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[Message #1   10:55:24 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

karen wong:

Discuss the impact of Spiegelman's inclusion of highly personal anecdotes (about his mental breakdowns, his hostility towards his father, his anxieties about writing this book) in this account of his father's experiences in the Holocaust.

[Message #2   11:36:40 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Patricia Stillman:

Vladek instilled a sense of realness in Artie. Vladek always told the straight cold truth to Artie from the beginning. "Friends?... If you lock them together in a room with no food for a week...Then you can see what it is friends!" (6). Art was never taught the concept of fluff and flowery illusion words to soften reality. Thus Artie only knows how to tell it how it is. He has no need for this fluff because he has been getting around without it his whole life. But Art also realizes the need to make the book as real as possible, to give a context to the readers. So the readers understand it is not just a story. "But Pop, it's great material. It makes everything more real- more human" (92).

[Message #3   11:36:53 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

sharma subha:

Spiegelman is the way he is because of his father's experience. His father's experience where so traumatizing that when it came to raise him, he wasn't the father he should be. Instead of being sensitive to Spiegelman when he was growing up and having him learn from his own mistakes and his experience the father was raising him on his experience from the Holocaust. Spiegelman's mental breakdown came from his parents mental breakdowns. He was raised by people who did not have the mental stability that they should because of the Holocaust. His mom was already a depressed and nervous lady, but the experience made her worst. The father was teaching Spiegelman how to survive the world based on how he survived the Holocaust, instead of being a father.

[Message #4   11:37:01 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Mathwe Han:
His father’s incident in the holocaust has many negative impacts on Artie. Vladek expects Artie to be a mature man since he was young, and it has been overseen by Artie. Because everything he had gone through in the holocaust shadows Vladek the real nature of the human being. The holocaust makes Vladek thinks that one has to be mature and strong enough to survive in the world. And he trained Artie to be that kind of person. Unfortunately, Artie misunderstands it. He thinks his father belittles him because he is not as capable as him. That leads to the competition of between them and the difficult relationship between them. Moreover, Richie, the elder son of Vladek and Anja died during the Holocaust. And it is normal for parents to remember him. Yet Arite thinks that they prefer Richie to him. That leads him to be distant both physically and mentally from his parents. And no matter how Vladek tries to be closer to him, he always reacts with rage and hostility. The Artie’s parents’ lack of knowledge in nurturing Artie leads him to the terrible breakdowns and part of that is because of the Holocaust's experience that they went through during World war 2.

[Message #5  11:38:34 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Kile Boele:

His Highly personalized anecdotes bring a very real aspect to the graphic novel. I think that overall his inclusions make the novel so much better. It makes people feel more when they read the book instead of it being just another Holocaust survivor book. It also portrays how the Holocaust survivors react after the Holocaust and how that in turn affects their family.

Prisoner on hell planet brings out the effects of arties mothers suicide on both Artie and Vladek instead of just saying that she committed suicide. Its more in depth to their lives and emotions instead of keeping things on the surface.

[Message #6  11:42:19 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Katrina Recinto:

Vladek's experience definitely impacted Artie in many ways. First is their relationship as father and son. We can tell that they don't have a very close relationship at all. And it has a lot to do with Vladek’s experience during holocaust. For instance, when Vladek tells Artie that he burned all of his mother’s diaries. Artie went hysteric, he yelled at his father with no hesitation, which I find very disrespectful.

[Message #7  11:43:37 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

sharma subha:
Mathwe i agreee with what you said. Vladek does expect Artie to be mature thinking it will help him, but it doesn't.

[Message #8 11:44:35 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
Katrina Recinto:
I agree with you kile. I think that Prisoner on hell planet really shows how affected Artie was/is from all of that has happened

[Message #9 11:46:08 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
Mathwe Han:
i dont think Artie even thinks Vladek as a father of his. He visits him because he wants to know a story of the Holocaust survivors.

[Message #10 11:46:15 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
Katrina Recinto:
I dont think he necessarily expects him to be mature...I think for the most part he just really wants what is best for his son, after all he did go through a terrible experience...

Katrina Recinto:
Matthwe: and i also think that maybe by writing down his father's experience, he will get to know him more because I think growing up, Artie was mnot able to get that chance

[Message #12 11:48:42 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
Kile Boele:
i agree with kat in that Vladek just wants the best for him but that in it self was his wrong doing to artie
sharma subha:
Well definitly Artie did not have a normal childhood and did not have a childhood like he should have. He never really had parents to talk to because their were always dealing with their own issues.

Mathwe Han:
Katrina> that is an interesting interpretation.. he may want to what is best for Art

Katrina Recinto:
but there is no way to treat his father the way he does.. Artie is never willing to help him out around the house, especially knowing that his father is sick and old..

Mathwe Han:
Sharma> yeah definitely .. he does not have a normal childhood .. i think that leads her to his mental breakdown because he is too young to handle all the issues by himself

Katrina Recinto:
Yes I agree

Kile Boele:
just kuz hes old doesnt mean that artie can stop his life and take care of him. Vladek is not poor he could hire someone to help out
Katrina Recinto:

He was too young...He was sent to prison at the age of 20.. and I would say his parents are accountable for that... they couldn't really be there for him due to all that has happened...

sharma subha:

I think Artie is the way he is because when he was growing up thats how his father was. His father told him to suck it up so now Artie is doing the same

Katrina Recinto:

Kile: I agree, he doesn't have to stop his life for his father, but can at least take the initiative to help him out...

Mathwe Han:

himm yeahh interestin point. > Sharma

Katrina Recinto:

but no matter what there is no way to treat your father that way... its not right..

Kile Boele:
when he did in the past Vladek always did it himself or showd artie that he could do it himself after he showed up to help so i can understand why he doesnt want to go and help him anymore.

Katrina Recinto:
good interpretation there sharma.. I suppose that could be the reason why artie is acting this way now

Mathwe Han:
may be not only his father.. also to other pople.. we dont know because he never mentions his relationship with other ppl in the book

karen wong:
Why do you suppose that Spiegelman portrays their relationship, warts and all? And what did you make of the therapy scenes in the second book?

[Message #28  11:56:51 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
karen wong:
Katrina and company, in "Prisoner in a Hell Planet," Artie is wearing prison clothes, but it's on a metaphorical level. In what ways does he feel imprisoned? How does he feel "guilty as charged?"

[Message #29  11:57:28 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
karen wong:
What are some of the highly personal anecdotes that are portrayed in the comic book, and what's their significance?
Mathwe Han:

he wants the readers to manipulate what is the cause of their hostile relationship.

Katrina Recinto:

he feels imprisoned because was not able to find answers.. for instance, why did his mother kill herself.. and now since his father burned all of Anja's diaries, there is no way to find out

Interchange Conference Transcript

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karen wong:

How does the experience of war affect conventional thinking and values (i.e., loyalty, family, friendship, etc.)? You may want to narrow your focus to a single character.

Arielle Bronson:

How does the experience of war affect conventional thinking and values (i.e., loyalty, family, friendship, etc.)? You may want to narrow your focus to a single character.

In both Maus I and II the war affected each character differently and they all reacted to their situation in different ways. The character that stood out to me the most was Vladek, due to the fact that given any situation he tried to make the best of it not only for himself, but he stayed true and faithfully loyal to his wife Anja, by using any means he knew to keep them both alive. For instance in Maus II when Vladek gets word that prisoners will be sent over to the new barracks they were building near Vladek, he immediately begins thinking of ways to bring over Anja. Knowing that food would be the only way he began saving all his daily portions to pay for this favor, "I starved a little to pay to bring Anja over. All what I organized I kept in a box under my mattress" (64) this is a perfect example of Vladek sticking to his values as a husband. Vladek is well aware of the effects of going without food, due to their harsh
living conditions and labor intensive jobs, but he does such things to make sure his is near to him so that he can in any way he knows how continue to keep her going on.

[Message #3  11:37:04 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
Ariana Bickham:
How does the experience of war affect conventional thinking and values (i.e., loyalty, family, friendship, etc.)? You may want to narrow your focus to a single character.

The experience in war has affected Vladek greatly. He has a dysfunctional relationship with his son and doesn't seem to care for him. His relationship with Mala isn't even a relationship, he is angry with her because he feels he can't love her the way he loved Anja. The war has made him angry with the people around him and he seems to not be able to trust anyone. He thinks everyone is out to get him. The loyalty to his son has been turned upside down, he only seems to make his son feel as though it's his fault with what happened in the war and Vladek needs to understand that. Him throwing away Anja's things were wrong because now Arite has nothing to look back on to understand why his mother might have committed suicide.

[Message #4  11:37:12 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
Gloria Keane:
With Vladek, the conventional thinking of the war has created a sense of complete loss with his family and himself. Having to be a tougher man overall, he is a different man because of the war. For example in Maus I in the very very beginning, Art (as a child) ran over to Vladek after his friends left him behind when he fell. Instead of consoling him, Vladek told him to 'tough it out,' there are much harder things in life like his experiences in the war. His experience has stunted the relationships that he has with his family including his child, Art. He seems to always have this continuous shell around him, so that he can always protect himself.

[Message #5  11:38:14 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
Melanie Martin:
Vladek's experience in the war has affected how he lives. It seems like he still has the mentality that he's still in the Holocaust and must save money or food for the future and that he must also do things for himself. This thinking affects his relationship with his son; they butt heads all the time about money and what to spend or what not to spend. Artie knows that times have changed since his father’s experience and he's trying to make him realize these changes, but he doesn't.
Experiencing a war definitely affects a person psychologically. This is evident through Anja since she has committed suicide. It was already bad enough that she was already depressed but to survive such horrifying historical event such as the holocaust seems to have made her in a much more vulnerable state. Given that, it seems as if her relationship with her family was affected as well because Art too had gone through a mental institution. I feel like Art had paid a price for coming from a family of Holocaust survivors. It seems as he was affected by the dynamics of his family's action or specifically his mom's action. Since Anja experienced the war directly her perspective has definitely altered.

I feel like we are all looking mostly at Vladek and what he has gone through especially how that has affected his relationship with Artie.

I never really thought it that way, the reasons why he is so cheap as his son would say. Vladek was in a situation were food was limited so now it had made him become very cheap.

here's a question for thought...why is it that you think Anja couldn't and didn't express her feelings to her family, at least Vladek, given that before and during the war he was always there for her pushing her to move forward and survive? Why is it that she felt she could no long confined in him as her husband?
Arielle Bronson:

*longer

[Message #11  11:46:06 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Ariana Bickham:

to answer your question, she might of felt that way because everytime she did try to speak she felt as though he wasn't listening.

[Message #12  11:48:04 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Melanie Martin:

yea, he kinda would shrugg of whatever she was trying to say

[Message #13  11:48:30 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Arielle Bronson:

but what evidence could show that through their relationship he didnt listen to her? I mean I could see that could be an obvious answer for why Mala left Vlad now, but I never got that from his relationship with Anja


Gloria Keane:

I don't know but we have to realize that she has always been unstable. Maybe, though he always loved her, thier relationship changed over time and she just didn't feel she could talk. Maybe, Vladek had changed so much after the war that he was not the same person who did those things for her during the war. I hope that made some sense.

[Message #15  11:50:17 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

karen wong:
Certainly couples are to marry and be with each other in sickness and health, but Vladek and Anja take it to another level altogether. It's as if each gave the other a reason for living-- see the bottom of pages 52 and 64, for instance.

Despite so many people fending for themselves, I was struck by how much folks also looked out for each other. Vladek sometimes was motivated by favors he could later gain, but in other instances, he stood by his friends, even folks he just met, like the young Belgian man who is condemned to die.

[Message #16  11:51:54 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
Ariana Bickham:

It's in Maus 1, Anja didn't want to move and Vladek kept telling her it was best and another friend told him it was wrong to leave and she says, "It's like talking to a wall" refering to speaking to Vladek.

[Message #17  11:52:05 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
karen wong:

Wow-- sorry for the interruption. All of you are on to an interesting point about how Vladek and Anja's relationship was later impacted. Do you suppose that Vladek feels guilty for not being able to prevent her suicide? After all, he played a significant role in keeping her alive for the duration of the war.

[Message #18  11:52:05 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
jinkyrhea santamaria:

since she was very sensitive, i feel like anja felt as if she did not want to be a burden im assuming.. I also believe that Anja feels like its her fault why her son has gone through a mental institution since she tries to confirm him if he still love her.. almost like saying im sorry for what happen to you..

[Message #19  11:53:29 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
Arielle Bronson:

jinky thats a good points...because if i read correctly, she came into his room the night before she committed suicide, so it was like she was trying to make peace with her son and what she caused him to go through before she left
jinkyrhea santamaria:

ofcourse, anybody in that position would feel guilty. Art doesnt really convey this in the story but from personal experience I would feel really guilty especially when you see that person everyday.

jinkyrhea santamaria:

@arielle: yeah it seems as if she defitely was trying to make peace

karen wong:

In the front flap of the book, someone has written, "Maus is the story of Vladek Spiegelman, a Jewish survivor of Hitler's Europe, and his son, a cartoonist who tries to come to terms with his father, his father's terrifying story, and History itself." Elaborate on how the past shapes the present for Art.

Genevieve Katoa:

The past shapes the present for Artie because the Holocaust has affected both his parents dramatically. His mother became very depressed after the Holocaust and her anxiety disorder increased to a whole new level because of the Holocaust which probably caused her doctor to prescribe her even more medication. This medication likely took a toll on her well being as well as her behavior. She lost the happy connection she once had with her pre-Holocaust family and in combination with the memories she continued to carry as a Holocaust survivor, she found herself walking down a lonely, depressing path whose destination would ultimately be death as she eventually committed suicide.

His father who never had a psychological condition like his wife was also greatly affected by the Holocaust. In order to survive the Holocaust, he needed to be very organized and strategic. During his
imprisonment, he had absolutely no free will. Nothing was in his control and so he had to cleverly work with whatever situation he was placed in. Even after making it through the Holocaust, he, like Anja, is left with these haunting memories of the Holocaust. In the present time of the novel, he continues to be very thrifty just as he was in the Holocaust. He is always thinking about saving for a worse situation. Always on his mind are the "what-ifs".

Anja and Vladek had Artie after the war and so Artie was raised as the son of Holocaust survivors. Both his parents had to encounter the traumatizing experiences of the Holocaust and so his whole life, he has had to deal with his parents' behavior. Though he needed guidance growing up, he felt restricted from asking them for such guidance because he felt that whatever his problem was, it would never be anything worse than the Holocaust.

Throughout this novel, Artie is revealed to us as a character who had to deal with the loss of his parents support growing up because of their Holocaust experiences. Growing up, he could not understand why his parents weren't there for them, and now that he is older, that's all he wants to know. He wants to come to term with his parents, despite the fact that he will have to hear about the gruesome and terrifying history and personal experiences of the Holocaust.

[Message #3  11:37:35 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

tamara abualhsan:

the history of the Art fathers past has really affected him and has brang up many different issue that now artie is starting to figure out on how has overall shaped Valdek persona. the meetings with his father has brang up many memory of his mothers suicde. this has made art more at edge with his life and has added to a burden that he felt that he was the cause of his mothers death. Also these encounters have gave val and art a more closer realtionship with each other, in which they both lacked before Val heroric survial tale. i think that val past has been a good oppurntunity for him to appreaciate society as a whole just as the way that val had seen it because art has really been living a life luxory compared to what his father had been through. I also belivie that this opportunity has really made this father and son relership more of a "relationship" as a whole.

[Message #4  11:37:38 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Val Tosheff:

Art is a victim of his family's struggles until and after the war. However, he does not realize his being victim and he does not try to understand his parents attitude by the time he starts exploring his father's story. Then he opens his mind for the reality. He does not change his attitude toward his father, but inside the book we can observe how he place himself as a separated from the author of the book character, and Art does not always justifies the decisions and the attitude of his character, so we can
assume that he has analyzed his behavior later on and even tries to convince the reader in the difficulty he encounters as a victim of his family's struggles, which make for him hard to understand his parents.

[Message #5 11:38:04 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

john stoller:

The past shaped the present for Artie because his dad would have been normal if he wasn’t locked in a concentration camp. Vladek’s mental state is a direct result of the Holocaust and this is the reason that Artie and Vladek don’t have a good relationship. Since Artie didn’t live through the Holocaust he can’t imagine the horrible things that happened to his father. That’s why he shows no empathy. Vladek was under the most amount of stress imaginable for years of course it’s going to affect him. Why can’t Artie give his dad a little credit? Artie seems to be ok, his dad raised him the best he could. I think that Vladek did his best but Artie is ungrateful and blames his dad for his mom’s suicide. The fact that his dad is so cheap bothers Artie, but if you think about it he is just continuing to do what kept him alive in the concentration camp and during the Holocaust in general. I can’t understand why Artie doesn’t just accept his father. He should be happy his dad even made it home and didn’t kill himself like his mom.

[Message #6 11:38:06 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Raya Mesias:

In, "Maus II", Vladek gets more into detail into the horrible events that occurred during the Holocaust. And in learning of these experiences, Artie learns how to come to terms with his father by understanding those experiences. In creating the comic novel about his father’s experiences in the Holocaust, Artie helps not only his father, but also himself in that in releasing the tension that was created from the pressure of feeling guilty—surviving—both can learn and come to terms with the issues that they have within themselves. On page 44 in a therapy session with Artie, Dr. Pavel says, "Maybe your father needed to show that he was always right—that he could always SURVIVE—because he felt GUILTY about surviving...And he took his guilt on YOU, where it was safe...on the real survivor..." And in understanding the cause of the kind of relationship that he had with father, Artie can shape his future by learning from his father's past.

[Message #7 11:38:16 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Justin Narayan:

The past shapes the present for Art because as a result of the past, Art was raised by Vladek in a strict and bitter environment. Art feels his father is too rough on him, but he may not realize the experience Vladek went through made him rough. We know Vladek was not always rough and bitter because before
he was a prisoner, he was known as sheik. Sheiks are the opposite of bitter. The past also effects Art because he feels guilty about what happened to his family during the time of the Holocaust. Since he did not face these same experiences as Vladek, they have trouble establishing a solid relationship where they understand one another. The guilt of his mother's suicide, the holocaust, and feeling alone during his childhood cause him to isolate himself a little. Because of this isolation he may feel like he needs to better understand his family history so he can understand what they went through and can have a better relationship. This causes him to use his father for information. It's strange he is eager to know more about his family history, yet does not want to spend time with his own father.

[Message #8  11:42:37 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
john stoller:
Genevieve-good point when you said that his problems were never going to be as bad as the Holocaust that probly made him not want to ask for help

[Message #9  11:44:33 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
Justin Narayan:
John - I agree with you, I think Vladek would've been different if he never experienced being a prisoner. He probably would have raised Artie to be a sheik

[Message #10  11:45:18 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
john stoller:
Val- he probly didnt relize untill his dad died

[Message #11  11:45:43 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
karen wong:
How do you suppose Anja's relationship with Artie was impacted, having lost her first son to the war?

Genevieve Katoa:
Tamara, I like that you brought up the fact that Artie feels this guilt for his mother’s death. He feels like he may have been selfish and unaware of his mother’s life experiences as a Holocaust survivor and that he wasn’t there to support her emotionally. That’s why it’s so difficult for him to hear these stories of the Holocaust because his mother is gone because of such traumatizing events in combination with the fact that there was no communication within the family. Each member was encompassed by their own problem, unaware of the fact that everyone else had a problem of their own going on.

[Message #13  11:46:51 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

karen wong:

Raya, very thought provoking quote you cite in message #6 from Artie's therapist. All, do you agree or disagree with the therapist's hypothesis? Why or why not?

[Message #14  11:47:38 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Val Tosheff:

I dont think vladec is cheap he is always ready to help friends with gifts and even money, he just dont like spending without obvious reason


Genevieve Katoa:

Right, Val. He is not cheap, just reasonable.

[Message #16  11:48:51 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Val Tosheff:

Or Art did not want to show to give too much to his father while alive


john stoller:

Ms Wong- i think Anja didnt want to get to close to Artie because she lost her first son
Genevieve Katoa:

But each character has their own definition of reasonable.

Tamara Abualhnsan:

Karen Wong - I think that she felt as if no one can compare to her first child and she felt a sense of emptiness looking into Artie's eyes. I think she still had a feeling that she still might lose her second son and that she couldn't feel the same motherly emotions toward Artie because she had such a burden from the death of her first son.

Genevieve Katoa:

In response to Karen, I think that Artie never had the chance to be treated as an individual. He was being treated as the "lost Reichu".

Genevieve Katoa:

I agree Tamara, she can't help but think of Reichu when she looks at Artie. "I wonder if Reichu would have looked like this," etc.

John Stoller:

Vladek is just being prepared in case there is another Holocaust. Stealing the matches is cheap to me.
Genevieve Katoa:

Right John, he is psychologically living in the past.

[Message #24   11:51:55 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Val Tosheff:

it is a bit too much of Vladec but he still keep this survival instinct


Genevieve Katoa:

Yup, constant organization and strategy.

[Message #26   11:53:00 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Raya Mesias:

@ Val and Genevieve:

Val, I definitely agree with you that Artie is a victim of his parents' Holocaust experiences. And that throughout his life he has had a very difficult time understanding them. And in going back to "The Prisoner on the Hell Planet", where Artie is illustrated as a convicted felon, symbolizing not only his feeling of guilt for the blame of his mother's suicide, but also his imprisonment caused by not only his parents' treatment of him growing up, but also the cause of his own imprisonment--in that he never allowed himself, to understand his parents' attitude of life, as you said so yourself. I think he wanted to, as Genevieve said, restrict himself from asking his parents for guidance because "he felt that whatever his problem was, it would never be anything worse than the Holocaust..." And I think that in creating this comic novel about his experiences in dealing with his father's past, he is finally opening up his mind and understanding the "reality" of the situation--the Holocaust. And this will help him shape his future, though no matter how horrible it may be. It will help him understand his parents, as well as himself.

[Message #27   11:53:05 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

john stoller:

Justin- i agree Vladek is bitter. Great job!
Justin Narayan:

It would be difficult to have a mind set that you are still a prisoner of the Holocaust, when in reality he is a free man.

Justin Narayan:

John - I agree, I think Vladek does cross the line of being conservative and becomes cheap at times

john stoller:

justin - I agree as well, it made him crazy seeing all his people die

Justin Narayan:

Do you think Vladek's crazyness had a negative affect on Anja?

Val Tosheff:

@Raya

That is why art draw the nazi camp on the cover of the book while writing it because he felt in prison in his childhood

john stoller:
Raya - i agree with you when you were saying his problems will never be as bad as the Holocaust

[Message #34  11:59:23 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

john stoller:

great job every body!

[Message #35  12:00:07 PM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Genevieve Katoa:

Thanks John, you too :]
karen wong:

Compare and contrast the relationship Artie has with each of his parents, and what influenced or had a direct impact on their interactions.

Emma Quadra:

There is strain between Artie and his dad. I think mainly because of the effect of the Holocaust war on Vladek. Artie gets irritated by his father saving things and having things neat and tidy that he just gets upset all the time. It's like everything his father does always makes Artie mad. Also, I think that he blames his father for his mother's death. His relationship with his mother seems to be very loving. He always talks about the good things about her and possibly feels regret that she had died. From the comic strip that he made it seemed as though when he reflected on his last moments with her, he wished that he could have done it differently. As though knowing now that those were his last moments with her he wish he new then that it was because then maybe things would have turned different.

Daniel Detrinidad:

It seems that Artie and his father Vladek are not really close I think this is because of what Vladek went through in his life back in Poland. For Vladek I think it is really hard for him to trust people for example in the beginning of Maus I he tells young Artie "If you lock them together in a room with no food for a week then you could see what it is, friends" (6). While Artie is crying about his friends abandoning he father tries to tell him if they didn't have food and how to depend on each other then Artie will discover who are his friends. Another thing Vladek doesn't trust Mala because he thinks that Mala only want his money. In the Arties comic "Prisoner on the Hell planet" Artie talks about his relationship with mother and her death, it seems to blame his mom for everything that is wrong with him. While in his room, Anja asks Artie, "Artie...you...still...love...me...don't you?" (105) and he replies, "Sure Ma" (105) but the way his face looks and the tone he says it in seems to me that he didn't care for his mother and she irritated
Artie has a rough relationship with his father. The effects of the Holocaust are a main reason for this distance within such an important relationship. Vladek was never really there for Artie because he saw Artie's problem's as very minor affairs compared to what he went through during the war. Vladek was also very demanding, he has to have everything his way and just his way or else it isn't expectable. Vladek also believes that he can do everything better than anyone else. This took its toll on Artie, who as a young kid was constantly told that he was doing things wrong and that only Vladek could do them right. As for the present relationship between the two Vladek feels it is closer than it really is. Artie is annoyed by the cost saving techniques Vladek and all the time Vladek is requesting to spend with him. Artie finds it hard to support his father when his father never did the same for him.

Artie's relationship with his mother was a good one in which she loved him very much. In the book Vladek says that she used to spoil Artie all the time. Her suicide had a huge impact on Artie who was already a fragile kid. The fact that she left no note means that they will never know exactly why she killed herself. This leaves Artie feeling guilty that it was his fault she killed herself, and if it isn't his fault then it must be his father. Overall his relationship with his mother who killed herself proves more destructive then the rough relationship that he carries out with his dad.
teenager growing up. Thus, the relationship is not what they would want it to be. There is a lot of misunderstanding and miscommunication.

Artie's relationship with his mother Anja was one of love and affection. His mother was the one who would spoil him, and comfort him. She was the one that Artie felt more emotionally and physically connected to. However, when they moved to New York, Artie had to be institutionalized. The effect that the war had on his parents was passed on to Artie. He became the "survivor." It is at this point in Maus II, that the focus shifts from his parents, to more about Vladek and how he saw the whole thing. He gives more insight into Anja's suicide and the events that preceded and followed it.

Art at one point called both of his parents "murderers." He called Vladek that word at the end of Maus I when he found out that Vladek had destroyed all of Anja's diaries and journals. (pg. 159)

[Message #6  11:37:55 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
Emma Quadra:
I think that maybe vladek is sort of putting his guilt on Artie. I think this is too far in advance but its on page 204 in my book I'm not sure if you're there already so I won't say anything.

[Message #7  11:39:59 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
Emma Quadra:
Its guilt of surviving is that what page was about if you're wondering

[Message #8  11:40:06 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
Bogdan Kurpita:
@ daniel:
Good job finding quotes and citing the pages. :)

[Message #9  11:40:41 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
Daniel Detrinidad:
Vladek Irritates Artie and Artie is feeling like his dad wasn't there for him when he needed him so he's writing the Maus books to understand the pain and anger his father is going through. I think after his mom's death he realized that his father was all he had left and want to get close to him

[Message #10 11:41:37 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Emma Quadra:
I think that's true, but I think it may have also been painful for Vladek to relive those painful memories.

[Message #11 11:41:39 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Orion Smith:
He doesn't make it seem like he wants to get close to him. Always complaining about having to help him and fighting with him.

[Message #12 11:42:36 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Daniel Detrinidad:
@ Orion: I agree but he does want to understand what his father is going through

[Message #13 11:42:44 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Bogdan Kurpita:
I think Artie feels that his parents had failed him and now views taking care of his father or even spending time with him as a chore.

[Message #14 11:43:47 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

karen wong:
In "Prisoner in a Hell Planet," he draws his mom in really grotesque ways—why? What does it suggest about how he perceives her? Also, when he recalls these past encounters, why does he draw himself as an adult in prison clothes instead of a little boy?
Artie has a unique relationship with each of his parents in that it is obvious that each parent loves his/her child, but due to life experiences such as the previous experiences before the Holocaust, the experience of losing a son, and finally, enduring and surviving the Holocaust has affected the relationship.

Vladek, Artie’s father is initially portrayed as a strong individual in that he is not "book smart", but has gained a lot of life experiences at a young age making him "street smart". This is evident in the fact that at a very young age, Vladek had to quit school and instead had to work in order to support himself and his family. Based on this, it can be inferred that at a young age Vladek experienced life itself, in that it is not all simple, but complex in that one needs to be resourceful in order to survive. This idea of being "street smart" is extremely helpful during the Holocaust in that Vladek acts a sort of "optimist/pessimist" in that he hopes for the best by preparing for the worst. For example, when news of the German occupation, his father and brother in law try to reassure him that everything will go back to normal, "Don't worry so much Vladek. You'll see...the war will be over like lightning! (76)". When instead he knows, deep down, that he needs to prepare. How this mentality has transgressed to the father/son relationship between Vladek and Artie is that Vladek has maintained the idea that surviving is winning and tries to relate this idea to Artie. This is exemplified in a scene in the book where Artie is slow in finishing the food on his plate and seeing this, Vladek responds to eat quickly and compares the moment to when he was in the camps with no food to eat. Though this scene seems trivial and simple, the complexity of it is revealed in that the deeper meaning is that the son and the father can not relate to each other based on experience, resulting in the tension that exists in the relationship. Another impact on the relationship is the lost of Vladek and Anja's first son, Richieu, who was killed in the war by his aunt, Anja's sister through a mercy killing. The effect of trying to protect his family as much as he could which is exemplified in his "street smarts" and wanting to give Richieu to a family to ensure his safety is a symbol of his lost hope or more likely a dream of his never fulfilled in that despite his efforts, Richieu did not survive the war.

As for the mother/son relationship, Anja is not "physically" present in the comic, but provides a huge impact on Artie. It is revealed in last chapters of the novel that Anja committed suicide at the age when Artie was 20. His feelings about his mother are revealed in his short comic, "Prisoner on a Hell Planet," in which it can be determined that Artie blames himself for his mother's death. In this one would wonder, why did Anja kill herself? Based on earlier interpretations made on her character it is revealed that Anja initially before the war was an unstable individual in which she was constantly raveled in her mood swings resulting in constant depressions. The lost of a son, of whom she loved very much, may have impacted her further in which since she wears her heart on her sleeves, the impact of the lost of a beloved son took an emotional drain on her. In addition, she survived the Holocaust as a concentration camp survivor, implementing the idea that she must have been more emotionally drained from that
experience as well. As for her relationship with Artie, it can be determined that she tried to implement her feelings for Richieu onto him in that in the comic, "Prisoner on a Hell Planet" reveals that before she committed suicide she asks Artie, "You still love me don't you?" When he turns away from her and says "Sure Mom," not only hurts her, but makes the idea that she wasn't good enough of a mother to Richieu and Artie explicit more, probably resulting in her suicide.

[Message #16   11:44:41 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

karen wong:

How do you suppose Anja's relationship with Artie was impacted, having lost her first son to the war?

[Message #17   11:45:59 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Daniel Detrinidad:

i think cause he feels like a criminal and he is feeling guilty and he draws his mom in a gruesome way because to show how depressed she was and also drawing his father in the same way to show how he had changed after the war

[Message #18   11:46:15 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Emma Quadra:

I think because she lost her first son she become more carring to Artie just because she didn't have the chance to with Richieu.

[Message #19   11:46:32 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Emma Quadra:

@ Daniel, yes I agree

[Message #20   11:47:22 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Daniel Detrinidad:

i think Artie believes that his parents see him as his dead brother and it's hard for them to raise him even though thier dealing with the lost of Richieu
Orion Smith:
IT seems she was almost smothering because of the way Artie responds to her asking if he loves her

Bogdan Kurpita:
@ emma: I agree with u agreeing with daniel.......

Riana Mesias:
@ Orion, I really liked the idea that you said that the relationship between the two " is closer than it really is" because I find it true in that though they don't get along, they are very similar people.

Emma Quadra:
@daniel. That's true because he talks about the picture of Richieu in his parent's room and how he haunts him for being the perfect child. And that they don't have a picture of Artie because he is still alive.

Bogdan Kurpita:
i think artie got screwed over as a kid by both his parents. seems like no one in the family had all their marbles with them after the war. Artie faced the consequences of having Holocaust surviving parents. They mentally had checked out by the time they came to America...so much of their efforts and nerves were used to survive the camps that they were not able to sanely raise Artie. Thus he was institutionalized...
Bogdan Kurpita:

@ Riana:

I agree...we talked about this on Monday. Artie is becoming like his father whether he likes it or not. The apple never falls far from the tree.

Orion Smith:

He might as well have ben raised in a camp

Riana Mesias:

Do you guys think that Anja killed herself because she thought she wasn't a good enough mother in that despite their efforts as parents to protect their first son they were unsuccessful? And in relation to Artie, in the comic "Prisoner in a Hell Planet" do you think she felt that this was confirmed when he turned his back and said "Sure Ma." what do you guys think?

Daniel Detrinidad:

I think by Artie being raised in America he views the world differently and it's makes it hard for him to understand his parents

Emma Quadra:

im not sure why she died because I feel like there was not enough evidence for me to guess and I think in the comic strip that sort of gave way that she might kill herself asking her son if he still loved her it was her goodbye to him I think
[Message #31  11:54:14 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Riana Mesias:

I think so too, like a good bye more like a finality of things. @ Emma

[Message #32  11:55:04 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Daniel Detrinidad:

she probably felt she was losing Artie by him not wanting to be with her or show that he did love her and she felt like she will never be able to have a relationship with Artie

[Message #33  11:58:56 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Riana Mesias:

@ daniel I agree and it's sad because out of the two parents she is evidently the one that wears her heart on her sleeves and so a gesture like that would mean a lot to her, as for Vladek, not so much I think
karen wong:

Spiegelman chose what many consider an unusual or startling medium for the story of a Holocaust survivor’s experiences-- a comic book which portrays the characters as animals. Analyze Spiegelman's drawing style and discuss how it reinforces or illuminates the books' content.

Matthew Juan:

I think that making the book as a comic has added more of a personal and visual way of explaining the story of his father and of what happened during the holocaust. The style of his comic portraying the characters as animals is a different way of telling the story. It makes understanding the better a little easier. Its nature knowing that cats usually hunt for mice when one is seen by a cat. So in the story the mice are jews and the cats are the germans. He wanted to tell the story from a different view and step away from the normal style of telling a story. Having visuals such as the comic made the story pop out more because of how we see the reactions and things that are going on during the story, rather than imagining what is going on and making our own assumptions of what was going on during the story. I think this is how he wanted it to be, he wanted to tell us what was going on as well as show us what had happened during the holocaust.

Kira Ostapenko:

I think the use of mice/cats is affective because it's a good analogy because like cats chase/hunt mice, the Nazi's hunted Jews. It makes the book seem to be something we can relate to better because it's a daily scenario we can see to gain insight. I think animals also take away human qualities because animals are seen as wild creatures. In my opinion, comics took away the seriousness of the event and made it more "fun" but at the same time the pictures give me a better portrayal of what happened instead of imagining for myself even though I find myself paying more attention to the images then to the words. I think the comic definitely makes it easier to follow than an actual book.
Zena Tarasena:

Spiegelman's idea was great because as a reader you are easily able to make distinctions between the characters. The Jew's were represented as mice and the German’s as cats. These animals illustrate and reinforce the roles of each, the predator and the hunted. The Polish were represented as pigs, and the American's as dogs. I do not see why he chose these animals. When we think of the mice we automatically think of them as pest to be destroyed which was Hitler's idea. When we think of cats we think of the cruel way they hunt and devour live defenseless animals such as mice and birds. In a comic book it is necessary for the characters to be given such identities to aid the reader because so much background setting is absent. The reader is mainly reading the conversations and relies heavily on the artists skills. For example the black color represent the dark depressed mind in many parts especially in Prisoners on hell planet. The mice wearing pig masks tell us how the Jews were always in hiding. And the facial expressions clearly show the horror of death.

Belle Asuncion:

The drawing style really shows Spiegelman's personality or characteristics. For one thing, Spiegelman inherited his father's sarcasm, so in the book, even in the drawing you see his sarcasm. In the Maus two, he drew his therapist cat because his therapist kept a picture of his cat in a frame. I think also Art's family have endured serious, scary events in their lives there not the perky, happy people we come across. Vladek and Artie are very cynical and sarcastic and to the point as to not make polite gestures they just say what's in their mind. Art drew German's as cats and the Jewish people as mice because in reality Cat's are about 5-10 inches long and mice grow only 2-4 inches standing tall. By drawing the Germans as cats it really mirrors what the Nazi's did to the Jews. A cat would corner a mouse or taunt them to get them from one place to the other, cat's would chase them and inevitably kill them. Aside from the ironic drawings of people as animals he also drew emotions well. There's a saying, "a picture is worth a thousand word" and this saying is proven over and over again by each panel. Take the panel on page 44, bottom left, he draws himself as a little kid, and from the back he looks human but has the mouse mask on. This picture shows how he truly feels inside even though the panel is about him in the present day, in his late 20s dealing with his problems. I think Spiegelman chose to draw his story because he can tell more with drawing than words how he truly feels.
I wonder if by portraying real people and actual events as animals that then the story is more accessible than if it was in traditional narrative form. After all, the horrors of the Holocaust are almost incomprehensible. (One of the images I'm currently visualizing is of all of the Hungarian Jews thrust into a pit and burned alive, their faces in agony as they scream out in pain.)

Yet another reason is because the symbolic is always richer with meaning than the literal, and so Spiegelman is able to convey a lot more depth to the story. For instance, the animal choices convey a hierarchy and reinforce the relationships between the different racial groups. Cat chase mice; the Nazi Germans are seeking to "exterminate" the Jews. Why are Poles the pigs (dirty and greedy?), and why are Americans the dogs (friendly and loyal?)? And how about when Vladek and Anja don masks when they're on the run? Note also that during the scenes with his therapist in the beginning of the first book, he's smaller—does that signify that he feels "small"—like he's not really deserving of all of these accolades? Or does it make it seem as if he's a child, since his childhood has clearly scarred him to the point of extreme depression now that he's an adult?

Another important observation is that there are some instances when people are not portrayed as animals but rather people—even two real photos (Richieu, and I think Artie and his mother). Why?

It's also important to note the three narratives that run through the story. If he were to use a traditional narrative, then perhaps he could not have shown the relationship between the past and the present. For instance, in the second book, while he reflects on the success his first book has garnered, note that he's walking on top of this pile of Jewish bodies, their bodies much like the starving, dying Jews while they were in the camps. This image suggests that he might feel guilty for achieving success literally and figuratively on the backs of Jews.

[Message #7  11:38:15 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
Jeianne Victoria:

Spiegelman's drawing style is represented as animals. Cats were represented as the Germans and Mice were represented as the Jews. In Maus II, Artie brings up his wife, who is French, and adds her into his book as a frog who converts into a mouse when she married Artie. His drawing style reinforces of illuminates the books' content because he can easily draw people, however he chooses to represent them in a more demeaning way, as in animals.

[Message #8  11:39:38 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]
Karen Wong:

Jeianne and company, why those animals? How are they similar or different to those ethnic groups? What relationships between these animals are reinforced?

Message #9 11:40:36 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010

Karen Wong:

Belle and company, why do you suppose Artie draws himself in the second book as a human, but with a mouse mask?

Message #10 11:41:26 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010

Jeianne Victoria:

I think those animals because in reality cats chase after mice and in this case, Germans were going after the Jews.

Message #11 11:41:29 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010

Karen Wong:

To reinforce the cat and mouse relationship, in what ways do some of the Nazi soldiers "play" with their prey? Also, what's the relationship of dogs to mice or cats?

Message #12 11:42:13 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010

Karen Wong:

Kira and company, what are some images that had a stronger effect on you than only words?

Message #13 11:44:43 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010

Zena Tarasena:

Oh I get it now. Americans were an enemy of the German so are dogs of cats.
Kira Ostapenko:

dogs chase cats who chase mice

Zena Tarasena:

The facial expressions of the burning Jews could never be more graphic than in a drawing. All pictures of the dead Jews in piles have no life the torment is not there whereas the torment is clearly shown in the screaming, burning characters.

Belle Asuncion:

The mask represents guilt. In terms of drawing cat and mouse, it was because during the war, Nazi's acted like cats chasing and playing with their food, meaning they tricked the jews and ran them out of their work, home and ultimately out of their towns and into traps to kill them in the end. The mouse, small and helpless like the jews were drawn scared, frail and confused. But Artie never experienced any of that, and so the mask represents what he is guilty of, not being part of his parents past, and being guilty of surviving all of it without enduring any of it. The animals are very similar to the ethnic groups, because of their behavior. I don't think you can just draw the story, I think you would have to use actual pictures to add description to a story about Holocaust but because Art can draw, he drew the characters in animal form, to get the sense of why. Nazi's drawn like cats, to show their evil machinisms.

Kira Ostapenko:

images that have a bigger impact are those where the jews are being tortured like the kids being thrown against walls and a diagram of the gas chambers. hearing that millions were burned is different from actually seeing the scenario

Matthew Juan:
Pretty much the whole story was a cat and mouse game. The jews had to hide anywhere possible. They would make those hide out spots in the attic, the basements, and behind a pile of supposed shoes.

[Message #19  11:49:51 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Jeianne Victoria:

like Matthew said, its like a game where the Jews would hide from the Germans and if they were caught, they would get killed

[Message #20  11:50:26 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Belle Asuncion:

I can’t get over the dead bodies Vladek have to step on, or when people talk about work, I see in my head, how Jews work on buildings for many years only to make their own death camps. But in my head, naturally I picture them as it is in Arts book, lifeless, frail.

[Message #21  11:51:29 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Kira Ostapenko:

personally when i picutre osemthing just from words, i try to not make it seem as bad as it is but seeing the pictures, i see it as it is

[Message #22  11:54:25 AM, Wednesday, May 12, 2010]

Zena Tarasena:

Artie's characters do leave a lot to the imagination, but the pictures he produces and captions stimulate your mind into action. You begin to see clearly the horror he is portaying


Belle Asuncion:

Also, when Vladek described the gas chambers and most bodies were near the door and the handles. Everytime I open a door lately I think about how lucky I am to open the door and not be trap. I think, what Art couldn't put in words he described well in pictures.
pictures leave a lasting impression

Yes, and the scene when Vladek is talking about them using the fat of the burned victims to help burn the other victims. This scene turns my stomach.

I agree with Zena. The comics really gets our mind into action with the story that we see what is happening while reading it. But to think if it were like any other narrative would it still have the same impact? would our own imagination of what went on be the same as seeing the pictures?

I think it would be dimmed

There is nothing greater than our own imagination.
I agree. Because when I read the book "night" my imagination of what went on during the holocaust was graphic. I believe the way it was being told also made my imagination of what went on more clear.