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INHERITED WOUNDS AND ECHOES OF SURVIVAL: METAPHORS OF INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA AND POST-MEMORY IN *I WAS A CHILD OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS* AND *MENDEL'S DAUGHTER*

Surya Raju[1] & Dr. Shobana K[2]

[1]Research Scholar, Department of English & Humanities, Amrita School of Arts, Humanities and Commerce, Coimbatore, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, India.
Email id: suryaraju97@gmail.com, r_surya@cb.students.amrita.edu, Ph: 8592887694

[2]Assistant Professor, Department of English & Humanities, Amrita School of Arts, Humanities and Commerce, Coimbatore, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, India. Email id: k_shobana@cb.amrita.edu.

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Abstract

A metaphor compares two entities so that profound links are made between objects, concepts, or people. Metaphors are cognitive mechanisms of human thought, conduits for complex meanings, obscure historical elements, and traditions handed down from generation to generation. Metaphors sustained through mnemonic processes, channel personal, historical, and cultural knowledge. Memory metaphors include a wide range of metaphors in collective memory that exist beyond temporal and generational boundaries. To represent intergenerational trauma and post-memory, this paper examines metaphors in Bernice Eisenstein's *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors* and Martin Lemelman's *Mendel's Daughter*. It analyses how both graphic novels represent the enduring effects of the Holocaust across generations through the use of trauma theory, including Marianne Hirsch's post-memory concept and Cathy Caruth's ideas of traumatic memory. Using visual and narrative metaphors of testimony, addiction, fragmentation, cultural symbols, and shadows, Eisenstein and Lemelman explain the difficulties of the second generation with inherited trauma. Eisenstein emphasizes the consuming nature of inherited trauma with abstract imagery, reflecting the internalized impact of her parents' suffering. At the same time, Lemelman's documentary style focuses on testimony and cultural memory, portraying trauma transmission as responsibility and preservation. This parallel analysis illustrates the range of post-memory experiences and expressions and shows graphic novels as a medium especially well-suited for remembering, losing, and being. Each of these works helps us to understand trauma transmission and embodiment across generations.

INTRODUCTION

The Holocaust, one of the most tragic experiences of modern human society, has had a direct and immediate impact not only on the shocked generation but also on the following ones. In the children of the survivors, the traumatic situation is not only inherited but also passed down orally, through the stories and memories of the Holocaust. This transmittal of trauma has been explored in depth using the theory of post-memory by Marianne Hirsch who means how the second generation comes with the burdens of memories and trauma but does not possess the experience. Both Bernice Eisenstein and Martin Lemelman explore this phenomenon through the graphic novel medium in *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors* (2006) and *Mendel's Daughter* (2006) and use the graphic novel's metaphoric visual and narrative potential to represent the difficult legacy

of intergenerational trauma. The works in this paper show how the children of Holocaust survivors try to reconcile their own identities with the weight of their parents' pasts, and with the lingering impact of trauma that remains a part of their lives. According to Narayanan, "The problems faced by the second generation are that they never have a first-hand experience of the tortures of the Shoah, but even then, they face the aftereffects, unable to find an absolute solution for this" (1).

The graphic novel format is particularly suited to the representation of trauma and memory, allowing for a fusion of text and imagery that allows for communication of the complexity of these things in a visceral and affective way. Graphic novels can express the fractured, non-linear nature of memory, and offer a powerful way to represent experiences that are difficult to convey textually. Eisenstein and Lemelman use this medium to show how Holocaust trauma persists in the second generation, through personal narrative and historical reflection. The authors use juxtaposition of image and text to show how the past is not a discrete entity that is encapsulated in history, but rather a continuous presence in the present, and sometimes in ways that are hard to say (8).

In her memoir *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors*, Eisenstein combines memoir and graphic novel to tell her story of being the daughter of Holocaust survivors. She looks at how her parents' unspoken trauma shaped her own experience of the world and herself. Eisenstein could also serve as a graphic novel format that can represent the surreal, fragmented quality of post-memory, the way the echoes of the suffering of her parents are felt intensely personal and hauntingly collective. Vivid visual metaphors turn Eisenstein's desperate effort to understand a past she never lived, but which still plays a central role in defining her identity, into a spectacle.

Lemelman's story in *Mendel's Daughter* is

similar to this, in that it tells his mother, a Holocaust survivor, the story as she remembers it and the story as her son remembers it. Lemelman's graphic novel includes family photographs, testimonials, and historical references to trace his mother's journey from prewar Poland to the United States. Lemelman uses these materials to keep his mother's memories and communicate the emotional and psychological effects of the Holocaust to survivors and their descendants. The work demonstrates how, in the case of Holocaust testimony, storytelling becomes a means of facing and keeping trauma.

Eisenstein and Lemelman use metaphor to depict the intricacies of the Holocaust's inherited trauma through symbol, imagery, and narrative devices to expose the invisible psychological wounds of the Holocaust. These metaphors help readers understand the emotional and psychological burden on the children of survivors and the transgenerational resonance of the Holocaust. The primary research question of this paper is: What metaphor and visual narrative do Eisenstein and Lemelman use to express the inherited trauma and post-memory of the

Holocaust? This inquiry investigates how these graphic novels address the lasting legacies of trauma and memory and how narrative forms can be uniquely adapted to represent such experiences.

This paper will examine how both *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors* and *Mendel's Daughter* represent the inheritance of trauma through visual and narrative means, by examining shared and divergent metaphors. Drawing on trauma theory, especially Hirsch's idea of post-memory and Caruth's work on trauma and memory, the discussion will analyze how these graphic novels represent the transmission of trauma and its effects on identity. In the end, this analysis will show that graphic novels, as a form of representation, have the potential to be an incredibly effective medium for presenting the long-lasting effects of historical trauma to the second generation, both personally

and collectively. Eisenstein and Lemelman each bring their approaches to this ongoing dialogue between memory, loss, and identity in the children of Holocaust survivors.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Until very recently, Holocaust studies have generally centered on the first-hand experiences of survivors and their immediate psychological, social, and cultural consequences. Authors like Primo Levi (1959) and Elie Wiesel (1960) also founded the study of survivor experience in foundational works that revealed the emotional and existential scars of those who lived through the Holocaust. This exploration was followed up by subsequent literature in the area, such as Lawrence Langers *Holocaust Testimonies* (1991) or Dori Laubs work on survivor testimonies (1992) which listed survivor narratives and found patterns of silence, guilt and resilience. Subsequent psychological studies, including Judith Herman (1992) and Robert Jay Lifton (1967) expanded on the effect of trauma on the survivors of atrocities (9-12). Together, these studies highlight the singular nature of Holocaust trauma by its effects on identity, memory, and worldview. Nevertheless, these studies offer a very solid foundation on how survivors perceive trauma themselves. Still, few of these studies expand their scope to include how this trauma might affect subsequent generations.

Some research on intergenerational trauma exists in a broader sense, but empirical research on the psychological or social impacts of the trauma experienced by the parents of Holocaust survivors on their children is remarkably rare. The lives, problems, and distinct identities of the Second Generation (of survivors) have remained a relatively neglected topic in the academic literature, despite the recent decades of increasing interest in intergenerational trauma in many contexts. This review investigates the situation in the study of the Holocaust and identifies possible gaps, namely, the lack of significant research on how the trauma

is passed on, reinterpreted, or otherwise revealed in the descendants of survivors.

The limited scholarship available on second-generation Holocaust survivors suggests several potential avenues for research, particularly concerning the psychological and social ramifications of their inherited trauma. Although some studies, such as the work by Israeli and Palgi (2013) and Kellerman (2001), provide initial evidence regarding the potential development of anxiety, guilt, or identity issues among the children of Holocaust survivors (15-16), they are scarce and do not provide a holistic perspective on the experience of the second generation. Additionally, the lack of qualitative studies exploring how second-generation survivors articulate and interpret their inherited memories leaves open questions about how these individuals perceive and process their parents' trauma. Therefore, this paper will investigate how second-generation survivors construct narratives around their parents' experiences, using tools such as metaphor and storytelling to cope with trauma that

is not their own but deeply influential. The study also examines how the Second Generation perceives its identity in the context of Holocaust history, in the face of growing historical distance from the event itself.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Metaphors of Inherited Trauma in *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors*

In *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors*, Bernice Eisenstein uses metaphor to explore the complicated and sometimes distressing legacy of trauma she inherited from her parents. As a narrator and illustrator, Eisenstein employs strong metaphors that enable the reader to comprehend the elusive and haunting nature of intergenerational trauma, particularly through the repetitive themes of addiction, fragmentation of identity, and cultural symbolism. These metaphors help to explain the burden of inherited trauma, the emotional and psychic burden that cannot be adequately articulated in

literal metaphors (13).

a. Addiction as a Metaphor for Trauma

The most salient of Eisenstein's metaphors is addiction. But she refers to herself as addicted to the Holocaust and the memory of her parents, equating her obsession with the suffering of her family to an obsessive, destructive habit. The second-generation survivor is neither addicted to the Holocaust events and narratives, but to the identity she develops in her. By saying, "I was hooked. On their pain. On their memories. On the extraordinary fact of their survival. It was my drug. It coursed through my veins as though it were my own" (2), Eisenstein symbolizes the inescapable presence of the past in her psyche and how children of survivors may feel the need to learn, to be, and even consume the traumas of their parents, even though it may have an awful effect on their psyche.

With this metaphor, Eisenstein reveals the irony of inherited trauma, which she believes she is bound to the Holocaust not through the experience but through the feeling of duty and intellectual interest as though her identity were inseparably connected to the pain of her parents. This is an addiction to inherited trauma which implies a kind of dependency on the pain that constitutes her family history, both its allure and devastating nature in her quest to understand the past. In examining this addiction, Eisenstein expresses the devouring, and sometimes self-destructive quality of struggling with a history of trauma which cannot be entirely understood.

b. Fragmented Imagery as Memory

Eisenstein's use of fragmented and surreal imagery corresponds to the fractured nature of memory, especially post-memory, the inherited, second-hand memory of trauma. For example, her work is often oneiric, made up of disconnected images and motifs to which there is no single narrative but whose emotional tenor evokes her parents' experience. It's no accident that trauma is remembered in this fragmented way, not as a smooth narrative

but in flashes of intense emotion, moments of fear, and fragments of loss. These visual fragments are a metaphor for trauma that resists complete narration or understanding, these memory fragments are indecipherable. Eisenstein reenacts the sensations of rupture and disorientation, of trauma as that which is not known (not known in the first instance, and then returns to haunt the survivor) in fragmented illustrations (2). By expressing her family history as broken, incomplete images and collages, she allows the reader to see the psychologically broken, incomplete past. Eisenstein's efforts to construct an identity that is shaped by experiences that she cannot understand, and the way that trauma disrupts and defines the self, these visual fractures are parallel.

c. Cultural Symbols and Jewish Identity

Eisenstein's use of Jewish cultural symbols is also filled with metaphors for her connection to the Holocaust and her family's identity. Her nucleation of the Deh meaning her narrative is interwoven with the Star of David, Hebrew lettering, and historical figures are integrated into her meaning creating a tapestry of symbols that connect her to her heritage. Her family's trauma is grounded in the cultural significance of these symbols: these are symbols that represent the cultural significance of her family's trauma, and her inherited suffering in a shared history and a larger communal identity. Eisenstein utilizes these cultural icons to identify the loaded and triumphant role of her Jewish identity as if her identity exists in overlapping synecdoche with her people's trauma and its resistance.

Eisenstein uses these symbols to metaphorically portray the painful history of her family that forms her identity. She says, "My parents' stories were not just theirs. They became mine, like heirlooms passed down, not to be displayed but to be carried, always" (2). The two were inextricably linked, individual memory and collective experience, and children of Holocaust survivors often walk a thin line between their memories as personal and

cultural inheritance, between 'theirs' and 'ours'. She conveys that cultural identity becomes a vessel for both pride and sorrow, bonding her to a shared, but private history through Jewish signs.

d. Surrealism and the Displacement of Reality

As a metaphor for the disorienting, and often distorted reality of post-memory, Eisenstein's surreal, at times exaggerated, illustrations are a perfect fit. She reflects on how inherited trauma distorts one's perception of the world so much as to addict their reality to these portrayals and individual perceptions, distorting perspectives and mystifying scenes that come close to becoming fantastical. "In the middle of a mundane day, the air would crack, and I would see

their past spilling into my present," she says (2). But it is in its surrealism that this becomes a visual metaphor for the displacement experienced by children of survivors, who live in a world that is real and haunted at once by the phantoms of an elsewhere and a different time. From these images, Eisenstein brings the experience of living in the shadow of trauma to us; of living simultaneously in the present and displaced to a past of horrors.

Thus, surrealism serves as a visual metaphor for the 'otherness' of the psychic experience of many second-generation survivors. It depicts how relatively ungrounded one can feel about a sense of self and reality when one has inherited trauma, making a visual language of the experience of feeling disconnected from one's own life amidst the weight of another person's memories. By using these metaphors, Eisenstein creates a narrative that is not linear and tells a story that is more emotional than it is about intergenerational trauma. The metaphors of addiction, fragmentation, cultural symbolism, and surrealism help her to represent the depth and persistence of what persists in trauma that extends across generations. By doing this, Eisenstein accounts a tactful representation of how memory, loss, and identification fuse for kids of Holocaust survivors, and inside

and out how a past both determines and imparts its shadow to the present may be grasped.

2. Metaphors of Post memory in *Mendel's Daughter*:

Martin Lemelman uses memory and metaphor to explore the inherited trauma passed down by his mother, who was a Holocaust survivor, in Mendel's Daughter. Lemelman uses visual metaphors to portray intergenerational trauma through the testimony of his mother, in which he frames memory as an individual and communal experience. By intertwining illustrations, family photographs, and storytelling, Lemelman presents a narrative that vividly represents the emotional and psychological impact of the Holocaust on both his mother and himself.

The metaphors convey the profound sadness, strength, and identity crisis that pervade the lives of those who survived the Holocaust and their offspring.

a. Testimonial Format as a Vessel for Memory

The testimonial format in *Mendel's Daughter* serves as a main metaphor of memory as a legacy that is passed down by the mother to the son. Lemelman builds his narrative around the audio-taped interviews with his mother, Gusta, who narrates to him her life experience during the Holocaust. The oral storytelling tradition is a metaphor of the intergenerational

delivery of the memory that centers on the forceful and delicate manner in which the trauma is conveyed between the heir and the survivor. By grounding his narrative in the verbatim narrative of his mothers, Lemelman is symbolically demonstrating the abundance and naturalness of inherited trauma by making it seem that he is not merely writing her story but internalizing it as a part of himself.

The testimonial format also highlights the importance of remembering, when Lemelman acknowledges that the memories of his mother are recollections that include memories that are on the verge of fading. The written form is a

preservation and loss, in that it is the memory which will in her death be silent, but which will be preserved in him. This testimonial process may be related to the notion of post-memory introduced by Marianne Hirsch according to which the second generation of people internalizes and redefines the memories of the traumas that were not experienced by them but shape their identities (3).

b. Photographs as Metaphors for Memory Artifacts

In Mendel, Lemelman has used family photographs as metaphors to the artifacts of memory to give the story a sense of place in solid relics of the past. Photographs are tangible links to relatives, locations and times that could otherwise be forgotten. They form a connection 11

between generations, and Lemelman can visually and emotionally relate to what his mother went through. As Hirsch points out, "Photographs, like the memories they trigger, are fragmentary and incomplete, and they require a narrative to fill in the gaps of what is left unsaid" (3). Consequently, the images in this memoir represent the disjointed, sometimes dim quality of memory, and at the same time, they anchor Gusta in visual reality, giving her stories a sense of credibility and seriousness.

Photographs function as mnemonic devices that enable Gusta to recall specific events or individuals, symbolizing how memory can be both piecemeal and collective. For the son, the photographs become a metaphor for his inherited memories, experiences that he has not lived but that define his identity. Within the theory of trauma, these photos symbolize the trauma witnessing process using visual stimuli, placing the reader in the visceral reality of the past of Lemelman mother. Incorporating these artifacts into the depicted narrative, Lemelman erases the distinction between history and memory, symbolizing how the past will always be with

him in his life and psyche.

c. Landscape as a Metaphor for

Emotional Geography

The landscapes Lemelman illustrates in *Mendel's Daughter*, from the desolate ghettos to war-torn villages, function as metaphors for the psychological and emotional terrain of trauma.

They bear the marks of history and trauma, becoming silent witnesses to events that have

shaped individual and collective memory (3). The oppressive and harsh environments are the psychological reflection of the experiences of Gusta and the representation of the process of suffering, surviving, and displacement. Lemelman's depiction of these wartime landscapes mirrors the emotional landscape his mother must navigate as she recounts her memories, transforming places into symbols of loss, fear, and resilience.

The shifting landscapes are symbolic of the instability and displacement that characterize the life of Gusta in the Holocaust. As she moves from place to place, Lemelman's illustrations of Bleak forests, crumbling buildings, and desolate streets evoke the traumatic displacement that his mother endured, and that subtly influences his sense of self. These sceneries are not only historical locations, but also the emotional richness of Gusta trauma and emotional geography that her son has to walk through as he receives her memories.

d. The Interplay of Shadows and Darkness as Metaphors for Trauma

Lemelman often employs shadow and darkness in his plans to show the pervasiveness of

trauma that is always present and always present in the memories of his mother. The shadows have the tendency to darken critical scenes as though the trauma is a malevolent spirit that cannot be cast out entirely. This darkness is the visual summary of this concept of post-memory in which the son has no experience of the trauma his mother endured but lives in the shade of it. She says, "In the darkness, I found myself unraveling, thread by thread until I understood my own tapestry" (4). Darkness and shadow in Gesta are complete in the

narratives when they are applied as metaphor of the painful experience of trauma which is inevitable, and what Lemelman comes to learn of his own identity.

The shadows and darkness also produce an effect of obscurity and veiling which is symbolically associated with inexplicability of the trauma and memory that the survivors are not always able to clarify. The shadows indicate the existence of a wall that Lemelman is unable to completely enter, just as children of survivors tend to view the experience of their parents as both visible and obscure. This visual metaphor highlights how hard it is to understand trauma indirectly and still have a significant impact on it.

e. The Use of Sepia Tones as a Nostalgic Yet Painful Reminder of the Past

The use of muted, sepia palette in the drawing of Mendel Daughter create a feeling of nostalgia mixed with melancholy, as the way memory tends to crystallize into a blurred yet heartfelt picture of the past. The sepia palette casts the historical era that Gusta has gone through and represents the disappearing but uneased nature of inherited memories. These tones cause the graphic novel to appear as an archive, implying that these memoirs are not only cherished but also forgotten with the course of years, and it is also the way survivors and their descendants share traumatic memories.

The sepia tones thus function as a metaphor for the process of post-memory, wherein memories are not entirely lucid but remain salient. Each image, as Berger insists, is a mode of perception. Sepia tones remind us that we are seeing not just the subject, but time itself (5). The addition of this old-fashioned effect to his drawings gives Lemelman a visual mood that is both personal and historical at the same time: a reverie. This stylistic decision reminds readers that memory, particularly traumatic memory, persists in the minds of those who inherit it, altering their emotional landscape even as the events themselves become temporally distant.

Through these visual and narrative

metaphors, *Mendel's Daughter* critically examines the experience of intergenerational trauma. The approach used by Lemelman in his narration makes the experiences of his mother come alive, as he uses the medium of graphic novels to give a depth to the immaterial aspects of trauma. The testimonial memory, family photographs, haunting landscapes, shadows, and sepia tones metaphors allow Lemelman to portray the long- term consequences of Holocaust trauma in a language that goes beyond language. In doing so, he constructs a narrative that addresses the complexities of identity, memory, and resilience among the descendants of Holocaust survivors, illustrating how trauma persists in those who inherit the narratives of survival and loss.

Both authors employ metaphor as a critical device to represent inherited trauma and post-memory. Although their methods have thematic similarities, including the use of cultural symbols, discontinuous imagery, and darkness as a manifestation of trauma, they differ in how they frame the relationships to memory and identity. These variations explain the distinct patterns of how children of Holocaust survivors feel and express inherited trauma, which are indicative of the personal and family-specific aspects of each author and their relationship to the Holocaust. In this parallel analysis, we explore the ways that each work deploys shared and divergent metaphors to portray the messy relationship between trauma and memory.

3. Parallel Analysis: Shared and Divergent Metaphors

a. Addiction vs. Testimony: Approaches to Trauma Transmission

I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors uses the Holocaust and her parents' traumatic past as one of the central metaphors that Eisenstein uses to describe her almost obsessive obsession with the Holocaust. Her story of addiction represents the seductive and destructive lure of trying to understand and incorporate her parents' suffering and her inherited trauma. This means she and her parents' trauma

memories have a huge impact on her sense of self, and being around trauma is wearing you out.

On the other hand, *Mendel's Daughter* presents the transmission of trauma as a metaphor for testimony. Lemelman's mother tells her life story in the form of a direct, oral narrative, as a gift and as a burden to her son. The testimony format itself becomes a metaphor for the transfer of memory as a duty, of the son as a keeper of his mother's experience as opposed to a compulsive seeker of the memory. Trauma is here a shared narrative rather than an all-consuming compulsion, an inheritance for which Lemelman receives respect and a sense of duty.

While Eisenstein's addiction suggests a personal, almost visceral entanglement with her parents' trauma, Lemelman's testimonial approach conveys a sense of distance; he is a witness to his mother's trauma, not a direct participant. This difference is indicative of the differences in how children of Holocaust survivors can internalize trauma as something they cannot control or something they must preserve.

b. Fragmented Imagery and Family Photographs: Reconstructing the Past

Both works utilize fragmented imagery to express the incompleteness and elusiveness of memory. The disjointed illustrations in *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors* resonate with the disjointedness of post-memory. Her photographs, which can be surreal and loosely related, are reminiscent of the disjointedness of inherited trauma. They create an impressionistic landscape where the memory is constructed of bits of stories, cultural symbols, and emotions that suggest that the past could only be understood as fragmented, sometimes conflicting, pieces of the past.

The use of fragmented imagery in *Mendel's Daughter* also occurs, but this is done by using family photographs as the visual anchors. These photos serve as metaphors for the material but fragile remnants of the past, as memories as a material thing that intersects generations.

As Barthes points out, "The Photograph does not call up the past (nothing Proustian in a photograph). The effect it produces upon me is not to restore what has been abolished (by time, by distance) but to attest that what I see has indeed existed" (6). In

comparison to the dreamlike fragments of Eisenstein, the photographs by Lemelman give his narrative a documentary touch, as the memories of his mother are placed in the historical reality and the trauma is depicted as something that can be touched, stored in photographs.

This difference is indicative of the relationship that each writer has with the Holocaust, where Eisenstein is connected to it through abstraction, struggling with intangible memories, and Lemelman through materiality, linking it to the lived experiences of his mother. The fragmentation of imagery in both works highlights the discontinuity of post-memory, but

unlike the abstract works of Eisenstein, which reveal the elusiveness of trauma, the photographs of Lemelman suggest the continuity and maintenance of memory.

c. Cultural Symbols and Identity: The Star of David and Jewish Heritage

Eisenstein and Lemelman apply the symbols of Jewish culture extensively to convey the significance of their inherited trauma. Star of David and Yiddish phrases fill Eisenstein's work, symbolism which helps to remind us of her closeness to Jewish heritage. These are metaphoric symbols of collective memory of Jewish suffering and resilience that her identity is closely linked to her cultural background. These symbols, ubiquitous in her life, indicate her sense of cultural responsibility and her pride, as well as the weight of Jewish memory that defines her.

Mendel's Daughter also uses Jewish cultural symbols, but these are mostly hidden in the story of Lemelman's mother. As metaphors for Gusta's identity, these symbols, as Yiddish expressions, religious practices, and visual representations of Jewish life, call to mind the world she has brought from pre-war Poland to America.

These symbols are important to Lemelman because they are part of his mother's narrative and because they are links to a heritage that he did not experience directly, but which he feels deeply connected to through her.

Both authors use cultural symbols to assert their Jewish identity, but Eisenstein's is more abstract and introspective, as a means to explore heritage, while Lemelman's symbols are more directly connected to his mother's memories, and so emphasize the role of familial transmission in defining identity. The difference between the two indicates that while Eisenstein's connection to trauma is more internalized, Lemelman's is more about his mother's lived history.

d. Darkness and Shadow as Persistent Trauma

In both graphic novels, darkness and shadow are used as metaphors for the ongoing existence of trauma. It works also as a "refuge of memory, where dreams gather and linger" (7). *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors* uses shadow and darkness to demonstrate how trauma is haunting and always present. Her illustrations often show shadowy figures or darkened scenes, signifying as if the specter of the Holocaust never left her, and never quite does. In the darkness, their experience of trauma becomes a dark pervasive influence cast on her attempts to construct her own identity.

Shadow is used like *Mendel's Daughter* as a metaphor for the inevitable weight of memory. The drawings of Lemelman are shaded landscapes and darkened figures: the desolation of his mother memories and the way his past turns into his future. This is a darkness not only haunting, but protective, too, and to that end it gives a reverence to the story of Gusta, which it encloses. The shadows of Lemelman are the subdued moans in their air, as he is conscious of the memories of his mother. Both authors employ darkness as a signifier of trauma; the shadows of Eisenstein are disturbing, intimate and suffocating, and the shadows of Lemelman are sober and respectful. Eisenstein's grappling with

trauma as a disturbing force, versus trauma as a space of mourning and remembrance, as Lemelman sees it, is contrasted in this.

e. Sepia Tones and Color Schemes: Nostalgia and Emotional Connection

For Lemelman's narrative, *Mendel's Daughter* uses sepia tones and muted colors to lend the work an archival feel, a sense of nostalgia, and a connection to the historical context Lemelman's dual role as both witness and custodian of his mother's memories is symbolized in the sepia tones, which create a sense of emotional distance and a sense of the passage of time. The muted palette suggests that these memories are not only fading, but they are also worth saving, as historical documentation is.

On the other hand, Eisenstein has applied a numerous color palette in *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors* as she intended to highlight some of the feelings or moments of her narration. The color she applies to each scene varies based on the mood of the particular scene, implying that there is a shifting degree of her attachment to the trauma of her parents. The color variety here represents her ongoing, active engagement with trauma, the memories and feelings of which come out bright, while others stay muffled.

For Lemelman, it's a historical legacy to be preserved with reverence; for Eisenstein, it's a fluctuating, often visceral experience that affects her day-to-day. Both Eisenstein and Lemelman use shared metaphors to describe the difficult nature of trauma and memory, and yet bring different points of view to the issue of inherited trauma. Eisenstein's metaphors show a deeply personal, internalized connection to trauma, their struggle to reconcile her identity with her parents' traumatic legacy. On the contrary, Lemelman's metaphors are more externalized, reverent, and represent trauma as a historical narrative to which he is heir through his mother's testimony. Together, these authors offer complementary perspectives on the ways

that intergenerational trauma manifests, and in what ways survivors' memories shape the lives of their descendants.

Thus, the memoirs offer a unique perspective to study intergenerational trauma and post-memory as they relate to the Holocaust in the Second Generation. While they are in tone and style different, they show how trauma informs identities and perceptions. Eisenstein and Lemelman explores the multilayered nature of inherited trauma by using visual and narrative metaphors of addiction, testimony, fragmentation, shadows, and cultural symbols to investigate how children of survivors navigate personal and collective memory.

Eisenstein's introspective approach to the Holocaust reflects her internal struggle with her 'addiction' to the trauma of her parents' Holocaust, which she must face but which has a destructive effect on her mental and emotional well-being. Her fragmented imagery is surreal, and her imagery captures memory's elusive and fractured nature, trauma as an overwhelming force that distorts identity and personal history. Her use of Jewish heritage symbols suggests that she links her identity to her parents' history and, consequently, Holocaust trauma is a significant part of her identity, and how the post-memory can affect her emotionally and psychologically.

In contrast, Lemelman's *Mendel's Daughter* is based on testimony and reverence, his mother's story told in her words, and himself as a custodian of the trauma. He maintains the history of his mother in an archival manner, with family photographs, sepia tones, and a documentary narrative, but depicts trauma as a legacy to protect. The testimonial form used by Lemelman implies that she regards trauma as something to observe and respect but not to internalize. By focusing on physical artifacts and cultural symbols, his mother's past becomes part of his

heritage and a historical reality not his own, and his post-memory is one of reverence for memory without the consumption of one's identity.

CONCLUSION

These works are analyzed in parallel and the diversity of experiences of the children of Holocaust survivors is revealed, as post-memory takes on very personal forms that are a product of family dynamics, cultural context, and personal psychology. Eisenstein's metaphors emphasize the powerful and sometimes painful effect of inherited trauma; Lemelman emphasizes the importance of bearing witness and preserving history. Together, both approaches help to expand understanding of intergenerational trauma, and how the second generation is tasked with remembering and struggling to create identity outside of trauma's shadow.

In both works, the graphic novel medium is crucial to the representation of trauma. Eisenstein and Lemelman achieve this by developing a multilayered text-and-image relationship in which the text and images are presented as fragments that depict the fragmented, and sometimes contradictory, nature of trauma and memory (14). The medium itself is a metaphor; words are supplemented by illustrations, the way post-memory fills in the silences of trauma survivors. Both authors synthesize visual and textual elements, allowing the often ineffable experience of inheriting trauma to be evoked, and to be understood not only on a sensory level but an emotional one.

In the end, both *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors* and *Mendel's Daughter* contribute to the broader body of trauma literature by offering very intimate and nuanced depictions of inheriting the suffering and survival legacy. They argue that trauma is not the survivor's alone, but is passed down in families and involves memory, identity, and cultural inheritance. These works

show that post-memory is not an inert passivization of the past, but an active, ongoing process of working through the past in ways that are subtle and profound. With this, they are asking us to think about how trauma feels and continues to exist in generations, and why storytelling, memory, and metaphor are so important to bring the past into the present. With their different approaches, Eisenstein and Lemelman demonstrate that bearing witness to inherited trauma is a powerful act of remembrance, resilience, and identity formation.

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