techniques are used in order to navigate through time and space or the story. Spiegelman's most fascinating techniques are presented in this section.

5.2.1 Narrative Technique

Initially, *Maus* was ranked a best-seller within the fiction-category. This was due to the heterocosm (the story setting⁷) that was created in order to present Vladek's story. However, Spiegelman asked for a re-assignment of his book to the non-fiction list by writing a letter to the editor so that the *Times Book Review* put *Maus* into the non-fiction-category. Indeed, *Maus* is often read like a novel because of its narrative levels and the complex linguistic structure (see Hutcheon, 8; Doherty, 69). The difficult categorisation of *Maus* is due to the fact that the comic is made up of complex, multi-layered narrative levels which Năpel (Auschwitz, 41) describes as follows:

1. the epic story about Vladek during the Holocaust (1933-1944),
2. the Bildungsroman, which is the autobiographic narrative of Art (the character),
3. the Künstlerroman in which Spiegelman (the author) deals with the challenging process of creating the comic which took place from 1978 to 1991.

All these narrative levels are interwoven and overlap in the course of the narrative. The narrative present of Art interviewing his father serves as the frame tale. Vladek telling

⁷ Heterocosm is the alternative world as opposed to the real world (see *Yourdictionary*).

his story how he survived the Holocaust is the narrative past. In between these two narrative levels however, Spiegelman introduces a meta-level which focuses on the process of creating the comic itself. This meta-level is predominantly represented in the chapter "Time Flies".

5.2.2 Visual Techniques

By telling his father's story, Art writes a biography about his father but at the same time, he also depicts his life and their relationship with each other. Spiegelman himself emphasises this notion by saying "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 animal" (Spiegelman in Young 73). In order to deal with his own history, Art Spiegelman has to get involved with the past of his parents which is inevitably interwoven with the horrors of the Holocaust. This is the reason why *Maus* could be read as a biography about Vladek Spiegelman, as well as an autobiography about Art Spiegelman. Vladek tells his own story in the first person but at the same time it is Spiegelman who chooses, alters and arranges the narratives and puts it together into the comic. This artistic alteration describes the relationship between father and son, who are two very different men, living in different times, under different circumstances but both in need of each other.

In *Maus*, Spiegelman draws pictures which his father was not able to produce. Spiegelman's visual depiction adds to a certain alteration of Vladek's history (see, Park 152). However, Spiegelman endeavours to assure his readers that he depicts the truth. In a scene in the beginning of *Maus*, after Vladek had told the story how he got engaged to his later wife Anja, he tells Art *not* to include the story of Lucia Greenberg, a girl he was much in favour of before he met Anja. Art promises not to write about this detail, but as the reader has just read the story about Lucia it is obvious that Art lied to his father and broke his promise (*Maus*, 25). Thus, the reader is assured that *Maus* depicts the truth about Vladek's history without gaps. On the other hand, this scene

alerts the reader to queries about the extent of the teller's rights over his or her tale, dramatizes questions of voyeurism and of the uses and abuses to which this kind of material might be put, whilst making of the reader a collaborator implicating him or her in the use Spiegelman makes of Vladek's story. (Banner, 140).

When Art urges his father to allow him to include the story with Lucia in his comic he says, “But **Pop** – it’s great material. It makes everything more **real** – more human.” His statement indicates that Art has retained a certain distance to his project *Maus* as he calls it “material”. For Vladek the story is certainly not “material” but his real life. Showing the ambiguity about this feature is a device Spiegelman uses to convince his readers.

The way in which Spiegelman assures his readership to tell a real story is impressive. In terms of historical accuracy, he uses tools such as a timeline which visualises Vladek’s stay at Auschwitz (*Maus*, 228), a map explaining the crematorium II (*Maus*, 230) and various other maps showing the places where Vladek went on his horrifying journey. Inserting these documents also contributes to Spiegelman’s attempt to make the story explicable and authentic at the same time. Hence, authenticity is represented by these maps and diagrams about the war in Europe and adds “historical authority as well as emotional power” (Doherty, 81) to the narrative.

Another instance of demonstrating authenticity is the use of actual photographs. Spiegelman “includes family photographs at strategic points” (Hathaway, 258) to document his story and to make it more legitimate and honest. There are however distinctions to be made between drawn photographs and real photographs. In *Maus II* (276; Illustration 3 reproduced at 115) Vladek shows various photos to his son which depict family members who died in the Holocaust. These photographs are sketched by the artist Art Spiegelman. While Vladek tells Art about the pictures, the photographs take over most space of the page until they pile up on the ground. The photographs expand until they exceed the panel mirroring Vladek’s overwhelming feelings about the dead victims of the Holocaust. (see Hathaway, 258).

There are two instances when a *real* photograph is used in the drawings. In *Maus I* (Maus, 102) Spiegelman inserts a real photograph of himself and his mother at Trojan Lake in 1958. The photograph suggests a happy family in their holidays. Ironically, Anja does not smile which might refer to the sad end her life would take exactly ten years after this photo was taken. Towards the end of Vladek’s story, Spiegelman adds the second real photo to the narrative (*Maus*, 294). It shows Vladek in camp uniform. For the reader, this insertion comes unexpectedly. “Coming, as it does, two pages before the conclusion of the book, the picture is shocking on several levels” (Hathaway, 258). It

is surprising to see Vladek as a person as he has always been a mouse since the beginning of the comic. Spiegelman might also add this photograph in order to convince the reader again of the authenticity of the story as the picture represents Vladek in actual camp uniform. However, in Vladek's statement following the photograph this belief is quickly challenged: "I passed once a photo place what had a **camp** uniform – a new and clean one – to make **souvenir** photos." By revealing the constructed truth about this picture, Spiegelman makes his readers aware of the fact that *any* truth is constructed and subjective just as his graphic novel is a mixture between historical facts, the memory of a survivor, his son's perceptions and the artistic development of a comic. As Hutcheon (13) points out, "*Maus* never lets us forget that it is the story of a story of history, a textualization of a textualization of very real suffering".

Pictures in *Maus* are drawn rather simple, "[r]elying mainly on sparse black lines and the shadings of the monochromatic scale", so that it "conjures the survivor's landscape with rough sketches, black silhouettes, and white space" (Doherty, 77). Most importantly Doherty (77) points out, "[t]he pictures lack detail but not depth" which reflects the subject matter of this thesis. An instance when this depth is made visual in a picture shows Vladek and Anja leaving their home. They walk along but all that is ahead of them is connected with Nazism as the swastika stretches out as a road and leads them to dead ends (*Maus*, 127; Illustration 2 reproduced 115).

Another fascinating drawing technique which is used by Spiegelman in order to "enter, pause, and understand the importance of a moment" (Spiegelman, *MetaMaus* 175) is the escape of the page boundaries. The image when Vladek and Anja arrive in Auschwitz is reminiscent of the importance of panel sizes (*Maus*, 159. Illustration 1 reproduced here at 114). By overtaking the page, Spiegelman adds a fierce effect to this scene.

Spiegelman dedicated a lot of time and space in his comic to this meta-level which focuses on the medium comic with all its techniques. At one point, however, Art reflects on the limits of representation worrying that "reality is too **complex** for comics..." (*Maus*, 176). This might be true, but then, "no medium may adequately contain the uncontainable or represent the unrepresentable" (Banner, 132) and *Maus* makes a successful attempt in depicting the Spiegelman history during the Holocaust and beyond.

5.3 Identity

Since “the self is perceived as something that can be communicated through language or, in the case of the *Maus* books, through a combination of language and graphics” (Kokkola 125), identity plays an important role in *Maus*. Although the books primarily deal with Vladek’s life during the Holocaust, it is not only his character, but also Art’s own inner self that is presented. Art Spiegelman displays various aspects about identity in his books which include the representation of the characters by animals as well as the Jewishness of the Spiegelman family. These notions about identity will be discussed in the following chapter.

5.3.1 Animal Metaphor

The representation of people as animals has been discussed vividly after the publication especially in non US-countries (see Mounajed, 62). Mounajed (63) refers to *the* problematic representation when he points out that the animal metaphors are a form of racism. Is it correct to suppose that all Polish people are pigs because they are represented as pigs in *Maus* or that all Germans are National-Socialist due to their representation as cats? The intentional deconstruction of his created animal metaphor is evidence that Spiegelman is aware of the problematic representation of people as animals.

5.3.1.1 Identification from Outside

During the Nazi era the National-Socialist ideas were characterized by the defamation of Jews by comparing them to vermin in order to dehumanise their victims. They treated them in a horrifying way in the ghettos and camps erected to kill these people by gasing them with Zyklon B, an insecticide. All these abhorrent practices were part of an “ideology” that excluded Jews from the rest of the people living in this world. It was an instrument to dehumanise them and show the world that they are like animals (see Frahm, Schatten, 222). *Maus I* starts with a quote by Adolf Hitler which features exactly this idea: “The Jews are undoubtedly a race, but they are not human.” (*Maus*, 10). With this quote, Art Spiegelman points to the animal metaphor already before the story begins. However, Spiegelman does not only hint at the animal metaphor that he uses in order to deride the Nazi-ideology but he also problematises it. Especially in the self-reflecting chapter “Time Flies” (*Maus*, 201-207) Spiegelman questions his own use of

animal masks. When he enters the apartment of his psychiatrist Pavel he mentions that “[h]is place is overrun with stray dogs and cats” and continues to make a remark about them: “Can I mention this, or does it completely louse up my metaphor?”. The discussion about his animal masks goes on when he further hints at a drawn photo of one of Pavel’s cats next to him and describes it: “Framed photo of pet cat. Really!”. Spiegelman plays with the animal metaphor in the text by addressing it bluntly. Another incident of the deconstruction of the animal metaphor occurs when both Anja and Vladek hide in a storage locker and Anja is afraid of the rats (*Maus*, 149). The rat is drawn as big as the mice (Jews) and is put into the foreground so that it seems oversized and monumental. The ironic fact that Anja - a mouse - is afraid of a rat also emphasises that Spiegelman consciously turned his characters into mice. The mice depicted in the comic act and behave like humans do, talk like humans do and also the physical appearance is rather humanised, except for the head. Thus, Jews are represented as a homogeneous “race” in the comic book because their appearances do not distinguish. This mirrors the ideology of the Nazis that all Jews belong to one race and by doing so they reveal “that it was the Nazis who acted like animals” (Staub, 37). Spiegelman mocks this idea by categorising *all* characters (no matter what nationality/ethnicity) in his comic book into animal races (not only Jews). Nazis are turned into animals as they are represented by cats. In this manner, in Spiegelman’s *Maus*, there is no difference between categorisations, since put up on one level, all of them are classified (see Frahm, Schatten, 236) and the absurd ascription in terms of races unfolds (see Huyssen, 178). In addition it also suggests that the comic parodies the Nazi (cats) because mice have got a deep-seated tradition in American pop culture as being smart compared to cats. Like Mickey Mouse, the mice in *Maus* outsmart the cats and finally survive (see Frahm, Schatten, 240). Spiegelman himself was raised in the American mass-culture, watching “Krazy Kat”, “Mickey Mouse” and “Tom and Jerry” which influenced his perception of the mouse as the smart winner (see Doherty, 74f., Pandel, 233). He connects this notion with the role of mice as vermin in the Nazi ideology. This becomes obvious when the reader notices the second quote, a propaganda newspaper article from the 1930s, which Spiegelman places at the beginning of *Maus II* (*Maus*, 164):

Mickey Mouse is the most miserable ideal ever revealed...Healthy emotions tell every independent young man and every honourable youth that the dirty and filth-covered vermin, the greatest bacteria carrier in the animal kingdom, cannot

be the ideal type of animal...Away with Jewish brutalization of the people! Down with Mickey Mouse! Wear the Swastika Cross!

In a scene in *Maus II* (*Maus*, 210) the reader learns that the ethnicity/nationality was ambiguous even at the time of the narrative and that one powerful person could decide on somebody's identity. A mouse-prisoner asserts he is German. He says, "I am **German** like you" to the Kapo, ensuring him that he has a medal from the Kaiser and that his son is a German soldier. He wanted to show his equality. But on one occasion the German killed him because he "didn't stand so straight". Art asks his father whether the soldier was indeed German but Vladek simply does not know. To visualise Vladek's lack of knowledge, Spiegelman draws a mouse and in the next panel a cat which is in the same position. The reader does not find out whether the man was Jewish or German (or both?) (*Maus*, 210; Illustration 4 reproduced at p. 116). This scene enforces the idea that it is highly problematic to identify a person in terms of ethnicity/nationality (see Frahm, Schatten, 223f.) so that it "make[s] the horror of the holocaust experience compelling and reveal the dehumanization of both perpetrators and victims" (Reibman, 25).

This scene leads to the most criticised and most striking aspect in terms of Spiegelman's animal metaphor namely whether the animals symbolise ethnicity or religious affiliation or nationality. Jews are represented as mice across the world, no matter in what place they are depicted. This is different to the other animals which are assigned geographically with regards to their nationality. Pigs are Poles, Americans are black and white dogs, French are frogs and Germans are cats. In terms of the war and the natural hierarchy of the fauna the representation makes sense: mice are chased by cats which are chased by dogs. Jews were persecuted by Germans who were defeated by the Americans. Obviously, the food chain analogy does not fit in any different context as in the narrative of *Maus* which takes place during the Holocaust. Naturally, ethnicities are not part of a so-called human food chain on a natural basis. Kennenberg (83) emphasises this erroneous technique by saying that "[t]his slippery metaphor operates as one of the many signals in the book that any systematic categorization of people based on ethnicity, nationality, or other imposed 'types' is itself fraught with difficulty." This at-first-glance identification is repeated throughout both volumes and is resumed in a scene in *Maus II* (*Maus* 291; Illustration 5 reproduced at p. 116) when Vladek comes to a German-Jewish family. The German mother is a cat, the Jewish father a mouse

and the kids are represented as mice with cat-stripes. This scene illustrates the Nazi's racist ideology in terms of mixed marriages and shows another instance when Spiegelman manifests his animal metaphor.

5.3.1.2 Self-Identification

Another aspect about the animal metaphor in *Maus* is the self-identification. Sometimes figures change their identities consciously in order to give themselves an advantage. There are many "characters who actively construct and renew their identities as individuals, particularly in the face of the all-consuming trauma of the Holocaust" (Kannenberg, 79). Although the characters are presented as mice and pigs visually, verbally, they are never addressed as animals but rather as Jews and Poles (Kannenberg, 80). Indeed, mixing up the animal metaphor in terms of narrative and images is evident when Vladek and Anja stroll around Sosnowiec (*Maus*, 138; Illustration 6 reproduced at p. 116). Both of them wear pig-masks to hide that they are Jews but unlike Vladek, Anja cannot hide her Jewishness. This is depicted by her long mouse-tail which sticks out dominantly whereas Vladek has no tail. With this picture Spiegelman shows that Vladek can hide his Jewishness visually. Hence, there is a simple but clever transformation of Jews into Poles and mice into pigs.

The masks that Spiegelman uses in order to turn his mice into pigs resemble ancient Greek masks. It is remarkable how this hiding tool makes the reader look even more closely at a character. In a scene where Vladek is dressed up as a Pole and meets another Jew in disguise the reader is not able to see whether the man is a Jew disguised as a Pole or a Pole because his face is cut off by the panel border (*Maus*, 140; Illustration 7 reproduced at p. 117). The reader, like Vladek can only identify him as a Jew when he reveals his identity himself in the next panel (see Kennenberg, 83).

5.3.2 Vladek

Spiegelman's depiction of his own father in *Maus* has been criticised due to the question whether it is valid for art's reasons to exploit loved ones in order to write a piece of literature and thus exploit their lives (see Kokkola, 125; Munier, 210). However, Art Spiegelman reflects on this issue and makes it obvious that he is aware of this problem in "Time flies" and other scenes throughout the book. This section is about the character of Art and in how far his character was shaped by the Holocaust.

5.3.2.1 Vladek's Character

According to Kokkola (80) Vladek Spiegelman is a unique character in Holocaust Literature since he is "the only victim who is not consistently noble, inventive, supportive of others, generous, brave, and kind-in short, a saint." On the contrary, he is rather described "just like the racist caricature of the miserly old Jew" (*Maus*, 133) by his son Art who intends to depict him as accurately as possible. Accordingly, Doherty (81) says that,

by [r]endering the truth in stereotype (ethnic group members can be quite true to form) and the lie (that the group image defines the individual), the artist refuses to flinch from a literal illustration of the complexity of being human, of being both an ethnic type and a unique individual, a cartoon character, and a fully realized human.

Adding to that, he inserts explicit examples of his father's misbehaviours. Before Vladek marries his wife Anja, he is in a relationship with Lucia Greenberg who was very attractive but came from a poor family. When Vladek met Anja and decided to marry her it was not due to the fact that Anja was more adorable than Lucia but simply, because she came from a very wealthy family. The simple way in which Vladek tells his son how he searched Anja's wardrobe shows that Vladek was a very pragmatic person (*Maus*, 21). He does not conceal that in case Anja was seriously ill (an assumption he drew from the fact that she hid pills in her wardrobe) he would not have married her (see Näpel, Auschwitz, 45). Vladek's pragmatism, which Näpel (Auschwitz, 45) calls a "natural lack of emotions"⁸ (my translation) is one main characteristic. He went up the social ladder while Lucia lost many years of her youth due to his ruthless behaviour. In a way he seems to understand that he did not behave properly since he asks Art not to include Lucia in his comic (*Maus*, 25).

Another misfeature of Vladek's character is his capitalistic attitude (=stinginess). This capitalistic attitude, his thrift, was one main reason why he survived. He was always able to change luxury goods such as chocolate or cigarettes for shelter or other services in order to survive. He only consumes what is absolutely necessary in order to save money and food which he can trade later on ("**Always** I saved....just in case!" *Maus*, 65). Vladek is witness to many situations when his thrift basically saves his life. It also helps him to relocate Anja from Auschwitz-Birkenau to other barracks nearer to him. Another quotation emphasizes the importance of trading goods. During his

⁸ „selbstverständliche Emotionslosigkeit“

narrative about hiding in the ghetto Vladek tells Art, "He [Miloch, Vladek's cousin] said, 'Tell me when **you** will go out Vladek. **Then** I'll know it's safe.' He and his girlfriend wanted to **pay** me to advise. They had still 2 watches and some diamond rings. I didn't want to take. They **needed** these to live. So I took only the small watch." (*Maus*, 126). The significance of the trading goods for Jews becomes more and more obvious. Vladek, on the one hand, knows that the guy and his girlfriend will need their goods in future; on the other hand, he is aware of the fact that he can also make use of them. Since his heart is soft after all, he only takes a small watch so that they can save the rest.

His strong will is revealed when Vladek is in Auschwitz. He does anything in order to survive. He speaks German with soldiers so that they like him, he teaches a Kapo English, and he bribes other people and takes employment in order to be indispensable for the Kapo. Vladek was undaunted. He takes a bath in icy water just to remind others and himself that he would not be willing to get killed by Germans, "I'm not going to die and I won't die **here!** I want to be treated like a human being!" (*Maus*, 56). Likewise, he encourages Anja in the ghettos when she is totally desperate, "**No**, Darling! To die, it's easy...But you have to **struggle** for life! Until the last moment we must struggle together! I need you! And you'll see that together we'll survive!" (*Maus* 124; Illustration 8 reproduced at p. 117).

Although Vladek's character traits helped him to survive in the past, they are not appropriate in present time anymore. Spiegelman questions whether the Holocaust is responsible for Vladek's misbehaviour but does not come to a conclusion since many others who survived the Holocaust (such as Mala) do not behave like Vladek (*Maus*, 133). One of the main aspects about Spiegelman's honest picture about his father is that the story is credible. Vladek is not a hero but a survivor. Due to the presentation of Vladek as a thrifty, manipulative, old man the reader is not likely to identify with Vladek. The gap between Vladek the survivor and Vladek the miser, serves as an instrument to keep a distance to the story. The ambivalent perception of Vladek is challenged in various scenes. Among others, there is a scene when Art's girlfriend Françoise wants to pick up an Afro-American hitchhiker (*Maus*, 258f). Only in this way, is it possible for the reader to glance at the very honest picture of Vladek Spiegelman.

5.3.2.2 Vladek & the Holocaust

Vladek's story is about the beginning and the course of the Holocaust with all its horrors. Vladek himself, comprising his identity and his character, is imperatively connected with the Shoah. Although Vladek and Anja are able to escape the National-Socialists many times due to a mixture of luck, resources and help (see Banner, 149) their deportation to Auschwitz can not be avoided. As *Maus I* ends, Anja and Vladek are about to enter Auschwitz via the infamous gate with the inscription "Arbeit macht frei" (*Maus*, 159; Illustration 1 reproduced here at p. 114). The panel in which the gate appears is one of the biggest pictures in the whole comic book. Furthermore, the drawing diffuses so that page margins are absent. As Banner (150) points out, "Auschwitz has burst the boundaries of the page". The ending of the first part of *Maus* leaves the reader anxious. The reader knows that Vladek and Anja survived but this is contrasted by the general assumption that Auschwitz is an equivalent to death. However, the reader simply has to turn the page in order to be reminded that Vladek did survive after all. After the quarrel about Anja's diaries, Art is very angry and calls his father a murderer (*Maus*, 161). The intensity of these two incidents, Anja and Vladek entering Auschwitz and Art calling his father a murderer is powerful. Cursing his father right after Vladek has told him about Auschwitz "seems out of all proportion" (Banner 152).

The representation of the Shoah becomes more and more terrifying when Vladek talks about Auschwitz and the extermination of Jews. He explains about the arrival of the prisoners, how the Nazis shouted at them, took their papers, clothes and hair, that they brought them to the showers and finally tattooed the prisoners (*Maus*, 185f). Vladek however, is able to survive by teaching English to a Kapo who treats him well so that he was fit and reconstituted. He was provided with good food and clothes that fitted him ("Always I was handsome...but with everything fitted, I looked like a million!") (*Maus*, 193; Illustration 9, panel 5 reproduced at p. 118). However, Vladek is still in the spotlight, still a Jew in a concentration camp and still potentially going to die. The sense of danger becomes even more obvious when Mandelbaum, Vladek's close friend, was taken away to work and never showed up again. As considered by Banner (160), "Vladek's acceptance of loss seems to be almost calm and he shows little distress in what becomes a familiar refrain". He loses Abraham ("Abraham I didn't see again...I think he came out the chimney" *Maus*, 187), the priest who encouraged him ("I never saw him again" *Maus*, 188), his friend Mandelbaum ("So. It was finished with

Mandelbaum. I never saw him more again" *Maus*, 194; Illustration 10 reproduced at p. 119), Vladek's father and his siblings ("to **such** a place [ovens] finished my father, my sisters, my brothers, so many" *Maus*, 231). Vladek's survival was due to his skill "to take advantage of any opportunity to save himself and his willingness to attempt anything which might work to preserve him longer" (Banner, 160).

5.3.3 Relationship between Vladek and Art

Spiegelman uses the narrative about the present (1970s and 1980s) in order to depict the ramifications of the Holocaust. The difficult relationship between himself and his father indicates that the Shoah is not something that happened only in the past but that it is still here, in the present and omnipresent for survivors and their families. "Through the difficulties in Vladek's and Art's relationship, one begins to see the long-term effects of the Holocaust on its victims" (Kokkola, 29). It is a depiction of a troublesome, agonizing but honest father-son relationship. The story is not only about Vladek's experiences during the Holocaust but also about what it did to him and about what it did to Art as a representative of the second generation of Holocaust survivors. The different time levels enforce this aspect. The interaction of the narrative about the Holocaust and the narrative about Art interviewing Vladek has a great influence on the protagonists and represents the effects of the past on the present.

5.3.3.1 Father and Son

Already in the first scene, the reader is introduced to both father and son. However, it is not a classical father-son relationship as it seems. Art is a young boy who fell down and hurt himself because his friends were faster at roller-skating. He runs to his Dad in order to complain about his friends and to seek comfort but all that Vladek answers is: "**Friends?** Your friends? ... If you lock them together in a room with no food for a week...then you could see what it is, friends!..." (*Maus*, 6). The impact of Vladek's experiences with so-called friends during the Holocaust was disappointing and dangerous. This scene clearly introduces a problematic father-son relationship. Spiegelman probably chose to draw this scene of his childhood-memory to show how such ordinary everyday incidents became extraordinary due to his father's experiences during the Holocaust (see Banner, 135). The destructive impact of the Shoah on Art has been present throughout his whole life. Later on, Art visits his father in order to work on the comic. It becomes obvious that Vladek is delighted to see his son whereas Art has a

reserved attitude toward his father. The reason for this becomes visible to the reader right away. The atmosphere in his father's house is stifling. Vladek has married another survivor called Mala after his first wife had died. However, they do not get along with each other. Vladek also complains that Art is late and is disappointed that Françoise has not been able to come. Slowly, the reader comprehends that Art is not a frequent guest in Vladek's house (*Maus*, 13). Scenes where Art interviews his father about the Holocaust depict the difficult relationship as well. Very often, Vladek wants to talk about something else that Art is not interested in. However, Art is only interested in Vladek's narrative about his life during the war. Sometimes, Art is reckless in his demand on Vladek to concentrate and stay focused on the story. After all, it is his broken father whom he urges incessantly. In the last scene, Art sits at his father's bed with the recorder in his hand, still urging his weak and sick father to talk about the horrors of the Shoah (*Maus*, 296). After Vladek had served Art's purpose, he is now finally able to find peace in his mind and is laid to rest (see section 5.5.4). Generally, it can be said that *Maus II* focuses more intensely on Art's biography which is deeply connected with the conflict between himself and his father. The reader is made aware that the Holocaust did not only affect its victims but also the victims' children. Art (Spiegelman) belongs to these "children of survivors, who are, or feel themselves to be, increasingly responsible for the carriage and transmission of the survivor stories" (Banner, 152).

5.3.3.2 Connecting Past and Present

The fact that the story is not chronologically ordered indicates that levels of time are interwoven and affect each other and that the past always influences the present. Spiegelman emphasizes this fact in order to explain the difficult relationship of himself (present) and his father (past) as they have lived through different traumas, have gained different approaches to life and finally have developed their different personal attitudes. It seems as if something that happened in the past still influences the present day and those people who have experienced the past. Importantly, people who have survived such a horrifying period such as the Holocaust have a certain traumatic bondage to the past because it has a consistent impact on what they do or say. In *Maus*, the reader is witness to a past history that simply can not pass (see Huyssen, 177). In this sense Spiegelman switches between the past and the present events quite vividly. The reader recognises this fact when two pictures of Vladek appear next to each other, one depicting him as a young man, the other representing him as the old Vladek narrating

the story (*Maus*, 124; Illustration 11 reproduced at p. 119). The two images look exactly the same which emphasises the fact that Vladek is still the same person who has witnessed and survived all these terrible happenings. (see Banner, 132).

The relation between past and present becomes already significant in the first chapter of *Maus*. The signifiers of present and past are brilliantly worked into the scene when Art and Vladek begin the very first interview. In the picture Vladek is already on his pedal wheel, not moving forward. His arm with the camp number is heading over Art who seems as small as a child. In the background there is a photograph of Anja. Vladek's words ("It would take **many** books, my life, and no one wants to hear such stories." *Maus*, 14; Illustration 12, panel 5 reproduced at p. 120), the tattoo and the photograph emphasise the connection between present and past in this scene, so that the reader can dip into the past effortlessly (see Chute, 205). Spiegelman's switch of present and past is visible throughout the comic book. In chapter 3 Art lies on the floor listening to his father like a child (*Maus*, 47; Illustration 13 reproduced at p. 121). His legs are spread across the previous panel which depicts Vladek as a soldier in 1939 so that Art serves as a link between past and the present (see Chute, 206). The relation between the time levels is also highlighted by Vladek's difficulty to stick to a chronological order. Art, on the other hand, continually urges his father to keep a certain order while narrating his story ("Wait! Please Dad, if you don't keep your story chronological, I'll never get it straight...tell me more about 1941 and 1942" *Maus*, 84). Also later, when Vladek talks about his stay in Auschwitz, mixing dates and lengths of time, Art gets upset with his father. Vladek however answers, "...In Auschwitz we didn't wear watches." (*Maus*, 228). His statement brings back the past again and illustrates how much impact the shock still has on Vladek.

5.3.4 Art

Since Spiegelman gives such an honest record of his father's character, he himself has to be depicted as an imperfect son in order to avoid a wrong heroism of his figure. In fact, he is a bad son. He does not care about his father but rather about his comic book which is the only reason why he visits his father ("I still want to draw that book about you" *Maus*, 14; Illustration 12, panel 2 reproduced at p. 120). Also later in the book Spiegelman continues to emphasise that the comic book was indeed the only reason he was regularly in contact with his father ("I visited my father more often in order to get more information about his past..." *Maus*, 45). Thus, it can be assumed that Art's main

reason to write the comic was to be able to cope with the past. Also, because Spiegelman refrains from seizing another source in order to write a comic about the Holocaust as his father's memory. Vladek's second wife Mala was a survivor too but her memories seem irrelevant for Art Spiegelman's purpose. Although she provides him with some information about her experiences during the Holocaust, Art never makes it a subject of address (*Maus*, 94.) So, although Mala had experienced the same shocking events as Vladek such as the selections in the stadium, Spiegelman does not include Mala's story in his comic book because it is not only a book about Vladek and the Holocaust but also about Vladek and his personal family history (see Näpel, Auschwitz, 60).

In the beginning of *Maus II*, the reader is introduced to another character in the book in the chapter "Time Flies". This character is basically Art Spiegelman himself. Spiegelman, as already mentioned, is not identical with Artie, the son of Vladek. This becomes obvious in this chapter where Spiegelman depicts himself as a human with a mouse-mask. The scene shows Spiegelman as he sits with his head leaning on the desk which is arranged on a pile of dead mice. There is a window which gives way to the sight of a watchtower. By mixing together various dates concerning his personal life such as the birth date of his daughter with dates that are relevant for the Holocaust he creates an atmosphere of total confusion. Art Spiegelman's own life which was recently hit by the success of his comic book *Maus I* is mixed up by the memory of his father and the Holocaust which intervenes in his life constantly. It represents Spiegelman's guilt due to the success of *Maus I*. It is striking that Spiegelman is not a mouse but a human being with a mouse-mask. As Kennenberg, (87) suggests, "Spiegelman both identifies with the Jews of the past, yet he also realises that the time and circumstance have changed him – and the world – as well". By depicting all characters in this scene as humans with masks he makes it less narrative and puts it into present-day. Therefore, all reporters coming from all over the world are represented as humans with dog-masks, cat-masks or mouse-masks. However, by intentionally pointing to the animal-masks Spiegelman challenges his readers again to think about the concept of masks in his book. The representation of the corpses also hints at his guilt. It symbolizes Spiegelman's realisation that the success of *Maus I* was built on the victims of the Holocaust. In addition, his figure shrinks to the size of a child due to the excessive mental overload (see Hutheon, 9) while trying to cope with his private life, his successful

job, his mother's suicide and the victims of the Holocaust including his father's experiences.

5.3.4.1 Prisoner on Planet Hell

Initially, the catalyst for writing *Maus* was the suicide of Spiegelman's mother in 1968. After this family tragedy he started to interview Vladek to gain information about his parents' lives during the Holocaust (see Munier, 2009). In the beginning of chapter two, Art emphasises that he starts visiting his father on a regular basis. In the first panel, however, he initially wants to obtain information about his mother ("About Mom..." *Maus*, 28). But Vladek is absorbed in counting his pills. Art seems not particularly interested in his father's state of health but rather urges him to talk about his mother again ("About Mom – Did she have any boyfriends before she met you?"). Interestingly, Art is obsessed with finding out about his mother's history. This obsession is opposed to his indifference towards his father. Banner (141) claims that "Spiegelman's representation of himself as Art and of Art's relationship with Vladek does reveal that he was not especially interested in Vladek's 'now' but only in Vladek's 'then'."

His relentless search for his mother's diary is a dominant aspect in *Maus*. Towards the end of *Maus I*, Vladek tells his son about the painful arrival at Auschwitz. Immediately after that, Art demands his mother's notebooks again. He emphasises the importance of the diaries for his comic book ("This is where Mom's diaries will be **especially** useful. They'll give me some idea of what she went through while you were apart" *Maus*, 160). Anja's diaries mean much more to Art than simple supplementary information about the Holocaust. They also represent Anja as a person. This legacy is also the connection between Art and his dead mother. Vladek however, ignores his son, assuring him that he knows how she felt "I can tell you...she went through the same what me: **terrible!**" 160) After Art has suggested to look for the notebooks in the house, Vladek now needs to confess that they do not exist anymore because he destroyed them. ("These notebooks, and other really nice things of mother...one time I had a very bad day ...and all of these things I **destroyed.**" (160). Even worse, Vladek has destroyed them in a special way: "After Anja died I had to make an order with everything...these papers had too many memories. So I **burned** them." (161). By admitting that the diaries do not exist anymore he also confesses that the memories about Anja and the Holocaust were too much to take for him. He burned them and the diaries turned into ashes. Art cannot hide his shock. Firstly, he cannot believe what his

father did, but this incredulity soon gives way to a more powerful emotion: anger. Finally, he curses his father, “God **damn** you! You – you murderer! How the hell could you do such a thing!!” (161). Art considers the destruction of the diaries to be “the destruction of the remembrance” (Frahm, *Memories*, 63). For Art, the chance to gain any information about his mother’s memory in Poland and Auschwitz is lost forever and he will never be able to approach her experiences during that time. Supposing Anja’s suicide in 1968 was initially the reason why Spiegelman decided to write *Maus*, it can also be assumed that the end of *Maus I* is the ultimate futility of his troubles and struggles (see Huyssen, 185).

The relationship between Art (Spiegelman) and his mother is represented in the short comic strip “Prisoner on Planet Hell”. It is concerned with Anja’s suicide in 1968 and its consequences for Art. In “Prisoner on Planet Hell”, Anja commits suicide by slashing her wrist. It is Vladek who discovers her corpse instead of Art who should have found her. “I suppose that if I’d gotten home when expected, I would have found her body” (*Maus*, 102). However, it is again Vladek who is directly confronted with Anja’s death and who has to bear the consequences of yet another tragedy in his life. At the same time, Art makes himself responsible for his mother’s death when he recounts the last time he saw her. He reacted roughly when she tried to approach him the other day. Now that she is dead, Art’s sadness can not be comforted by his father, just like in the very first scene of *Maus*. Hence, Art needs to take up the role as the comforter but he is not able to cope with his feelings either. Both of them feel abandoned by each other and are overwhelmed with the tragedy. This incident certainly contributed to the troubled relationship between Art and Vladek.

Another remarkable aspect about “Prisoner on Planet Hell” is Art’s outfit which resembles prison and/or camp clothing. On the one hand it suggests that Art thinks he is the murderer of his mother (and as a result is put into prison) but on the other, he draws a connection between himself and the Holocaust. One panel depicts various suggestions why his mother committed suicide (“Menopausal Depression; Hitler did it; Mommy; Bitch” *Maus*, 105; Illustration 14 reproduced at p. 121). Since she left no note, no one knows the real reason, but the letters “Hitler did it” are predominantly written across the picture. It is accompanied by pictures of the extermination of Jews under the swastika and Anja slashing her wrist with the registration number of the concentration camp that she survived. The Planet called Hell is not only Auschwitz but also the psyche of the survivor child Art, who is confronted with death and destruction (see

Huyssen, 185). Evidently, the after-effect of the Holocaust, also for the next generation, is severe (see Näpel, Auschwitz, 62).

5.3.4.2 Art's Guilt

Art has developed a feeling of guilt due to his being alive while most of his family did not survive the Holocaust. It also proceeds from Anja's suicide. Art's childhood was dominated by memories of his parents' experiences. This becomes noticeable when Art talks to Françoise in the beginning of *Maus II*: "When I was a kid I used to think about which of my parents I'd let the Nazis take to the ovens if I could only save one of them...usually I saved my mother." (*Maus*, 174). The memory of his childhood is shaped by his parent's memories of the Holocaust. Another scene in *Maus* (47; Illustration 13 reproduced at p. 121) shows Art lying at his fathers' feet and listening to his story. Art is depicted as a young boy who is excited about a (bedtime) story that his father is telling. However, it is not a fairy tale that Vladek is talking about. It is his story of survival during the Holocaust. The scene suggests that while other kids listened to fantastic bedtime stories, children of survivors listened to stories about the Holocaust. The position of Art makes him a child while Vladek is the grown up. Art listens in awe how his father survived Auschwitz. This makes Art much more feasible as a character than Vladek who survived an inconceivable historical period like the Holocaust. The guilt that Art has been developing ever since is resulting from living without the horrors of the Holocaust. "I guess it's **some** kind of guilt about having had an easier life than they did" (*Maus*, 176). This exclamation suggests that Art suffers from his parents' predominant memory about the Holocaust. In the same scene Art says: "I know this is insane, but I somehow wish I had been in Auschwitz **with** my parents so I could really know what they lived through!" (176). This exclamation repeatedly emphasises his struggle to cope with his parents' memories. Somehow, it seems that he will never be able to compete with the memory which is too dominant in his parents' lives.

The life of the post-war generation of survivors' children is undoubtedly bound to the Holocaust. Although they have never experienced it themselves it has always played a significant role in their lives. It is needless to say that they have been shaped by the narratives of their parents and have not had much chance to approach the Holocaust from a different perspective than being directly involved in it. However, what the post-war generation passes on about the Shoah is what they have heard but not experienced, so that "the impressions retained in the mind's eye of a vivid sensation

long after the original, external cause has been removed” (Young, 84). As for Spiegelman and the generation he represents, it is important and necessary to accept this aspect about Holocaust memory as it still affects them and society as a whole. By introducing the reader to his own perception of the Holocaust and its consequences, he adds the importance and relevance for this generation and the next which emphasises the importance of maintaining the discussion and narration about the Holocaust.

The sorrows of survivor children are being expressed by Art on various occasions but most intensely when he is talking with Françoise in the beginning of *Maus II* (*Maus*, 174-176) on their way to Vladek. In addition to Art articulating his troublesome relationship with his father (Françoise: “Poor guy...I feel so sorry for him” – Art: “Yeah, me too...’til I have to spend any time with him- then he drives me **crazy**”), he also expresses his ambiguous feelings towards his comic book about the Holocaust and ponders over his childhood as a survivor child. He tries to defend himself saying “Don’t get me wrong. I wasn’t obsessed with this stuff....It’s just that sometimes I’d fantasize Zyklon B coming out of our shower instead of water.” (*Maus*, 176). The Holocaust has been “a constant point of reference in the young Art’s psychological terrain” ever since (Banner, 155). Furthermore, Art’s brother Richieu who died in the Holocaust has been such a point of reference and reminded everyone in the house of the Shoah and its destructive impact. Although Spiegelman refuses to feel guilty about his “ghost” brother (“I never felt guilty about Richieu,” *Maus*, 176), it is obvious that the permanent presence of his ghost brother by a blurry picture which was put up in the house, had a severe impact on family life. His parents never talked about Richieu but the silence was even more representative of the ghost brother: “They didn’t talk about Richieu but that photo was a kind of reproach.” (*Maus*, 175). Art knows that his parents were desperate for finding a possibility that Richieu survived the Holocaust: “After the war my parents traced down the vaguest rumors, and went to orphanages all over Europe. They couldn’t believe he was dead.” (*Maus*, 175). Richieu was talked up as the perfect son who “never threw tantrums or got in any kind of trouble” (*Maus*, 175).

Art’s intention to write the story about his father is primarily to overcome the trauma. Spiegelman’s honest illustration of himself, his character and his feelings is unique. It makes him a trustworthy and authentic narrator. His personal involvement with the Holocaust is obvious. Due to his parents’ experiences in Auschwitz his whole life was influenced by feelings of guilt which is represented by the comic strip “Prisoner

on Planet Hell". Thus, the ramifications of the Holocaust, its consequences on survivor children and also the impact on society are still present nowadays.

5.4 Languages in *Maus*

The use of languages in *Maus* plays an important role as it is an instrument Spiegelman uses in order to highlight different aspects. On the one hand Vladek's broken English is characteristic for him and language played an important role in his life. On the other hand German and Polish were both languages that influenced people during World War II. However, the significance of language in *Maus* is not limited to the protagonists using the language but it is also a noteworthy aspect when looking at the title. The following section examines the importance of different aspects of languages in *Maus*.

5.4.1 Titles

Language in *Maus – A Survivor's Tale* is already worth examining when looking at the title. Initially, the subtitle *A Survivor's Tale* refers to Vladek's survival of the Holocaust. Looking at the title from Art Spiegelman's perspective however, it could be argued that Art is the one who survives Vladek in the end when he sits at his bed while Vladek is dying (*Maus*, 296). (see Näpel, Auschwitz, 63; see Huyssen, 179) so that both of them could be designated to be the survivor. In terms of linguistic features, the title is impressive too. The word "Maus" is a cognate which is pronounced the same in English as well as German (mouse & Maus: /maʊs/). At first the phonetic similarity suggests that the title is English since it was written by an American author. Then, however, the letters "Maus" are written in German so that Spiegelman points to *the* language of the Holocaust because German was spoken by most of the perpetrators (see Rosen, 123f). Also, the title's "tale" is phonetically identical with the word "tail" (/teɪl/) which connects the title to the story's protagonists: animals (see Richter, 89).

The graphic novel consists of the two volumes *My Father Bleeds History* and *Here My Troubles Began*. The title of part I hints at two aspects. Firstly, it is Vladek who suffers as he is the father in the story. Vladek narrates the story of his survival during the Holocaust, about his sufferings and about the difficulties he had to face. Secondly, the title visualises how difficult it was for Vladek to talk *about* these things, when his son urges him to talk about the cruelty of the past. This is also exemplified by many scenes

in which Vladek would rather talk about his rough marriage with Mala or his illnesses and pills than narrating the story of his life (see Chute, 203). The title also hints at the fascination of the National-Socialist with the word “blood” in terms of the unbelievable reasoning of the genocide to keep the Arian blood clean (see Näpel, Auschwitz, 53).

And Here My Troubles Began is the second volume’s title and contains various interpretative notions. Initially, the reader assumes that the words represent Vladek’s feelings about the transport from Auschwitz to Dachau. However, it also hints at Spiegelman’s misery to represent the Holocaust in a way “that would both viscerally communicate *and* critically comment upon the workings of racism” (Staub, 39). Spiegelman’s troubles with the book start in the second volume when he depicts himself struggling with the impact *Maus I* had in public. He devotes one chapter to this conflict so that Spiegelman’s real troubles began with *Maus II*, at the same time when he tells the story about his father entering the concentration camp Auschwitz.

5.4.2 English

Maus was written by Art Spiegelman who was the child of immigrants but has always considered English as his mother tongue. As he reveals in *MetaMaus* (15), Spiegelman “had a kind of passive Polish”, so he could perceive what his parents were talking about when he was a child. Thus, it can be assumed that Vladek and Anja talked Polish to each other after the war in America. As Spiegelman goes on talking about his parents’ use of languages he says that he had never revealed to them that he could understand Polish because “[o]therwise I’d blown my cover and they would have switched to Yiddish” (15). Yiddish was obviously not used after the war besides from a few exclamations which are also included in the comic (“Oy”, “Shvartser” *Maus*, 258).

Considering language in *Maus*, what is most striking, is Vladek’s use of English which is “foreignized through its Polish/ Yiddish features” (Shaw, 26). His English resembles other accents of Jewish immigrants who were depicted by American Jewish writers in the 20th century. These authors, like Spiegelman, were often survivor-children who took their parents’ accent as a model for their characters in their fictions. As Shaw (28) suggests,

“[t]he register may vary from standard American English in intensity in the number of non-normative features involved, but it is *qualitatively* recognizable as the English of Eastern European Jews who emigrated to America – particularly

New York – as adults, and whose ‘old country’ languages were Polish or Russian, and Yiddish (the *mama loshen*) at home or in the *shtetl*.”

In Vladek’s case, this “broken language” (*MetaMaus*, 155) is represented by changing word order (“I have for you a warmer coat” *Maus*, 71), confusing modal verbs and determiners, and misusing prepositions. However, “[t]here are no lexical errors” (Shaw, 28) so that the reader can easily understand him.

One of the main reasons why Vladek is depicted with his accent is that the reader is constantly reminded that Vladek is an Auschwitz survivor of Polish-Jewish origin. It also functions as a mark to demonstrate there are two narrative levels. While Vladek uses non-standard English when speaking to Art in Rego Park (the narrating present), his Standard English during the Holocaust represents Standard Polish (the narrating past) (*Maus*, 36; Illustration 15 reproduced at p. 122). In this scene Vladek tells Art about Anja’s stay at the sanatorium before the war in 1938. In the captions Vladek is mixing up sentence structure as well as word categories whereas in the speech bubbles, Vladek uses high-standard English. The usage of English is a tool of setting events into a certain time span so that the use of English “serves as a constant marker” (Rosen, 130) (see Huyssen, 181).

In addition to this function, Alan C. Rosen suggests another purpose of Vladek’s accented English. In his article “Language of Survival: English as Metaphor in Art Spiegelman’s *Maus*”, he investigates Spiegelman’s attempt to celebrate English as the “good” language that helps Vladek to survive.

The positively connoted English is given attention already in the beginning of Vladek’s story when it is revealed that Vladek could speak English even before the war. When he met Anja, she talked English with a friend not knowing that Vladek could understand her. In the next panel Vladek said, “You know you should be careful speaking English – a “stranger” could understand.” (*Maus*, 18). He further explained that he had learnt to speak English by taking private lessons because he had always dreamt of going to America some day (*Maus*, 51). This scene reveals what kind of role English played in their lives. Vladek coming from an underprivileged family did not have the opportunity to learn English at school unlike Anja. Rather, his motivation to learn English was his dream of going abroad. This further suggests that Vladek assumed to have a better life in America than in Poland. Moving to the country that celebrates the American

dream was the solution to Vladek's misery of being born in a low social class (see Rosen, 125). Later, in Auschwitz Vladek's command of English turns into the language of survival as he tutors a Kapo. In this scene the significant meaning of English during the Holocaust is demonstrated. The Kapo himself wanted to learn the language spoken by the Allies, since it would give him an advantage in case the enemies would win the war. By tutoring the Kapo in English Vladek gained a better social status within the camp. He was provided with good food and clothes so that Vladek tells Art, "I looked like a million" and asserts that he was "amazing well-off" (*Maus*, 193; Illustration 9, panel 10 reproduced at p. 118), so that the reader could assume that Vladek, in spite of the horrors of the Holocaust, had achieved his dream of improving his social status which was only possible because of his command in English. His original intention to study English was to ameliorate his condition in terms of materialism. Ironically, he did exactly this during a time that was shaped by darkness. To both the Kapo and Vladek, "language is generally a means to improve social status, and English is the specific instrument to achieve that end in the future" (Rosen, 126).

Another instance of presenting English as the language of survival is a scene towards the end of the story. Vladek met a French prisoner who was relieved to have found someone who also spoke English. He emphasises his feelings when he says, "I talk English also a little, I was becoming crazy!...There is no other French here and I do not know to talk German. I had **nobody** to who to talk." (*Maus*, 253). This exclamation demonstrates how important English was for the psychological state of the Frenchman as well as Vladek's. Because Vladek's use of English relieved the Frenchman, who received extra food rations, he decided to share it with Vladek. Vladek is aware that the ability to speak English saved his life: "He **insisted** to share with me, and it saved my life." (*Maus*, 253).

English continues to play an important role in Vladek's story. When they were rescued by the Americans, Vladek was able to communicate with them. He told them his survival story in English and English took over as being the language of everyday life. Thus, slowly English changed to be the language of the survived ones whereas German is no longer the language of the authorities. With the invasion of the Americans English became the language of freedom. However, in *Maus*, this notion is ambivalent since the Americans are depicted rather as colonisers than liberators (see Rosen, 128). Vladek and his fellow were allowed to stay in the camp if they kept the house clean ("But I guess you boys can stay if you keep the joint clean and make our beds" *Maus*,

272). In order to receive protections from the Americans, Vladek and his friend were committed to serve them domestically. In return they received food and Vladek was called "Willie". On the one hand, Vladek's command of English helped them to survive; on the other hand, the Americans' English is another symbol of oppression. In conclusion, Vladek made a deal with the Americans, which was only possible because of his command of English: "So we worked for the Americans and they **liked** me that I can speak English." (*Maus*, 272) (see Rosen, 127-129).

Although "Vladek's accented English is mimetically appropriate for a Polish Jewish immigrant to America" (Rosen, 129), it is interesting that Vladek is the only immigrant with an accent. Mala or Art's psychiatrist Pavel, who presumably immigrated at the same time as Vladek and Anja did, are depicted without Polish-Yiddish accent. Vladek's English could be a representation of his torture and struggle at the war. The fact that Mala or Pavel are also survivors is revealed to the reader because of *what* they say but not *how* they say it (see Rosen, 130).

5.4.3 German and Polish

Vladek does not only use English in *Maus* but also German. In a scene with German soldiers he uses German in order to speak with them. As a result Vladek was not beaten "I answered in German and his partner stopped him from beating me" (*Maus*, 51). It can be assumed that language played an essential role as it depended on the language if a person was declared as being a friend or a foe and thus if someone survived or was killed. In *Maus*, the reader can find German expressions on various occasions such as "Juden raus" (*Maus*, 115) or "Schnell! Schnell! Schnell" (*Maus*, 186). This use of German in an American comic enforces the importance of languages at that time. Since Vladek uses these expressions himself in order to tell Art his story, the usage of German also enhances the authenticity of the narrative so that the reader assumes that Vladek has heard these expressions with his own ears.

There is only one instant when Vladek uses his mother tongue Polish (*Maus*, 258). It is a very impressive scene where Françoise wants to pick up an Afro-American hitchhiker who himself speaks "a highly inflected [...] form of Black English" (Rosen, 131). Vladek's reaction to that is cursing and swearing in Polish. By using Polish he is sure that no one will understand him. However, his condemnation towards the Afro-American man is foregrounded by Spiegelman, who depicts his father as someone who

has not “learned the lesson of the Holocaust” (Rosen, 131). This is emphasised by Françoise scolding Vladek by saying, “That’s **outrageous**! How can you, of all people, be such a racist! You talk about Blacks the way Nazis talked about the Jews!” (*Maus*, 259).

The functions of languages are versatile. It is a tool to communicate in numerous ways and often, it is so natural to people that they are not aware of the power language has and what it can do to others. Language in *Maus* illustrates several of these functions as English helps Vladek to survive, while German is represented as a language of deception, used by the Nazis. The ability to speak multiple languages is promoted in *Maus* and emphasises the importance of languages in Vladek’s story.

5.5 Limits of Representation

Although *Maus* is a piece of work that mirrors the Holocaust, questions stereotypical concepts and other important problems connected with the Shoah, it is also a piece of literature that demonstrates the limits of Holocaust representation. In his conversations with Françoise, Spiegelman stresses the problem of representing the Holocaust. In the beginning of *Maus II*, during a conversation between Art and Françoise, the reader learns how problematic it is for Art to write and hence, to represent his father’s story. At the same time the reader is witness to Vladek’s struggle to remember and recite everything that he has been living through. Due to his age and his horrifying past, he might not be able to remember everything correctly. These limits address the much discussed problem of adding meaning to such a terrifying event.

Making meaning out of the Holocaust simply does not make any sense at all and grasping the meaning of it is impossible. Just like that *Maus* is a comic book that, due to its combination of pictures and text, offers multiple meanings as well as no meaning at all. In other words, the ambiguous narrative of *Maus* “simultaneously makes and unmakes meaning as it unfolds. Words tell one story, images another.” (Young, 75). The reader is locked in the story to find out that neither author, nor anybody else is able to make sense of the war, the Holocaust and its ramifications. This is illustrated when Spiegelman shows us how Vladek survived and *what* he has survived just to deconstruct it in the present day narrative. The story and what Vladek has experienced

is remarkably challenged in the comic's images. It is important to understand that these are two different notions. Vladek says something but does something else in the next instance. He has survived the Holocaust but is a racist himself (*Maus*, 285). Art promises not to write the story about Lucia Greenberg just to include it and betray his father later on (*Maus*, 25). Indeed, these two aspects are not separable since both stories depend on each other (see Young, 75) and are connected to each other in a way that is as impossible to grasp as the meaning of the Holocaust itself and thus restrict Holocaust stories to unfold fully.

5.5.1 Vladek's Limits

The limits of Holocaust representation are illustrated on various occasions in the graphic novel. In the beginning of *Maus* Vladek already hints at the impossible task to tell the story about his survival because of his personal experiences that he struggles to recount. Vladek utters his discomfort with the recounting of his memory a few times and he resigns with the words "it would take **many** books, my life" and that "no one wants anyway to hear such stories" (*Maus*, 14; Illustration 12, panel 5 reproduced at p. 120). In this quote also lies a form of bitterness and pain. Obviously, the Holocaust has had a deep influence on Vladek which he might not admit to himself. The mental suffering goes so far that at one point, Vladek has nothing more to say. His "More I don't need to tell you" (*Maus*, 296) indicates the limits of remembering the Holocaust and speaking of the horrifying past. On many occasions, Vladek is revealed as an unreliable narrator. He asks Art not to include the Lucia-Greenberg-story and he cannot remember specific details such as the camp orchestra (*Maus*, 214) or has forgotten them. The scene in which Art questions his father about the orchestra visually reveals that Vladek's account of the past might be incomplete. When Vladek tells Art about his leaving Auschwitz to go to work every day there is an orchestra in the panel. Art questions his father about the orchestra. But he cannot remember anything like that, so in the next panel, the prisoners are walking past the orchestra which is hardly visible anymore. Spiegelman did not remove the orchestra as the conductor's head and some parts of the bass fiddle are still visible. Since the orchestra is well documented but Vladek has no account of it, it must be assumed that he either cannot remember it or, that Vladek never entered Auschwitz through the main gate which suggests that he might have never seen the orchestra. Spiegelman does not provide any solution for this (see Spiegelman, *MetaMaus*, 31) and it becomes evident that extracting details from his father's

memories was a difficult process for Spiegelman. In *MetaMaus* (25), Spiegelman talks about this “barrier”, saying that he was frustrated when, while interviewing his father, Vladek “would recite almost word for word an event he’d told me before” but “asking him about things that “he hadn’t ever talked about, he’d have a difficult time locating it” (Spiegelman, *MetaMaus*, 28).

5.5.2 Spiegelman’s Limits

However, it is not only Vladek who struggles with the limitations of representation. Art soon realises that the comic book project pushes him to his personal limits too. While talking to Françoise he admits, “I mean, I can’t even make any sense out of my relationship with my father...how am I supposed to make any sense out of **Auschwitz?**...of the **Holocaust?**” (*Maus*, 174). Obviously, the question he asks can never be answered since no one can make sense of anything that happened during the Holocaust.

The second chapter in *Maus II* deals with the limits of the story on the basis of the self-reflexive narrative level of Art Spiegelman as the author of *Maus*. Within this self-reflection the limit of representing the Holocaust becomes exceptional. Art ponders whether it is adequate to tell his father’s story the way he did. The fact that *Maus I* was a great success adds to his sorrows as a feeling of guilt arouses in him. The limit of depicting the Holocaust, of making money and success out of the Holocaust is a problem for Spiegelman so that he also addresses this aspect in the chapter “Time Flies”. As he tells the dreadful story of his parents (and himself) he commercialises it in a way he feels uncomfortable with. In “Time Flies” the success of *Maus* in terms of popular culture is represented by a film team (“Alright Mr. Spiegelman...We’re ready to shoot”) as well as the journalists who want to make as much money as possible. The media industry is luring Spiegelman to make his graphic novel part of mass culture. Spiegelman condemns people who make money out of all the victims of the Holocaust as he also emphasises in an interview, “As they say, there is no business like Shoah business” (see Richter, 95). At the same time he feels guilty because by publishing *Maus I*, he had become one of them.

In terms of Spiegelman’s personal limits Anja’s diaries play an essential role. It is especially noteworthy that Anja’s diaries become a certain symbol of the unrecoverability of the Holocaust. Because he cannot reconstruct his mother’s

experiences of the Holocaust, Spiegelman feels that his story is incomplete. His obsession with finding the diaries is an evidence for the limits of representation in *Maus*. Thus, “the search for this missing narrative becomes a working metaphor for the ultimate unrecoverability of all Holocaust experiences” (Staub, 35). Since the diaries would tell Art what his mother went through during the Holocaust, her narrative is lost and Art’s story about his parents’ experiences in Auschwitz limited.

It is very difficult to approach a topic such as the Holocaust in any way, but even more challenging if the story is connected to the author who processes his childhood and family relations in it. As Staub (37) summarises, “*Maus* is very much about the inability of art (Art) to confront fully or represent metaphorically a monstrous past, but it is also about the tensions involved in understanding what it means to have a Jewish identity in a post-Auschwitz age”. However, it is not only the representation of the Holocaust as such which Art struggles with but also the representation of actual places, things and people. In the beginning of *Maus II* (*Maus*, 171) for example, he ponders whether Françoise should be drawn as a mouse since originally she is French.

One last aspect about the limits of Holocaust representation in *Maus* is the absence of a merciless illustration of direct violence. Spiegelman hints at horrifying happenings constantly but hardly ever shows it bluntly. It is questionable if this strategy makes the incidents even more frightful for the reader because he/she cannot be stopped (but he/she is rather encouraged) to think about what is really just happening. A scene where this is illustrated shows a German soldier smashing a child onto the wall. However, Spiegelman uses a speech bubble in order to hide the victim and the bloodstains (*Maus*, 110; Illustration 16 reproduced at p. 123). Another scene shows the murder of the prisoner who claimed to be German. All that the picture reveals is a German soldier who kicks someone. The shadow on the wall makes this scene even darker but there is no explicit depiction of the prisoner’s death (*Maus*, 210; Illustration 17 reproduced at p. 123) just as the reader never witnesses Mandelbaum’s death (*Maus*, 194; Illustration 10 reproduced at p. 119). The reader learns these terrible consequences from Vladek’s narrative, but not exclusively from the pictures. The limit of representing that child is a tool that Spiegelman uses, or needs to use, is as further evidence that the cruelty of what happened during the Holocaust is just so horrifying that any representation of the Holocaust could not convey an idea of the sufferings that people had to bear.

5.5.3 Ash and Smoke

The graphic novel *Maus* is characterized by the use of numerous symbols. The most noteworthy symbol in *Maus* is fire in terms of burning and ash. According to Collins English Dictionary the word Holocaust itself goes back to the Greek word holókaustos (ὁλόκαυστος, which can be translated as “whole” and “burnt”. The notion of fire stretches through the comic book. Constantly, smoke is visible. First of all, Art smokes while he is interviewing his father (*Maus*, 17) which suggests that his artistic skills are very much linked to his vice. At one point, Spiegelman dedicates four whole panels within his narrative to the symbol of ash by depicting a scene when Art drops ash on the carpet and Vladek scolds him (*Maus*, 54). Emphatically, Vladek mentions that he only was able to survive due to the fact that he was a non-smoker (*Maus*, 56) and used the cigarette rations in order to trade goods. At that time, cigarettes became a kind of currency on the black market so that it was basically a tool of surviving for Vladek. Vladek can not understand why his son smokes and even less that Art is not paying enough attention to his cigarette, resulting in ruining the carpet by sheer carelessness. Obviously, knowing the importance of cigarettes for Vladek during the Holocaust, his reaction becomes more understandable even if it is not appropriate in America in the 1980s anymore.

Another notable instance of the symbol of fire is when Art realizes that Vladek had burnt Anja's diaries (*Maus*, 160f.). He did not simply throw them away but he *burned* them so that they could never be explored by anyone anymore. In the course of the story the reader also gets to know that Vladek – in order to save matches – leaves the gas on (*Maus*, 182). In *Maus II*, the notion of ash and smoke becomes darker as Vladek talks about the crematorium. Repeatedly, Spiegelman ends his pages with depictions of smoking chimneys within a short distance (*Maus*, 215, 218, 229; Illustration 18 reproduced at p. 123). The accumulation of smoking chimneys in a short time illustrates the hazardousness of the situation in which Vladek struggled to survive. The concept of fire, which turns everything into ash and leaves nothing behind, reminds the reader of various associations. Nothing is left of Anja's diaries or memories. Nothing is left of the other members of the Spiegelman family (especially Richieu). Nothing is left physically and unfortunately, often also in terms of remembering the stories of millions of Jews who died in Auschwitz. All that is left is ash, which is *the* recurrent symbol in *Maus* (see Richter, 98-101).

5.5.4 The End

The ending of *Maus II* marks the end of the story about Vladek's experiences during the Holocaust as well as the story about Art interviewing Vladek. However, compared to other stories about the Holocaust the grim ending of *Maus* does not impose a moral lesson on its readers. Rather it encourages the reader to reflect about the Shoah's ramifications up to today, because Vladek's death does not mark the date when the memories and sufferings resulting from the Shoah, end. Moreover, they survive Vladek and are part of Art Spiegelman. Vladek's story ends with a remarkable sentence, "More I don't need to tell you. We were both very happy, and lived happy, happy ever after." (*Maus*, 296). This exclamation as the reader knows now after finishing the story is rather ironic. Vladek and Anja simply did not live happily ever after. Again the reader is assured that Art Spiegelman's narrative is authentic as he depicts his father as a dreamer or a liar, someone who cannot or does not want to believe that the Holocaust has influenced his life ever since. The reader realises that this is not true. His last words, "I'm tired from talking, Richieu, and it's enough stories for now..." (*Maus*, 296) indicate not only that Vladek is physically tired but also that he is emotionally exhausted. Talking about his horrifying experiences during the Holocaust has taken its tolls. Banner (170) goes even further suggesting that "Vladek's request signals his death; when his story ends, so does Vladek." Art submits to his father's will which makes the scene even more powerful as he switches off the recorder for the very last time. As Vladek lays his memory to rest he finds peace believing his dead son has come alive again. Eventually, by mixing up his sons' names, he brings up all the problematic aspects about the Holocaust's consequences again (see Huyssen, 187).

The very last picture in *Maus* is remarkable. It depicts a non-comical but rather realistic memorial stone with Anja's and Vladek's birth-and-death-dates which exceeds its panel borders so that the two panels above are split symmetrically. The fact that the tombstone breaks the frame indicates that there is no closure or ending (see Chute, 215). The traditional style of beginning and ending a biography by giving life dates is also used by Spiegelman. However, the tombstone and especially the life dates (Vladek: Oct. 11, 1906 – Aug. 18, 1982; Anja: Mar. 15, 1912 – May 21, 1968) convey the idea that the life of Art's parents has not been happy as suggested by Vladek in the scenes before. "[I]t represents another, truer end to their stories than the romantic

image of their reunion” (Banner, 170). Even more, it reveals the truth about life of survivors in a post-war age: They both had to cope with their experiences in the Holocaust, the loss of their son Richieu, and other family members. As a result, they had to struggle with their lives emotionally on a basis that cannot be comprehended by the post-war generation: Anja committed suicide; Vladek was devastated and has suffered ever since. Moreover, his health condition was bad, his second marriage with Mala (also a survivor) unhappy and as a matter of fact, the relationship to his only (living) son was estranged and cold. The happy ending is nothing but an illusion that Vladek tries to keep alive until the end.

Above the dates, the Star of David is positioned centrally on the tombstone. Chute (217), suggests, that the Star as *the* symbol of Judaism, is also *the* symbol of the persecution of Jewish people during the Shoah. Putting it on the tombstone of his parents, he emphasises that in spite of all the horrifying aspects about this time, Jews and Judaism have survived until today. Under the drawing Art Spiegelman’s signature appears with the dates that mark his work on *Maus* (1978 – 1991). Since Art Spiegelman is still alive, it is obvious that these are not his life dates. It is the time in which he has written *Maus* and thus, these numbers are the life dates of Art writing his masterpiece. Art Spiegelman is a survivor child, who has struggled all his life with the history of his parents and has tried to come to terms with the past by creating this graphic novel. At the same time, the signature also reveals the falsity of Vladek’s and Anja’s happy end and “that Spiegelman does not intend to let his father have the ‘last word’” (Chute, 217) just to make the reader aware of the ambiguity that stretches through the whole comic book.

Part III

6 The Meaning of *Maus* in the EFL Classroom

Before considering using Art Spiegelman's *Maus – A Survivor's Tale* at school, it has to be pointed out that comics provide a valuable context for language learning as "[c]omics and graphic novels [which] are powerful teaching tools" (Williams, 13). Jacobs (19) emphasises on two aspects regarding comics as a useful tool in the classroom:

- (1) reading comics involves a complex, multimodal literacy; and
- (2) by using comics in our classrooms, we can help students develop as critical and engaged readers of multimodal texts.

The first argument illustrates the acquisition of skills in order to read a text and its accompanying images simultaneously, whereas the second comment refers to the empowerment of students to be critically aware of the complexity of the comic as well as the cultural and historical aspects that go hand in hand with the medium and the topic of the comic. In the case of *Maus*, this would suggest that students will be able to comprehend the complex setup of the story, including the possibilities *Maus* as a graphic novel seizes in order to tell the plot, which is embedded in a difficult period. In addition students would develop historical and social competences so that they become critically engaged with themselves and the world.

Considering *Maus* in the classroom, there are numerous reasons why it is a suitable piece of literature that can serve as a powerful teaching tool. This third part attempts to explain that the use of *Maus* in an Austrian EFL classroom is a legitimate resource by applying CLIL as a framework. This part also provides information on why using *Maus* could be helpful in terms of acquiring competences ranging from social skills, language and linguistic skills to historical expertise. It also emphasises the importance of the beneficial usage of the medium comic in order to acquire media literacy as well as developing historical and cultural awareness within the school context. All instructional activities which are introduced in this thesis are mere suggestions on how to deal with *Maus* at school and are inspired by plentiful online sources. They need to be adapted according to the target group as precisely as possible in order to have a profitable learning outcome. Since the main aspiration of the CLIL class is to acquire

communicative competences as well as content knowledge, the activities try to foster peer work and attempt to develop reading skills, “to engage higher cognitive skills, such as recognition, understanding application of certain procedures, and evaluation (with the purpose of developing the students’ critical thinking and judgement” Ravelo, 11) and to provide students with historical expertise. *Maus* meets all these requirements if applied accordingly. Chun (147) is certainly correct when he says, “What makes the use of *Maus* in the classroom so compelling is its intellectually engaging content realized through its visual narrative strategies of representing history”. This approach requires the graphic novel to cause emotions in the reader so that students are eager to participate in the lesson and become critically engaged with Vladek’s story. However, it is not only the emotional, but also the visual aspect that plays an important role when looking at *Maus* as Chute (214) suggests:

the graphic narrative is a contemporary form that is helping to expand the cultural map of historical representation. Its expansive visual-verbal grammar can offer a space for ethical representation without problematic closure. *Maus* is a text inspired with an intense desire to represent politically and ethically. But it is not a didactic text pushing moral interpretations or solutions.

Therefore, students should be encouraged “to deconstruct these texts on multiple levels”, including the examination of the plot in terms of historical aspects, the investigation of the author’s intention, the study of the characters and their relationships, and also the deconstruction of design, pictures and text (see Williams, 13).

So far, I tried to establish *Maus* as a class reader by emphasising the overall benefits regarding language competences and historical expertise. It is worth to examine in how far *Maus* could be beneficial in terms of concrete competences and also how to put all these benefits into practice. First of all, it is essential to remember that CLIL is the methodological framework and that the overall competence that is to be acquired by students is the communicative competence as well as historical expertise, so that lesson plans should be developed thoughtfully and decisions made consciously by the teacher. Thinking about the target group is a good starting point. I would suggest to plan teaching *Maus* in a 7th form Upper Secondary school as in terms of their historical expertise, they have already deepened their knowledge about the Holocaust and should be able to recognise certain dates and places in the comic. As the Holocaust is also addressed in the 4th form of Lower Secondary I could also imagine using *Maus* in this form. Naturally, tasks must be made easier and vocabulary needs to be taken care of to

a greater extend than in a 7th form. Also, it might not be that relevant to focus on the brutality of the graphic novel. Still, *Maus* could be beneficial for the 4th form if the teacher knows his/her students well and is aware of what they can cope with. By deepening the students' factual knowledge, historical processes can be reconstructed and a conscious and responsible interaction can be initiated. It must not be forgotten that this thesis focuses on students who attend an Austrian school and most of them have been brought up with the knowledge that World War II took place here, not a long time ago. Any narrative is dependant on its historical and geographical context as well as the background knowledge of its readers so that teachers need to consider materials which are useful for their students (Dittmar, 425). Although it is evident that "complex themes on war and its atrocities, current political realities, and coming-of-age in a time of revolution" (Chun, 147) are suitable topics for the EFL classroom as it provides the necessary context for discussion and critical thinking, teachers must be aware of the difficulties they have to face when dealing with *Maus* in their classes.

In addition, I think that *Maus* would be a perfect topic in an optional subject (Wahlfach) as students and teachers can intensify working on the graphic novel and thus focus on the competences that might be acquired.

6.1 Social Competence

In my view, students must be encouraged to ask and answer certain key questions before, while and after the reading process. Those questions are supposed to dig deeper into the story and touch aspects including the artistic process and style, the author's intention and the genre. There are numerous questions provided by several teachers, scholars and press houses on the internet, one of them being *The Random House*. One of the main aims of dealing with *Maus* in the classroom is to empower students to acquire critical thinking that can only be evolved if students develop "[a]n understanding of the reasons why texts are written for a specific readership" (Chun, 147). Defining the readership of *Maus* is certainly problematic. Especially in terms of Holocaust literature, the aspect of double readership is dominant since there are hardly any boundaries between adults' and children's' literature. This is due to the fact that the literature deals with a very sensitive topic in a more accessible and responsive way than adult Holocaust literature. It can be said that *Maus* is especially addressed at people who are not only interested in the historical events that lead to the Holocaust or the

question of how someone (Vladek) survived Auschwitz. It is also written for people who are aware of the aftermaths of the Holocaust up to this very day. For me, one of the most important aspects about *Maus*, and about Holocaust literature is that people become aware of the presence of the consequences of the Shoah in our everyday lives. It still affects people, nations, ethnicities and religious believers. Spiegelman enforces this thought when he bluntly depicts his own struggle with the comic book, with his father and with his life that is undoubtedly bound to the Holocaust, although he himself has never been part of it as such. But because his parents survived, it still affects him deeply. All the more, students are supposed to understand this consequence as it probably also affects them perhaps in a different or unconscious way. It is an example of how people fail in being human and the effects of this inhumanity. These consequences have to be made subject in the classroom as it will make students become critically aware of the past as well as the present regarding democracy and sociability.

In the first part of this thesis, I mentioned that the Holocaust involved millions of people so that students often feel overwhelmed by the quantity of victims. It might be a good idea to get students involved personally to approach the past. A possible activity might include involving the students' family as they become aware of their own identity and its interconnections with the family history. Students can "interview a parent or grandparent about an episode of his or her life" (Random House). By recording the students' emotions and comments about the anecdotes, students should also be enabled to connect the story of their grandparents to their own. At the end of the project *Maus*, students could create their own family history by creating a comic themselves.

Reading *Maus*, it becomes evident that the portrayal of family members is a delicate topic. Art depicts his father as an unpleasant protagonist. In addition, Spiegelman portrays his alter ego as Vladek's irresponsible, lying son. Students can learn a lot by examining the portrayal of different characters in order to make the story more believable and authentic. The question whether a story like *Maus* needs a moral narrative could also be discussed by students as well as the stereotypical behaviour of Vladek. As suggested by Adorno, the universal aim is to never let anything like Auschwitz happen ever again. Dealing with the Holocaust in the classroom offers multiple strategies to make students understand about the impact the Holocaust has

had until now. Students should be made aware of the dangers but also the developments that lead to the Holocaust.

Working with graphic novel such as *Maus* offers a great opportunity to study history as well as social issues since they “have the potential to generate a sense of empathy and human connectedness among students” (Williams, 15). The reason for the possibility to work intensely on *Maus* is that students can identify with or at least feel some sense of empathy with Vladek or Art. Since *Maus* offers the opportunity to view Vladek’s life through Art’s pen, – i.e. from a different perspective – students can make the experience to tell a story from different points of views. Only if this connectedness is held upright, will students eagerly work on the topic, develop their literacy skills and gain many other social competences (see Williams, 15). Comics can support teachers to approach sensitive topics such as war, humiliation, or genocide. Since *Maus* deals quite honestly with topics such as racism and its consequences it is a text that fits not only into the curriculum but also into the students’ private lives as children are often victims of racism themselves. Obviously, it is not only racism as such that can be made subject. A discussion about Vladek, who was a victim himself, and who, after 30 years of struggle, curses a black dog, could serve as a good starting point of discussing the contradictory topic of stereotypes. Perceptions, public discourses and practices of racism particularly today could be addressed. This topic is very current today as PEGIDA and terror attacks dominate the newspapers. Thinking about negative attitudes towards asylum seekers, immigrants, or Muslims arouse the feeling that Vladek’s point of view is not as uncommon as one might think even in our present days. Students should develop awareness for minorities and the problem of xenophobic attitudes towards them and be critically engaged with these topics that command society and press alike.

Clearly, the most striking aspect about *Maus* for students will be the animal metaphors. As a matter of fact, the animal metaphors are also suitable for any discussions about race, ethnicity, religion and culture. It is absolutely necessary to deconstruct these animal metaphors and to connect and compare *Maus* to other stories featuring animal metaphors, such as Aesop’s *Fables* or Georg Orwell’s *Animal Farm*. The metaphor as such could be deconstructed by analysing scenes when Spiegelman addresses the animal mask directly. This happens for example in the chapter “Time Flies”, when the author explicitly focuses on the metaphor or when Anja is startled by a real rat (although she is a mouse). The controversy that the animal metaphor will

probably provoke, can be a good starting point to discuss issues such as segregation, racism, identity, representation and also racial ideology as insanely developed by the Nazis. This will help students to acquire awareness towards the present practices in society where racism and segregation are still dominant issues (see Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, 6-21). Along with the animal metaphor goes the issue of limits of representation. As presented in the second part of this thesis, plentiful scenes are suitable for discussing the limits of representing the Holocaust. Students might be encouraged to think about the impossibility to show certain scenes in *Maus* and its reasons. In my view, it is important to make students question these limits in *Maus*, ranging from the symbols of smoke and ash to the very last page of the graphic novel.

6.2 Media Competence

The comic has been a minor medium of literacy ever since due to the assumption that the images only mirror what is being said in the speech bubbles. Subsequently, it is believed that the readers cannot develop a power of imagination or that “they are simply looking at the pictures as a way to avoid engaging in the complex processes of learning to read” (Jacobs, 19). However, examining comics as a medium shows that reading any visual narrative is quite complex. Comics are multimodal texts that require its readers “to negotiate diverse systems of meaning making” (Jacobs, 21). Looking at the page of a comic suggests that the visual narrative provides a context that must be understood since one page is made up of different panels, which are “divided from each other by gutters, physical or conceptual spaces through which connections are made and meaning is negotiated” (Jacobs, 21). A comic consists of various components such as images, text, gutters, panels, onomatopoeias, speech bubbles, etc. that operate in a very complex system in order to make meaning. In addition to that *Maus* very often uses bold lettering in order to emphasise meaning so that the written words that represent spoken words can be almost “heard” in the reader’s mind like a narrative voice which reads out loud (see Jacobs, 23). In this way, students have to learn *how* to read a comic so that they are empowered to “engage critically with ways of making meaning that exist all around them” (Jacobs, 21) such as texts on the internet, newspapers, TV, etc. This section investigates in how far comics can support “fostering students’ critical literacies and addressing the needs of the many English-language learners” (Chun, 144) in terms of reading multimodal texts.

“The main advantage of working with comics or cartoons is the pleasure of reading a narration that coexists with images” (Ravelo, 10). So it is not only important to make meaning of the text but also to evaluate and analyse images. This ability is called visual literacy and is insofar important as it enables students to read pictures, interpret them and deduct meaning from them. Text and pictures can be analysed separately but they can also be interpreted together which creates a completely new perspective on the comic as a whole. “Readers”, as Williams (13) notes, “can choose to look at the words or the images first, or take the page in all at once as an integrated design”. This special aspect is suitable for classes which are diverse in terms of weaker or more advanced students but also in terms of personal preference. Each student is able to decide for him/herself what is important in the first place or what is more attractive when looking at the comic. This individualised approach can offer students to work self-determined.

Comics are believed to render fiction but certainly not reality. *Maus* is different. *Maus* is about a *real* man living at a time that made dark but *real* history. The first challenge for students is to identify a comic. What is a comic? What makes a comic a comic? It is necessary that students work with instructional material that explains the medium comic straight forward. *The book on comics*, which interestingly is created as a comic itself, is Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*. The explanation how comics work is feasible and also fun to read as it makes use of the medium very cleverly. As it gives a concise overview of the medium comic, I recommend this instructional book for novice comic readers. To answer the question “What is a comic” the reader needs to “know what signs make up the language of comics, their common interpretations or meanings, and – most important of all – to understand that the same sign can have a meaning of its own, despite all possible generalizations” (Ravelo, 11). Students are required to learn how to analyse signs within specific contexts. Hence, it is absolutely necessary to help students to learn identifying the language of comics, the signs, the onomatopoeias, etc. All these components make *Maus* a multimodal text which is not only represented by text and panels but also by the variety of textual resources such as real photos and drawn photos, maps, time lines, are independent comic strips, detailed drawings, etc. which accompany the written words. Since visuals are becoming more and more dominant in our everyday life, students should be empowered to “develop a critical attentiveness toward how visual images are constructed with the aim of influencing and manipulating consumers of such images” (Chun, 150).

In the case of *Maus*, it is undeniable that the “cartoon format is absolutely necessary to the telling of the tale” (Gallo & Weiner) due to the great impact that the images have on the story and the interplay of the multiple narrative levels. This also explains why it is important to analyse *Maus* in terms of genre with students. One activity that is suitable for the beginning of reading *Maus* and that encourages looking at the genre is suggested by Ravelo (15f.) who emphasises the work with the medium comic as a start. She proposes to do a “Judge a Book By Its Cover” activity as the students are analysing the cover of *Maus* without hardly any information about the book. By answering a set of questions that lead the students through the analysis they can develop skills which help them to identify the language of a comic or to realise the power of signs and images and finally to connect the comic to the historical background.

Another activity is suggested by Maple (27) who argues that working on the medium comic is a good opportunity to let students create their own comics. This can either happen in groups, as a class work or as an individual creation. This activity is suited as a final activity as “students can put all their learned literacy skills into one final project as they become content creators” (27). Students also need to “consider pictures, dialogues, and their own skills of employing technology in order to create a storyboard” (27). Creating a comic has various benefits as it helps students to understand symbols and images. For EFL students, creating a comic on their own can be a possibility to play with words and get to know the language better in a more playful way than writing essays. There are various comic creators online (*NCTE’s Read, Write, and Think, Bitstrips, Comic Life 2*) where students are able to construct and create a comic quite easily. Creating a comic can include to tell stories about the students’ lives, about their grandparents’ lives or parents’ lives. Especially students with a migration background could seize this opportunity to tell their story (if they wish to do so), about the struggle of coming to a new country, learning a new language and their experiences with prejudices and maybe racism.

Creating a story that spans over a certain time could also include learning “how to use the correct verb tenses to mark the chronological events in their lives” (Chun, 150). The activity of creating one’s own comic by using online tools does not only make them experienced online-media-users but also fosters reading engagement. It helps to understand meaning making and it may also turn reluctant or passive learners “into active producers of knowledge” (Chun 150).

Furthermore, connecting the acquisition of media competences with the definition of Holocaust literature, students could develop an awareness of *Maus* as a unique piece of Holocaust literature. The Random House suggests that “[m]ost art and literature about the Holocaust is governed by certain unspoken rules”, which include “the notion that the Holocaust must be portrayed as an utterly unique event; that it must be depicted with scrupulous accuracy, and with the utmost seriousness, so as not to obscure its enormity or dishonour its dead”. Thus, students could try to analyse in how far *Maus* violates these rules.

6.3 Language Competences

The context of Part III is the EFL classroom which implies an engagement with English texts. As “[k]nowledge of linguistic, audio, visual, gestural and spatial conventions within comics affects the ways in which we read and the meaning we assign to texts” (Jacobs, 24) it is absolutely necessary to examine the medium comic within the EFL classroom in terms of language. Only if students are able to draw conclusions i.e. to make meaning of a piece of literature, can they actively take part in negotiating meaning. Working with a graphic novel in the classroom can help and “prepare students for better negotiating their worlds of meaning” (Jacobs, 24). This section deals with three language skills including speaking, reading and writing. Another important aspect of language in terms of the EFL classroom is the English language so that the role of English in *Maus* is discussed as well.

6.3.1 Speaking

Topics in *Maus* can trigger multiple interdisciplinary discussions among students. Besides my recommendation to keep track of the students’ knowledge and understanding of the comic by asking them study questions which could be either answered orally or in written form, it is important to “enable them to engage in critical discussions” (Chun, 146). This is however often only possible by avoiding written discussions “due to their [the graphic novels’] scaffolding of the textual meanings through their rich visual modes of representation” (Chun, 146). Appealing and inspiring images in the graphic novel empower students to think about various, often contradictory aspects which they can express in a discussion so that students improve expressing their opinions. In a discussion, they need to agree, disagree and justify their

opinions. Also, controversies within the classroom might be better initiated and directed by the teacher as *Maus* touches upon delicate topics such as segregation and racism. Reading images does not only train students' visual literacy skills. It also helps students to describe pictures and in to analyse them. Expressing speculations about further actions of the characters in the graphic novels is another language function that could be trained and practised with the help of *Maus*. By talking about the content in *Maus*, they can learn how to summarise a story, a chapter or a whole book verbally. When discussing personal experiences, students need to provide personal information as well. Hence, talking about students' own experiences of racism or getting to know their family history is a good opportunity to encourage speaking activities.

6.3.2 Reading

Excellent reading skills have become more important nowadays. People need their readings skills not primarily in order to be able to read a book during their spare time. As a matter of fact they need it in order to be able to read their e-mails, to surf through the internet, to use Twitter and Facebook, or text messages in a working environment. Deconstructing the definition of reading and the purpose of reading clearly shows how important it is nowadays that students are enabled to deal with multimodal texts. The comic, naturally, is a perfect way of developing and training multimodal and visual literacy since "the multimodal nature of the graphic novel and the idea of reading signs, gestures, and pictures presents a different way to think about reading and privileging print" (Maple, 26). Although it is assumed that reading is an isolated activity, Chun suggests that reading clubs, chat rooms, blogs or other interactive reading actions prove that reading can also be a social interaction and since "meaning making has become increasingly multimodal, our definition of literacy needs to encompass not only the textual, but also the visual, the spatial, and the aural" (Chun, 145).

The interest in reading a comic might be higher among high school students and especially among students who have a different L1. They might be more motivated if the text is accompanied by pictures because it might simplify the meaning making process in the beginning. Possibly, the interest in reading comics might be enhanced for "students who come from marginalized communities and have little access to resources that enable mainstream middle class students to success academically" (Chun, 145). Supposedly, comics can empower students to become enthusiastic readers since they might experience reading "as a new way of imparting information, serving as a transition

into more print-intensive works, enticing reluctant readers into prose books” (Gallo & Weiner, 115). This motivational aspect should not be neglected. In terms of reading activities, there are multiple possibilities. One activity suggested by Chun (150) features a “Reader Theatre” in which students are assigned different roles (Vladek, Art, Francoise, etc). In class they read out loud and play their roles. While I think that this might be fun for some students who are outgoing, this strategy is not suitable for everyone. However, it could be used for some scenes or to revise some key scenes such as the scene in which Vladek confesses that he has burnt Anja’s diaries in order to put emphasis on the dialogues. Role plays might also be a good idea to have students interactively engaged with the comic. Nonetheless, *Maus* is a graphic novel that deals with the horrors of the Shoah and naturally, brutal scenes should not be acted out in order to avoid glorification of violence. It is obvious that a visual narrative about the Holocaust also features limits of representation. These limits can be discussed while reading the graphic novel and should be touched upon every now and then throughout the project of *Maus*.

6.3.3 Writing

Maus provides numerous opportunities to develop writing skills. In my view, it is important to encourage students to write about various aspects of *Maus* as the act of writing also serves as a reflexive activity. Maples (27) emphasises the importance of such activities in combination with working on the graphic novel as purposeful writing skills are developed. Furthermore, writing can be encouraged by other tasks such as keeping a diary while reading the novel in order to keep track of emotions towards the characters and the development of the plot. Keeping a journal and recording thoughts about *Maus* can also help developing an awareness of family history. The connection between keeping a journal and *Maus* is immediate as Anja’s diaries play an essential role in the comic. Thus, the importance of diaries (or any historical sources) can also be made subject of study by observing the role of Anja’s diaries in the graphic novel.

6.3.4 The English Language

As already encountered in the analysis, it is obvious that Vladek uses a non-standard form of English. It is important to make this a subject of discussion in the EFL classroom so that students do not only benefit from the insight that Vladek’s English adds to the

authenticity of the story but also investigate the usage of Standard English in everyday life and especially the importance of it for the students themselves. The various notions of standard English and the use of language could be addressed by the teacher as students are affected by the gap between written and spoken language themselves. Interestingly, most students will not have any problems in understanding Vladek so that a discussion about the purpose of a foreign language could be initiated. The discussion could be extended by adding the topic of dialects and accents or by examining grammatical rules of Vladek's English. As various forms of English are studied, English in the context of *Maus* could also be analysed as the language of deception as noted in part II of this thesis. Students could investigate in how far language was used in order to dehumanise Jews. Discussing the fact that people still use language as a tool of violence in our everyday life could be a good starting point. Oppressive language is a form of violence that is used in schools everyday among students. As a result it could be worth examining how language works so that students can develop critical language awareness (see Chun, 148). Language and identity are two concepts that are intrinsically interwoven as already observed in the analysis of *Maus*. Vladek's use of language identifies him as a Polish or as a Jew. From the way in which he talks, the reader knows that English is not his mother tongue. Language users take on different roles and signify where they belong to by speaking a certain language. It identifies them just like speaking Yiddish makes Vladek a Jewish victim during the Holocaust. As he switches languages, it is noticeable how the contexts change either locally or historically. Especially for teenagers and young adults identity plays an important role in their life. They are supposed to acquire awareness towards the role language plays in terms of identity. This might be encouraged by discussing the socio-cultural aspect of accents and dialects. Looking at different accents of one language, their statuses and their value, could help students to become engaged with the notion of identity

Another possible activity could include the definition of difficult words such as "Liquidation, Selection, Final Solution, etc" so that students can find out about the difference between these words' actual meaning and their meaning in terms of the Holocaust. As a matter of fact the use of the German words like "Appell, Sonderkommando" or the words on the gates to Auschwitz (*Arbeit macht frei*) could be discussed. Students can make up their mind why Spiegelman used these original words to insert them in his comic. He also chose a German title (*Maus*) for the graphic novel which might also be investigated by the students.

In addition, teachers must be aware that classrooms tend to become more diverse in terms of linguistics and culture so that there are more and more students with a different L1 than the language of operation. *Maus* can serve as a starting point to discuss topics such as multilingualism as Vladek himself speaks several languages and uses them according to the situation. It is only due to his command of so many languages that he is able to survive Auschwitz. Speaking more than one language is appreciated in the comic and it should also be addressed positively in a multilingual classroom in order to help multilingual students who might struggle with their legacy as well as make students, who promote a monolingual point of view, reflect upon their opinion. There is another aspect about language in *Maus* that could be made a topic in the lessons. It is Vladek's ability to stick to discourse conventions. He knows exactly "how to use different talk with Nazi officers, Polish guards, and potentially treacherous countrymen" (Chun, 149). Spiegelman uses the animal masks in order to represent these changes of discourse conventions. One example would be the Jewish man who is disguised as a pig when Vladek meets him on the streets of Sosnowiec. The "visual metaphor of the need for people to adopt different guises in daily interactions with people" (Chun, 149) could be another topic connected with language competence that teachers might want to address. Navigating in a society is something that students must learn as they grow up. It can be said that *Maus* is an outstanding example "of how people use different registers for different occasions, which in the particular case of *Maus* may well determine one's fate" (Chun, 149).

Working on vocabulary, using comics is a useful activity as students can witness what is being said by looking at the pictures and they might "develop new vocabulary through recognition of the picture that is represented" (Maple, 27). It also provides a context for certain words such as "swastika", but it also includes to learn about a specific genre and to initiate a discussion about discourse conventions in order to empower students to be able to make meaning within a multimodal text (see Jacobs, 24). It might be good ideas to pre-teach certain vocabulary or to have students create a vocabulary log where they keep new words so that they "acquire a more advanced command of the English language as well as the necessary interpretative skills to infer the meaning of words through context" (Ravelo, 12).

6.4 Historical Competence

As already elaborated in the first part of this thesis, “[t]eaching the Holocaust is not an easy task”, as “[m]any feelings, sensations, doubts, or even family memories may arise when studying such a [...] comic” (Ravelo, 10) for both students and teachers. Still, as already mentioned, such complex topics are suitable for the EFL classroom as they are multilayered and not one-dimensional. Although Spiegelman presents two different stories (Vladek’s quest and Art’s troublesome relationship with his father) it is also (primarily) a book about the Holocaust.

As Vladek’s story stretches from the beginning of World War II to the very end it serves as a perfect timeline where students can examine which events happened at what time. *Maus* “can provide an initial point of departure to [...] examine the historical process by which the Nazi regime was established through the democratic apparatus of Weimar Germany” (Chun, 148). Students will learn about World War II and the Shoah but they will also explore the historical lesson that is to be learnt from the past as well as the relevance of the past for today and gain historical knowledge. Historical expertise must also be acquired by examining certain terms such as fascism, Holocaust, etc. Within this topic, different types of governments can be discussed so that students are enabled to critically engage with history.

Since this thesis deals with *Maus* in an Austrian classroom it would be a good activity for students to examine the historical context of the Holocaust not only in Austria but also in Poland since students hardly ever have the chance to investigate historical facts from an alternative perspective than their own. Vladek’s narrative represents the events that led to the Holocaust and the Holocaust itself from a Polish viewpoint, while Art’s narrative presents an US-American point of view. It is worth to examine these three approaches (Austrian, Polish, US-American view) by the students as they will develop awareness that there are multiple opinions and views on the very same topic. Alongside with this, *Maus* could be an occasion to talk about the different and diverse perceptions of the Holocaust nowadays. Many people still feel very sensitive about this topic. Teachers need to provide enough balanced material for students so that a prejudice-free discussion can be initiated. Furthermore, concrete knowledge about the events that lead to the Holocaust can be traced and identified in the comic. The beginning of the Anti-Semitism in Poland can easily be analysed as well as the escalation of the systematic extinction of the Jews. The chapters “The noose Tightens”

as well as “Mouse Holes” describe the worsening of the situation of Polish Jews. It would be a good possibility to try to define the Holocaust in this state of learning. Students could do research about the differences between terms such as Holocaust, Shoah, pogrom, genocide, victim, survivor, etc. and try to draw connections to the present. Students are supposed to deal with the question of in how far these terms are controversial and actual today (see The Random House). They should also find similar and more actual examples of present political actions. Another interesting topic for students could be the black-market since it is often neglected in the subject of History. Nevertheless, it offers a great opportunity for students to learn under what kind of circumstances people lived and survived during the war.

Chun (146) is convinced that

[g]raphic novels like *Maus*, [...], about seminal events in the not-so-distant past, can mediate [...] historical realities with their unique visual narrative styles that allow many readers, especially adolescent ones, to imagine and interpret characters' experiences that are far removed from their own daily lives.

It might be easier to deal with the Holocaust by deconstructing the animal metaphor of *Maus* just as Art Spiegelman used his animal masks as a tool to build a certain distance between his private emotions and the horrors of the Shoah. The unimaginable events that lead to the Holocaust are represented by a “defamiliarizing device” (Chun, 147) in order to make the historical facts easier to digest. For many students History seems to be a boring subject due the fact that they are not able to make a connection between themselves and the subject of study. Since teaching and learning are inevitably connected with emotions, *Maus* is suitable for the classroom since it is a story that “is much more accessible to a general audience than many other accounts, because it is particularly effective at inviting emotional involvement” (Staub, 33). A historical comic can engage students in not only acquiring historical knowledge but also to understand the importance of past events and its meaning for the present.

There are numerous ways of dealing with the Holocaust by analysing a comic. One activity, featured by Chun (147) could include a comparison between actual historical events and the events reported in the comic or the comparison of *Maus* with other representations of the Shoah such as documentaries or movies (for example Schindler's list).

In conclusion, *Maus* is certainly a graphic novel that “can engage students’ attention and activate their imagination through the author’s use of multimodalities in presenting visually arresting narratives that feature multilayered emotions and contradiction of the characters” (Chun, 147) so that students are empowered to critically engage with the past and important social issues that are relevant today. The actuality of the Holocaust and its victims could not be more meaningful than today as I am writing these words. It is January 27th 2015 and it has been exactly 70 years since Auschwitz was liberated. Newspapers are full of commemoration posts and TV programmes show the liberation ceremony. The survivors are given a voice and their message is straight forward: never forget what happened (see for example Escher). Deconstructing *Maus* will help students to acquire and train multimodal, as well as literacy skills, in order to think about history and the present critically. Also, working with *Maus* is also a good opportunity for teachers to enter the students’ world and to “learn about youth culture outside of the classroom” (Williams, 18). Graphic novels have been forefronted for several years so that it is not only part of our popular culture but also part of the students’ everyday lives. Thinking about the latest movies which are characterised by superheroes such as Superman, Spiderman, The Hulk, Hellboy, The Avengers, Thor, etc. it is evident that comics gain more importance in our culture. Comics that deal with “high” literary content are also congesting the market (*Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte) and journalists and scholars are debating and writing about the comic as a medium. The development of comics into a serious medium that can be used in the classroom is also evident by adopting the term “graphic novel” for comics that are perceived as serious and lengthy. Deconstructing comics include the acquisition and the practice of multimodal and visual literacy, language skills, as well as social and historical competences. All these benefits can be reached by dealing with *Maus* in the EFL classroom that applies a CLIL methodology.

7 Conclusion

This thesis set out with the intention of providing evidence that a graphic novel like *Maus A Survivor's Tale* is a valid teaching tool regarding Holocaust Education.

First of all, the thesis explained the importance of Holocaust Education in the school context. The relevance of the Holocaust cannot be denied as we still live in a world that is shaped by segregation and racism. Also, the ramifications of the Holocaust are still present. A few days ago, the liberation of Auschwitz 70 years ago was celebrated with a massive gathering of politicians and survivors in Poland (1 Feb 2015). It is obvious how essential it is for next generations to be critically engaged with the Holocaust, to make them aware of the consequences, prejudices and racism, and to become responsible citizen, living in a pluralistic world. Nevertheless, it is crucial that students get the chance to deal with the past events on an independent level so that they can form a view on the Holocaust themselves. Schools are an appropriate place to do Holocaust Education and to create enough space and time to learn and reflect on this time period in any subject. Teachers must have adequate knowledge about World War II as well as the Holocaust in order to assist their students to get engaged with it. The situation of Holocaust Education in Austria is intricate. Austria has had troubles with commemorating the past as the country's role during and after World War II was ambivalent. Thus, the process of reappraisal has been difficult and slow. In the meantime, the situation has become better and many projects and platforms (*erinnern.at*) have emerged that promote a critical study of the Holocaust.

Teaching the Holocaust in an EFL context might be an unusual idea but I strongly argue for a rethinking. It is possible to teach the Holocaust in any subject but I think that language subjects provide the necessary communicative component so that there is room for discussions and reflections in the language classroom. Providing an English lesson with concrete content is the purpose of the CLIL methodological framework. Communicative competences can easily be acquired by confronting students with the Holocaust as it is a topic that requires learners to reflect, recount and discuss sensitive topics that relate to them as stereotypes, prejudices and racism, as they are still around society today.

The role of Holocaust literature was another subject of address. It suggests that it can be a factor to encourage students thinking and reflecting about the Holocaust. This goes hand in hand with the idea of Holocaust comics. After setting out the history of comics, I laid out the benefits of reading historical comics with students. Historical comics need to aid the student's development of historical consciousness in terms of creating a sense for the present and the future. Discussing Holocaust comics, a debate whether such a horrifying time period like the Holocaust could be subject of a comic, is initiated. As the comic has been considered to be a minor form of literature, Holocaust comics have not been very popular and are still eyed suspiciously especially by German and Austrian readers. The supposedly childish literature that is usually connected with superheroes has proved to be a suitable medium to be used to convey knowledge about the Shoah.

The graphic novel under consideration won the Pulitzer Prize in 1992 and changed the world's understanding of Holocaust comics. The story about Vladek, an Auschwitz survivor who narrates his story to his son Art, has had an impact on Holocaust Education in so far, as many American high schools put it on their compulsory reading lists. The comic is quite complex in terms of its narrative levels and other postmodern techniques so that students necessarily need to acquire certain literacy skills in order to be able to understand the visual narrative. It was my attempt to cover as many relevant aspects as possible but since *Maus* is such a complex piece of literature it was not possible to include all of them. It is the teachers' choice to decide which aspects about *Maus* are most important for them and their subject. One of the most essential aspects about *Maus* is the medium comic. In other words, the medium can be discussed in great detail by working with *Maus*. It is also a necessary part of the students' development to acquire and train multimodal and visual literacy skills to help them navigate in a world that is shaped by multi-media.

The animal metaphor is one of the most striking and critically discussed aspects about *Maus*. Spiegelman constantly constructs and deconstructs his metaphor and makes racism, stereotypes and Nazi propaganda subjects of address. By briefly outlining the characters of Vladek and Art, I intended to show how complex Spiegelman's characters are and in how far their relationship to each other is difficult. The fact that the Holocaust has affected Art during his whole life, although he has never been part of it himself, demonstrates that the aftermaths of the Shoah are still relevant for today's society. In this sense, Art is also a victim of the Holocaust, as are many who have never lived through these horrors themselves. It still has an impact on them.

Surely, the real victims of the Shoah must not be forgotten. Survivors like Vladek or Anja fought their whole lives and were still not able to live a “normal” life as the traumas could not be overcome.

The role of language was investigated by looking at German as the language of deception and English as the language of survival. The importance of foreign languages is promoted so that students might realise how useful it can be to speak other languages as well.

Lastly, the analysis revealed that representing the Holocaust comes along with certain limits that cannot be overcome. Spiegelman’s self-reflexive chapter on the process of creating the comic and symbols like ash and chimneys are evidence that there are limits of representation. Finally, the question of what we make of the end is not being answered as the graphic novel has a different impact on each individual reader. Most importantly, since the moral voice is absent, the reader is forced to make up him/her own mind and to critically engage with the story about Vladek and Art, but also about the Holocaust.

Using *Maus* in the classroom offers numerous advantages that students can benefit from. I elicited 4 competences that might be acquired by students when dealing with *Maus*: social competences, media competences, language competences and historical competences. By social-media-competence I meant the development of critical awareness towards stereotypes and racism, and their consequences on people and society. Also, it is important that students try to connect with history because only then will they be able to get involved. By choosing a comic as a class reader, teachers certainly make the first step in entering the students’ culture and make a potentially boring topic interesting.

Furthermore, media competences can be acquired as students need to read text and look at images simultaneously. What is more, they need to deduct meaning from words and pictures which makes reading a comic a complex matter. The multimodality of the comic is a challenge for students, because *Maus* deals with a difficult topic and contains complex stylistic techniques.

The main aim in an EFL classroom should be the acquisition of communicative competence. This suggests that discussions, role plays or keeping a diary are suitable activities to help students get involved with the story and improve their speaking,

reading and writing skills. As a matter of fact they might also enlarge their vocabulary as *Maus* contains many terms that students have never heard of before.

Finally, *Maus* will assist students to acquire historical expertise as it tells a story that is set in the past. Besides the fact that Vladek's story stretches through World War II, timelines and maps help to broaden their knowledge. Also, the lives of Jewish people in the ghetto, the black-market or the everyday life in the concentration camps are described in great detail. By reading *Maus*, students will acquire historical knowledge and develop awareness of history's consequences.

Obviously, this thesis provided only one possible usage of *Maus*. There are numerous other ways of dealing with either *Maus*, graphic novels or the Holocaust. Art Spiegelman's narrative about his father is only one example of a historical comic that could be used in a classroom. There are several other graphic novels of high quality (for example Croci's *Auschwitz*) which are also suitable for teaching the Holocaust. The CLIL framework, as well as the overall aim (communicative language learning) could be changed or adapted as well. Furthermore, dealing with *Maus*, comics or the Holocaust should not be limited to the subjects English and History but could be extended to other academic fields such as Religion, other languages, Geography, etc. The possibilities of teaching a historical topic like the Shoah are endless but Holocaust Education urgently needs to be established on an interdisciplinary basis in the Austrian classrooms. In my view, historical comics, and especially Holocaust comics, are a promising tool in order to combine content and language learning.

From an academic perspective, I strongly argue for more research that needs to be done in terms of applying comics in the classrooms. Also, both Holocaust Education as well as the proper handling of comics (multimodal & visual literacy skills) should be more integrated into teacher education. Many educators are anxious teaching the Shoah due to various challenges that might emerge so that Holocaust Education should be part of *any* teacher education curriculum. Only then will it be possible to increase the usage of this special medium. Finally, it would be desirable if the graphic novel would be more present in the EFL classroom and that doubts and prejudices about Holocaust Education would diminish.

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ndary+education))AND(DT+2011)AND(TI+instructional+approaches+in+teaching+the+holocaust)&bdata=JmRiPWVmdCZ0eXBIPTEmc2l0ZT1laG9zdC1saXZl>.

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10 Appendix

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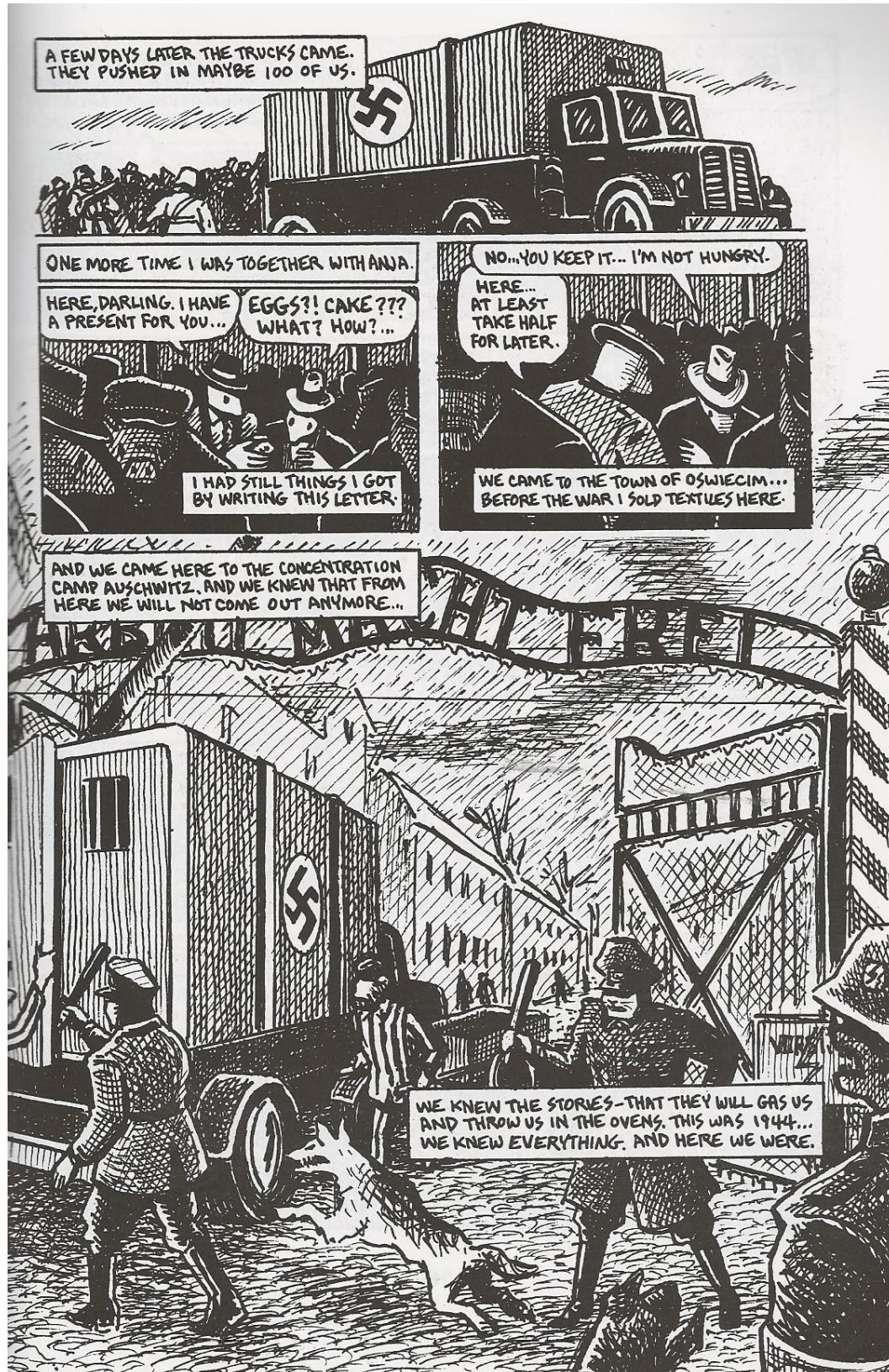


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Illustration 7 (*Maus*, 140)



Illustration 8 (*Maus*, 124)



Illustration 9 (*Maus*, 1993)



Illustration 10 (*Maus*, 194)

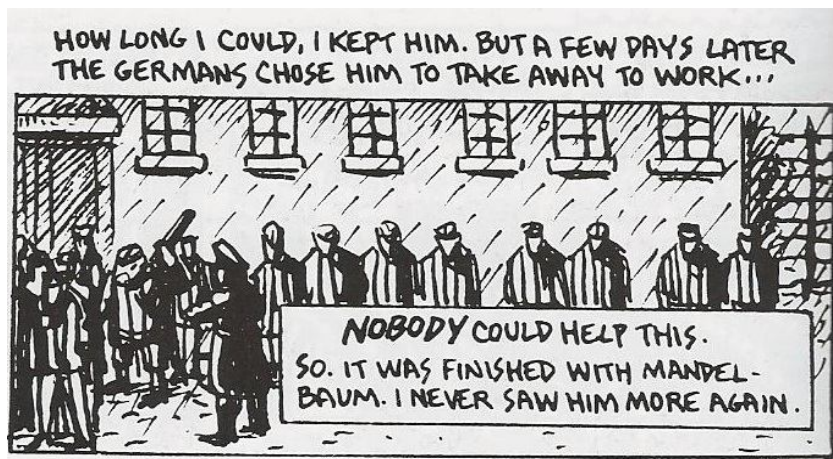


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Illustration 18 (*Maus*, 215)



11 Zusammenfassung

Es mag ungewöhnlich sein, ein Holocaust Comic als Grundlage des Fremdsprachenunterrichts zu verwenden. Diese Arbeit, beabsichtigt allerdings diese Zweifel zu beseitigen und zu beweisen, dass *The Complete Maus* von Art Spiegelman eine hilfreiche Basis sein kann, den Holocaust im Rahmen der CLIL-Methode den SchülerInnen näherzubringen.

Zuerst wird in dieser Arbeit darauf eingegangen, wie Erziehung über den Holocaust stattfindet. Nationale und internationale Zugänge werden untersucht, um die Wichtigkeit von Holocaust Education zu untermauern. Weiters wird auf die Herausforderungen hingewiesen, vor denen LehrerInnen und Lehrer stehen, wenn sie die furchtbaren Ereignisse im Zweiten Weltkrieg in der Schule durchnehmen wollen. Ein wichtiger Punkt, auf den des Weiteren eingegangen wird, ist die Rolle der Holocaust Erziehung in Österreich. Nachdem Österreich eine schwierige und ambivalente Rolle im Zweiten Weltkrieg spielte, muss dieses Thema vorsichtig behandelt werden, und die Aufarbeitung von Österreichs Geschichte muss hier beachtet werden. Das Thema Holocaust könnte allerdings nicht aktueller sein. Im Jahr 2015 jährt sich die Befreiung Auschwitz' zum 70. Mal und trotzdem findet man in unserer Gesellschaft immer noch Spuren von Antisemitismus, Rassismus und Fremdenfeindlichkeit. Auch die jüngsten Ereignisse in Paris, die Terroranschläge auf den Verlag Charlie Hebdo oder diverse Attacken auf jüdische Einrichtungen in ganz Europa rücken den Holocaust und seine Auswirkungen in den Mittelpunkt. Die Bedeutung der Ereignisse im Zweiten Weltkrieg und vor allem ihre Auswirkungen, die bis heute spürbar sind, sollten im Unterricht thematisiert werden um den Gegenwartsbezug herzustellen.

Maus, das Comic, mit dessen Hilfe dieses Thema beleuchtet werden soll, gewann 1992 den Pulitzer-Preis und veränderte somit die Comiclandschaft. Seriöse und ernsthafte Themen wurden von Comicautoren aufgegriffen und kritisch bearbeitet. Ich plädiere für die Verwendung solcher Comics im Unterricht, weil sie den SchülerInnen ungeahnte Möglichkeiten bieten, ihre Fähigkeiten zu erweitern und zu vertiefen. Fertigkeiten wie historische Kompetenz, Sozialkompetenz und die sprachlichen Kompetenzen werden geschult und können den SchülerInnen helfen, sich kritisch mit sich selbst und der Welt auseinanderzusetzen.

12 Curriculum Vitae

SIMONE HOFER

EDUCATION

Since September 2008

To study to become a teacher:

University of Vienna
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October 2007 – June 2008

University of Vienna
Faculty of Law
Schottenbastei 10-16, 1010 Vienna, Austria

Sep 1999 – June 2007

Grammar school
(Privatgymnasium Maria Regina, 1190 Vienna, Austria)

WORK EXPERIENCE

Since September 2013

Pedagogue at *Tagesheim Leobendorf*, (after school care centre), Leobendorf

September 2012 – June 2013

Language Assistant at St Peter's Church of England Aided School, Exeter, Devon UK

August (& July) 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014

Work Placement, *Holiday Camp*, Leobendorf, Austria

November 2010 – September 2012

Assistant of Management, Hofer Rudolf Elektro GmbH, Vienna, Austria

October 2009 – November 2010

Museum Guide, *Fossilienwelt Weinviertel*, Stetten, Austria

July 2009

Work Placement, *Volksbank Wien*, Vienna

July 2008, 2007

Work Placement, *Ärztchamber Wien*, Vienna

July 2006, August 2007

Work Placement, *University of Vienna, Library*