

Facets of Multidirectional Memory in Miriam Katin's *Letting It Go*

Keywords: graphic memoir, memory, multidirectional memory, trauma, ethics

Abstract: This paper analyzes Miriam Katin's graphic memoir *Letting It Go* by using the concept of multidirectional memory as coined by Michael Rothberg, arguing that this is a narration that uncovers multiple perspectives on a traumatic event, with an ethical purpose in mind. The focus is on the novel way in which this is achieved given the specific modes of graphic narration. I analyze the literary modes behind the narrative in order to show the overlap of the narrator *I*, narrated *I*, and protagonist, and I unveil the graphic modes of the narrative as powerful tools that shape perspective and yield subjectivity.

Miriam Katin's *Letting It Go* is a graphic memoir dealing with the traumatic memories of the Holocaust, one of the themes of autobiographical graphic narratives. As autobiography, the narrative can be questioned for what is real and what is imagined in the context of the freedom offered by the modes of visual memory-making, ranging from cartooning to graphic realism to reproduced photography. As a Holocaust memoir, it presents a narration that represents both collective and personal trauma, but stands out through a sense of the private as the trauma is shaped through family interaction highlighting the intergenerational transmission of trauma. Given the memoir's incursion into the trauma of the Holocaust and the deeply personal motivation behind the main character's attempt to come to terms with her identity and overcome a historical animosity against Berlin, I argue that Miriam Katin's graphic narrative is both a site and a means of achieving a multidirectional approach to memory. To that end, I examine Katin's narrative strategy, which starts by presenting the German and Jewish collective memories as competitive and I highlight the gradual graphic and narrative encoding of the multidirectional approach which acknowledges both experiences and their uniqueness.

* Roxana Mocanu is a second-year MA student in the American Studies Program at the University of Bucharest, Romania.

For my analysis, I am indebted to Michael Rothberg's term of multidirectional memory, which he coined in his eponymous book as an alternative view to more traditional approaches that understand memory as a clash of collective histories of victimization which usually take the form of a monologic one-way "zero-sum struggle for preeminence" (Rothberg 3). Rothberg proposes that memories of historically traumatic events should engage in a dialogue about the past, in an ongoing negotiation and cross-referencing that can lead to a renewed understanding of the historical events. These negotiations, resulting in fidelity with different events and historical legacies, highlight the ethical dimension of the multidirectional approach. Due to its link with identity formation, multidirectional memory is concerned with both collective and individual memory. Thus, it is centered on both agents and sites and their interaction in a particular historical or political context. Rothberg links his term exclusively to objects and their relation to history and space in his multidirectional approach to narratives. I argue that it can be extrapolated to examining narration itself and that a graphic narrative can become a site of memory through narrative strategies that bring together different stories of traumatic events and graphic techniques that render actual spaces and the subjective gaze and interpretation cast upon them.

In analyzing the graphic memoir *Letting It Go* as a potential site for the unfolding of multidirectional memory, close attention should be paid to the medium. In a graphic memoir, the author is both the narrator and the main character of the story. But what the medium of graphic narration brings to the fore is a split between the narrator and the narrated subject, which allows the autobiographer to be, for instance, both victim of trauma and detached onlooker (Gardner qtd. in Witek 228). This is important, as *Letting It Go* was written as a cathartic exercise for the author to be able to make sense of her identity in various historical contexts and to come to terms with her son's decision to move to Berlin, a city which represents for the narrator the site and source of her traumatic experience, a *lieu de mémoire* for Jewish trauma.

In other words, the narrator gathers all the sites of memory she interacts with, as well as different memories that these sites evoke to the characters involved in the pages of the graphic narrative, thus turning it into a site of multidirectional memory.

Letting It Go establishes itself as a graphic memoir through several techniques foregrounding the point of view of the narrator/author Miriam and establishing subjectivity through various ways that betray the fragmentariness of the self as well as the subjectivity of perception. The splash page on the inner cover shows birds soaring into the sky and the narrator, binoculars in hand, looking away from the reader into the distance. This can be interpreted as a symbol of the quest the narrator embarks upon in her attempt to let go of the past and gain a more objective view of it. The following page shows birds flying in the sky and a dedication, “*Dedicated to the Past, Present, and Future, and the new Berlin.*” This points to the author’s aiming at objectivity, at getting a bird’s eye view of the situation, as well as to the issues to be debated in the book as indicated by the acknowledgement. Further on, the graphic narrative moves directly into the protagonist’s head, providing us with one of her fantasies of the world as she knows it being ended by “someone in Berlin.” The technique employed is reminiscent of Katin’s previous memoir *We Are on Our Own*, in terms of framing and color, thus conditioning the reader to proceed with this narrative in mind, foregrounding from the get-go the trauma the Jewish people suffered during WWII. The following seven pages dominated mainly by silence invite a close reading of the artist’s style which I will discuss in relation to Katin’s first memoir. Finally, there is the point-of-view image that makes the reader see through the character’s eyes while hearing a voiceover detailing the endeavor of putting pen to paper, and the subsequent reaction image that flows from the previous one as the protagonist awakes to a site of horror: the bug which will gain important connotations throughout the narrative.

The issue of subjectivity is important in a graphic memoir, as subjectivity is not only implied through narration, as is would be the case with a first person traditional narrative, but

also through the visual, the graphic modes which represent the way the narrator sees and interprets the world. The feelings of the character who is the focal point of the narration can distort perception, while glimpses into the character's mind account for sudden reality shifts. Therefore, in order to decode the graphic representation, one can investigate the author's personal experiences and how she has referred to them either in past works, such as, in this case, the graphic memoir *We Are on Our Own*, which details how the child Miriam and her mother went into hiding in Hungary and survived World War II, or the interviews she gave about what prompted her to put her life on paper. Moreover, by getting to the core of the graphic symbolism which creates a continuity between the two memoirs, a symbolism encoded in the cartooning style, paneling, and color, a new interpretive path opens for the reader, who can identify and interpret them.

In terms of comparing the evolution of the aforementioned symbolism from Katin's first graphic memoir *We Are on Our Own* to *Letting It Go*, the first element to stand out is color, as there is a clear play on contrast between black and white vs. color or *the chromatic code*, as identified and detailed by Diederik Oostdjik in his essay "*Draw yourself out of it: Miriam Katin's graphic metamorphosis of trauma.*" The monotony of non-colors in *We Are on Our Own* is meant to evoke bleakness, with the occasional occurrence of red to evoke fear, but also to subtly hint at the totalitarianism of both extremes, fascist and socialist. *We Are on Our Own* is drawn almost exclusively in black and white, except for the Nazi flag that signals the start of years of torment and the Soviet flag that represents the hope for a better future, although the black and white background undermines the latter interpretation, showing in fact that the characters exchange one tormenter for another. Other instances of color, and this time on a full page, can be found in the scenes from post-war America. Color frames America as a safe place, with no connection to the trauma of the Holocaust, a place of healing, while black and white are used to represent and underscore the traumatic past. The same technique is employed in

Letting It Go when Miriam Katin remembers scenes from the past, or her trauma overwhelms her in the present (Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries* surprising her in her own home, triggering a flood of somatic memories and responses).

In terms of paneling and style, *We Are on Our Own* appears in clearly delimited, often same-sized panels with rarely any bleeds and a discourse limited to speech bubbles. Thus, the story is very easy to follow, but at the same time it appears very evidently as a story. Katin put to page her experience during World War II; however, she was too young to remember everything, if anything, and thus her account of the story is the one she got from her mother. Her only memories are on an emotional level, which is noticeable in the cartooning where the reactions are accentuated. In *Letting It Go*, however, given the first-hand experience and the array of emotions overcoming both the creative and the real self, images are bleeding into one another with barely any frames, and words are squeezed in between images with no speech bubbles. Katin justifies her style in an interview with CBR News, attributing her choice to the struggle to put to paper her Holocaust-centered existence. She claims to have lost patience with the page structure, hinted at in the reflection on procrastination and contemplation of *Swan's Way* (Part one in Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*). In terms of paneling, she started with separate pictures, lacking a border but easy to read, only to abandon the attempt to orderly layout and instead choose a structural chaos meant to mirror the narrator's feelings. This bleeding through the page with no delimitation between actions, opinions, characters and views (at least in the final part of the narrative), could be seen as an invitation to a multidirectional reading, since there is no foregrounding of any single point of view, nor a reading order, at least in terms of the printed word, although images can sway interpretation.

In terms of cartooning, *Letting It Go* also presents the evolution of memory towards multidirectional memory by including representations of actual sites of memory as seen and interpreted by the narrator in relation to her experiences. The conclusion drawn after interacting

with the afore-mentioned sites of memory and its effect on the narrator can be inferred from a series of pages containing the only framed panels in the otherwise frameless narrative. These panels resemble the point of view image which establishes the focal point at the beginning of the narrative and is represented by the gaze of the narrator cast upon the view outside her window. These images recur as instances of deep reflection, suggesting that the narrator is taking a step back and rethinking her position in relation to the events unfolding up to that point. The multidirectional approach can be traced through these specific pages as the narrator evolves from a believer in the uniqueness of her experience into a trauma competitor and eventually into a believer in the multidirectionality of memory. In this repetition with a difference of the panels, what stands out the most is a series of panels where the point of view image shifts into a gaze image, i.e. the reader no longer sees through the eyes of the character, but over the shoulder of the character. This happens once the narrator decides to confront her knowledge of Berlin with actual historical information and can be interpreted as the narrator/author taking a step back and reassessing the issue after structuring it on the page, thus reinforcing the idea of the author as narrator and detached onlooker.

Before separating the medium and the literary subject, in order to understand Katin's view of her Jewish trauma as unique, as well as the way in which she eventually reaches a multidirectional approach to her memory, we must consider her views on Jewish identity in the context of the emergence of the graphic narrative. Katin's work enters a long tradition of graphic narratives, mainly graphic memoirs, produced by Jewish authors who employed this medium in order to tackle various aspects of their identity. In his book *The Quest for Jewish Belief and Identity*, Stephen Tabachnick argues that the topics of Jewish graphic narratives include Jewish religious belief, belief in the Jewish people (as a group sharing a common faith) or Jewish identity, belief in Israel, and belief in the persistence of antisemitism (2). Through this thematic viewpoint, Katin, in both of her graphic memoirs, figures as a believer in Jewish

identity and a believer in antisemitism, both translated into the act of linking Jewish identity with the trauma of the Holocaust. *We Are on Our Own*, however, can be seen as tackling the topic of religious belief from the position of a secular Jew, “Early in life I absorbed my father’s atheism at home and the secular education in school. My father, however, never denied being a Jew and held pride in the ethical and the literary nature of our background. I was always comfortable with this” (126).

This secular approach yields a new understanding of Jewish identity through ethics, literature and experience. As the term “Jewish” stands for both the ethnic group and the religious group, defining Jewish identity without its religious dimension puts the question of the author’s approach to antisemitism in a lay context. Antisemitism, as the prevalent topic, is the one bringing the Holocaust into contemporary everyday life and family matters. Moreover, it allows a closer link to America, as her lay lifestyle helps her evade any form of antisemitism there. America, moreover, seems like a haven when juxtaposed to the memories of Europe, yet not one that cannot be tainted by the trauma of the Holocaust.

This sense of perpetual danger emerging from everyday life accentuates the trauma which marked the narrator’s Jewish identity by associating even the most mundane things with the Holocaust. One such example is presented on the first page of the novel, i.e. the previously mentioned panels which transport the reader into the character’s mind, drawn and framed in a style reminiscent of *We Are on Our Own*. In it, the narrator imagines *Knuss* coffee machines as time bombs to be set off by “someone in Berlin,” once “every kitchen in America has one plugged in” (Katin, *Letting It Go* n. pag.). Although altered in name, the author refers here to the brand Krups, known for its efficient appliances, but also to the arms and ammunition manufacturer Krupp, known for its use of slave labor during World War II (Mihăilescu 156). In the following panel, detailing the outcome of the explosion, we also encounter an explosion of color. This could be seen as the artist’s fear of being overcome by the traumatic past in the

secure present and having it destroyed. These initial two pages set the tone for the entire narrative, showing the depth of the narrator's trauma, both accounting for her point of view and framing it in a certain graphic style to be recognized across the memoir.

In the literary dimension, multidirectional memory comes into discussion with the onset of the intergenerational conflict triggered by the son's decision to acquire Hungarian citizenship and move to Berlin. The multidirectional view over the unfolding and aftermath of World War II stems from Katin foregrounding the Holocaust, as she uses her memory of the event to prevent her son's moving out and to justify her fear of his leaving her. Although the two traumas are related, she uses the memory of the Holocaust as a screen memory. Freud coined the term screen memory and defined it as an early memory used as a screen for an event, i.e. that displaces an event in time and space in order to allow the subject to cope with it. The essential elements of an experience are represented in memory by inessential elements of the same or another experience (9). Given that Katin screen memory is by no means of a trivial kind, it is a refractory memory (negative screen memory) foregrounded with a degree of consciousness, as there is common ground, namely the "traumatic space," between the two events, i.e. the war and Ilan's planned departure. This screen memory is important to the protagonist as it provides the ground for both her fears and her motives, accentuating the belief in the uniqueness of her experience and the competitive approach of the German people in terms of traumatic experiences.

The memory of the Holocaust does not only incite competitiveness, but "provides (...) a greater level of comfort than confrontation with more local problems would allow"; in other words, it functions as displacement covering up another event that cannot be faced (Rothberg 12). In terms of the multidirectional approach, this displacement can both open up lines of communication and close them off (Rothberg 12). Considering the way Berlin foregrounds Holocaust memory through each *lieu de mémoire* supports a multidirectional approach as it also

reveals the city's efforts to rebuild itself from the ashes of World War II. For Katin, however, as stated before, the Holocaust displaces her difficulty to come to terms with her son's departure, as the author herself confessed in an interview for *Art Review Magazine*, "I created *Letting It Go* with the enormous need to deal with my trauma of my son moving to Berlin" (Gravett). Since the author herself identified the subject of the novel as her coping with her son's leaving, the assumption that her memory of the Holocaust functions as a screen memory is all the more credible.

Although functioning as a screen for Miriam Katin's private problem, foregrounding the memory of the Holocaust implies a shift towards the collective. In seeking advice, Katin is confronted with different views across generations, all influenced by the means in which they experienced their trauma, their interpretation of their Jewish identity--be it religious or secular--and the secondary identity they acquired by living in America.

Miriam Katin belongs to the 1.5 generation of Holocaust survivors. This means that she is a direct survivor who was too young to remember consistently; hence, her memory is in a way a postmemory since it was mediated and acquired through her mother's narrative of what happened. Marianne Hirsch defines postmemory as "distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by deep personal connection (...) its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection, but through imaginative investment and creation" (22). Katin acquired her memories, but her difference of opinion from her mother stems from her particular way of internalizing trauma. Miriam Katin's trauma is psychological through inheritance and "imaginative investment and creation," but physical through her own experience, as another type of recollection that the child Miriam acquired consists in the somatic memories from early childhood. This is common to children "who have been directly affected by the Holocaust and for whom the main receptacles of trauma were represented by somatic reflexes, i.e. instantaneous reactions of their bodies to potentially traumatizing external stimuli

which they have internalized and which continue automatically to recur in their adult lives when they recall a traumatic event” (Mihăilescu 160). Given her specific type of memory and the somatic reactions it brings about, Miriam Katin becomes afraid for the physical safety of her son even in the context of a post-war Berlin, as antisemitism translates for her as actual acts of violence. Moreover, her identity includes the stance of the fugitive, hence her idea of the U.S. as a safe place and her self-identification as American. This is important, as she doesn’t refer to herself as Jewish-American in any instance. She is American, but resorts to her Jewishness in her attempt to dissuade Ilan from leaving for a country where this identity is not, to her mind, fully appreciated.

Her son Ilan is a child of survivors who also acquired postmemory. His secular upbringing identified him as Jewish more through his cultural inheritance, just as in the case of his mother, but unlike her, his lack of firsthand experience of the trauma doesn’t weigh him down and interfere with his life. Moreover, he doesn’t see himself as a victim of antisemitism. Adding to the cultural inheritance, his interest in the arts and his traveling enabled him to get a clearer grasp of post-World War II Europe. He opposes the idea of continuing “to hold our prejudices based on history and not on direct experience.” Ilan is the voice of reason calling his mother into the present and urging her to assess current events in an updated context which has not remained stuck in time. He is the one who invites her to come and see Berlin for what it is.

Unable to reason with her son--to whom she eventually gives in--Miriam Katin turns to her mother, who she believes will share her opinion, as they also shared an experience. Her mother is a first-generation survivor, yet unlike her daughter, she is more preoccupied with her grandson’s secular life and his leaving rather than where he is going. She also relates this to her own daughter’s running away. For the mother, Jewish identity translates as belonging to a homogenous group and sharing not only the same cultural background, but also the same religion, hence her fixation on Tinet (Ilan’s girlfriend) being a gentile.¹

The outcome of the multigenerational conflict and its multidirectional approach has yielded for Katin new views of Berlin as just another place, as deemed by her mother, and a place that evolved as opposed to being stuck in time. This results in an ethical outcome, an investigation of the past which uncovers a common ground. After agreeing with her son's choice, thus ending the conflict, Miriam Katin decided to try and broaden her view of Berlin and the history of post-war Germany. The investigation starts in an attempt to compete with her post-war memories, to place Jewish collective memory against German collective memory, but, in the end, it results in a multidirectional take on the experience of that time period, regardless of ethnicity, since the "ethical subject emerges out of investigations of gaps in the present" (Rothberg 272). As Rothberg pointed out, "varied strategies of aggressively foregrounding the 'haunting past' (...) seek to uncover already existing, unresolved divisions" (272). This act of uncovering divisions constitutes the "ethical dimension of multidirectional memory" (Rothberg 272).

Katin's incursion into history starts with her knowledge up to that point, represented by the panel "The Map of Germany in Miriam's Mind." This shows both an organic and a derisive map. It is organic, since it is presented on Miriam's body, resembling how her memories are physically affecting her, but also sketchy--Germany is separated right through the middle into an East and a West, with no further information. It is and also derisive, since the important places of the rise of Nazi ideology are listed on her fingers, culminating with Wannsee, the place where the Final Solution was officially decided in January 1942, drawn on her middle finger (Mihăilescu 157). This is proof Katin's competitive approach as the map zeroes in on what is relevant to her experience, omitting the experience of the German people to the point of ignoring the very geographical reality of Berlin. The incursion into her own views, however, marks the point of openness towards multidirectionality, as she is now willing to accept the *other*. The narrator journeys into her own mind, uncovering the things that render her emotional

and are her “complete undoing,” among which she counts the national anthem, The Star-Spangled Banner. Through this gesture, she reinforces her identification as American, and discovers that she could not feel “any compassion...compassion for these...these people...the people of Berlin...Berliners suffering...suffering in May, 1945.” This episode proves that for her Berlin not only became stuck in time, siding with the anti-Semitic views of the Nazi regime, but also confuses the people with the ideology that drove them into submission. Her subsequent quest to uncover more about the past of the city of Berlin proves just how little she actually knew.

Katin’s travel to Berlin is key in her gaining another perspective. Katin’s skewed vision of Berlin is given by contrasting her black and white drawn memories with her view of Berlin now, which is rendered through postcards encoded through graphic realism, but which betray a subjective view, a mental image of the protagonist, not reality itself.

The multidirectionality of the narration is doubled by uncovering Berlin as a multidirectional site both to the narrator and the reader. There are places and memorials in the city giving justice both to post-war Germany (the remnants of the Berlin wall), and to the Jewish people who have suffered under the Nazi regime (the Field of Stelae, the Stolpersteine, a rebuilt synagogue). This first encounter with Berlin helps Miriam more easily come to terms with the city, allowing other points of view to shape her own image, so that she may see Berlin in the present and dissociate it from the Berlin of her memories, stuck in an oppressive past. This visit, however, is not untainted by the past, as her body somatically reacts to the fear instilled by the city itself. The episode is narrated exclusively through cartooning, which prompts the reader to pay more attention to the image and slow down the reading process due to the change in narration. The silence invites an interpretation of trauma as unspeakable but also frames the body as vulnerable; this vulnerability is emphasized through nudity.

In contrast to her first visit, the second one is made willingly and eagerly. It is at this point that the narrator actually embraces multidirectionality. Physically, however, much as with her first visit, her body somatically rejects the experience: she has a rash that manifests itself throughout her entire stay. Another side of this visit is Katin's engaging in another generational conflict of opinion with Tinet, her son's girlfriend, an impartial source, neither Jewish nor German. While walking around the city, she points out to Katin that the Germans have undergone "a great deal of introspection" through *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* ("coming to terms with the past"). When hearing the word, Katin responds with, "If I can say Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious, maybe I can learn that too?" (Katin, *Letting It Go* n. pag.). Although she pokes fun at the agglutinative language, Miriam also seems to understand the necessity of "learning" to come to terms with her past: "I guess the Germans moved on and I didn't" (Katin, *Letting It Go* n. pag.).

However, this is somewhat undermined by the ending, which shows a conversation between the two fleas that supposedly caused her itch, "Her blood will be all over this city. That will call her back" (Katin, *Letting It Go* n. pag.). It is an ironic reference made by the narrator *I*, suggesting that the narrated *I* still hasn't fully come to terms with the past. She still refers to the same imagery of "blood" on German soil. The ending greatly contributes to the meaning-making allowed by technique and medium, unveiling a three-fold interpretation. Story-wise, it undermines the narrated *I*'s resolve. From a metafictional point of view, we get the narrator *I* aware of her inability and unwillingness to overcome the situation, which is rendered in a sarcastic manner. Simultaneously, the reader gets an understanding of both the narrator *I* and the narrated *I* while still being able to form her own view regardless of it being swayed by both words and imagery.

Letting It Go both graphically and literally can be read as unveiling a collective trauma clothed in personal struggles, or personal struggles using collective trauma as screen memory,

precisely because the two are inextricably linked through the keyword “trauma” as an ever-present and haunting experience. Moreover, this accounts for the inevitable subjectivity in writing. However, the graphic dimension makes up for this through the multiple points of view, which, albeit out of focus, can be used by the readers in order to construct their own opinion. It is in such a context that the graphic memoir as a medium can be seen as a site of multidirectional interpretation of memory as it gathers multiple points of view, gives credit to all of them and, eventually, presents them as being able to co-exist in a present which has overcome the traumatic past and learned from it. Thus, one might infer that the ethical dimension of multidirectional memory has been achieved, as, throughout the narrative, histories of trauma have been uncovered and acknowledged in the present.

Works Cited

- Dueben, Alex. "Miriam Katin is *Letting It Go*." *CBR News*, 25 April 2013. Web. 19 January 2017.
- Freud, Sigmund. "Screen Memories (1899a)." *On Freud's Screen Memories*. Eds. Gail S. Reed and Howard B. Levine, London: Karnac, 2015, 5-24. Print.
- Gravett, Paul. "Miriam Katin: Coming to Terms." *Art Review Magazine*, October 2015. Web. 19 January 2017.
- Herman, David. "Narrative Worldmaking in Graphic Life Writing." *Graphic Subjects. Critical Essays on Autobiography and Graphic Novels*. Ed. Michael A. Chaney, Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011. 227-230. Print.
- Hirsch, Marianne. "Mourning and Postmemory." *Graphic Subjects. Critical Essays on Autobiography and Graphic Novels*. Ed. Michael A. Chaney, Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011. 17-44. Print.
- Katin, Miriam. *We Are on Our Own*. New York: Drawn & Quarterly, 2006. Print.
- . *Letting It Go*. New York: Drawn & Quarterly, 2013. Print.
- Kelly, Brian. "Sequential Art, Graphic Novels and Comics." *SANE Journal: Sequential Art Narrative in Education* 1:1 (2010). 3-23. Web.
- Mihailescu, Dana. "Haunting Specters of World War II Memories from a Transgenerational Ethical Perspective in Miriam Katin's *We Are on Our Own* and *Letting It Go*." *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 6:2 (April 2015): 154-171. Web.
- Oostdjik, Diederik. "Draw yourself out of it: Miriam Katin's graphic metamorphosis of trauma." *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 17:1 (Jan. 2018): 79-92. Web.

- Pedri, Nancy. "Graphic Memoir: Neither Fact nor Fiction." Eds. Daniel Stein and Jan-Noël Thon. *From Comic Strips to Graphic Novels*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013. 127-153. Print.
- Rothberg, Michael. *Multidirectional Memory*. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009. Print.
- Tabachnick, Stephen E. *The Quest for Jewish Belief and Identity in the Graphic Novel*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2014.
- Witek, Joseph. "Justin Green: Autobiography Meets the Comics." Ed. Michael A. Chaney. *Graphic Subjects. Critical Essays on Autobiography and Graphic Novels*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011. 231-243. Print.

¹ Another interesting thing to note at this point is the language they employ. They speak Hungarian, which may seem somewhat ironic, since the artist cannot come to terms with the idea of her son becoming a Hungarian citizen, whereas her Hungarian origins are an integral part of her identity, much like her Jewishness. However, her lifestyle identifies her as American with no hyphen (i.e. Jewish-American) unless she needs to fight against her son's opinions.