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Comics realism and the Maus event

Comics and the dynamics of World War II remembrance

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Endnotes

1. My use of the term “catastrophic past” is based on Walter Benjamin’s discussion of Paul Klee’s *Angelus Novus*, in which he describes the angel of history looking back to only see catastrophe (Benjamin 2003, 392). Benjamin wrote this ninth thesis of “On the Concept of History” while fleeing from the Nazi-regime in 1940. The term “catastrophic past” is suited to my approach to World War II representation because it does not imply that the past can only be present as an individual wound, as is much more the case with “traumatic past.” “Catastrophic past” allows for ways to relate to the horrors of the past that are not solely centered around subjective experience. The main drawback of “catastrophic past” is that it can be seen as deindividualizing the causes as well as the effects of the past; rendering past events as inescapable natural disasters. This is not my intention. The catastrophic past is certainly not without its perpetrators.
2. See Jarausch; Torpey; Eley; Evans; Moses; Dworok; and, for a recent forum discussion on the legacy of the *Historikerstreit*, Port. For broader overviews of the Holocaust in historiography, I refer the reader to the essays collected in Stone 2004 and Stone 2013.
3. See Langer; Ezrahi; Friedländer 1986; Young 1988; Patterson; Friedländer 1992; LaCapra 1994; Hirsch 1997; Horowitz 1997; Agamben; Huyssen 2000; Rothberg 2000; Vice 2000; Lang; Wernick; Fridman; Zelizer; Mack; Reading; Bernard-Donals and Glejzer 2003; Eaglestone; Waxman; Reiter; McGlothlin 2006; Bigsby; Bernard-Donals; Spargo and Ehrenreich; Trezise; Lothe et al.; Chare and Williams; Rothberg 2009.
4. “Cultural criticism finds itself faced with the final stage of the dialectic of culture and barbarism. To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric” (Adorno 1983, 34). Adorno’s point in this passage of *Cultural Criticism and Society* (1954) is not that it is unethical to represent the Holocaust per se, but that it is unethical to perpetuate the culture which led to the Holocaust: “hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems. But it is not wrong to raise the less cultural question whether after Auschwitz you can go on living—especially whether one who escaped by accident, one who by rights should have been killed, may go on living. His mere survival calls for the coldness, the basic principle of bourgeois subjectivity; this is the drastic guilt of him who was spared” (1973, 362–363). For a more detailed discussion of Adorno’s thinking concerning the Holocaust, see Ryland; Hofmann.
5. For more in-depth treatments of historical representation in Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse Five*, see Edelstein; Bloom; Rigney 2009.

6. See Mitchell 1994.
7. For overviews of the use and misuse of comics during World War II see Wright; Riches; Scott; Goodnow and Kimble. Historical overviews of the representation of World War II in comics from after 1945 can be found in Nakar 2003; Nakar 2008; Ribbens; Berndt; Streb.
8. I am thinking here specifically of Harvey Kurtzman's highly critical treatment of war in EC comics' *Two-Fisted Tales* (1950-1955) and *Frontline Combat* (1951-1954).
9. During this time, *Maus* also received numerous comics awards in the United States and abroad, including the Inkpot Award in 1987 (United States), the Stripschappenning for the best foreign comics album in 1987 (The Netherlands), the Urhunden Prize for best foreign comics album in 1988, and the Fauve d'Or for best foreign comic in 1988 and 1993 (France).
10. In "'The Shadow of a Past Time' History and Graphic Representation in *Maus*" (2006), Hillary Chute, developing a line of thought already present in the early work of Marianne Hirsch on *Maus*, argues that the strength of comics for historical representation stems from their ability to juxtapose and blend past and present on the comics page. Chute's argumentation is persuasive, especially in relation to *Maus*, where the continuing impact of the past on the present is a central theme. At the same time, Chute's focus on the juxtaposition of past and present in *Maus* is limited to how the continual infringement of the past on the present is experienced by different subjects. As such, she does not point to comics' ability to, for example, juxtapose an eyewitness account with historical discourse. Therefore, even though Chute successfully demonstrates what is certainly one of the great strengths of historical comics, my approach to comics realism can be read as a broadening of hers and others' discussions of comics affordance in relation to historical representation.
11. See Groensteen 2007; Miodrag 2013.
12. For general overviews of this subject see Henke and Woller; Lagrou; Deák. A more detailed discussion of collaboration in the Dutch context follows in chapter three.
13. A good example of the need for contrast in analyses of graphic style is Joseph Witek's discussion of graphic style in *Maus*. In order to bring out the implications of *Maus*' graphic style, Witek compares it with the style of an earlier version of *Maus* (1989, 103-108).
14. From here on out, I will refer to *Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths* as *Onward*.
15. For recent book-length treatments of historical representation in comics: see Mickwitz; Chute 2016; Earle; in 't Veld.
16. A similar case can be made for the majority of book-length treatments of historical representation in comics. A number of them, like Elisabeth El Rifaie's *Autobiographical Comics* (2012), already declare this focus in their title. In the case of autobiographic renditions of the past, Rifaie argues, the medium shows its ability to challenge more linear conceptions of time and so enables a subjectively based critique of mechanical and historical conceptions of time (97). Furthermore, the fact that the comics artist has to continually draw his/her body on the page leads to a continual interrogation of the self

and its limits (El Rafea 51–52; Tolmie viii). These and other affordances of the comics medium, such studies argue, pose new questions to existing authentication strategies and demonstrate that if there is such a thing as reality, it only exists in the context of the experiencing subject. But when an interrogation of the limits of the self is brought to its extreme, can self-examination not also lead to an attempted transcendence of the self? In instances when the realism produced by experience is not enough, are experiences not also at times combined with differently produced truths that strengthen or question them? Studies that build their conceptual approach to historical representation in comics around trauma also foreground the suitability of the medium to a subjective rendition of the past. Here, Hattie Earle's *Comics, Trauma, and the New Art of War* (2017) is the most complete and recent example. Trauma as a central concept, even when applied on a societal or communal scale, revolves around experience. Psychological wounds only exist in the context of the experiencing subject. Comics' ability to visualize trauma, in Earle's study, becomes its ability to draw readers into experiences. A similar foregrounding of comics' predilection to subjective realism can also be discerned in two recent book-length studies that analyze comics in the theoretical context of documentary: Nina Mickwitz's *Documentary Comics* (2016) and Hillary Chute's *Disaster Drawn* (2016). Both these works admirably demonstrate the possibilities for documentary in comics. Furthermore, they show that, in comparison to other documentary forms such as photography and film, comics seem to be especially suited to a brand of documentary which inserts the subject as its main strategy of authentication (Mickwitz 33). While the aforementioned studies do not deny or even downplay the importance of other ways of establishing realism in comics, they emphasize different comics' affordances regarding historical representation than I do in my research. This does not mean that I disagree wholeheartedly with the emphasis placed on subjective realism in the study of World War II comics. The subjective mode of realism is important in all my case studies, and I will use the valuable insights into it provided by these studies in my analyses. At the same time, I resist the complete identification of the medium with a subjective approach to historical representation.

17. For a more in-depth discussion of the relation between the conceptions of postmodernism of Jameson and Hutcheon see Duvall (1999) and Shirvani (1994). In my discussion of the topic here, I follow Duvall's attempt to see the approaches of Jameson and Hutcheon alongside one another, rather than as purely contrary. For Duvall, the main differences between Jameson and Hutcheon's conception of postmodernism arise because Jameson approaches postmodernism from the perspective of the consumer, while Hutcheon viewpoint is more centered around creators of culture (372). But even though this difference in perspective causes their evaluations of postmodern culture of be almost opposite to one another, both scholars see eye to eye in their description of postmodern culture as an expression of a loss of connection to history.

18. See Moraru 2011.

19. See Vermeulen & van den Akker 2010 and van den Akker, Gibbons, and Vermeulen 2017.

20. Of the movements away from postmodernism listed here, new sincerity is most fragmented. While for cosmopolitanism, metamodernism and transmodernism relatively clear points of origin can be established, new sincerity, like postmodernism, means different things in different cultural practices. In the study of literature, new sincerity is closely associated with the works of David Foster Wallace. See Kelly 2010 and Kelly 2017.

21. Ways out of postmodernism that are less centered around a reestablishment of some kind of connection to the world can be found, for example, in Samuels' automodernity, which frames the shift away from postmodernism as a political, psychological, technological, historical, and economic reaction made possible by a technologically driven interplay between social automation and individual autonomy (Samuels 3–4) and in Turner's post-postmodernism, which sees a return to faith—in religion, institutions, persons, and nations—as constituting a fundamental move away from postmodernism (Turner 8).
22. Töpffer is widely regarded as the first comics artist. See, for example, Groensteen's "Töpffer, the Originator of the Modern Comic Strip" (1999) and David Kunzle's *Rodolphe Töpffer: Father of the Comic Strip* (2007).
23. Töpffer did not refer to his works as comics but as *histoires en estampes* (Willems 227). Considering his canonization as one of the originators of modern comics, however, I believe it makes sense to do so retroactively.
24. The emphasis placed on the experience and unique expression of the artist over studied methods also shows the influence of romanticism on the poetics of Töpffer. In Töpffer's conception of intuition, however, little or no reference is made to the theoretical subtleties concerning intuition and naivety in the work of romantic theorists such as Friedrich Schiller (Veire 70–72).
25. In *The Drowned and the Saved* (1986), Primo Levi famously considers the dilemmas of representing Auschwitz. Levi's nuanced account of the difficulties of representation in the face of the catastrophic past, I hold, is highly relevant to discussions of World War II representation in comics. For more on Levi, see Giorgio Agamben's *Remnants of Auschwitz* (2002).
26. In the United Kingdom, besides *Commando Comics*, the series *Air Ace* (1960–1970), *War at Sea* (1962–1963), *Warlord* (1974–1986), and *Battle* (1961–1984 & 1988–1990) are prominent examples of comics that use a naturalistic style in the depiction of war. In the United States, *Two-Fisted Tales* (1950–1955), *Frontline Combat* (1951–1954), *Fighting Army* (1956–1984), *Fighting Marines* (1955–1984) and, *Blazing Combat* (1965–1966) are among the most famous. See Conroy, Riches et al., and Roach for overviews of war comics and Goodwin, Evans, Kurtzman et al., Kendall, and Severin et al. for recently republished collections of war comics.
27. A good example of such pushing back of historiography against memory in the specific context of this thesis can be found on pages 16–18 of Arno J. Mayer's *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken?* (1988).
28. Ricoeur extensively discusses the parody of a Platonic myth on which this conception of writing is based in the prelude to *Memory, History, Forgetting* (7–15).
29. The centrality of writing to the historiographic mode of realism will be discussed in the section "New Wars in Text and Image."
30. Whether history as a discipline has engaged extensively enough with the challenges of postmodernism as leveled against it by the works of Hayden White, Roland Barthes, Keith Jenkins, and Frank Ankersmit is still subject to debate (Breisach; Daddow 2004 & 2006; O'Brien). But even if not all historians have incorporated the theoretical insights

of postmodernism in their practice, there also exist many studies dedicated to integrating postmodern theoretical insights into historical methodology (see, for example, Jenkins, Southgate, Thompson, and Donnelly and Norton).

31. See Kittler; Neef; van Dijk 2012; Brillenburg-Wurth 2014.

32. Other examples of the conflation of painting and the novel in discussions of realism can be found in Jakobson 23; Watt 17; and Gombrich 2002, 7.

33. See, for example, how Charles Hatfield discusses the ways in which images and text can approach one another in comics in the introduction to his *Alternative Comics: An Emerging Literature* (2005, 36–37). A valuable critical addition and nuancing of the coming together (and remaining different) of images and texts in comics can be found in Hannah Miodrag's *Comics and Language: Reimagining Critical Discourse on the Form* (2013).

34. It is important to note that Gombrich does not mean to imply that humans have innate schematic images of the human body or animals that stay the same from individual to individual. Gombrich's schematism relies on acquired rather than innate knowledge and, as such, is not perfect.

35. Comics historians Thierry Smolderen and Gombrich use the term “diagrammatic” to describe similar graphic abstractions. In their works, the schematic and the diagrammatic are used almost as synonyms. For me, there are two significant distinctions: first, the diagrammatic—slightly more than is the case with the schematic—hints at an abstraction away from the human and as such is closer to technical drawing. See for example Smolderen: “Their wordless gags, which often featured mechanical devices, were generally drawn in a clear, diagrammatic style that evoked that of technical schematics” (Smolderen 2014, 113). Second, the word schema refers more directly to Kant's use of it in his philosophical system. This makes schematic the more general of the two terms. Still, the definitions of both terms in the *Oxford English Dictionary* are circular, with schema being used to explain diagram and vice versa.

36. I have neither the space nor expertise to delve into the complex aesthetic and cognitive history of the term here. In short, I would argue that Gombrich's use of the term ventures away from Kant's transcendental idealist understanding of the schema of human cognition. Gombrich holds that the abstraction of the schematic is made legible to the reader at least as much through social convention and/or cultural background as through any kind of innate cognitive apparatus. In my use of the term, the schematic is fully dependent on context, instead of adhering to a preexisting structure of the human mind.

37. One of the more compelling variants of this argument can be found in the introduction and second chapter of Pierre Bourdieu's *Photography: A Middle-brow Art* (1990).

38. My thinking on the relations between photography to comics is indebted to Nancy Pedri's writing on the subject in both “Thinking About Photography in Comics” (2015) and “Graphic Memoir: Neither Fact Nor Fiction” (2013). Furthermore, Pedri's conception of different types of images as existing in “a pictorial continuum” has opened up a way of thinking about the relations between photography and drawn images that investigates how they can work together without negating their differences. This insight

has been instrumental for my analyses of graphic style in *Magneto: Testament* and *Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths* (2015, 4).

39. While Groensteen prefers “page-layout,” I prefer page composition because it references Renault Chavanne’s *Composition de la bande dessinée* (2010). Chavanne’s detailed analyses of comics pages, seen as an extension of Groensteen’s approach, allow for a more detailed reading of the ways in which page compositions can create meaning in comics and as such have been influential in this research.

40. An especially noteworthy project regarding the inclusion of visual sources in historiographic practice in the context of this research is Jane A. Chapman et al.’s *Comics and the World Wars: A Cultural Record* (2015). The fact that such initiatives are still needed, however, underlines that a bias for writing still exists in historiography today.

41. With postmodern testimony, I allude here to the embattled status of testimony under postmodernism, where testimony ceases to be an at least somewhat trustworthy transmission of truth and becomes much more a discussion of the possibility of telling the truth of oneself or one’s experiences. Testimony in works such as *Maus* folds back upon itself and is at its most truthful when it expresses self-doubt. Instead of a truth-telling about the past, testimony here becomes a discussion of the possibilities of truth-telling. This postmodern shift of testimony finds its genesis in the crisis of testimony in the face of the Holocaust (see: Bernard-Donals and Glejzer and Derrida 2000).

42. For a more extensive discussion of postmodernism in relation to the representation of the Holocaust, see Eaglestone; Berger and Cronin.

43. The selection criteria: (1) Academic article in journal or essay collection, book chapter, book, or dissertation that focuses on *Maus* or has *Maus* as one of its central case studies. (2) Languages: English and German. (3) Longer than five pages (taking into account varying page layout). (4) No interviews. (5) No MA or BA Theses. (6) If previously published, select the earliest publication. If the later publication is longer or altered, use the longer version in the reading process but keep the earliest publication for the archive. The application of this last criterion yields some surprising results in relation to David Smith’s review article of the academic reception of *Maus*. For Smith, 2003 was an especially prolific year for *Maus* scholarship (Smith 2015, 500). This has to do with the spike in publications on *Maus* caused by Deborah Geis’ edited volume. However, after subtracting the previously published articles from the collection, 2003, with seven publications, is not that far above the average of five publications per year and quite far below 2009, for which I have found eleven publications. A spike, coincidentally, that probably has more to do with the peculiarities of academic publishing than anything else. This is especially clear when comparing the number of publications on *Maus* with the number of pages that these publications contain. On the basis of pages, 2006 would be the most prolific year because of the length of Ole Frahm’s *Genealogie des Holocausts*. My point here being that the academic publication history of *Maus* is best characterized as relatively stable between 1987 and 2017, as is illustrated by figure five, which displays the cumulative number of pages written on *Maus* in academia.

44. Robert S. Leventhal’s “Art Spiegelman’s *Maus*: Working-Through The Trauma of the Holocaust,” was published as part of his online *Responses to the Holocaust. A Hypermedia Sourcebook for the Humanities* (<http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/holocaust/spiegelman.html>).

ENDNOTES

45. See Delannoy 1998; Delannoy 2002; Delannoy 2003; Lacour; Haudot 2005; Haudot 2008; Théofilakis-Brendahan; Malgouzou; Normandin.
46. See appendix for the chronological bibliography of *Maus* scholarship that was used in this study.
47. There is another publication in 1987: Graham Smith's "From Mickey to Maus: Recalling the Holocaust through Cartoon," published in *Oral History* vol. 15. nr. 1. However, because this article is a long interview it has been omitted from the archive and this study.
48. *Maus* was initially published serially in *Raw* between 1980 and 1991. Two volumes collecting what was then called *Maus I* and *Maus II* were published by Pantheon Books in 1986 and 1991. In 1996 a one volume "complete" edition was published which combined and replaced the earlier two-volume publication.
49. The other two being Brown and Kaplan.
50. The danger of claiming clumsiness as a strength of comics is that it limits comics' representation of the past to one that succeeds because it fails. The more successful this claim, the more difficult it is to argue that comics are able to represent the past successfully through other means than abstraction away from historiographic and mechanical realism.
51. Huyssen's discussions of *Maus* at first appear to be a German original article and an English translation. Upon reading both, it becomes clear that the later English version is a substantial reworking. As such I have decided to keep both of the articles separate in this discussion and the archive on which it is based.
52. See Staub; Klimek; Mandel.
53. See Charlson; Laga; Levine; Marks; Thormann; Glejzer 2003; Miller; Gordon 2004; Costello; Ketchum Glass; Ógi; McGlothlin 2008; Mulman; Eakin; Heller; Copley; Merino; Berlatsky 2011; McGlothlin 2011; Morris; Kolár; Matloob Haghanikar.
54. See Bosmajian; Budick for psychoanalysis; Ewert; Horstkotte and Pedri for narratology; Vice 2001; Meneses for chronotope; Schuldiner for metalepsis; Mandaville for gender; Bredehoft for materiality.
55. See Loewenstein; Adams 1999; Adams 2008; Barr; Chun; Vizzini; Grabau.
56. See Baccolini & Zanettin; Porcelli; Urdiales-Shaw 2013; Urdiales-Shaw 2015.
57. Besides the impact of *Maus*, the overall preferences for "heavier" genres and subjects in academia in general and in fields of study that are not yet comfortably established specifically can be seen as another leading cause of the focus on a particular set of comics in early comics studies.
58. See, for example, Alan Rosen's "The Language of Survival: English as Metaphor in Art Spiegelman's *Maus*" (1994).

59. A convincing illustration of the importance of *Maus* for the early Anglophone study of comics is the fact that three out of the sixteen essays collected in *The Graphic Novel* focused on Spiegelman's comic.
60. Pseudonym of Peter Pollmann.
61. Joost Pollmann, Pontiac's younger brother, is the foremost Dutch comics reviewer and has published several books on comics.
62. There is also a significant difference in the presence of the author in these works. While in *Maus* the author continually draws himself in a form of self-caricature "that allows readers to see and scrutinize how the author imagines her or himself" (Rifkind 402-3), *Kraut* does not feature a similar continual process of self-portraiture.
63. "IK BEN LANGE TIJD VAN PLAN GEWEEST DEZE BRIEF TE BEËINDIGEN MET HET BEELD VAN MÛHSAM DIE HET STRAND VAN DE DAAIBOOIBAAI OPSTROMPELT, DE VERBRIJZELDE HANDEN VOORUITGESTOKEN OM JOU VERVOLGENS TE WURGEN.. EEN GOEDE VRIEND MET EEN GROOT HART DIE IK DAT VERTELDE SMEEKTE MIJ DAT NIET TE DOEN, OM JOU TE VERGEVEN... MISSCHIEN HEEFT HIJ WEL GELIJK. HET ZOU OOK WEL ERG "GRAND GUIGNOL" ZIJN GEWEEST... MAAR OF DE BEGRIPPEN "SMAAKVOL" EN "SHOAH" OOIT GOED SAMEN GAAN BETWIJFEL IK."
64. In this chapter, I use small caps to signal that these passages are handwritten in the original work.
65. "MOET IK JOU GEWOON ZIEN ALS ANY "ANGRY YOUNG MAN" VAN 19? JUST ANOTHER TEENAGE-REACTION TEGEN DE OP AARDE AANGETROFFENWANTOESTAND? EEN PROVOCERENDE NAZI-NOZEM? EEN SHOCKERENDE PUNKPADVINDER? [...] GRAAG ZOU IK GENOEMDE "ONSCULDIGE" MOTIEVEN ACHTER JOUW GEDRAG ZOEKEN, MAAR ZO SIMPEL IS 'T NIET: NOZEMS WILLEN GEEN BEVOLKINGSGROEP UITROEIEN..."
66. See Eakin p. 217.
67. *Kraut's* publication was also met with reviews in national newspapers and was subject of a television documentary for the Dutch network VPRO by Chris Kijne in 2003. A search with *LexisNexis* yields eight relevant results between October 2000 and February 2001. Two of these articles (Eiselin; Brummelen 2000) are more general review articles about the rise of the autobiographical graphic novel. The six other articles are reviews ("Kraut ; Peter Pontiac tekent zijn vaders biografie: een voorpublicatie"; "Bittere biografiek van foute vader"; Meijer; Brummelen 2001; Jongstra; "Peter Pontiac: Vlamme brief aan verdwenen vader").
68. In the United States, these comics were published first as *Classic Comics* and after 1947 as *Classics Illustrated* (1941-1971) (van Eijk and de Vos).
69. Translated from the French *Oscar Hamel et Isidore* (1945-55). This comic by F.A. Breyse was published originally in *Coeurs Valliants*.
70. The only speech balloons are located on page 24, 97, 113-115, 146, 150, and 155, and there are thought balloons on page 3, 69, and 100. There are also a number of text boxes that look like speech balloons but are actually the narrator's explanation of a certain aspect of a drawing (see fig. 12).

71. “Zij wilden liever typografische letters maar ik heb mijn poot stijf gehouden omdat ik vond dat het dan geen brief meer was.”
72. As such, *Kraut* could also be read alongside other literary works that turn back to handwriting in an increasingly digital age. See Drucker 1995 van Dijk 2012, Brillenburg Wurth 2014, and Plate 2015.
73. “HOOP DAT MIJN HANDSCHRIFT TE ONTCIJFEREN IS?!”
74. A translation of an earlier version of this chapter was published in *European Comics Art*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2010, pp. 1-21.
75. “HET MOCHT DUS, EN ONVERVEERD STORTTE JE JE IN HET “FRONTISME,” MET HART, ZIEL EN PEN. VOOR HET FRONT-ORGAAN DE WEG BEGON JE STUKKEN TE SCHRIJVEN, DAARBIJ “VLOTTE DANCINGS EN (KITSCH-)FILMS” NIET ONTZIEND!”
76. Another remarkable aspect of Pontiac’s writing is that he addresses his father and, with that, the reader, in the second person quite aggressively. The fact that *Kraut* is a letter then also causes the reader to be interrogated by the narrative that she/he is reading. Besides an investigation of his father’s past, then, *Kraut* also can be read as addressing the past of the reader.
77. “NET ALS JIJ HEB IK OOIIT GEFULMINEERD TEGEN “GENOTZUCHTIG” EGOÏSME (HYPOCRIET GENOEG!), MAAR NIET TEGEN “VOLKSVREEMDE ELEMENTEN”...”
78. Peter Pontiac’s uncle.
79. “Nadat ik het proefwerk had ingeleverd bij de Germaanse berichtendienst te ’s-Gravenhage, kreeg ik bericht dat ik mij moest melden.” Pontiac in handschrift: ““STALER CONTRA HITLIN OM DE EER VAN EUROPETTE!”?”
80. This section was difficult to translate due to a number of puns. The Dutch “als een speer,” literally meaning going as fast as a spear, refers to the Nazi architect Albert Speer. “OOK JOUW NA-OORLOGSE RECHTERS HEBBEN JOUW TOESPRAKEN “ERNSTIG OPGEVAT”... IN HET PLEIDOOI VAN JOUW VERDEDIGING WORDT BEWEERD DAT JE “BEZWAAR HEBT GEMAAKT” TEGEN DE RONSEL-SPEECH (MAAR DAT DIT NIET WERD ‘GEACCEPTEERD’) IK VIND DAT MOEILIK TE GELOVEN. JE CARRIÈRE SWINGDE, ALS ’N SPEER VAN EEN LEIEN DAKJE...”
81. “OOK REPT JE PLEITER VAN BRIEVEN, DIE IK GRAAG HAD WILLEN LEZEN!”
82. Here, the narrator refers to a letter his father wrote to Arnold Meijer on the 18th of Februari 1942: “Er moet kost wat kost iets gedaan worden in deze dagen, er moet een Volk behouden worden en ik ken uit eigen ervaring den prachtige tijd, die zoovele kerels in het zwarte hemd onder het teeken van den wolfsangel voeren in kristalzuiver idealisme en grooten werkelijkheidszin.” (Groeneveld 337).
83. “TROUWENS, OOK “AUSCHWITZ” EN “VERGEVING” VIND IK MOEILIK TE COMBINEREN. AL HEB JIJZELF MISSCHIEEN GEEN JOODSE HAAR GEKRENKT, HET “KRISTAL (NACHT)-ZUIVERE IDEALISME” VAN JOU & DE JOUWEN HAD DAAR GEEN MOEITE MEE, NIETWAAR? MIJN VERGIFFENIS ZOU EEN DRUPPEL ZIJN OP EEN GLOEIENDE PLAAT VAN SCHULD. AL MOET IK ZEGGEN DAT HET BRAVE GEVOEL DAT ME BIJ DE VOORGAANDE WOORDEN OMGEEFT EEN ONGEMAKKELIJKE SENSATIE IS.”

84. “OF WIL IK DAT ALLEEN MAAR GELOVEN, MOET IK JOU OP JE KNIËN ZIEN, VOORDAT IK KAN ZEGGEN DAT IK VAN JE HOUD, JE MIS? MIJN LIEFDE VOOR JOU IS EVEN AMBIVALENT ALS JOUW “DOOD”.. HET VOELT HAAST ONFATSOENLIJK OM VAN EEN VADER TE HOUDEN MET FASCISTISCHE DENKBEELDEN, ZEKER IN EEN TIJD WAARIN DAT GEDACHTEGOED ZICH ONUITROEIBAAR TOONT [...] KLAARBLIJKELIJK KAN IK JOU ALLEEN VERGEVEN DOOR EEN ZELFMOORD, EEN VRIJWILLIGE EN ZELF VOLTROKKEN DOODSTRAF.!?”

85. For more on the Comics Code and the public uproar leading up to it, see Amy Kiste Nyberg’s *Seal of Approval: The History of the Comics Code* (1998) and Bart Beaty’s *Fredric Wertham and the Critique of Mass Culture* (2005).

86. The ways in which the comics series and the subsequent blockbuster films use the Holocaust past as a backdrop in order to find some form of redemption for its main villain Magneto as well as facilitating and artificially deepening their treatment of racism, bigotry, and persecution have been well documented in Lawrence Baron’s “X-Men as J Men: The Jewish Subtext of a Comic Book Movie” (2003) and Cheryl Alexander Malcolm’s “Witness, Trauma, and Remembrance: Holocaust Representation and X-Men Comics” (2008). For more general treatments of the thematics of the X-Men universe, see Martin Lund’s “The Mutant Problem: X-Men, Confirmation Bias, and the Methodology of Comics and Identity” (2015) and Marc DiPaolo’s “Gay Rights, Civil Rights, and Nazism in the X-Men Universe” (2011).

87. Small-caps is used in this chapter to symbolize the all-caps comic sans font used in *Magneto: Testament*.

88. I have had to number *Magneto: Testament*’s by hand because it does not have page numbers. As such, my numbering is best read as an indication that can help readers navigate quicker towards the discussed sections of the comic. Please be advised that because I used the collected volume of the miniseries, the numbering I use here might not correspond to the individual installments of the series.

89. This in opposition to, but not contrary to the logic of, Barthes’ analysis of image-text relations in his famous “Rhetoric of the Image,” where he sees text as anchoring the possible connotations of an advertisement image (Barthes 1977, 38–39).

90. E.C. Comics’ particularly dramatic use of onomatopoeia is also noted by Witek in his comparison of *Classics Illustrated* and E.C. Comics’ renditions of the shot that started the Civil War (1989, 42).

91. The absence of thought balloons from *Magneto: Testament* betrays their dual effect for realist representation in comics. On the one hand, thought balloons allow access into the thoughts of characters and thus enable subjective realism by offering direct insight into a character’s experience. On the other hand, thought balloons detract from subjective realism because they make visible something that is not perceivable.

92. I am here purposefully evading a more Bakhtinian notion of dialogue, where dialogism is a characteristic of all language that expands the use of a word in a specific text and sees it in relation to other uses of that word (Bakhtin 1981, 279). From Bakhtin’s point of view, dialogism is certainly not limited to dialogue, but would include the juxtapositions of different kinds of texts in comics as well. Through a deliberate incorporation of different kinds of discourse and by being aware of the other instances of use of the words—this is one of the central claims behind Bakhtin’s *Problems of*

Dostoevsky's Poetics (1963)—literature is able to offer up an image of civil society that reflects its multi-voicedness or heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1984, 204; Bakhtin 1981, 262-263; Pechey 23). On first glance, there are many parallels between Bakhtin's conception of discourse and my approach to realism in comics. Still, I move away from a Bakhtinian approach for two main reasons. First, Bakhtin's approach to representation is utterly language-focused, leaving little room for a discussion the relation between text and image than my current theoretical framework. Second, for Bakhtin, on a very basic level, it is possible to incorporate another's experience of the world in the novel, which is very thing that he praises in Dostoevsky's novels (Bakhtin 1984, 43). Such a belief cannot be ascribed to the creators of the comics that I discuss in this thesis, who continually emphasize the impossibility of representing another's experiences in their works. As such, Bakhtin's approach to dialogue would more confuse than clarify my readings of post-*Maus* World War II comics.

93. The text in the text box is in quotation marks to further highlight the connection with the spoken text.

94. One way in which other historical comics have questioned historiographic discourse is by embedding historiography within the story world. This makes visible the contradiction inherent to the practice of historiography, which is always caught up in the subjectivity of the historian yet which tries to transcend this subjectivity through method, cooperation, and/or institutionalization. In Shigeru Mizuki's *Showa: A History of Japan* (*Komikku Shōwa-shi*, 1988-1989), for example, historical discourse is narrated by the fictional character *Rat Man* who readers of other works by Mizuki know as extremely untrustworthy. By using such a character to narrate Japan's wartime history, Mizuki's historical comic series finds a way to have historiographic narration while at the same time stressing the fundamentally subjective basis of historiography.

95. In terms of content, *Magneto: Testament's* covers, as well as its main narrative line, conform with the focus on children that can be found in many Holocaust films. For more on this, see "The Jew as Child", in *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust* (2003).

96. For more on *Schindler's List* specifically and Holocaust film in general, see the third edition update of Insdorf's classic work *Indelible Shadows* (1983), Baron's *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present* (2005), and Kerner's *Film and the Holocaust* (2011).

97. Hagelstein's "How to Capture Life as it Happens? An Aesthetical Approach to Joann Sfar's Drawing" (4-5) points to a pertinent discussion concerning the different levels of realism of Moebius and Sfar's drawing.

98. As Anthony Grafton writes in *The Footnote: A Curious History* (1997): "the text persuades, the notes prove" (15).

99. Race shame.

100. It has proven difficult to locate the exact photograph on which the page in *Magneto: Testament* was based on because the link provided in the notes accompanying the collected volume of the comic no longer works.

101. See, for photography, the controversy that erupted around Didi-Huberman's contribution to the exhibition catalogue of the 2001 exhibition *Mémoires des camps*, which is published in English, together with Didi-Huberman's response to the critique

offered by Gerard Wajcman and Elizabeth Pagnoux, in *Images in Spite of All: Four Photographs from Auschwitz* (2008).

102. I have taken the notion of “witnessing witnessing” from the title of Thomas Trezise’s *Witnessing Witnessing: On the Reception of Holocaust Survivor Testimony* (2013).

103. I would like to express my thanks to *Mizukipro* for extending the rights to publish images from Shigeru Mizuki’s works with the analysis. Obtaining these image permissions, moreover, would never have been possible without the help of Maki Hakui from *Presspop* and Zack Davisson, who is currently the main translator of Mizuki’s work and was generous enough to write a letter of recommendation for me to *Mizukipro* as well as help me untangle the publication history of *Onward*.

104. See Spurgeon 2011, Alverson 2012, Olukotun 2011, Robinson 2011. A similar statement can be found in Paul Gravett’s *Manga: Sixty Years of Japanese Comics* (2004, 49). Of the reviews, only Robinson problematizes this somewhat simplified binary characterization of Mizuki’s use of graphic styles.

105. Please note that *Drawn & Quarterly* published *Onward* in its original Japanese reading direction, which reads from right to left. In fig. 1, therefore, page 32 is the right-hand side page while page 33 is on the left-hand side.

106. The first issues of *GeGeGe no Kitarō* have only recently, after the success of Mizuki’s historical comics, been translated into English. The first three volumes are *Kitaro: Birth of Kitaro* (2016), *Kitaro: Kitaro Meets Nurarihyon* (2016), and *Kitaro: The Great Tanuki War* (2017).

107. In a short article published on his website, Davisson also convincingly shows that Mizuki drew inspiration from images found in 1950s E.C. horror comics (Davisson) (see fig. 38).

108. It is difficult to pin *Garō* magazine to a specific style or ideology since it went through a number of distinctive phases in its development (see Ryan Holberg’s various publications for more information about *Garō*). In the context of the current article, it is noteworthy that for the first years of its publication, *Garō* was an “antiwar, pro-direct democracy political magazine for elementary and middle school children” (Nadel and Holmberg). Mizuki was, as an artist already published in the first issue of *Garō*, involved in this pedagogical anti-reactionary project. In 1991, moreover, Mizuki published a short historical comic detailing Japanese war crimes in *The Sixth Grader*, which further cemented his position as a criticaster of those who attempted to sweep the atrocities committed by the Imperial Army under the rug (Penney 2008).

109. Mizuki’s autobiography has not yet been translated in English. French translations do exist (in three parts: *Vie de Mizuki*. Éditions Cornélius: 2012–2014). In my translation of the title, I have chosen to remain closer to the more economic French variant.

110. There is also a television film adaptation of Mizuki’s war experiences called *Kitaro Witnessed the Noble Death: Shigeru Mizuki’s War* (*Kitarō ga Mita Gyokusai: Mizuki Shigeru no Sensō* 2007). Moreover, between March and September 2010, the Japanese television station NHK aired a drama series based on Mizuki’s wife’s autobiography

called *GeGeGe's Wife* (*GeGeGe no Nyobō* 2008), which also briefly describes Mizuki's war experiences.

111. Mizuki's contact with the Tolai resulted in a life-time friendship (see fig. 43). While Mizuki did not choose to stay and live out his life with the tribe, something they had offered him, he did return to visit as soon as his financial situation allowed him and tried to repay the tribes' kindness to him (Davisson 2013).

112. As was already noted in the theoretical framework of my thesis, Fredric Jameson's work in *The Anatomies of Realism* (2013) is very important for my thinking here. In this work, Jameson argues that realism should not be seen as a period in literary history or as a particular combination of reality effects. Rather, "Realism as a form (or mode) is historically associated, particularly if you position the *Quichote* as the first (modern, or realist) novel, with the function of demystification" (Jameson 2013, 4). While I take from Jameson's work the notion that realism is constituted through demystification of other modes of realism, I do not follow Jameson's subsequent point which ties realism historically to the nineteenth century and the aim to represent the new affects created by a bourgeois society (Jameson 2013, 32) through a specific balance of destiny and eternal present (Jameson 2013, 26).

113. Lefèvre's original list also includes color. Because *Onward* is in black and white and has no dramatic differences in coloring that cannot be approached by way of the other markers, I have omitted it here.

114. The cyclopean perspective is, as was famously analyzed by the iconologist Erwin Panofsky in *Perspective as a Symbolic Form* (1927), a convention rather than a mathematical reality, as which it is often presented.

115. For another discussion of the ties between Töpffer and romanticism, see Willems (2009)

116. See, for example, Witek (1989, 114 and 122), Cvetkovich (114), Medley (55), and Wettlaufer (459). For an example of a similar type argument but centered around the art of drawing, see Rawson (1).

117. In Mizuki's wider historical oeuvre, the distinction between the two graphic styles also at times flat out becomes the distinction between the historical and the personal narrative. See, for example, *Showa* 2014, 434.

118. In this respect, *Onward*, as well as Mizuki's close contact with the indigenous Tolai tribe shows remarkable similarities with *The Thin Red Line* (1998), even though it was published more than 25 years before the film.

119. In relation to *Life of Mizuki* and *Showa*, Mizuki's use of his famous historical photography archive is limited in *Onward* in the sense that he much less obviously directly inserts photographs on the page. In *Onwards*, Mizuki inserts detailed retracings. I wonder, however, how significant the ontology of these images is against both their virtual inseparability before the human eye and technological advances which undermined any fundamental difference concerning the malleability of the photographic and the drawn image.

ENDNOTES

120. See, for example, the treatment of the Nanjing massacre in *Showa* (2013, 482-485) (see fig. 53), or the description of the underlying motivation of the Japanese expansion in *Showa*: “JAPAN WANTS TO MODERNIZE THE ASIAN COUNTRIES [...] BUT BEHIND THE PURITY OF MANIFEST DESTINY SWIRL LESS BEAUTIFUL APPETITES AND LUSTS. JAPAN’S REAL INTENTION IS TOTAL DOMINATION” (2014, 17-20).

121. In 1889 the English Japanophile Marcus Bourne Huish wrote in *Japan and its Art* that the waxing and waning of the moon is associated with the endless cycle of life and death (134-5). Yet the Japanese is hardly the only culture in which such a notion exists, nor is this the only association in the Japanese culture with the cycles of the moon. The moon means many things in many cultures and I do not want to present a too stereotypical reading of its metaphorical meaning in my analysis of *Onward*. At the same time, the particular use in Mizuki’s comic does strongly suggest a connection of the waning of the moon with the waning of life.

122. It is here that I find the biggest flaw of the English translation in the somewhat obnoxious way in which the letters of the song are placed over Maruyama’s face. In the original version, the letters are placed much more around Maruyama’s face, instead of over it.

123. I have borrowed the phrase “the content of the form” from Hayden White, who uses it as the title of one of his books.

List of Illustrations

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4. Figure depicting the frequency of *Maus* academic publications between 1987 and 2016. Made by author.
5. Figure depicting the number of pages of academic texts written on *Maus* per year between 1987 and 2016. Made by author.
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Summary: Comics Realism and the Maus Event: Comics and the Dynamics of World War II Remembrance

In this thesis, I consider the causes and effects of the success of Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1980-1991) and chart the formal directions in which World War II comics have moved since. I do so through the theoretical lens of realism, which I conceptualize in the first chapter alongside the work of Fredric Jameson, Erich Auerbach, and Ernst Gombrich. Like these scholars, I see realism as a continual struggle between different ways of depicting the world. This means that instead of approaching realism as denoting the degree in which a representation supposedly succeeds in capturing reality, I consider it as a field of research in which there is place for the different ways in which realism has been defined alongside shifting tastes and media

technologies. With this conception of realism in hand, I show how the depiction of the past in World War II comics is often dependent on combinations of different forms of realism in images and text, rather than on a complete adherence to one such form. In order to analyze how the different forms of realism most prevalent in the World War II comics that I study co-constitute a representation of the past, I distinguish between three prevalent modes of realism: the subjective, historiographic, and mechanic. Where the subjective mode of realism is centered around an experiencing subject, the historiographic mode revolves around the discipline and practice of historiography, and the mechanic mode around the perception and reproductive prowess of machines.

In the second chapter, I investigate the reception of *Maus* in academia in order to demonstrate how the success of *Maus* intensified the already existing perceived suitability of the comics medium to subjective realism. *Maus*, I argue, became a canonic work for memory and literary studies because it bridges the all-too-easy divide between American Holokitsch and European Holocaust art and because it broadens the focus from Holocaust survivors to their family and the societies in which they live. Through the success of *Maus*, comics became more visible to academia. But while success of *Maus* made comics more visible, it also caused certain aspects of the medium's affordances for historical representation to be enlarged at the cost of others.

In the subsequent chapters of this thesis, I analyze three other World War II comics in order to show that the medium's strength lies more in how it affords the combining of different modes of realism in text and image, than in its special suitability to one of these modes. In chapter three, which revolves around Peter Pontiac's *Kraut* (2001), I demonstrate how Pontiac combines text-based modes of realism as a way of authenticating his inquiry into his father's collaboration during World War II and investigating the limits and possibilities of different kinds of texts as a means to reconstruct the past. By decoding

Kraut's densely packed and intricately composed pages, the readers uncover a nuanced account of collaboration supported by subjective and historiographic realism. I consider Greg Pak and Carmine Di Giandomenico's *Magneto: Testament's* fictional Holocaust testimony in the fourth chapter. Like *Maus* and *Kraut*, *Magneto: Testament* combines historiography, testimony, eyewitness accounts, and photography in its depiction of the camp history of the supervillain Magneto. Unlike the other comics I discuss in this thesis, however, *Magneto: Testament* aims for a transparent representation of the past. But because it aims to achieve transparency by combining a wide range of different modes of realism that allude to other media, *Magneto: Testament* unwittingly shows that the illusion of realism produces a proliferation of representational forms, rather than the intended merger between representation and the outside world. Moreover, while it employs all these different ways of reconstructing the past, Pak and Di Giandomenico's comic downplays almost all formal characteristics that are associated with comics, such as dramatic onomatopoeia or expressive page compositions and superpowers. In their denial of elements that evoke "comicsness," and the remediation of media that they perceive as more realistic, Pak and Di Giandomenico return to an outdated conception of the comics medium as inadequate for historical representation. The last comic I discuss, Shigeru Mizuki's *Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths*, is a fictionalized reconstruction of the author's experiences as a Japanese Imperial Army infantryman in the Pacific during World War II. By drawing his rendition of the past in a range of different graphic styles, Mizuki demonstrates the narrative content of graphic style. What is more, Mizuki makes use and deconstructs the connotations of schematic and near-photorealist drawing. In *Onward*, different ways of seeing the world are juxtaposed on the page co-recreate a past. Moreover, because it deploys different modes of realism in such close proximity to one another, *Onward* can also be read as a probing of the limits of different kinds of images for the depiction of the catastrophic past.

SUMMARY

The works that are discussed in this thesis are marked by a desire to reestablish contact with the past. At the same time, they struggle with and demonstrate the impossibility of reconstructing the past as it was. In their attempts to do so nonetheless, the makers of *Maus*, *Kraut*, *Magneto: Testament*, and *Onward* draw on the comics medium's ability to render the past in densely layered combinations of the subjective, historiographic, and mechanic modes of realism in texts and images. By analyzing the way in which different modes of representing the past are brought together in comics, I not only show that the medium's affordance for historical representation is much broader than is often assumed, I also uncover World War II comics as reflections of the impact of an ever-widening media landscape on the remembrance of World War II.

Samenvatting: Striprealisme en het Maus event: strips en de dynamiek van de herinnering

Met dit proefschrift onderzoek ik de oorzaken en gevolgen van het succes van Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1980-1991) en analyseer ik hoe striptekenaars historische representatie hebben vormgegeven in daarna gepubliceerde strips. Ik doe dit met behulp van een herconceptualisering van realisme dat ik in het eerste hoofdstuk in het verlengde van het werk van Fredric Jameson, Erich Auerbach en Ernst Gombrich uiteenzet. Net als deze academici zie ik realisme als een constante strijd tussen verschillende manieren om de wereld te representeren. Dit betekent dat ik in dit proefschrift realisme niet benader als een concept waarmee een bepaalde mate van mimetische vervolmaking in een representatie wordt aangeduid, maar als een onderzoeksveld waarin plaats is voor de tegenstrijdige manieren waarop realisme historisch gezien langs ontwikkelingen in smaak en mediatechnologieën is gedefinieerd. Door middel van deze opengebroken conceptualisering van realisme laat ik zien dat de verbeelding van het verleden in strips vaak niet gestoeld is op

één, maar op een combinatie van verschillende vormen van realisme in zowel beelden als teksten. Om de manieren waarop in Tweede Wereldoorlogstrips verschillende vormen van realisme het verleden samen representeren te onderzoeken, maak ik een onderscheid tussen drie prevalentie modi van realisme: de subjectieve, de historiografische en de mechanische. Waar de subjectieve modus is gecentreerd rond de waarnemingen van een subject, baseert de historiografische modus zich op de discipline en praktijk van de historiografie, en de mechanische modus zich op de vermogens van machines voor registratie en representatie.

In het tweede hoofdstuk demonstreer ik door middel van een studie van de academische receptie van *Maus* hoe het succes van Spiegelman's strip de bestaande gepercipieerde synergie tussen het medium strip en de subjectieve modus van realisme heeft versterkt. *Maus* werd een canonisch werk voor zowel de literatuurwetenschap als memory studies omdat het de al te gemakkelijke splitsing tussen Amerikaanse Holocaust kitsch en Europese Holocaust kunst tenietdoet en omdat het de aandacht van onderzoek naar de herinnering van de Holocaust verruimt van de overlevenden naar hun families en, via deze families, naar de samenleving. Het succes van *Maus* maakte strip voor de academie zichtbaar als onderzoeksobject. Maar mede doordat *Maus* voor het medium als geheel kwam te staan zorgde het succes van Spiegelman er ook voor dat bepaalde aspecten van de mogelijkheden van het medium voor historische representatie ten koste van anderen werden uitvergroet.

In de op deze receptiestudie volgende hoofdstukken analyseer ik drie andere Tweede Wereldoorlogstrips om te laten zien dat de kracht van het medium schuilt in hoe het een vertelling van de geschiedenis in een combinatie van verschillende modi van realisme in teksten en beelden mogelijk maakt, en niet, zoals in de academische receptie van *Maus* vaak gesteld wordt, in de bijzondere geschiktheid van het medium voor de subjectieve modus van realisme. In hoofdstuk drie demonstreer ik hoe Peter Pontiac in *Kraut* (2001)

door verschillende vormen van realisme in tekst te combineren zowel zijn onderzoek naar zijn vaders collaboratieverleden authentiseert als de mogelijkheden en grenzen van verschillende vormen van tekst in de verbeelding van het verleden bevraagt. Door middel van een ontcijfering van de uiterst informatiedichte en intelligent ontworpen pagina's van *Kraut* toon ik het werk als een genuanceerde overdenking van de motieven voor en impact van collaboratie die overeind wordt gehouden door zowel subjectief als historiografisch realisme. Grek Pak en Carmine Di Giandomenico's fictionele Holocaustmemoire *Magneto: Testament* (2008-2009) staat centraal in het vierde hoofdstuk van dit proefschrift. Net als *Maus* en *Kraut* combineert *Magneto: Testament* in haar verbeelding van het verleden historiografie, memoires, ooggetuigenverslagen en fotografie. Waar Pak en Di Giandomenico met *Magneto: Testament* echter in afwijken ten opzichte van de andere strips die ik onderzoek is in hun poging het verleden van een fictionele superschurk op een zo transparant mogelijke wijze in stripvorm op te tekenen. Maar omdat deze transparantie wordt nagestreefd in combinaties van modi van realisme die verwijzen naar verschillende media demonstreren de makers van *Magneto: Testament* dat het najagen van de illusie van realisme hier de proliferatie van vormen van representatie voortbrengt, in plaats van de beoogde samensmelting tussen representatie en realiteit. Hierbij komt dat de makers van *Magneto: Testament* zo veel mogelijk elementen en kenmerken die met strip worden geassocieerd, zoals onomatopoeën, expressieve paginacomposities en superkrachten, uit hun strip weren of het gebruik ervan sterk limiteren. In hun keuze om dergelijke elementen te vervangen door remediaties uit media die zij als realistischer zien, wordt duidelijk dat Pak en Di Giandomenico met *Magneto: Testament* terugvallen in een verouderde opvatting over de ongeschiktheid van het medium strip voor historische representatie. De laatste strip die ik in dit onderzoek analyseer is Shigeru Mizuki's *Onward Toward Our Noble Deaths* (1971). *Onward* is een gefictionaliseerde reconstructie van de oorlogservaringen van

de auteur, die tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog als voetsoldaat in het Japanse Imperiale Leger vocht. Door dit verleden niet in één, maar in een spectrum van verschillende stijlen op te tekenen toont Mizuki de narratieve inhoud van grafische stijl. In zijn verbeelding van het verleden maakt Mizuki niet alleen gebruik van de connotaties van zijn meer schematische en meer fotografische tekenstijlen, ook deconstrueert hij de schijnbaar absolute verschillen tussen deze vormen van representatie. Zo worden in *Onward* verschillende manieren om het verleden visueel vorm te geven samen ingezet voor een verbeelding van het verleden. Maar doordat Mizuki deze verschillende modi waarin het verleden kan worden verbeeld naast elkaar inzet, is *Onward* ook te lezen als een onderzoek naar de mogelijkheden en grenzen van verschillende representatieve stijlen voor de verbeelding van het catastrofale verleden.

Uit alle werken die ik in dit proefschrift analyseer spreekt een verlangen om een connectie met het verleden te herstellen. Tegelijkertijd zijn deze werken te lezen als overdenkingen of expressies van het onvermogen van representatie om het verleden ongeroerd naar het heden te transporteren. In hun pogingen om ondanks dit onvermogen het verleden zo getrouw mogelijk te representeren bedienen de makers van *Maus*, *Kraut*, *Magneto: Testament* en *Onward* zich van de mogelijkheid van het medium strip om op de pagina op gelaagde wijze subjectieve, historiografische en mechanische modi van realisme te combineren. Door te analyseren hoe het medium strip makers in staat stelt verschillende manieren om het verleden te representeren naast elkaar in te zetten, laat ik zien dat het vermogen tot historische representatie van strip breder is dan vaak wordt aangenomen. Ook toon ik strips als reflecties van de impact van een zich constant uitbreidend medialandschap op de herinnering van de Tweede Wereldoorlog.