

Remediating the Documentary: Photography and Drawn Images in *Mickey au camp de Gurs*

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« C'est un univers à part, totalement clos,
étrange royaume d'une fatalité singulière ».
– David Rousset, *L'univers concentrationnaire*.

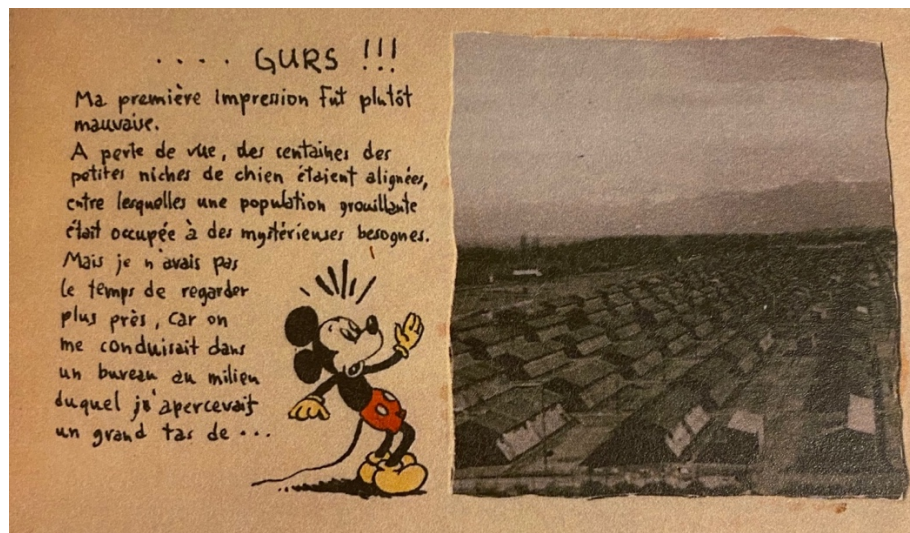


Fig. 1. *Mickey au camp de Gurs*, panel 4.
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In this page from *Mickey au camp de Gurs* (1942), a comic booklet created by Horst Rosenthal while interned in Gurs in southern France, Mickey Mouse directs our attention to a bird's-eye view of the camp (Kotek 3). In the black-and-white photograph, rows and rows of barracks stretch southward. On the horizon is a hazy outline of the Pyrénées. The teeming population alluded to by Mickey – nearly 22,000 passed through this space during World War II – is nowhere to be found. The provenance of this photograph and how Rosenthal came into possession of it is not clear. Perhaps it was taken before the camp was in operation, which would explain why the place looks deserted. Or perhaps, in what amounts to the same thing, the interned masses are simply not captured by the

camera or the composition. Either way, the photograph, together with the cartoon alongside it, register one of the key features of the camp institution during World War II, namely, its duality as a site of incarceration, packed with captive bodies, and, on the other hand, as a zone of invisibility, where not only humans were made invisible or otherwise liquidated, but the very mechanism making them invisible was itself under erasure.

As well attested in the secondary literature, the internment, concentration, and extermination camps of World War II functioned as self-enclosed, autarkic sites that severed communication with the outside world. This separation allowed for the construction of a new social order, thereby creating what camp survivor David Rousset described as « un monde à la Céline avec des hantises kafkaïennes » (*L'univers* 69). The rules of society were not only deregulated, inverted, or otherwise disfigured, but the Nazi program of destruction also sought to eradicate any traces of the absolute erasure of targeted groups of people. In a speech delivered to members of the SS in 1943, Heinrich Himmler stated, « [a]mong ourselves, this once, it shall be uttered quite frankly; but in public we will never speak of it... I am referring to the evacuation of the Jews, the annihilation of the Jewish people... In our history, this is an unwritten and never-to-be-written page of glory » (*Speech in Posen*). Most killing orders were delivered orally so as to leave no written record. The rural locations of the camps – as in the case of Gurs, which was tucked away in the foothills of the Pyrénées mountains in southwestern France, only fifty miles from Spanish border – were no mere coincidence, as they kept the system outside of view of everyday urban existence.¹

Improbably surviving a regime of secrecy and oblivion, *Mickey au camp de Gurs* outlived its creator as a reflection on camp experience. Save for the date, 1942, and Rosenthal's signature, on the last panel, little is known about the production and circulation of the text.² Some scholars have suggested that its first readers were children (« little Mickeys ») interned at Gurs.³ In fifteen pages of drawn panels and handwritten text, the narrative follows the famous cartoon mouse as he is arrested and interned at Gurs, where he encounters camp administrators, fellow prisoners, and the bureaucratic machinery of the camp. Although *Mickey au camp de Gurs* is not an autobiographical text, neither a memoir nor a diary, there are resonances between Rosenthal's and Mickey's journey through the camp. Rosenthal, a German-Jewish national, fled Germany in 1933 and was arrested and sent to Gurs in 1940. On September 11, 1942, he was deported in convoy 13, and all traces of him disappeared (*Mickey à Gurs* 93). Mickey, meanwhile, arrives at the camp as a foreigner (« Moi, pas papiers! Moi, international »), and over the course of the comic, its cartoonish style makes visible the Kafkaesque bureaucratic and carceral machinery that ultimately disappeared Rosenthal.⁴

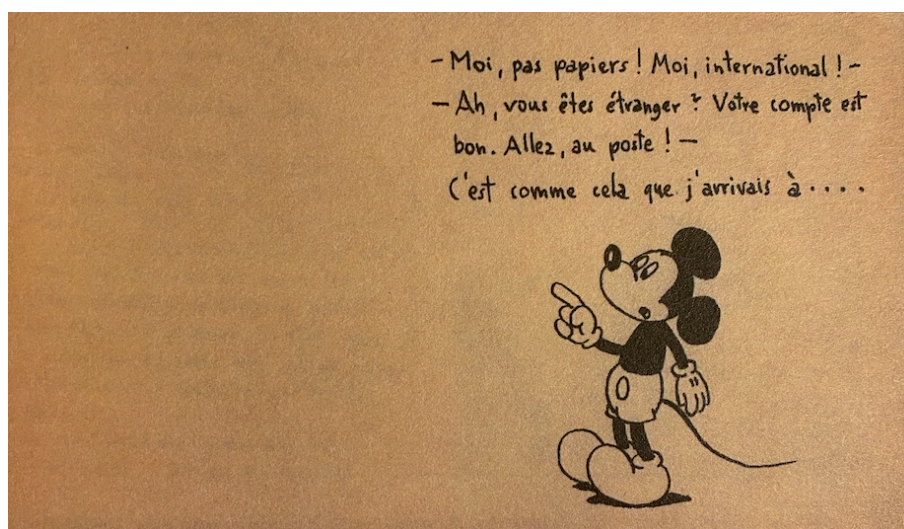


Fig. 2. *Mickey au camp de Gurs*, panel 3.
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The past seventy years have been marked by a profound and concerted effort to accurately document the Holocaust, and to recover the traces of individuals like Rosenthal. Nazi destruction of evidence, as well as enduring discourses of negationism, have sparked endless debates about the kinds of historiographical labor needed to establish what happened. In recent years, there has been a trend toward the recovery of survivor testimony. However, in the immediate postwar period, the trend was towards a « perpetrator-focused, regime-centered [...] ‘top-down’ approach » (Hilberg 29).⁵ As in Hilberg’s landmark study of the Holocaust *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1961), personal survivor accounts were often eschewed in favor of the official German documentation. This came at a time when individual testimonies were seen as unreliable in comparison to official paperwork, as well as to photographic modes of documentation, such as newsreel footage, which were perceived to be self-evident, unmediated, and objective. Where the « top-down » approach produced a unified narrative of the past, survivor testimony, it was thought, fragmented the historical record into individual recollection, inconsistent narratives, errors of memory, and so on.

Produced in the early 1940s, years before these questions began to be asked, challenged, and posed again in myriad ways by different generations of Holocaust scholars, Rosenthal’s *Mickey au camp de Gurs* addresses the problem of documenting camp experience. Moreover, the design of the comic, especially its juxtaposition of colorful cartoons and a lone black-and-white photograph, stages a confrontation between different modes of documentation that anticipates subsequent debates about the ideal forms and media of historical evidence in Holocaust discourse. Putting Mickey Mouse, a quintessentially fictional figure, alongside the disembodied, self-evident facticity of the

photograph brings the fictional or aesthetic and the photorealistic or documentary into a dynamic tension that evolves throughout the comic. In so doing, Rosenthal does not only transport us into « un univers à la Kafka où tout est étrange et arbitraire », but renders strange the very media by which this « univers étrange » exists (Pasamonik 103). In the following paragraphs, I examine how mixed media in *Mickey au camp de Gurs* calls attention to the tensions that always belong to the work of documentation. I argue that the meeting of media – in particular the quintessentially documentary and quintessentially cartoonish properties of the images – invites readers to reimagine « documentation », thus mutually illuminating how truth and fact come into being.

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Today, the co-presence of photography and drawn images in comics is not unusual.⁶ Rather, graphic novelists, especially travel journalists and memoirists, have taken significant advantage of this multi-modal medium, creating artworks that capture experience and memory in innovative ways. As a medium that promotes both the non-linear and linear accumulation of information in order to achieve meaning – in a synchronic and diachronic process Groensteen dubs *braiding* – comics not only encode meaning: they lay bare the devices of that process of encoding and representation. For this reason, as Hillary Chute suggests, comics present themselves as a « rich location for the work documentation », as they always « call attention to the relationship of the part to the whole, to the self-conscious buildup of information » (*Disaster Drawn* 17). When mixed-media are in play, for instance when photographs are inserted into a comic, as in *Mickey au camp de Gurs*, the part-whole dynamic activates a host of secondary dialectics between fictionality and realism, between private and public acts of remembrance, and between vernacular and state discourse.

Concerns regarding the transmission and representation of experience – the historical and the memorial – are at the heart of Holocaust discourse. As such, comics of recent decades about the Holocaust are always already engaged in a dialogue about the construction and circulation of Holocaust documentation. Some artists choose to explicitly address these concerns and do so by integrating photography into their work. Art Spiegelman, Miriam Katin, and Jérémie Dres, for instance, chose to insert photographs of family members in their graphic novels. Other artists shun photography, opting instead to draw images of iconic Holocaust photographs (e.g., Rutu Modan's *The Property*). It is interesting, nonetheless, that when artists do include photographs, they are typically family portraits. For instance, at the end of *We Are On Our Own* (2006), Miriam Katin's graphic retelling of her and her mother's survival in World War II, she chooses to include a single photograph of her and her mother. Similarly, Art Spiegelman includes three family pictures in *Maus*: him and his mother, Anja; his brother, Richieu; and his father, Vladek.⁷ In this way, in graphic and comic representations of the

Holocaust, photography figures the intimate and private relations destroyed during World War II.⁸

No such visual rhetoric of private memory or family intimacy appears in *Mickey au camp de Gurs*. Unlike contemporary comics, Rosenthal's use of photography is alienating and defamiliarizing; it depicts the absence of intimacy and personal connection. The high oblique and elevated vantage of the photograph, most likely taken from a nearby water tower, offers a distancing view on the Gurs internment camp. If taken from a water tower, it nevertheless approximates the gaze of the watch tower, which seeks to make things visible in order to better control them. Until the 18th century, this perspective was the principal mode for representing landscapes, where the « goal of showing as much as possible was outweighed by any concern for true perspective or straight sight lines » (Ford). This preference for an Icarian or bird's-eye perspective was tied to its capacity to provide a visual inventory of wide spaces, a kind of panoptic and mastering vision of space. The effect, as Michel de Certeau suggests, is to stabilize the diversity and complexity of the world into a legible image, « transform[ing] the bewitching world by which one was 'possessed' into a text that lies before one's eyes » (*Practice of Everyday* 92). Space, in other words, is made « readable », and therefore available to different kinds of organization, classification, and rationalization.

In this way, the aerial photograph in *Mickey* functions as a quintessentially documentary image. The properties of the photograph, as a « paragon of perfect visibility », in both vertical perspective and mechanical production, seem to present it as impersonal, objective, and unmediated (Saint-Amour 245). Indeed, aerial photography is most often associated with military reconnaissance and drone warfare, valued for its capacity to provide actionable information for instrumental purposes. But as Roland Barthes observed from atop the Eiffel Tower, where, looking down « one can feel cut off from the world, yet owner of the world », the elevated perspective of the photograph in *Mickey au camp de Gurs* divorces the viewer from the scene in the same measure that it makes it visible and available to inspection. As I already mentioned, looking closely at the aerial image of the camp in *Mickey au camp de Gurs* reveals a conspicuous absence: there is not a single human being visible in the photograph. Considering the fact that the camps were premised on the exploitation and abuse of targeted groups of people, this incongruity is striking, and puts into question the later valorization of photographic evidence in Holocaust discourse. If this black-and-white photo were to be used as proof, what could it immediately prove? If there were humans in Gurs, the photograph that provides an all-encompassing view of the camp, of its magnitude and internal order, of its surroundings, simultaneously keeps the prisoners out of focus.

In his research on aerial photomosaics, Paul Saint-Amour recounts an anecdote particularly relevant for the discussion at hand. In 1928, Major General Douglas MacArthur was shown an aerial photomosaic and upon being told that it is a map, he retorted, « [y]ou understand, young man, that's not a map... yet » (Saint-Amour 242).

Saint-Amour glosses this perplexing statement by explaining that for MacArthur, the photomosaic aerial photograph is « too full of information to be legible or navigable; it too nakedly represents without representing » (243). Whatever the angle or composition of the aerial photograph, its perspective ultimately renders information unreadable. The space represented no longer « bear[s] any relation to visible, concrete objects » and as such, it abstracts reality by « disregarding [...] any discernible association of an object » (« Abstraction » 102).

In *Mickey au camp de Gurs*, the paradoxical farseeing nearsightedness of bird's-eye photography enters into dynamic interrelation with the drawn images of the comic. The sketched and hand-colored cartoons do not only point to the perceptive limitations of the view from the water or watch tower, although they certainly do this. More to the point, I argue that the comic images, like the black-and-white photo, are amalgams of mimesis and abstraction, immediacy and mediation, revealing as much as they conceal. That is to say, the visibility of what the photograph conceals is emphasized by the cartoon's own playful disguising and embellishing of reality. And in the meeting of these two media, both marked by exaggerated features of the fictional and the realistic, or the cartoonish and documentary, the comic raises the central question of postwar Holocaust discourse: how best to convey the camp experience?

In contrast to the mechanical production of photography, which presents itself as « an imprint or transfer of the real », drawings are artisanal, handmade (Krauss 1981:26). Although comics are, for the most part, made to be mass-produced, in the criticism there continues to an emphasis on the non-mechanical hand-madeness of these texts, as thematized in the works of Chris Ware, Alison Bechdel, Emil Ferris, and countless others. According to Emma Tinker, this emphasis on « the physicality of their texts reflects a desire to express something personal and individual, something of their identity through their comics » (« Manuscript » 1179). Comics' materiality, in other words, carries, as Pascal Lefèvre, Thierry Groensteen, Jared Gardner, and others have remarked, a human signature. Materially, comics form bears the traces of authorial intention. For Jan Bactens and Hugo Frey, drawn lines « inevitably manifest themselves as agents and vehicles of storytelling... and behind or beyond each line emerges the source of any storytelling whatsoever: the narrator » (*The Graphic Novel* 165). In this way, not only is a story told, but a familiarity and sympathetic connection between artist and reader is created, a phenomenon described by Philippe Marion as inviting the « reader-spectator to achieve a coincidence of his gaze and the creative movement of the graphiateur » (Varnum 149).

Returning to the context of Holocaust discourse, the hybrid nature of comics as a mass- and mechanically- or digitally-reproduced form that is simultaneously public and intimate, distributed and personal, makes comics a medium especially suited to the work of testimony, a communicative speech act that must negotiate between the private and public sphere. As Hillary Chute remarks, the very structure of the comics form is outward

facing, as it is destined and created for a mass-consuming audience; at the same time, however, the form of comics balances this public vocation with dimensions of « intimacy, immediacy and crucial self-awareness » (« Interview »). In this way, comics are uniquely suited to address the demands of bearing witness. In *Mickey au camp de Gurs*, the titular, pop-cultural Walt Disney character, perhaps one of the twentieth-century's most emblematic figures of the industrial origin of most entertainment, becomes a vehicle for a personal, embodied tour of the camp in southern France. Public and private, the commercial and the intimate converge in the materiality of the text. Although it is a comic about Mickey, nothing about Rosenthal's text was informed by a commercial motive. Numerous features emphasize its private handmade quality, including the fact that there exists only one hardbound copy. Unlike in Disney animations, mistakes are scattered throughout this text. For instance, on pages 9 and 15, there are blotted out words, and it appears that page 11 was revised in order to add a missing sentence. As Spiegelman once stated about his own work, « [i]f I make a mistake, I want you to have my mistake » (Witek 131). Indeed, he did not shy away from errors; choosing, for instance, to draw his panels in a one-to-one ratio, rather than drawing larger panels as many artists do. For Spiegelman, this emphasis on the one-to-one ratio would be consistent with the one-to-one relationship between him and his father represented in the text. The intimacy portrayed in the pages could be mirrored by the humanness of such mistakes. In *Mickey au camp de Gurs*, unedited imperfections similarly linger as reminders for the reader of the unique, individual, almost auratic quality of the comic.

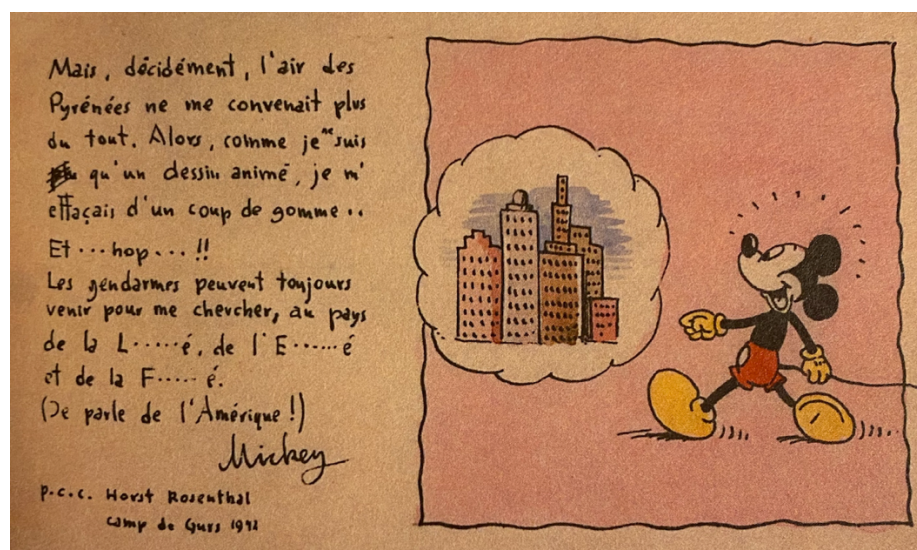


Fig. 3. *Mickey au camp de Gurs*, final panel.
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But errors are after all only incidental, and there is a more systematic way in which the comics form discloses an intimate world concealed from the all-seeing vantage of the photograph in *Mickey au camp de Gurs*. To use McCloud's classification-scheme of dimensionality, the drawn images of *Mickey au camp de Gurs* are flat and one-dimensional. They do not figure the « real » features of the people in the camp, but instead an imaginary version of what they could have been. The choice to memorialize others through caricature offers a way of telling a story efficiently and comprehensively, without distraction. It is spare in detail but immediately recognizable. The high oblique aerial photograph, by contrast, gestures towards a three-dimensionality of space, with leading lines that stretch backwards towards the Pyrénées and the border with Iberia. In a manner of speaking, the photograph is nothing *but* specific, clear, and real lines. But one of the disadvantages of the high oblique aerial photograph is what is dubbed « dead zones »: the areas in shadow, behind large buildings and other structures that are hidden by virtue of the angle. The cartoon, on the other hand, in its one-dimensionality, hides nothing. Paradoxically, by flattening everything into a single plane, the comic achieves a merging of the internal and external, inner and superficial. Everything that exists in the world of this text is fully externalized, pure surface. In this way, the photograph, which appears to show the most, is covered in blind spots, whereas the cartoons, in their playful simplicity, focus on reducing information to its most salient, foreground information.

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« A paradoxical and almost compulsive desire to narrate the single meaning behind the photograph defines our modern negotiation of the relationship between word and image », writes Megan Williams (*Through the Negative* 5). Charles Hatfield remarks, « [i]n fact comics [...] are always characterized by a plurality of messages » (*Alternative Comics* 36). Baetens brings both media together when he explains that « comics and photography are radically different in the sense that our basic vision of photography defines the medium in terms of 'single' images, whereas our basic vision of comics implies the notion of sequences of images » (« Abstraction » 103). There are, in effect, a number of significant differences – many of which have been discussed above – in how these photographs and comics are perceived; the former as an immutable, singular imprint of reality, the latter constantly reinvested with meaning through the accumulation of information. Given these seemingly different image regimes, how can one read the interaction of the photograph and the cartoon in *Mickey au camp de Gurs*?

If comics are already a system composed of « a complex combination of elements, parameters, and multiple procedures » (Groensteen 159), the presence of the photograph in the comic produces an excess of possible meanings. The aerial photograph, in relation to the drawn image, emerges as dominant (in interruption), subordinate (in quantity), and equivalent (in framing). This ambivalence *and* excess are

pivotal to the reconstruction of documentation in *Mickey au camp de Gurs*. Georges Didi-Huberman remarks, in reference to the four photographs from Auschwitz, that « we often ask too much or too little of the image », and in this case, by putting together two distinct image regimes, Rosenthal invites readers to ask *both* too little and too much from each (*Images* 32-33).

In *Mickey au camp de Gurs*, the photograph is subordinate in terms of number. It appears only a single time. This subordination can be interpreted in a few ways. On the one hand, it suggests that, while a plurality of drawn images is necessary to convey a message, a single photograph will suffice. On the other hand, its subordination may also suggest that it is simply not useful as the drawn images. In other words, the drawn image is desirable and the photograph less so.

The photograph, in its singularity, also interrupts the reading, in this way dominating – even if momentarily – the reception of the story. Interruption is key to Alister Wedderburn's interpretation of *Mickey au camp de Gurs*. He argues that the text functions as an aesthetic disruption into the established order of the camp, a space premised on hyperrationality. Although few scholars have paid attention to the role of the photograph in Rosenthal's comic, Wedderburn comments on it briefly, suggesting that the media contributes to this interruptive mode by « [presenting] an encounter [...] between an actual place and an imagined, fabulous subject with no material referent at all » (« Cartooning » 182).

It is important to note, however, that the frames containing the photograph and the drawn images are identical in size, shape, and location. In the comics medium, this gestures toward a transparency or equivalency of meaning, as the size of the panel determines how time and space are conceptualized by the reader (McCloud 94-117). Both the photograph and the drawn panels are located on the right side, the line defining each panel is identical, and the size of the panels are the same. The format, therefore, is strictly ordered, reflecting a « conventional » page layout (Peeters « Four Conceptions »). A page layout can be invisible in the sense that it remains constant throughout the narrative and is therefore almost imperceptible as a unit of meaning; this is achieved to great effect in Dave Gibbon and Alan Moore's *Watchmen* (1987) and in Jacques Tardi's *C'était la guerre des tranchées* (2010). In the case of *Mickey au camp de Gurs*, the consistency of the page layout suggests that the photograph and the drawn images belong to the same order of reality and that these two modes of representation are not as different as they may at first appear.

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The way *Mickey au camp de Gurs* mediates between forms of visibility and invisibility, fiction and memory, anticipates what resistance member and camp survivor Jorge Semprún would later observe about representing camp experience. In Rosenthal's

comic, Mickey's drawn figure cowers beside a photograph of the internment facility; in his memoir *L'écriture ou la vie* (1994), Semprún recalls a similarly disorienting encounter he had with mechanically-reproduced media. Upon first seeing a newsreel showing footage of the Buchenwald Concentration Camp, Semprún was struck by the great disparities between the spectacle of the filmed or photographed and the embodied memory of what he lived. He describes the enormous breach between the seen (the *vu*) and the experienced (the *vécu*) when confronted with the newsreel's documentary images:

Il en avait aussi [des images] de Buchenwald, que je reconnaissais. Ou plutôt : dont je savais de façon certaine qu'elles provenaient de Buchenwald, sans être certain de les reconnaître. Ou plutôt : sans avoir la certitude de les avoir vues moi-même. Je les avais vues, pourtant. Ou plutôt : je les avais vécues. C'était la différence entre le vu et le vécu qui était troublante. (*L'écriture* 259)

Strangely, then, while the documentary images aim to represent the reality of the camp *as it was*, they are, according to Semprún, inadequate. Any informed discussion of Holocaust testimony must take this fact into account. What, exactly, *is* a document representing events or experiences from the Holocaust? What can be counted as proof or attestation to the camps? What is that status of the document? Over the past seventy years, eyewitnesses and secondary witnesses alike have approached visual and graphic forms of evidence in myriad ways. Some have entirely eschewed newsreels, stock footage, or photography in favor of eyewitness interviews, as in the case of Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah* (1985) or the archival recordings at the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University. Others have opted to intersperse newsreels and other kinds of documentary footage with eyewitness testimony, for instance, in Marcel Ophüls's film *Le chagrin et la pitié* (1969). Finally, others, such as the compilers of the Buchenwald footage Semprún saw, have opted for unadorned documentary footage.

The impetus to show newsreels, stock footage, and photographs is tied to the perception that such forms of documentation are unmediated, and therefore serve as more adequate and direct means for reflecting the realities of World War II. In a similar vein, memoirists tend to employ spare rather than ornamental language, out of the concern that any emphasis on the aesthetic features of their texts would call attention to their mediatedness and, therefore, their distance from reality.⁹ In a context characterized by profound anxieties regarding the transmission of truth and fact, it is no wonder that any semblance of artifice is abhorred. Nevertheless, beginning in the 1980s, these sorts of convictions were challenged as artists and eyewitnesses devised new ways to preserve and transmit memory in innovative forms of expression, leading a number of important scholars to reassess the relationship between truth and representation in Holocaust discourse. But even after these developments, the conversation continues to be haunted by the fear of the seeming unreliability of subjective or otherwise mediated modes of

bearing witness. *Mickey au camp de Gurs*, as a work that structures testimony as an interplay between observed, documentary fact and the playful fictionality of a cartoon universe, offers a map for navigating the difficult questions at the center of Holocaust studies. Years before Semprún's mature work, and even before World War II was over, Rosenthal's comic anticipates how the French-Spanish writer would later conceive of the inadequacy of the *vu* without the *vécu*:

Il aurait fallu travailler le film au corps, dans matière filmique même, en arrêter parfois le défilement : fixer l'image pour en agrandir certains détails ; reprendre la projection au ralenti dans certain cas, en accélérer le rythme, à d'autres moments. Il aurait surtout fallu commenter les images, pour les déchiffrer, les inscrire non seulement dans un contexte historique, mais dans une continuité de sentiments et d'émotions... Il aurait fallu, en somme, traiter la réalité documentaire comme une matière de fiction. (*L'écriture* 262)

In other words, while the footage provides the *vu*, it is the aesthetic devices that enable the *vécu* of the experience. Rather than denying reality, artifice – as Semprún sees it – is necessary to communicate the subjective, personal aspect of the experience: « [s]eul l'artifice d'un récit maîtrisé parviendra à transmettre partiellement la vérité du témoignage » (16).

The counterpoint of photography and cartoon in *Mickey au camp de Gurs* can be read along similar lines. While comics are a « conspicuously artificial form » (Chute 17), Rosenthal calls attention to the way the interpretation of media is shaped through relation. The juxtaposition of two media of *Mickey au camp de Gurs* stages, more than an opposition or tension between photograph and comic, a basic interdependency between the two forms as modalities of documentation and creative memorialization. As I have argued in this article, and through a close reading of Rosenthal's singular text, it is only through establishing a relation between the photograph and the cartoons that the insufficiencies and possibilities, limits and conditions, rise to the surface, and, more than that, combine and recombine in unexpected ways, continually shifting the two poles of the problem, locating truth at one end, before displacing it the other side, and back again in a dynamic and circling interrelation. If all testimony aspires to represent, re-tell, or otherwise transmit the personal experience of the camps, the repurposing of Walt Disney's cartoon mouse confers a universality on memory – a universality that, under capitalism, commodities (and Mickey Mouse is certainly one) can uniquely sustain – while the drawings themselves intimate the personal, the subjective, the individual.

As I have explored, the photograph and drawn image, placed as they are in the text, suggest an ambivalence with regards to how they should be read. On the one hand, the lone photograph of *Mickey au camp de Gurs* sticks out as an anomaly, as if it possessed a kind of totemic significance. Seeing it alongside a children's cartoon, we might assume it to represent the single piece of factual evidence in the comic. On the

other hand, the particular placement and design of the framed images, be it the photograph or the drawn image, suggest that no such hierarchy exists in this work, that, in other words, the two media belong to the same order of representation. And to the extent that they correspond to the same register, the meaning of the photograph and the drawn images can be said to lie precisely in the rapport or interplay that is created through their juxtaposition. That is to say, the photograph and the drawn image complete one another. Beyond the suggestion that « fictional » representations may be able to adequately capture the emotion, feeling, or social experience of the camps where documents fail, the placement of the photograph and the drawn image suggests not a hierarchy of meaning in documents – according to which one would be better or more adequate than the other – but rather, that establishing a relation between the documentary impulse and the cartoon’s testimonial impulse, where the two inform, build upon, and contribute meaning to one another, is perhaps the best way to transmit and record the experiences from the camps. The breach between the *vu* and *vécu*, then, can be managed, not by denying or affirming either, but by bringing them into conversation, showing the places where they touch and the places where they disconnect.

In his writings on the four photographs from Auschwitz, Georges Didi-Huberman questions the treatment of images as either mere appearance or absolute evidence of some incontrovertible, almost Platonic truth. Relegating images to « the sphere of *simulacrum* [excludes] them from the historical field »; but relegating images to « the sphere of the *document* [severs] them from their phenomenology, from their specificity, and from their very substance » (*Images* 33). In its mixture of media, *Mickey au camp de Gurs*, by contrast, models a way of reimagining images as a way of both potentiating the document and verifying the fictional, thereby « putting the multiple in motion » (*Images* 120).

Notes

1. But see Gordon J. Horwitz’s *In the Shadow of Death: Living Outside the Gates of Mauthausen* for an account of local knowledge of these rural sites. Although the majority of internment, concentration, and extermination camps were established away from major cities, they were not necessarily hidden in the sense that the general population was aware of their existence and at times interacted with the daily operations of the camp.
2. Rosenthal is the author of three small comic booklets: *Mickey au camp de Gurs*, *La journée d’un hébergé: camp de Gurs*, and *Petit guide à travers le camp de Gurs*. The first two were donated to the Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris by a survivor of Gurs, Rabbi Léo Ansbacher. The third is at the archives of the École Polytechnique Fédérale (ETH) in Zürich, Switzerland, donated by Elsbeth Kasser, a Swiss nurse who lived in the Gurs internment camp from 1940–1943, where she not only provided medical care for prisoners, but also contributed to the artistic activity in the camp.

3. See Philip Smith, « 'Un livre pour enfants': *Mickey au camp de Gurs* as Picture Book » and Joël Kotek and Didier Pasamonik, *Mickey à Gurs: Les carnets de dessin de Horst Rosenthal*.
4. As Pnina Rosenberg argues, the verbal elements of *Mickey* also make visible the absurdist administrative apparatus of the camp. For instance, by identifying the date as « l'an II de la révolution nationale », Rosenthal places in direct contrast Pétain's regime and the French Revolution of 1789 (Rosenberg 276).
5. It is important to note that towards the end of World War II and in the few years immediately after the liberation of the camps, eyewitness testimonies were recorded, but typically for purely evidentiary purpose. Numerous centers were established with the explicit mission of documenting eyewitness experience of the Holocaust, such as the *Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine* (CDJC) in France or *The Central Jewish Historical Commission* (CZKH) in Poland, among many others. The number of testimonies recorded during this period is astonishing – approximately 18,000 testimonies and 8,000 questionnaires were collected. At a minimum, contributors numbered in the tens of thousands. By the early 1950s, the practice of interviewing witnesses virtually disappeared. For more, see Laura Jockusch, *Collect and Record!: Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe*; Boaz Cohen « The Children's Voice: Postwar Collection of Testimonies from Child Survivors of the Holocaust »; and Beate Müller, « Translating Trauma: David Boder's 1946 Interviews with Holocaust Survivors ».
6. Although there is a tendency to perceive the mixing of photography and comics as a new phenomenon, Nancy Pedri notes, quoting Thierry Smolderen, that since the birth of comics in the 1880s, photography « offered to cartoonists an almost unlimited source of new models that could be stylized, deformed, or redirected in empirical and intuitive manners to represent action and movement » (Pedri 3).
7. For more see Marianne Hirsch, « Family Pictures: Maus, Mourning, and Post-Memory ».
8. As Ofra Amihay points out, other graphic novels make reference to widely circulated photographs and do so by relying « on the very iconicity of the photograph and its status as a collective *memento mori* » (Amihay 174).
9. James E. Young suggests that the position in which the eyewitness testifying finds him or herself is a double bind, whereby the desire to relate their experience requires recourse to literary strategies, and these literary strategies are what risk undermining the very truth that the testimony aims to impart. By these criteria, the truth can only emerge in accounts that are unmediated, which is, needless to say, an impossibility. Young writes: « The possibility that, once committed to paper, a witness' testimony could be perceived as a fabrication of reality and not the trace of it he had intended, would seem to mock a witness's very *raison d'être*. And to compound the dilemma, the more insistently a survivor-scribe attempts to establish the 'lost link' between his text and his experiences in the text, the more he inadvertently

emphasizes his role as maker of the text, which ironically—and more perversely still— further undermines the sense of unmediated fact the writer had attempted to establish » (Young 25)

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