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Humanities Seminars

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Two Kinds of Prisons

The fear and anger of war can cause people to make physical prisons for those who they distrust. The memoir Citizen 13660 by Mine Okubo is a good example of people being imprisoned just for seeming untrustworthy. After the war, those who survive these prisons can become trapped in their own mental prisons. The graphic novel Maus by Art Spiegelman shows not only the camps and physical prisons but also the post-war mental prisons of the survivors and their families.

During times of war people who are scared or angry can make physical prisons for those they hate or fear. Sometimes people are put in these prisons just because just because they are different and untrusted. Citizen 13660 shows that after America is attacked by Japan, all Americans of Japanese descent are labeled as untrustworthy and dangerous regardless of their loyalty or citizenship. Okubo explains the shock and anger when even the Japanese born in America are imprisoned. "We had not believed at first that evacuation would affect the Nisei, ... but thought perhaps the Issei, ... would be interned in care of war between Japan and the United States. It was a real blow when everyone, regardless of citizenship, was ordered to evacuate."(Okubo, 17) When people are imprisoned just for being different they are being unfairly blamed for something that they had no control over.

good!

The physical prisons in war can leave behind echoes in those who lived in them. Survivors of physical prisons might make mental prisons for themselves because they have become used to being prisoners and having someone control their lives or because they are haunted by what they have seen in the physical prisons and never fully escaped them. These mental prisons might cause someone to become insecure. In Maus Vladek is untrusting of others to do things right and redoes them himself, a habit which his son Art states his annoyance at. "Yeah. One hour to pack, and four hours for Vladek to unpack and refold it all!"(Spiegelman, 283) Vladek is also shown as being overly stressed about needing things perfect, and always readjusts anything others touch which can make those around him feel uncomfortable, as Art's wife Françoise tells her husband. "It's so claustrophobic being around Vladek He straightens everything you touch- he's so anxious." "He never learned how to relax"(Spiegelman, 182). Vladek's mental prison is likely what makes him so untrusting of others to do tasks properly or keep things *good* correctly organized.

Even the families of these survivors aren't free from their mental prisons. Survivors may force their families not to waste anything that can't be reused or not to buy anything unless they truly needed it. In Maus, Art explains that Vladek wouldn't let him waste food and made him eat his leftovers before getting anything new. "when I was little, if I didn't eat everything Mom served, Pop and I would argue 'til I ran to my room crying... Mom would offer to cook something I liked better, but Pop just wanted to leave the leftover food around until I ate it. Sometimes he'd even save it to serve again and again until I'd eat it or starve."(Spiegelman, 45) Vladek forcing Art to eat all of his food shows that Vladek is making Art live in his mental prison as well.

These mental prisons left behind from physical ones are a good example of how war leaves behind echoes and ripples. These ripples are felt not only by the survivors but their kids too. Children of survivors may be forced into their parents' mental prisons and become survivors themselves, only survivors of their parents' prisons. Even though the physical prison is long gone its effects are still felt by those who were imprisoned out of fear and anger and committed no crime other than being different.

The analysis you added has made your essay and argument much stronger, Jacque!
It flows more smoothly and supports your points well. You also are doing a good job of ~~and~~ setting up your quotations.
It helps not only the flow but also the analysis. Good job! 100