
Extending the Conversation

The Ethics of Teaching Disturbing Pasts: Reader Response, Historical Contextualization, and Rhetorical (Con)Textualization of Holocaust Texts in English

Mary M. Juzwik

A recent themed issue of *English Journal* on “Ethics in the English Classroom” includes two papers addressing how teachers can ethically engage students in reading literatures of wartime (Glasgow & Baer, 2011; Vaughn, 2011). Kyle Vaughn, for example, describes a course on the literature of war in the non-Western world that he teaches at a private all-girls school. In reflecting on the ethical consequences of students’ literary study throughout the course, Vaughn cites the careers of three former students in humanitarian work as possible evidence of students’ taking to heart the moral lessons of the course. He goes on to write:

I often sit back after class and hope that . . . more and more students will take what they have learned, go out, and act. I feel quite confident that all of them, regardless of their future vocational paths, will go out and act more ethically in regards to the questions of global conflict, refugees, suffering and need, and cultures that represent different viewpoints. (66)

Vaughn’s reflections on the ethical consequences of a specific course he teaches exemplify a broader cultural-historical phenomenon that Deborah Brandt (2004) labels a “moral imperative” for literacy. She describes that moral imperative as “a belief in literacy as a knowledge of right behavior” (p. 488) and locates it historically, for example, in a nineteenth-century Protestant worldview that shaped purposes for reading in primary and secondary U.S. English classrooms (Applebee, 1974; see also Fraser, 1999).

Contemporary transformations of the moral imperative for literacy live on in the popular imagination, sometimes erupting in controversies about text selection and censorship in English classrooms. They also show up in writings by teachers—such as Vaughn (2011)—that assert that reading and studying literature are ethically consequential in students’ lives. I believe it is time to subject the belief in the moral consequences of literature study—and especially in the moral consequences of teaching difficult literatures about past events—to closer critical scrutiny.

A set of especially complicated ethical relationships becomes visible in literary study when the unspeakable atrocity of state-sponsored genocide is part of the story, as it is in many wartime texts taught in secondary English classrooms, including some discussed by Vaughn (2011). On the one hand, we want students to relate personally to texts, to identify with characters, to make the works live anew today. In short, we want to encourage meaningful transaction. Yet with material grounded in deeply disturbing periods of history, most would agree that it seems shallow at best and ethically irresponsible at worst to encourage *just transaction*. What then is the nature of an English teacher’s obligation to the detailed particularity of the past and to those who endured that past when encouraging students’ individual and collaborative responses to texts in the present (or in the future)?

I explore the broad ethical question by discussing specific difficulties presented by the case of Holocaust pedagogy.¹ The Holocaust offers a useful case for examining the tensions surrounding the studying of difficult literatures about the past. First, because the Holocaust was a historically unprecedented effort at state-sponsored mass murder (Bauer, 2001), many believe it poses a “moral affront” to humanity that requires response (Margalit, 2002). Because Holocaust texts and teaching about the Holocaust pervade U.S. English classrooms,² moreover, the content offers up a set of practical pedagogical challenges for new teachers.³ My argument therefore proceeds by discussing tensions raised by three different approaches to engaging Holocaust texts in English classrooms: reader response, historical, and rhetorical. The guiding purpose of the discussion is to explore a set of more general questions about the ethical dimensions of literary engagement in English—and specifically engagement with texts about disturbing pasts.

I begin with a critical examination of popular reader-response approaches to Holocaust texts, raising a first tension: *How to encourage students*

The guiding purpose of the discussion is to explore a set of more general questions about the ethical dimensions of literary engagement in English—and specifically engagement with texts about disturbing pasts.

to personally and collaboratively engage with Holocaust texts while discouraging inappropriate comparisons between the experiences of those who lived through, or perished in, the Holocaust years and “my problems today” or even global problems today? One solution for many teachers is to present historical context. Yet that choice raises a second tension: *How to ensure accuracy and detail of historical/contextual information without reverting to history lessons that do not really belong in the disciplinary context of English?* Another, less common, solution is to take a rhetorical approach that relates textual particularities to broader ethical considerations (i.e., the moral affront to humankind presented by the Holocaust). Such an approach, in turn, raises a final tension: *How to foster active moral stance-taking and rhetorical analysis of texts, while discouraging simplistic moralizing about Holocaust atrocities?* These historical, rhetorical, and ultimately ethical tensions—which seem to pose greatest difficulty for early-career teachers—also point to a broader question: *What, ultimately, are the purposes for teaching Holocaust and other texts about disturbing pasts, in English?*

I build an argument around these tensions, sharing and interpreting examples from specific teaching situations and texts I have encountered. Examples include (a) my own early-career teaching of Anne Frank’s diary to a group of ninth graders in a private suburban school; (b) the teaching of an early-career colleague, Jane Connor,⁴ who taught seventh and eighth graders in an urban public school; and (c) the teaching of teacher writers such as first-year teacher Erin Gruwell (*Freedom Writers*, 1999) and veteran teachers Kate Kessler (1991) and Alexander Hernandez (2001). Ultimately, I argue, the tensions raised by reader response and historical approaches to teaching Holocaust literature suggest a more general need to check our confidence in the ethical consequences of teaching and studying difficult literatures about past events. A rhetorical approach offers a particularly fruitful pathway for directly grappling with some of the tensions involved in transactions with such texts.

Personal Response and Identification: Encouraging Meaningful Transaction, Discouraging Inappropriate Comparisons

We should encourage students to make connections between the present moment they inhabit and the world(s) of the texts with which they transact and about which they interact, say both literary theorists (Bakhtin, 1981; Iser, 1981; Rosenblatt, 1994; Tompkins, 1980; Wolf & Heath, 1995) and literacy researchers (Beach, Appleman, Hynds, & Wilhelm, 2010; Wolf, 2003). As Cynthia Lewis (2000) points out, that transaction involves the nature of the

text itself—for example, its literary, poetic, and rhetorical features—as well as the aesthetic experience of any given person reading that text in a particular social, cultural, and historical setting. In some classrooms, literary response entails a collective give-and-take among diverse voices and interpretation, not just an individual response (e.g., Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995; Nystrand, Gamoran, Kachur, & Prendergast, 1997).

I aspired to such an approach when I designed a unit around expressive and personal responses to Anne Frank’s diary early in my English teaching career. My description of the Anne Frank unit serves to illustrate a more general ethical tension that *can* arise when individual meaning-making becomes the primary focus of literary interpretation. Thus I do not assume that my early-career interpretation of a reader-response approach some years ago is more generally true of how reader-response pedagogies are enacted in English classrooms today. While it is possible that my uptake of reader-response theory is completely anomalous among early-career teachers, my classroom research on narrative talk in literature instruction (e.g., Juzwik, Nystrand, Kelly, & Sherry, 2008; Juzwik & Sherry, 2007), my reading of the practitioner journals (most notably, *English Journal*), and my ongoing work with teacher candidates in a large teacher preparation program lead me to suspect that the reader-response approach I enacted was not atypical for an early-career teacher and may be found among veteran teachers as well.

Let’s now take a look at my reader-centered Anne Frank unit. I devised student-led discussions (Nystrand et al., 1997) and expressive writing (Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen, 1975) as daily activities. A cycle of small-group reading and discussion, followed by group-led whole-class discussions, provided momentum for most daily activities in the unit. Students partnered up, with each group assuming responsibility for leading one day’s discussion. For example, one group of girls jotted the following notes while preparing to lead whole-class discussion after reading a segment from the middle of the diary:

Mrs. Van D, selfish, rude, etc. pg 139

An entire entry on her pen? Pg 145

Dr. Dussel’s bathroom use? Pg 126 (pagination based on Frank, Massotty translation)

Although cursory, this list indicates some ideas and scenes that interested them. In response to the group’s question, “An entire entry on her pen?” the class collaboratively explored what the pen meant for Anne as a writer and

how its loss might have affected her.⁵ Students questioned and explored how and why a diarist might choose to spend “an entire entry” writing about an object dear to him or her. I then used the students’ discussion point about Anne’s pen as springboard to invite students to compose “Odes in Memorium” about a time they lost an object that was important to them. Consider, for example, the piece written by Dina⁶ about losing a treasured necklace:

A few weeks ago I went to New Jersey for my cousin’s wedding. We were staying at my grandma’s house. It’s almost like tradition. My grandma always tries to give all of her old clothes to us. Well, I found a shirt or two that I liked so I went to the bathroom to try them on. I liked them, so I kept them.

A few hours later, we were all getting ready to go to the wedding. Then we went to this fancy hotel and during the appetizers, I noticed it was gone. I started to panic and looked everywhere twice. Then I told my Mom and she asked me the usual questions: “Where did you last see it? Did you take it off?” I answered no to both of these and went to go ask a hotel person. He helped me look for it. But we still didn’t find it.

For the rest of the night I felt like crap. I had lost maybe the one and most valued thing I had. I talked to my Mom about it, and she said that if I didn’t find it, she would give me one of hers that was like it. My grandma went to Israel and got it for me there. I have worn it ever since. It looks like this [Here Dina inserted a sketch of a Hamsa hand symbol].

Well, the night went by and then we went home. And guess what? My necklace was on the bathroom floor. I think it fell off when I was trying on my shirts. I was so happy I couldn’t believe it. It was like having something you lost come back to life.

I valued many aspects of this expressive writing—Dina’s personally invested voice, her implicit forging of a connection between a symbol of her own Jewish heritage and Anne’s beloved pen, the representation of intergenerational family relationships, the joyfulness conveyed by her writing. At the same time, however, this piece rather forcefully reveals some troubling problems with the reader-response approach to Holocaust texts that I espoused.

In keeping with my writing invitation, Dina’s response does not account for the broader historical and ethical context surrounding and shaping Anne’s writing. For example, Anne’s pen could be seen as her tool for resisting the Final Solution goal to globally annihilate all persons of Jewish heritage—through writing. Through an emerging, self-styled identity as “a writer” (Prose, 2009), Anne self-consciously resisted the state-sponsored effort to silence her voice forever. I do not recall this topic coming up in our student-driven discussion about the pen.

It seems that my writing prompts, including the one inviting Dina and her peers to write about objects dear to them and the culminating assign-

ment discussed below, may well have fostered inappropriate identification with Anne and her world (Suleiman, 2005). Although there may be many forms of inappropriate identification, I refer here to the projection of readers' own worlds onto the text, with the text serving as a kind of Rorschach test for readers' own current preoccupations (Lewis, 2000; Rosenblatt, 1994). Because I did not explicitly frame the writing prompt (or the unit more generally) within the sociohistorical context of the Second World War, the ethical reprehensibility of the Final Solution, or any number of contextual ways I might have and because students either were not equipped to or did not choose to bring such insights to the class discussions, many students responded in just such a way (although, to provide full disclosure, some of the boys in my class struggled to identify with Anne at all).

The unit culminated in students writing and publishing a diary about 10 days in their own lives, an assignment resembling the invitation to respond to Anne Frank presented by teacher Erin Gruwell in *Freedom Writers Diaries* (Freedom Writers, 1999). Gruwell's students, the self-styled Freedom Writers, read and compared Anne Frank's diary with other diaries of wartime. Gruwell reports encouraging her students to identify with characters and situations in the wartime diaries by observing similarities of the diarists' lives to their own lives in urban Los Angeles. Writing diaries in response to their reading, the Freedom Writers further documented the grinding daily challenges of poverty and racial injustice in Los Angeles. The urban lives chronicled by the Freedom Writers were far removed from the worlds inhabited by my well-off white students in suburban Boulder.

As I reread my students' diaries today—having in the meantime engaged in my own study of Holocaust history and representation—I feel somewhat chagrined at the diaries my students “published” in response to their reading of Anne Frank. They read like mundane snapshots of comfortable life for middle- and upper-class U.S. youth in the late 1990s. Truly, the unit was designed as what Dixon (1975) some time ago called a “developmental” approach to English, an opportunity for students to grow in their capacity for self-expression in written form. But, it seems to me now, that unabashedly expressive goal trivialized the particular life and times of Anne Frank, including the particular, unprecedented state-sponsored genocide that dominated her world.⁷

I am not entirely to blame for these problems in my Anne Frank unit, although I do take responsibility for its shortcomings. The text itself, including Anne's writerly choices, can invite a somewhat troubling reading of Anne as a developing teenager “just like me” (Bernstein, 2003). The great Holocaust narrator Art Spiegelman (2011), for example, testifies to his

daughter's response to Anne Frank's diary as a middle schooler, an uptake of the diary similar to those recounted by Bernstein and others: "I remember my daughter getting excited about it as a coming-of-age love story and being inspired to briefly keep a diary" (44). Eleanor Roosevelt's influential introduction to the first English translation (Frank, 1993) also invites such personal responses to the story as a teenage "coming-of-age" tale:

Anne herself . . . matured very rapidly in these two years, the crucial years from thirteen to fifteen in which change is so swift and so difficult for every young girl. Sustained by her warmth and her wit, her intelligence and the rich resources of her inner life, Anne wrote and thought much of the time about things which very sensitive and talented adolescents without the threat of death will write—her relations with her parents, her developing self-awareness, the problems of growing up.

These are the thoughts and expression of a young girl living under extraordinary conditions, and for this reason her diary tells us much about ourselves and about our own children. And for this reason, too, I felt how close we all are to Anne's experience, how very much involved we are in her short life and in the entire world. (pp. 7-8)

Here Roosevelt universalizes Anne's experience as a teenage girl, placing it within a development framework of "growing up," even while recognizing the "extraordinary" times in which Anne lived. If the textual particularities of Anne's diary do reveal the daily difficulties of life in hiding from the Nazis in such "extraordinary" times, the even more horrifying reality of death camps and state-sponsored mass murder remain distant and implied at the diary's ending (Ozick, 2000), especially in contrast to *Night*, the other canonical Holocaust text taught in secondary schools that some teachers choose to teach alongside Anne Frank's diary (e.g., Kessler, 1991).

In sum, my Anne Frank unit design and Dina's writing within it illustrate how collective transactional study of the diary can run the risk of trivializing the unprecedented state-sponsored atrocity in which the writing was embedded. Certainly more skilled or more talented teachers may not find themselves running up against such trivialization problems, but such problems can confront early-career teachers who want students to personally transact with literatures grounded in deeply troubling past events.

Historical Contextualization: Engaging Sociohistorical Context of the Nazi Genocide While Still "Doing English"

One key approach to discouraging such trivialization and inappropriate identification, at least with a text such as Anne Frank's diary, is to teach students

about the historical context of the diary. Certainly many other teachers have sought to overcome the problems just raised by teaching students about the horrific events in human history that defined the Holocaust years. But for many English teachers, and I think especially early-career teachers like me (and perhaps also Erin Gruwell), doing the historical contextualization can pose problems.

I, for one, struggled with that contextualization task as an early-career teacher without a background in twentieth-century European history and with four brand-new course preps to manage simultaneously. As someone who was interested in history, however, and particularly oppression in history (I had, for example, read extensively about the civil rights movement in the United States and about Latin American social justice movements while in college), part of my struggle emerged from my recognition of and respect for the detailed complexity of the Holocaust in history. My respect for the complexities and questions of history led me to *worry* about the historical and ethical tensions raised by leading students to transact with Holocaust texts as an English educator. I wondered: How is it possible to engage the detailed particularity of the Holocaust and World War II in history, while staying true to my literacy-focused and transactional goals in English? How can I remain accountable to the past, while making it serve my purposes as an English educator in the present?

As a graduate student, I decided to study the issue further in classroom research with Jane, an energetic and impressive third-year teacher. Anchoring her middle school Holocaust unit in historical study, Jane organized into six sections, which were—with the exceptions of the first and last segment—chronologically ordered:

1. Introduction (included such topics as prejudice, stereotypes, racism, and scapegoats),
2. Pre-World War II (1930–37),
3. World War II and Hitler’s war against the Jews,
4. The Final Solution (1942–45),
5. Liberation and displaced persons camps, and
6. Genocide studies.

How is it possible to engage the detailed particularity of the Holocaust and World War II in history, while staying true to my literacy-focused and transactional goals in English? How can I remain accountable to the past, while making it serve my purposes as an English educator in the present?

Because she wanted to historically contextualize the events of the Holocaust, Jane chose to spend an enormous amount of time in class—especially in the first four weeks of the unit—going through historical timelines, which she had herself created by synthesizing various resources (see Figure 1 for an example).

For example, she clarified to her students—using the timeline in Figure 1—that *Kristallnacht* occurred in November 1938 and was an important historical turning point for the fate of the Jews of Germany. Within the historical framework, Jane introduced many other curricular genres (both nonfiction and fiction): documentaries, autobiographies, biographies, diaries, letters, memoirs, short stories, essays, and poems. For example, she showed *Hitler: The Criminal*, a film suggesting that from the time he wrote *Mein Kampf*, Hitler intended to murder the Jews of Europe (for more detail about the unit, see Juzwik, 2009, Chapter 2)—a contention that has been vigorously debated by historians of the Holocaust.

To quickly summarize those debates, intentionalists such as Dawidowicz (1975/1986), Fleming (1984), and Jackel (1981) argue that even from a very early point onward, Hitler intended systematic genocide. Functionalist historians such as Broszat (1979), Mommsen (1978), Kershaw (2000), and Browning (1991) claim that only later on, around or after the time of the Wannsee Conference in 1942, did Hitler’s intentions coalesce around the

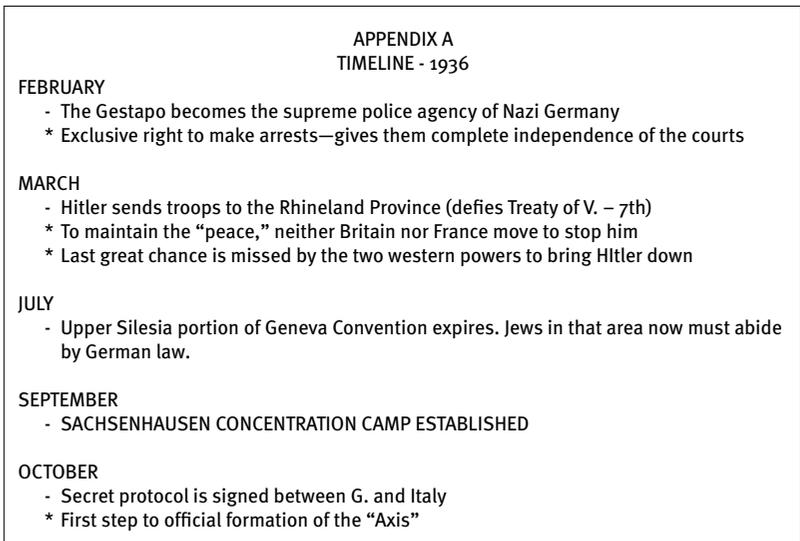


FIGURE 1. A Timeline Jane Created as Part of Her Historically Focused Holocaust Unit

systematic destruction of the Jews of Europe, with the ultimate goal the global destruction of Judaism and Jewish persons. Jane herself did not have knowledge of that debate among historians, and neither did I at the time I observed her teaching the unit. That lack of knowledge became apparent in a story about Hitler's intentionality that she told to students:

JANE: Right, right, I mean, there's no—Hitler did NOT intentionally set out to kill six million Jews. He just wanted 'em gone, Folks, and I can't stress that enough. He just wanted them to leave. He just didn't want them, in, basically in Europe, because he was going to try and take over all of Europe, that living space policy he had. But he didn't necessarily want 'em dead, that was never his intention. The camps and all those things were never his intention. He didn't set out to DO that. He just didn't WANT them there. But when no one else would take them, he had to find other methods of getting rid of them. And the ghettos only worked for so long too. It was very slow [said slowly]. It was a very slow process. He was kinda forced into getting bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger. And at a certain point, Nathan's right, you can't just all of a sudden shut down all the, shut down all the camps and say, "We're not doing it any more. It's over." It was impossible. In fact, they kept it up until forty-five, even though it probably meant—that was probably one of the big reasons why they lost the war. They had a LOT of trains that could have been used for the war purposes used for Jews being sent to camps. It was, it became somewhat impractical, what was going on. But by that point, there's question over Hitler's mental state at a certain point too. And how much it was all in his control, how much he lost control, how much sanity remained at the end when he killed himself. And we're never going to know those things. We're NEVER going to know. And that's all just fictionalized and I can't really tell you about that stuff. I don't know. But it was NEVER his intent to do that. And that's proven, Nathan. He NEVER intended just to kill all these [Jews], especially like that. Winona?

WINONA: If he didn't intend to kill all those people, why did he write a book about how he was going to be a mass murderer?

As Winona pointedly noted in her follow-up question to the story, the key theme of the story is false: Credible historians now agree that, at some point, Hitler's intentions did coalesce around the Final Solution goal of annihilating all the Jews, not only of Europe, but of the world. The historical debate

revolves around *when* that happened. As Winona observes, *Mein Kampf* is marshaled by some historians as evidence suggesting that Hitler's intention to systematically annihilate the Jews coalesced relatively early on.

This example is extreme and some have interpreted it to position Jane as a Holocaust denier, an interpretation that would aggrieve Jane terribly, because she is decidedly *not* a Holocaust denier. In fact, preparing students to debunk Holocaust denial was a stated goal of her unit. It does, however, usefully show how a dedicated English teacher working very hard to historically contextualize her teaching of Holocaust texts, yet *without formal training in modern European history*, can make an egregious historical error. I would argue that such errors are indeed *likely* to happen to English teachers who lack historical training or expertise attempting to teach history. I suspect that most such errors go undocumented (even if they are called out by keen students like Winona!). Teaching history is difficult and it takes a good deal of knowledge and background to avoid errors such as the one in this story told "in the moment" as a response to a previous student comment about Hitler. Even when well prepared with historical knowledge, rhetorical practices in the life of the classroom—such as storytelling—can sometimes undermine or altogether contradict the history being taught. After all, Jane had in fact advanced the opposite story about Hitler's intentionality—that he had intended, from early on, to systematically murder Jews—earlier in the unit when she shared the film *Hitler: The Criminal*.

Another common problem in teaching history surrounding Holocaust texts involves essentializing or oversimplifying people and events in that past. Take, for example, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum recommendation that the history of anti-Semitism be included when teaching about the Holocaust. While this goal may work well in history courses, I wonder if the history of anti-Semitism in Europe before the Second World War may simply be *too difficult* for many English teachers to pull off. The simplification of the history of anti-Semitism, in the effort to include it, can sometimes result in unintended and unfortunate consequences.

Consider, for example, a troubling item from a quiz that Jane designed: "What are three Jewish practices that make it easier for anti-Semitism to exist?" One potential interpretation of the question is that Jews are in some way responsible for anti-Semitism, a potentially offensive—albeit unintended—meaning of the question. If Jews—as a conglomerate mass—do something that makes it easier for anti-Semitism to exist, that interpretation suggests, would it not therefore follow that they are in some way responsible for anti-Semitism? This question was crafted as an assessment of what students learned from a general nonfiction reading on the history of

anti-Semitism taken from a study guide to *Night* (Hogue, 1993). As I read it, the quiz question became possible due to an essentialization (in the article) of what was in reality a diverse range of Jewish experiences and practices in prewar Europe. By “essentializing,” I mean that the article (and the quiz question, following the interpretation I have introduced) categorizes the Jews of Europe together as a single *conglomerate mass*, rather than as a set of culturally diverse ethno-religious communities (including assimilated and non-observant Jews) that experienced different types and levels of anti-Semitism in different European settings. Even a qualifier on the question, for example, “practices of observant Orthodox Jews” rather than “Jewish practices,” could mitigate the potentially problematic implication of the question.

The problem of oversimplification or essentialization of European Jews, in turn, raises further questions: Which histories of anti-Semitism ought to be told and which obscured? How can oversimplification of Jewish experiences and anti-Semitism in Europe be avoided while still recognizing Jews as the distinct group targeted by the Nazi Final Solution for global annihilation? To delve into the complex and diverse history of anti-Semitism in Europe before the Holocaust years in a short period of time in English class can truly be a daunting challenge, especially for an early-career teacher like Jane. That challenge seems *more likely than not* to result in error, oversimplification, or essentialization of persons and events in history.

Teachers therefore face a challenge of selecting what social and historical context to teach and how best to communicate that material to students. Many find that community experts, for example on Judaism, can be tremendous resources. Hernandez (2001), for example, invited a Jewish rabbi to visit his class to teach the class about Judaism as a faith tradition before their reading of *Night*. Kessler (1991), on the other hand, invited a local pastor (a Christian, I presume, given the designation “pastor”) who was an expert on Judao-Christian relations to speak with her class about Judaism. If indeed the pastor was Christian, that choice seems less likely to contextualize texts written by Jewish writers on their own religious and historical terms. Despite the potential controversy that may be introduced by bringing religious information into public school classrooms (Kunzman, 2006; Moore, 2007), this choice seems appropriate and reasonable in scope for a teacher to undertake, especially given the religious themes that are so central to *Night* (Spector, 2007).

Finally, Ozick (2000) suggests choosing texts with robust, complex historical representations at the scenes of Nazi atrocity. Ozick, for her part, is not enthusiastic about Anne Frank’s pervasive presence in the secondary

English canon—often at the expense of other, more robust, representations of the Holocaust. Good text choices can be a helpful way to avoid errors when teaching historical context in an English classroom (like Jane) or to avoid insufficiently detailed historical contextualization (like me). It can, however, also be difficult for an early-career teacher to feel confident about making such judgments. Key historical issues for them to consider, when evaluating and selecting Holocaust texts, include the following:

- › What do authors leave out in their representations of the past?
- › Whose perspective do they foreground and whose do they efface?
- › What is the level of historical detail presented in a given text?
- › How does this text complement other texts being introduced, in the historical material it teaches students?
- › How persuasive is the text likely to be to a particular group of students?

Those overwhelmed by the task of text selection can look to Art Spiegelman's (1994) *The Complete Maus*, which includes an account of the prewar lives of his parents Vladek and Anya, including the ways anti-Semitism before the war affected them differently. It also reveals their experiences in the death camps and the lifelong and indeed cross-generational reverberations of those experiences (e.g., Anya's suicide in the 1960s). Spiegelman's (2011) *MetaMaus* describes the meticulous research process the author undertook in composing the work. My goal here, however, is not to argue for the place of *Maus* as the standard Holocaust text in secondary English.⁸ Rather, my goal is to suggest that historical contextualization of the Holocaust within an English classroom unit can be a more complex and challenging undertaking than new teachers and teacher educators often make it out to be.

Rhetorical (Con)Textualization: Relating Textual Particularities to Broader Ethical Considerations While Avoiding Banal Moralizing

A second and less common solution to contextualizing the Holocaust when studying Holocaust texts in English is to focus more on the text itself, connecting detailed literary particularities with the broader ethical implications of the Holocaust.⁹ A rhetorical approach invites teachers to focus on engaging the students in studying how texts—including narratives—work persuasively to take ethical stances on persons and events of the Holocaust years. Staying focused on how texts work rhetorically helps teachers to avoid the problem of banal moralizing about the Holocaust that historian Peter Novick (1999)

laments as a tendency in American life. Such moralizing often follows the logic: *Because of the Holocaust, _____ is wrong* (fill in the blank with your particular moral judgment, for example, on abortion or capital punishment).

Two particular strategies are particularly useful for delving into *the moral complexities of language and its persuasive uses* that are raised by the Nazi genocide and texts about it:

- › Studying textual features and moral stances through which the Holocaust is represented in various texts
- › Examining how identification and division are promoted in Holocaust texts

Such inquiries can involve students in exploring questions such as, How do texts represent a difficult-to-represent past? What are the (ethical) consequences (intended and unintended) of those representations? Examining the rhetoric of Holocaust texts can help students engage with the moral complexities of the Holocaust—and especially the Final Solution—as a set of historical events being represented for various purposes to various audiences in writing and other artistic forms. I am not suggesting a rhetorical approach somehow *gets around* the problems of history in engaging Holocaust texts; rather, it engages some of those very problems by connecting textual study to broader ethical concerns.

Examining the rhetoric of Holocaust texts can help students engage with the moral complexities of the Holocaust—and especially the Final Solution—as a set of historical events being represented for various purposes to various audiences in writing and other artistic forms.

Examining Narrative, Language, and the Construction of Moral Stance in Holocaust Texts

Maus provides perfect fodder for such study. At one level, it recounts an oral history of an Auschwitz survivor, Vladek Spiegelman, the author Art Spiegelman’s father. However, Vladek’s personal narrative is figuratively framed and remediated by Artie’s commentary and by the framing medium and accompanying conventions of the *comic book*. The multimodal re-mix of visual and written texts and genres expands the symbolic and allegorical potential of this text in secondary classrooms. For those not familiar with it, the work is a boundary blurring historical genre that:

- › represents persons and group affiliations through allegory (most saliently, Jews are mice and Germans are cats);

- › is rich with metaphor, both visual and verbal;
- › offers provocative characterization—perhaps most interestingly, of Vladek and Artie;
- › unfolds through multiple perspectives, most notably Vladek’s and his late wife Anya’s experiences of Auschwitz; and finally,
- › explicitly invokes the difficulties of representing the Holocaust.

For example, at the beginning of Part II, Chapter 2, we encounter a series of frames where the author represents himself “depressed” despite the “critical and commercial success” of “the first part of *MAUS*” (p. 201). This same section also features reporters hounding Artie the author, asking him what “message” he is trying to get across through the work. He responds, “I never thought of reducing it to a message. I mean, I wasn’t trying to CONVINCe anybody of anything” (p. 202). This section explicitly invites consideration of whether—and if so, how—*Maus*, as a narrative, works as a persuasive text.

Not insignificantly, the rhetorical complexity of *Maus* makes it a compelling text for a wide range of students, from the most “gifted” students to struggling readers and writers. I have especially observed, as has Wilhelm (1997), that *Maus* can be appealing to boys who are struggling readers. Another beauty of *Maus* is that, because the text itself offers up such rhetorical complexity in its representation of Nazi atrocity, teachers can proceed using the reader-response approaches discussed above without worrying about short shrifting history, for the text itself teaches a good deal of history. For this reason, *Maus* may be an excellent text choice for an early-career teacher who feels daunted by the historical challenges I’ve raised above. Yet rhetorical study is certainly possible with other texts as well.

A key rhetorical dimension of Holocaust texts to explore is how *moral stances* are taken by different voices shaping interpretation of the past. My students and I compared how Anne Frank and Nazi leader Joseph Goebbels each represented the surrender of Italy in their diaries. Goebbels, well-known for his hateful anti-Semitism and his rousing oratory, kept a diary that recounted his leadership during the Third Reich, now published and available as *The Goebbels Diaries* (Goebbels, 1948). One interesting point of comparison is the Italian capitulation. Anne wrote of it:

Friday, 10 September, 1943

Dear Kitty,

Every time I write to you something special seems to have happened, but they are more often unpleasant than pleasant things. However, now there is something wonderful going on. Last Wednesday evening, 8 September, we

sat around listening to the seven o'clock news and the first thing we heard was: "Here follows the best news of the whole war. Italy has capitulated!" Italy's unconditional surrender. The Dutch program from England began at quarter past eight. "Listeners, an hour ago, I had just finished writing the chronicle of the day when the wonderful news of Italy's capitulation came in. I can tell you that I have never deposited my notes in the wastepaper basket with such joy!" "God Save the King," the American national anthem, and the "Internationale" were played. As always, the Dutch program was uplifting, but not too optimistic. (pp. 108–109)

Goebbels, on the other hand, wrote:

September 9, 1943

A sensational development took place in Italy in the course of the day [yesterday]. In the morning the British and American papers were already able to report the news—which proves that the Italians have cheated us to beat the band. . . .

During the afternoon we received more detailed news, until the actual facts became apparent at 6 P.M., first via the London radio. Without telling us a single word about it in advance, Badoglio has offered unconditional surrender and concluded an armistice with the enemy powers. This armistice is to be effective immediately. Eisenhower, who concluded the armistice, urged the Italians to chase the German troops out of the country.

. . . [T]he Fuehrer . . . is incensed about developments. Only a few hours before his unexampled treachery, Badoglio informed our Counsellor of Legation . . . that he wasn't thinking of leaving the fighting Axis front, and that we would still have occasion to see how an Italian general keeps his word. Well, now we certainly know how he does it! . . .

The Italians are deserting us in our most critical hour. But I suppose they realize fully that they have thereby chosen the most disgraceful fate that history can record. They have lost face. Certainly one cannot break one's word twice in the course of a quarter century without smirching one's political honor for all time to come. (pp. 486–487)

I invited my students to look closely at the two accounts to compare how they communicated stances on the historic event. Students pulled out details such as Frank calling Italy's surrender "wonderful" and Goebbels labeling it "sensational" and "unexampled treachery." Students also noticed the stylization of Anne's entry: In quoting the radio show, Anne uses the words of the British newscaster to capture her own perspective on the events, whereas Goebbels summarizes the events and the behind-the-scenes conversations between himself and Hitler. What is fascinating—especially in our present Internet age—is how we get a blow-by-blow account of how the news reached both Anne and Goebbels on Wednesday, September 8, on British radio shows

(*not* on the Internet!). Through rhetorical examination of contrasting reports of the same event, students explored how—even as history unfolded—its construal was vastly different, depending on who was experiencing, reporting on, and responding to the events.

The great irony—and one that students were quick to point out—is that Goebbels himself, along with other leaders and followers of the Third Reich, chose “the most disgraceful fate that history can record” by carrying out mass murder. Another rhetorical possibility in a text like the Goebbels diary is to ask of it: What can we infer counts as right and wrong for this person? What might he need to believe about the world and the moral order to write as he does? We get a clue about the Nazi prioritization of “honor” to the state, for example, in Goebbels’s final paragraph above. By examining the words of Goebbels about the Jews elsewhere in the text, students could also observe how the atrocities of the Holocaust unfolded by *state-sponsored design* (most notably, the Final Solution) and how individuals such as Goebbels and “The Fuhrer” shaped and debated and reshaped that design.

Examining Identification and Division in Holocaust Texts

A second rhetorical pathway for addressing the Nazi genocide in its broader ethical context involves guiding students to pay attention to how texts are used to promote identification and division. This is a more analytic take on the sort of personal identification promoted within reader-response approaches and I think it can serve as a useful complement to such identification. The notion of examining identification as part of rhetorical study was advanced by Kenneth Burke, who wrote throughout the Holocaust years and made sense of the rise of the Third Reich in part through the study of rhetoric. In Burke’s (1969) view, a central use of rhetoric is to promote identification and division. Identification, on the one hand, entails writers or speakers striving to identify or connect their ways of speaking or writing with those of their audiences or readers, thus to persuade those audiences. In this way, rhetoric is not just about individual language choices, but it is about tapping into collective sensibilities and beliefs. Division is part of this process, for writers or speakers often divide themselves from others through a range of available means, separating “us” from “them.” For example, the strategies that Hitler and the Nazi propaganda machine used to represent Jews as “inhuman” or “other” are well documented. There are numerous possibilities for studying how these rhetorical processes played out and continue to play out in texts surrounding the Nazi genocide.

One way to explore identification and division is through critical

examination of Nazi propaganda. Especially in the context of teaching argumentative writing and speaking, such study can add an ethical dimension to the study of argument, showing how much may be at stake in the crafting and acceptance of arguments, such as Hitler's, that come to have widespread influence. Two websites about Nazi propaganda provide a valuable resource for examining identification and division:

- › Nazi and East German Propaganda Guide Page (<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa>) by Randall Bytwerk
- › Nazi Propaganda (<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005202>) by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Many of these texts are well worth exploring with middle-level students, particularly the books and other propaganda targeting children and youth. In studying propaganda, however, we should beware the danger that students might lose the analytic stance and find themselves identifying *with*—or, as Kessler (1991) discusses, laughing sympathetically *with*—anti-Semitic rhetoric: handling such distressing readings of hate-filled propaganda can be a central ethical challenge of Holocaust study.

Political cartoons offer another option for studying rhetorical identification and division. Such cartoons were published, for example, by Theodore Seuss Geisel (Dr. Seuss) in 1941 and 1942 (Minear, 1999). As Spiegelman claims in his preface to the collection, these cartoons are “very impressive evidence of cartooning as an art of persuasion. . . . Dr. Seuss’s political cartoons were, perhaps, ahead of their time in seeking to entertain as well as convince” (pp. 6–7). Dr. Seuss takes a clear and vivid moral position as he divides the interests of Hitler and Nazi Germany from “the good” (p. 101) and from the policies the United States should be pursuing (p. 101). Many of the cartoons critiqued the isolationist policies of the United States (e.g., p. 32). Because Dr. Seuss’s cartoons are visually rich and highly stylized, they provide much rhetorical material for analysis and exploration. Foci of using these cartoons in the classrooms could include:

- › the text of the cartoon,
- › the metaphors and allegories of the cartoon,
- › the way the visual and the textual work together,
- › the historical “lesson” of the cartoon,
- › the moral stance of the cartoon (Who is right and who is wrong? And how is that conveyed by the cartoonist?), and

- › the genre of the political cartoon.

A final way to explore the notion of “identification”—probably best used with older students—is to examine how the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum uses “identification cards” to encourage visitors to identify with victims of the Nazi genocide (see <http://www.ushmm.org/education/foreducators/resource/idcards.pdf>). Some of the strategies for promoting identification include:

- › First-person point of view (in some of the cards)
- › Close-up portraits or photographs
- › Detailed description of family
- › Accounts at the bottom of the card about the fate of the individual (whether or not he or she survived the Nazi genocide)

The museum and its online repository include many cards representing those who were adolescents and children during the Holocaust years. Inviting students to study these identification cards as rhetorical texts offers one pathway for meta-exploration of identification as shaped through specific textual and visual choices. They could even take longer texts they’ve read (such as Anne Frank’s diary, *Night*, or *Maus*) and design new cards about the characters, critically reflecting on their own identification or division “moves” as writers. It thus becomes possible for students to build analytic, procedural, *and* affective understandings of how identification is working in texts.

In rhetorical studies of Holocaust texts that bring in ethical questions and considerations, it may be wise to ground the work in students’ ethical frameworks, some of which may be richly informed by religious faith and religious communities (see also Spector [2007] and Schweber & Irwin [2003]). Both Kunzman (2006) and O’Donnell-Allen (2011) suggest the power of engaging students (yes, even public school students) in open discussions about their own religious-based or non-religious-based ethical frameworks on the one hand and those of authors, narrators, or characters in texts on the other. To honestly read and interpret Holocaust texts in ethical terms, religious faith is central for many students (and teachers). And given the complex moral questions, problems, and situations raised in Anne Frank’s diary, *Night*, and *Maus*, why not allow students to fully bring what may be the most salient aspect of their identity to the table? Admittedly such discussion can be difficult, especially given what many feel should be a tall wall separating church and state in public school classrooms. Many may feel as

though they have neither precedent nor vocabulary for engaging such discussions.¹⁰ And what about the comfort of religious minorities in a classroom? Yet given the basic moral affront to humanity posed by the Holocaust (Margalit, 2002), engaging ethical frameworks that include religious faith of students and authors alike may be critical to transactions that overcome—or at least openly address—the ethical and historical problems I have raised.

Beyond Moralizing: The Ethical Purposes of Teaching Holocaust and Other Texts about Disturbing Past

What, finally, is the purpose of teaching Holocaust texts and other difficult literatures about the past in an English classroom? As an early-career teacher, my response tended (rather shallowly, I now think) to be focused on the student reader and his or her capacity for expressive writing and personal identification with characters. Others, such as Hernandez (2001), profess grander moral purposes for teaching about the Holocaust:

[T]oday's students need to learn about the human capacity for evil so they can guard against it. They need to understand that the seeds of prejudice and racism still lie just below our thin veneer of civilization, that racism and prejudice know neither color nor gender, and that acts of genocide are still being committed today, more than fifty years after the defeat of Nazi Germany. *Night* provides our students with the opportunity to gain insight about and reinforce the human capacity for love, understanding, compassion, faith, and respect for life. (p. 59)

The insistence on a reading of *Night* that reinforces the “human capacity for love, understanding, compassion, faith, and respect for life” recalls Vaughn’s (2011) confidence “that all of [his students], regardless of their future vocational paths, will go out and act more ethically in regards to the questions of global conflict, refugees, suffering and need, and cultures that represent different viewpoints (66),” to repeat from the beginning of the article.

As noted already, such moralizing goals emerge from a long ethical tradition in the teaching of English (Applebee, 1974; Brandt, 2004). Through transaction with Holocaust texts, English teachers aspire to do more than engage our students in becoming skilled and critical writers, readers, speakers, listeners, and viewers. We also want to improve our students as moral persons—what nineteenth-century literacy educators referred to, in religious terms, as the “cure of souls” (Brass, 2011) and, in more secular terms, as “personal cultivation” (Hinsdale, 1897, p. xvi). Some teachers—like Erin Gruwell—scale that up to the societal level and seek to teach tolerance and social inclusion through Holocaust study (Danks, Rabinsky, & NCTE Commit-

tee on Teaching about Genocide, 1999; Freedom Writers, 1999), for example, through broader studies of stereotype and prejudice.

This article brings to the surface a tendency to make strong claims on behalf of the moral persuasiveness and subsequent ethical consequences of Holocaust study and, more broadly, the study of other difficult texts about past events in secondary English classrooms, especially within the context of reader response and historical approaches. While I listen to many teachers—like Gruwell, Hernandez, and Kessler—who claim that their students’

While I listen to many teachers—like Gruwell, Hernandez, and Kessler—who claim that their students’ lives were transformed through transactions with Holocaust texts, I wonder at the extent to which these claims actually play out in the life pathways of students.

lives were transformed through transactions with Holocaust texts, I wonder at the extent to which these claims actually play out in the life pathways of students. Do students who have studied the Holocaust or other wartime atrocities actually become “better people” as a result of that literary study? What would count as evidence to support that claim? My own reading reveals scant empirical or historical evidence to support such claims; indeed, my literary reading and my reading of the daily newspapers continually reminds me of

the depth of the human capacity for doing (to quote, from my own ethical heritage, the early Christian apostle Paul) “that which I know I ought not to do.” In light of the historical, rhetorical, and ethical tensions that can accompany transactions with Holocaust texts in English, I am beginning to wonder if we might be wise to temper those grand moral claims about what that study accomplishes in the lives of our students.

One virtue of rhetorical study is its capacity to push beyond morally *didactic* positions toward the exploration of how moral complexities and ethical stances are implicated in the relationship between *word* and *world* (to borrow from Paulo Freire [1970]) that gets crafted in texts and taken up in textual interpretation. It may never be possible, or desirable, to completely un-tether the reading of Holocaust texts with some form of didacticism—and the same may hold true for texts about other disturbing pasts. For example, Holocaust denial is an intolerable and unacceptable response to a Holocaust text. With this qualification in mind, I do advocate for *toning down* the moralizing that often accompanies engagement with Holocaust and many other texts in English.

By spending at least some time dwelling on the rhetoric of representation, whether of the Holocaust or of other distressing historical events, it becomes possible to engage students in investigating precisely *how* texts construct moral stances and collective visions of what is right and what is

wrong. When coupled with dialogue about students' own ethical frameworks (Kunzman, 2006), such rhetorical investigation of morally challenging texts can open up possibilities for "ethical reading" (Booth, 1989; Phelan, 1996) where "students become responsible for their own positions, stances, and beliefs rather than authoritatively or moralistically assuming those beliefs are universally held norms" (Thein & Sloan, 2011, p. 16) shared by authors, characters, and narrators of texts they read or by fellow readers. That, to me, is an interesting and doable project for English.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Jory Brass, Samantha Caughlan, Janine Certo, Leila Christenbury, Patricia Enciso, Karen Spector, and Ken Waltzer for their feedback on the developing manuscript and arguments. I also thank the doctoral students in the Fall 2010 Writing for Publication seminar at Michigan State University for their feedback, encouragement, and delightful camaraderie: Daniel Birmingham, Zoa Bonofiglio, Betsy Ferrer, Lisa Hawkins, Amal Ibourk, Kristin McIlhagga, Abu Bakar Mohamedrazali, Takumi Sato, Sumathi Venkatesh, and Kalamamma Ponnann.

Notes

1. I recognize that my choice to use the term *Holocaust* throughout the article is not without problems. Spiegelman (2011), for example, observes the discomfort many scholars and writers feel in using the term *Holocaust* to label the years that included the rise of Nazism and the Final Solution: "I keep wanting to put the word—Holocaust . . . in quotation marks to disown them. The word Genocide was coined to refer to what happened to my family, and is free of the odd religious implications of 'Holocaust,' a burnt offering" (p. 75). Like Spiegelman, I follow popular usage of the term *Holocaust*, while recognizing its disturbing connotations.

2. According to one survey conducted in Michigan, for example, *Night* has moved into the "top ten" list of most frequently taught texts in secondary English (Borsheim-Black, 2011).

3. Whether Holocaust texts ought to be so pervasive in U.S. classrooms (as opposed to literatures emerging from other genocides, for example the Native American genocide in North America, which implicates U.S. citizens more directly) is a curricular question that deserves serious consideration.

4. Pseudonym.

5. For those interested in exploring this theme further, it may be worthwhile to compare Art Spiegelman's (2011) discussion about the pen used to draw Maus (p. 158).

6. Real name.

7. Whether this charge of trivialization can also be leveled at Gruwell's pedagogy (Freedom Writers, 1999) is an interesting question, deserving of further consideration, that space does not allow me to explore in the present article.

8. For the record, I do think that argument can be made.

9. My thinking about ethics and Holocaust texts has been greatly influenced by Israeli moral philosopher Avishai Margalit and particularly his fine book, *The Ethics of Memory*.

10. See Cindy O'Donnell-Allen (2011), who provides some suggestions about scaffolding small-group discussions about religious differences

Works Cited

- Applebee, A. (1974). *Tradition and reform in the teaching of English*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination*. (M. Holquist, Ed. C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.). Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bauer, Y. (2001). *Rethinking the Holocaust*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Beach, R., Appleman, D., Hynds, S., & Wilhelm, J. (2010). *Teaching literature to adolescents* (2nd ed.) New York: Routledge.
- Bernstein, S. D. (2005). Promiscuous reading: The problem of identification and Anne Frank's diary. In M. Bernard-Donals & R. Glejzer (Eds.), *Witnessing the disaster* (pp. 141–161). Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Booth, W. (1989). *The company we keep: An ethics of fiction*. Berkeley: U of California Press.
- Borsheim-Black, C. (2011, February). *English teachers' uses of literature to address themes of multiculturalism in predominantly white contexts*. Mid-winter Conference of the National Council of Teachers of English Assembly for Research. University of Wisconsin. Madison, WI.
- Brandt, D. (2004). Drafting U.S. literacy. *College English*, 66(5), 485–502.
- Brass, J. (2011). Historicizing English pedagogy: The extension and transformation of "The Cure of souls." *Pedagogy, Culture, and Society*, 19(2), 95–112.
- Britton, J., Burgess, T., Martin, N., McLeod, A., & Rosen, H. (1975). *The development of writing abilities (11–18)*. London: Macmillan.
- Broszat, M. (1979). Hitler and the genesis of the "Final Solution": An assessment of David Irving's thesis. *Yad Vashem Studies*, 13, 75–125.
- Browning, C. (1991). *Fateful months: Essays on the final solution* (Rev. ed.). New York: Holmes & Meier. (Original work published 1985)
- Burke, K. (1969). *A rhetoric of motives*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Danks, C., Rabinsky, L., & NCTE Committee on Teaching about Genocide. (1999). *Tolerant world: Essays and resources for grades 9–12*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Dawidowicz, L. (1986). *The war against the Jews, 1933–1945*. New York: Bantam. (Original work published 1975)
- Dixon, J. (1975). *Growth through English*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Fleming, G. (1984). *Hitler and the Final Solution*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Frank, A. (1993). *The diary of a young girl*. (B. M. Mooyaart-Doubleday, Trans.). New York: Bantam.
- Frank, A. (1997). *The diary of a young girl. The definitive edition*. (O. H. Frank & M. Pressler, Eds.), (S. Massotty, Trans.). New York: Bantam.
- Fraser, J. W. (1999). *Between church and state: Religion and public education in a multicultural America*. Boston: St. Martin's Press.
- Freedom Writers. (1999). *The Freedom Writers diary: How a teacher and 150 teens used writing to change themselves and the world around them*. New York: Main Street Books.

- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Seabury, 1970.
- Glasgow, J. N., & Baer, A. L. (2011). Lives beyond suffering: The child soldiers of African wars. *English Journal*, 100(6), 68–77.
- Goebbels, J. (1948). *The Goebbels diaries*. (L. P. Lochner, Ed. & Trans.). New York: Eagle.
- Hernandez, A. A. (2001). Telling the tale: Sharing Elie Wiesel's *Night* with middle school readers. *English Journal*, 91(2), 54–60.
- Hinsdale, B. A. (1897). *Teaching the language-arts: Speech, reading, composition*. New York: D. Appleton.
- Hogue, D. R. (1995). *Night: Curriculum unit*. Rocky River, OH: Center for Teaching and Learning.
- Iser, W. (1981). *The act of reading: A theory of aesthetic response*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Jackel, E. (1981). *Hitler's world view: A blueprint for power*. (H. Arnold, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Juzwik, M. M. (2009). *The rhetoric of teaching: Understanding the dynamics of Holocaust narratives in an English classroom*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton.
- Juzwik, M. M., Nystrand, M., Kelly, S., & Sherry, M. B. (2008). Oral narrative genres as dialogic resources for classroom literature study: A contextualized case study of conversational narrative discussion. *American Educational Research Journal*, 45(4), 1111–1154.
- Juzwik, M. M., & Sherry, M. B. (2007). Expressive language and the art of English teaching: Theorizing the relationship between literature and oral narrative. *English Education*, 39(3), 226–259.
- Kershaw, I. (2000). *The Nazi dictatorship: Problems and perspectives of interpretation* (4th ed.). London: Arnold.
- Kessler, K. (1991). Teaching Holocaust literature. *English Journal*, 80(7), 29–32.
- Kunzman, R. (2006). *Grappling with the good: Talking about religion and morality in public schools*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Lewis, C. (2000). Limits of identification: The personal, pleasurable, and the critical in reader response. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 32(2), 253–266.
- Margalit, A. (2002). *The ethics of memory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Marshall, J. D., Smagorinsky, P., & Smith, M. W. (1995). *The language of interpretation: Patterns of discourse in discussions of literature*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Minear, R. H. (1999). *Dr. Seuss goes to war: The World War II editorial cartoons of Theodor Seuss Geisel*. New York: New Press.
- Mommsen, H. (1978). National Socialism: Continuity and change. In W. Laqueur (Ed.), *Fascism: A reader's guide* (pp. XX–XX). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Moore, D. (2007). *Overcoming religious illiteracy: A cultural studies approach to the study of religion in secondary education*. London: Palgrave.
- Novick, P. (1999). *The Holocaust in American life*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

- Nystrand, M., with Gamoran, A., Kachur, R., & Prendergast, C. (1997). *Opening dialogue: Understanding the dynamics of language and learning in the English classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- O'Donnell-Allen, C. (2011). *Tough talk, tough texts: Teaching English to change the world*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Ozick, C. (2000). Who owns Anne Frank? In C. Ozick (Ed.), *Quarrel and quandary* (pp. 74–102). New York: Vintage.
- Phelan, J. (1996). *Narrative as rhetoric: Technique, audiences, ethics, ideology*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press.
- Prose, F. (2009). *Anne Frank: The book, the life, the afterlife*. New York: Harper.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1994). *The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work*. (Rep. ed.). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Schweber, S. A., & Irwin, R. (2005). “Especially special”: Learning about Jews in a fundamentalist Christian school. *Teachers College Record*, 105(9), 1695–1719.
- Spector, K. (2007). God on the gallows: Reading the Holocaust through narratives of redemption. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 42(1), 7–55.
- Spiegelman, A. (1994). *The complete Maus*. New York: Pantheon.
- Spiegelman, A. (2011). *MetaMaus*. New York: Pantheon.
- Suleiman, S. R. (2005). *Crises of memory and the Second World War*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Thein, A. H., & Sloan, D. L. (2011, November). *Toward an ethical approach to perspective-taking and the teaching of multicultural texts: Getting beyond persuasion, politeness, and political correctness*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Council of Teachers of English. Chicago, IL.
- Tompkins, J. (Ed.). (1980). *Reader response criticism: From formalism to post-structuralism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. (2004). *Teaching about the Holocaust: A resource book for educators*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Vaughn, K. (2011). Reading the literature of war: A global perspective on ethics. *English Journal*, 100(6), 60–67.
- Wiesel, E. (1982). *Night*. (Reissue ed.). New York: Bantam.
- Wilhelm, J. D. (1997). “You gotta BE the book”: *Teaching engaged and reflective reading with adolescents*. New York: Teachers College Press and NCTE.
- Wolf, S. A. (2005). *Interpreting literature with children*. New York: Routledge.
- Wolf, S. A., & Heath, S. B. (1995). *The braid of literature: Children's worlds of reading*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Mary M. Juzwik is associate professor of Language and Literacy in the department of Teacher Education at Michigan State University, where she teaches courses in writing, discourse, and English education and pursues research on the rhetorical, moral, and religious dimensions of teaching, learning, and schooling. She is incoming coeditor of *Research in the Teaching of English*.