

SPACES OF THE HOLOCAUST:
ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE FORMS IN
BRIAR ROSE, THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PAJAMAS, AND THE BOOK THIEF

by

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B.A., University of Victoria, 2006

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

The Faculty of Graduate Studies

(Children's Literature)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Vancouver)

October 2010

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Abstract

The Holocaust has been increasingly represented in literature for young adults and children; this representation often makes use of alternative forms of narrative. For example, the young adult texts *Briar Rose*, by Jane Yolen, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, by John Boyne, and *The Book Thief*, by Markus Zusak, use the forms of the fairy tale, the fable, and a very unique narrator, respectively, to represent the Holocaust in narrative. This thesis uses Theresa Rogers' identification of spaces of the Holocaust to show which spaces are represented in each text, and Rick Altman's theory of narrative to discuss how the narratives function in relation to the framing and following-patterns used.

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Acknowledgements

I have many people to thank for their invaluable help in completing this thesis. I need to thank Dr. Theresa Rogers for her academic and personal support, for her encouragement and confidence during tough spots researching and writing about a difficult topic, and for her endorsement of my use of her analysis of the literary spaces of the Holocaust. I would also like to thank Prof. Judy Brown for being on my committee and allowing me to benefit from her writing expertise and attention to detail. Thanks are due as well to all of those involved in the Master of Arts in Children's Literature program, particularly Judi Saltman. Thanks to Kathie Shoemaker for her support and for introducing me to Rick Altman's *A Theory of Narrative*.

I need to thank my family for their support: my parents Marian and Roger Kirk, my sister Jillian Kirk, and my grandparents Lloyd and Margaret Main. Thanks to Susan and David VanBlarcom for their interest and continual support. Thanks to Craig Larson for being my first reader, for emotional support, and for giving me a free pass on housework during crunch time. Thanks to my MACL friends for telling me that it could be done and for being a fabulous group to navigate this degree with: Janet Grafton, Elizabeth Walker, Vasso Tassiopolous, Karen Taylor, Shannon Ozirny, and Brianne Grant.

Introduction

1.1 Background Framing the Proposed Research

1.1.1 Holocaust Literature for Children and Young Adults

Holocaust literature has been extensively written about; in particular, debate has focused on what should and should not be represented in fiction about this historical genocide. In the sixty-five years after WWII, the types of stories being written about the Holocaust have changed. A period of relative silence immediately after the war was followed by the emergence of a larger body of works in the 1960s (Bosmajian, *Sparing the Child* xiv). Survivor memoirs dominated for quite some time. More recently, the Holocaust has become the subject of more and more fiction for both adults and for children and young adults (Sokoloff, Review of *Representing the Holocaust* 443). With the increase in fiction comes an increase in the importance of authentically representing history. The consensus has been that although all history is a representation and therefore cannot present the whole truth, there is still an obligation to represent it in an effective way. As time passes, there are fewer and fewer people alive who survived the Holocaust themselves, and there has been an increase in the publication of memoirs and fictional narratives from the second and third generations. The existence of second and third generation representations brings to light the continuing importance of this historical event. The experience of the Holocaust through image and narrative and the way it is represented are important both in the past and now, as we live in a world still affected by the events.

1.1.2 Holocaust Fiction by Jane Yolen, John Boyne, and Markus Zusak

As Patty Campbell explains in her article, “YA and the Deathly Fellows,” in the last few years, “the broader contemplation of mortality has spread throughout young adult literature,” exhibiting a trend of dealing with death and dying in young adult books (357). Campbell cites several possible reasons for this trend, including the possibility that since teenagers believe they are immortal, they find it more comfortable to think about death and dying as they are theoretically further away than adults from the moment they will have to face their own mortality (361). Whatever the reason, the interest in death in the broad genre of young adult fiction certainly ties in with young adult Holocaust fiction. Although Yolen’s *Briar Rose*, published in 1992, would be considered far ahead of Campbell’s trend, which she states began in 2002 (357), both Markus Zusak’s *The Book Thief*, first published in 2005, and John Boyne’s *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, published in 2006, would fit into this category.

All three of these books have the Holocaust as their subject, but their authors have chosen different and distinct ways of representing it. These alternative representations are the focus of this study. According to Lydia Kokkola, “one of the distinctive features of Holocaust fiction [is that] it frequently attempts to revise traditional literary forms and genres” (9). Boyne recognizes this alternative viewpoint in his account of presenting his book to different audiences; he and Zusak at one point presented at an event together, allowing them to discuss “two books which explore a subject from very different points-of-view” (Agnew n. pag.). These alternative forms of narration allow for the representation of different spaces of the Holocaust, which will be discussed in the following sections.

Yolen’s *Briar Rose* tells the story of Becca, who attempts to find the truth about her grandmother’s history as told through the Sleeping Beauty story repeated by her grandmother

throughout Becca's childhood. The novel was published as part of Terry Windling's series on adaptations of traditional folk and fairy tales, and has been the subject of many critical essays and much academic study, as well as contributing to Holocaust courses at many levels of education; for example, in a university English class at New South Wales University (Byrne n. pag.), in a required reading list for Year 12 students in St. Leo's College in Australia (St. Leo's Catholic College n. pag.), and in an English Language Arts Reading Guide for Grades 9-12 for the State of New York (University of the State of New York 16). It has won numerous awards, including the American Library Association Popular Paperbacks for Young Readers; Books for the Teen Age, New York Public Library; *School Library Journal* Best Books of the Year, and the Mythopoeic Fantasy Award (Yolen, "Briar Rose," n. pag.). Yolen had previously written about the Holocaust in *The Devil's Arithmetic*, and wasn't too keen to delve into the subject again; however, she now lists it among one of her favourite works (Yolen, "Briar Rose," n. pag.). *Briar Rose's* categorization as an alternative form of narration comes from the use of the framing story of Sleeping Beauty.

Boyne's *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas: A Fable* focuses on Bruno, the son of the fictional Commandant of Auschwitz. He befriends a boy named Shmuel on the other side of the fence that surrounds the camp. *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* was adapted into a movie, released in 2008, and in book form won two Irish Book Awards in 2006: Children's Book of the Year and People's Choice Book of the Year (Miramax Films n. pag.). Boyne has commented on the subject of the Holocaust in fiction for children: "I don't think that there are any subjects that you can't explore in children's literature. But you've got to be sensitive. You've got to be careful. You've got to think about your audience and not try to frighten them" (Agnew n. pag.). To this end, the story is told from Bruno's point of view, or to use a different narratological term,

focalized by Bruno. He is a very naïve 9-year old boy, who, while he is right in the middle of the evidence of the Holocaust, knows next to nothing about what is going on at “Out-With.” The story is presented as a fable, a decision explained by Boyne:

I just thought because I was changing some facts of the camp, and was making it one step away from reality, a little bit, it was better to call it a fable and have it represent all the camps. I thought it would put a halt, right at the start, to some of the potential criticism, you know, that at a camp the fence would be electrified, and so on. I could say ‘It’s a fable; you’re not supposed to look for the absolute, definitive facts. It’s a fiction with a moral at the centre of it.’ (Agnew n. pag.)

This use of a fable to frame the story and separate it from “reality” is what defines *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* as an alternative narrative form.

Zusak’s *The Book Thief* is narrated by Death, and tells the story of Liesel, a young German girl growing up during WWII. This unique narrator and the situations that Liesel lives through, for example, her family hiding Max, a Jew, in their basement, make for a novel that has made it onto various bestseller lists. It has won such awards as the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best Book (2006), *Horn Book* Fanfare (2006), *Kirkus Reviews* Editor Choice Award (2006), School Library Best Book of the Year (2006), *Publisher’s Weekly* Best Children’s Book of the Year (2006), *Booklist* Children’s Editor’s Choice (2006), Bulletin Blue Ribbon Book (2006), the Boeke Prize (2007), the ALA Best Book for Young Adults (2007), the Michael L. Printz Honor Book (2007), Book Sense Book of the Year (2007), and the Pacific Northwest Young Readers Choice Master List (2009). Zusak explains, “all I’m trying to do, like every writer does, is to tell a story that hasn’t been told in this way before. It’s the hope to examine one small story in the big story that we already know” (Ridge 61). By both using a voice that hasn’t been heard before

and by presenting what one reviewer terms, “the perspective of people who were on the wrong side” (Neill 3), Zusak’s novel is also an alternative narrative.

1.1.3 Narrative Theory and Literature for Children and Young Adults

The field of narratology began in the 1960s and is rooted in structuralist thought. Gerard Genette published *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* in 1980, and his terms and structures have been used ever since. Mieke Bal, in her collection of essays titled *On Story-Telling*, published in 1991, as well as in her work, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, published in 1985, further built on Genette’s terms and redefined those she found flawed. Other narrative theorists -- such as Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, Peter Hunt, David Herman, Suzanne Fleishman, Monika Fludernik, and Patrick O’Neill -- have further contributed to the field of narratology. Although narratology does have its faults, it is still in use today, and its importance and usefulness remain for my study.

In “Beyond the Grammar of the Story, or How Can Children’s Literature Criticism Benefit from Narrative Theory,” Maria Nikolajeva recounts the numerous ways that the study of narratology -- particularly the elements of characterization, plot, perspective and temporality -- can illuminate the study of children’s literature (6). While Nikolajeva outlines the ways in which she believes that the narrative strategies employed in children’s literature directly contradict the primary methods of narrativity in adult literature, I have found in my research and reading that this is not exactly the case. Theories of narratology used for adult literature have just as much relevance when applied to children’s literature. The difference between literature for adults and for children, and the study of it, brings us closer to the definition of children’s literature and how

it is differentiated from adult literature, a persistent question asked of this field, and a complicated one; for example, Nikolajeva asks: “What characterizes a children’s book as narrative, distinct from all other types of narrative?” (5). According to Rachel Falconer, the dominant view of childhood and therefore of children’s literature has changed in recent times, and this is reflected in our attitudes towards literature of all types (31-41). Nikolajeva, for her part, applies narratological research to children’s literature, in the hope that “we may be witnessing the emergence of ‘children’s-literature-specific’ narratology” (14). I would argue instead that children’s literature should be considered Literature, and that a children’s-literature-specific narratology is unnecessary. Discussions of the status of children’s literature considered to be crossover fiction support this view. However, Nikolajeva’s question -- “What characterizes a children’s book as a narrative, distinct from all other types of narrative?” (5) -- gives the application of narrative theory to children’s literature a firm purpose. Nikolajeva’s article gives credence to the application of narrative theory, including Rick Altman’s *A Theory of Narrative*, to my particular study of young adult literature about the Holocaust.

Altman published *A Theory of Narrative* in 2008, and because of his work on what he calls following and framing I have chosen his theory as the methodology for this study. Drawing on Genette’s (and others’) terms for focalization, Altman identified a gap in the representation of what he terms following patterns. Instead of identifying the focalizer and focalizee, as Genette did (*Narrative Discourse* 189), Altman refers to the character being followed and the patterns of following for the shape of a story. Building upon the broader field of narratology, his contribution allows for a different kind of analysis of fiction in the ways in which point of view is discussed. Further details of Altman’s theory will be explained in Chapter 2 in the Literature Review and Methodology section.

1.1.4 Crossover Fiction

The phenomenon of crossover fiction, from young adult to adult and vice versa, has been increasing in recent years. Yolen's *Briar Rose* and Zusak's *The Book Thief* are both examples of crossover fiction. *Briar Rose* was first published for adults as part of Terry Windling's series of updated folk and fairy tales (Yolen, "Briar Rose," n. pag.). It was later reissued by Tor with a new cover for young adults in 2002 (R. Stone n. pag.). The book features an adult protagonist searching for the true meaning behind her grandmother's version of a childhood fairy tale. The many levels of meaning in Yolen's novel accommodate different levels of experience with literature in general and with the Holocaust as subject matter. *The Book Thief* was first published in Australia as an adult title; when it was published in North America it was marketed as a young adult title, possibly because Zusak is known in this part of the world as an author who writes for young adults. His young adult titles include *I Am the Messenger* (2005), *Getting the Girl* (2004), *Fighting Ruben Wolf* (2002), and *The Underdog* (1999), among others. *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* was published as a children's book, but has since been published in an adult version with a different cover, something that is becoming more and more common after what Sandra Beckett refers to as the "Harry Potter Phenomenon" (116).

This indistinct boundary between youth and adult fiction is recognized by John Stephens as he identifies the complexity of young adult literature in terms of linguistics: "complex sentences, especially in conjunction with complex focalization, tend rather to be the province of more difficult Young Adult fiction" (65). My classification of *Briar Rose* and *The Book Thief* as crossover novels introduces further levels of complexity into how and what the books represent in the genre of Holocaust literature, as well as how they are aimed at their audience. Often the decision to market a novel as written for a certain age group comes exclusively from the

publisher and is meant primarily to make it easier for libraries and bookstores to organize their shelves. Yolen's use of a fairy tale makes its classification as a crossover especially fitting; as Bruno Bettelheim states in *The Uses of Enchantment*, "fairy tales... convey overt and covert meanings – speak simultaneously to all levels of the human personality, communicating in a manner which reaches the uneducated mind of the child as well as that of the sophisticated adult" (6). While I would not agree with his underappreciation of the minds of children, Bettelheim's statement sheds light on the different levels of meaning present in fairy tales and in some of their adaptations.

1.2 Principal Research Question and Methodology

1.2.1 Research Question

My research question -- "What are the alternative narrative forms in three young adult Holocaust novels, and what are their effects in terms of the representation of the spaces of the Holocaust?" -- brings into focus the main thrust of my research. Holocaust novels seem to be a genre in which the use of alternative narrative forms thrives. This is demonstrated by authors' motivation to represent the fragments of the experiences of atrocity as fragments. As it is nearly impossible to impart to a reader the full sense of any experience of atrocity, authors seem to lean towards using alternative ways of explaining experiences of events, especially for children and young adults. The alternativeness of the narrative in *The Book Thief* comes from the unique perspective of its narrator, Death. *Briar Rose*'s use of the fairy tale to frame the Holocaust story is alternative to the traditional structure of a narrative, as is *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*' use

of the form of the fable to express the experiences of the naïve narrator. The alternative narrative forms and the main points of the three young adult Holocaust novels -- *The Book Thief*, *Briar Rose*, and *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* -- have been explained above, and will be expanded upon in Chapters 3, 4, and 5. Identifying and exploring the alternative narrative forms is one of two important areas of my research topic.

1.2.2 Methodology

I make the connection between the effects of the form of narrative on the representation of the spaces of the Holocaust and Theresa Rogers' 2005 paper on the most often represented spaces in young adult Holocaust literature, "Disrupting Childhood Landscapes: Mapping Gendered Bodies on to Coming of Age Narratives of the Holocaust," as well as to her expansion of these categories of represented space. Rogers outlines the represented spaces of the Holocaust: hiding/confinement, displacement/transit, and forced labour/imprisonment (1). Since her 2005 paper, Rogers has expanded these categories to include discrimination, ghettoization, camps, marches, witnessing, resistance, liberation, and post-Holocaust memory for generations (personal communication, 25 Nov. 2009). Dividing the representations of spaces of the Holocaust into these categories allows for a discussion and interpretation of how the three different narratives I have selected represent these spaces. Here, "spaces" refers to the literary spaces, which represent the actual events and spaces of the Holocaust; I will apply Rogers' categories to my reading of these novels.

The three books to be studied represent different spaces of the Holocaust, while none represents ghettoization or death marches. *The Book Thief* represents discrimination,

hiding/confinement, displacement/transit, forced labour/imprisonment and camps, liberation, post-Holocaust memory, as well as witnessing and resistance (see fig. 1). *Briar Rose* represents discrimination, displacement/transit, forced labour/imprisonment and camps, hiding/confinement, displacement/transit, forced labour/imprisonment and camps, liberation, post-Holocaust memory for generations, as well as witnessing and resistance (see fig. 1). *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* represents discrimination, forced labour/imprisonment and camps, post-Holocaust memory, and witnessing (see fig. 1). For a brief explanation of which of the three books represent which spaces of the Holocaust, see Figure 1. Beyond listing what these narratives represent, this categorization allows for a discussion of the alternative forms of representation in narration as well as how the narrative forms enable particular spatial representations of the Holocaust.

What is it about the form that these narratives take that allows for these spaces to be represented in them? Through the use of the fairy tale, Yolen can represent Chelmo as Sleeping Beauty's castle in *Briar Rose*. Boyne uses the form of the fable and the naivete of his protagonist to enable the representation of Aushwitz as "Out-with," and to shield readers from a full understanding of the workings of the camps. Zusak has chosen the Death as the narrator for *The Book Thief*, conceivably giving him the ability to represent every single horror of the Holocaust; however, he has chosen to limit the spaces the narrator represents. In the following chapters that outline the details of the application of this methodology, Altman's theory of narratology and Rogers' categorization of spaces will be combined in order to analyze what these books do for the fictional narrative of the Holocaust.

| Represented Spaces | <i>Briar Rose</i> | <i>The Boy in the Striped Pajamas</i> | <i>The Book Thief</i> |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Discrimination | * | * | * |
| Hiding/confinement | * | | * |
| Ghettoization | | | |
| Displacement/transit | * | | * |
| Forced labour/imprisonment and camps | * | * | * |
| Death marches | | | |
| Liberation | | | |
| Post-Holocaust memory for generations | * | * | * |
| Witnessing | * | * | * |
| Resistance | * | | * |

(Table 1: Spaces of the Holocaust in *The Book Thief*, *Briar Rose*, and *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*)

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Holocaust Literature

The Holocaust, as mentioned in the “Introduction,” has been a consistent source of inspiration for writers after a period of silence in the decade immediately following World War II. The debate over how to represent it and even whether to represent the atrocity has consistently been added to, and it continues to be an uneasy topic. According to Adrienne Kertzer, the response and controversy surrounding Roberto Benigni’s movie, *Life is Beautiful*, indicates how “problematic we still find the question of aesthetic response to historical atrocity, particularly as such atrocity affects young children” (203). Many of the books and studies on representing the Holocaust that I encountered in my research referred to Theodore Adorno’s iconic words after his experiences during the Holocaust: “Writing a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric” (qtd. in Kokkola 18). This claim that “the creation of an aesthetic response, by implication a pleasurable experience, is a further form of victim abuse” (Kokkola 18) is a strong one, and one that has been argued against explicitly as well as implicitly in the very creation of art with the Holocaust as its subject. This claim leads to a sense of responsibility and discomfort for authors of works on the Holocaust, and a (justifiable) sense of caution about what can and cannot be represented. Indeed, “[w]hen the Holocaust is the theme, history imposes limitations on the supposed flexibility of artistic license” (Langer, “Fictional Facts” 117).

There are several reasons that authors and critics have overcome the reasoning behind Adorno’s statement, including the fact that the opposite of representation is silence, which is unacceptable as in silence we become complicit with the oppressor (Kokkola 16). Berel Lang writes: “The Holocaust *is* spoken, *has* been spoken, *will* be spoken” (*Future of the Holocaust*

18). This means that the question becomes not whether the Holocaust is speakable, but how to justify what is spoken (Lang 19). In order to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive, we must represent it. Lawrence Langer, in *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*, writes that “literature seeks ways of exploring the implications [of history] and making them imaginatively available” (9). He believes that the “significance of the literature of the atrocity is its ability to evoke the atmosphere of monstrous fantasy that strikes any student of the Holocaust” (30). The writer of literature about the atrocity of the Holocaust has to deal with the fact that “reality often exceeded the power of imagination to conjure up images ... the writer is confronted with the dilemma of converting into literature a history too terrible to imagine” (284). This is a demanding challenge to meet.

In *Preempting the Holocaust*, Langer writes that the “Holocaust reality limits rather than liberates the vision of the writer, historian, or artist who ventures to represent it” (xix). He argues against the “unshakeable conviction that the Holocaust contains a positive lesson for all of us today” (1), and instead believes that, “all Holocaust art, whether memoir, biography, or fiction, is built on a mountain of corpses, so that it can never be a celebration, a triumph of form over chaos of experience” (127). He adjusts this point of view to give a role to Holocaust literature instead of warning all writers from attempting the monumental task: “one role of Holocaust literature... [is to] ease us into a position where we can imagine the struggle for those daily immersed in it” (129).

Because the facts can’t “speak for themselves,” there is a great deal of “mediation between experience and transmission” (Leak and Paizis 7). This mediation introduces contentious issues into the representation of the Holocaust in fiction. Andrew Leak and George Paizis warn that because the event of the Holocaust makes no sense, “any narrativization would

constitute a falsification” (8). This view positions Leak and Paizis within the school of thought that warns that the Holocaust should be represented with the outmost caution. According to them, the Holocaust “looks both backwards and forwards” (14); they believe that Holocaust writers are not as “unfettered in their creation as might seem to be the case: they are not free to create any meaning for the world, but instead find themselves constrained by additional, and possibly unique, concerns for truthfulness and authenticity” (9).

2.1.1 Historical Accuracy

However, historical accuracy itself is problematic. Hayden White has three basic criticisms of traditional narrative accounts about history: narrative is regarded as being a neutral container of historical fact; narrative histories usually employ natural or ordinary rather than technical language to describe events and characters; and historical events are deemed to consist of or manifest “true” stories that have been extracted from available evidence to be displayed before the reader (Kokkola 52). When the history of the Holocaust is represented, these issues become even more contentious. White writes that any representation of history, and any writing, comes from a moralizing impulse. He comments that, “narrativity, certainly in factual storytelling and probably in fictional storytelling as well, is intimately related to, if not a function of, the impulse to moralize reality, that is, to identify it with the social system that is the source of any morality that we can manage” (18). This statement becomes even more meaningful and problematic when it is applied to Holocaust literature, which many argue should not end with a lesson or a moral. However, White continues: “[t]he demand for closure in the historical story is a demand, I suggest, for moral meaning, a demand that the sequences of real events be assessed

as to their significance as elements of a moral drama” (24). While we expect closure at the end of a narrative, the responsibilities of writing about the Holocaust mean that closure is not always available to the author of fiction.

2.1.2 The Holocaust as Common Culture

On this topic of art from the Holocaust, Alvin H. Rosenfeld writes in *Thinking About the Holocaust: After Half a Century*, “Indeed, the language of ‘Holocaust,’ in its manifold verbal and visual forms, has become part of common cultural parlance, even, one might say, of common cultural inheritance” (xi). Further to this, he writes:

[F]or most people a sense of the Nazi crimes against the Jews is formed less by the record of events established by professional historians than it is by individual stories and images that reach us from more popular writers, artists, film directors, television producers, political figures, and the like.... We live in a mass culture, and much of what we learn about the past comes to us from those forms of communication that comprise the information and entertainment networks of this culture – novels, stories, poems, plays, film, television programs, newspaper and magazine articles, museum exhibitions, etc. (120)

These statements bring to light the fact that whether we like it or not, the dissemination of historical information cannot be completely controlled by professional historians, and that events of such import as the Holocaust have affected so many people that it must be represented in an artistic way. This means that although there exists a sense of obligation to be historically

accurate and historically sensitive – an obligation that is not always respected by every author – it seems that the Holocaust has been and will continue to be represented within all forms of art.

Michael Bernard-Donals and Richard Glejzer, in *Witnessing the Disaster: Essays on Representation and the Holocaust*, identify two imperatives in representing the Holocaust in writing: to produce knowledge so that it doesn't reoccur, and to produce in the reader an effect that forces him not to simply recognize the event but to confront it (12). They also explicitly assume that the “knowledge produced in the relation with a work translates into universal ethical action”; it may be “possible to produce knowledge *from* the Holocaust, but not *of* the Holocaust” (12). They are very clear in their belief that “neither art nor narrative redeems the Holocaust with meaning – didactic, moral, or otherwise” (40). Many critics of literature of the Holocaust have this view, but Bernard-Donals and Glejzer state it unambiguously. They continue with the call for the Holocaust to “become part of our cultural ‘myth’ or cultural fabric” (86); they see this beginning to happen, and approve. In reference to the ability of literature to represent history, they write, “the severity of the events witnessed defies the historically transparent writing we generally assume to be the best vehicle for reporting them” (256). This view of the Holocaust as problematic but able to be represented creates a way for authors to incorporate the Holocaust into fiction.

2.1.3 Holocaust Denial

In addition to these issues of representation, because of the presence of Holocaust denial, “authors writing about the Holocaust have greater responsibilities concerning the presentation of the Holocaust as having taken place. There are greater pressures on them to be historically

accurate” (Kokkola 2). Because of the presence of Holocaust denial in our culture, authors of Holocaust literature have the responsibility to represent historical detail in a particular way. Increasingly, the past is only accessible through documents, archives and artifacts; therefore, our knowledge of the past is always mediated and determined by prior textualizations or representations -- the past is only knowable as text (McCallum, “Very Advanced Texts” 148). This complicates the representations of the past, as it is through these texts that we can access the past, including the Holocaust. In fact, “[h]istory is never just a story... the stories we tell are intimately grounded in the histories that produce us and the identities that we claim” (Kertzer, “Canadian Mosaic,” 52). Fiction about the Holocaust is difficult to create at all, and it becomes even more complicated because of the unique problem of the continued presence of Holocaust denial. For, “if one can write the Holocaust, and even rewrite the Holocaust, then perhaps one can also *unwrite* the Holocaust” (Young 23).

2.1.4 How to Remember

Geyer and Hansen further problematize the remembrance of the Holocaust, specifically in Germany, in their article, “German-Jewish Memory and National Consciousness.” They write, “the problem is no longer ‘never to forget’: it is how to remember” (176). In regard to the issues of contemporary times and the fact of the Holocaust being situated in history, they believe that “[r]emembering and mourning will be different because the Third Reich is no longer part of a lived experience: it has become an imaginative construct” (177). Their words connect to the ideas of how to write about the Holocaust when they write, “remembering the Holocaust has shifted from being an issue of motivation (the willingness to remember) to an issue of

representation (how to construct the presence of the past)” (177). The issues have instead become: “[h]ow to enable remembrance in order to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive in the midst of these transformations... This task is all the more urgent, since the Holocaust is becoming exclusively dependent on the representational intellect” (178). This is a call for conscientious representation, and one that has been taken up by writers for adults and children alike.

Zohar Shavit, in her book, *A Past Without Shadow: Constructing the Past in German Books for Children*, believes there to be a “systematic effort by West German society to portray the Holocaust as if it had nothing to do with the Germans themselves, to place blame on the Jews and the Allies, and to depict the Germans as the real victims of World War II” (xvii). This is a much more extreme view of the same issue that Geyer and Hansen identify – that of the many problems that are involved in representation of the Holocaust. Shavit writes of the social role of memory that, an “event’s meaning is not only derived from a succession of events, but also from the link to contemporary events” (74)

Related to Bernard-Donals and Glejzer’s identification of the reasons for representation -- in order to remember and to recognize the Holocaust -- Roger Simon, Sharon Rosenberg, and Claudia Eppert identify different strategies for remembrance. They assert in *Beyond Hope and Despair: Pedagogy and the Remembrance of Historical Trauma*, there are two main conceptions of remembrance: strategic practice, “in which memorial pedagogies are deployed for their sociopolitical value and promise,” and difficult return, “a psychic and social responsibility to bring the dead into presence, a responsibility that concurrently involves learning to live with, and in relation to, loss” (3). Many texts for children on the Holocaust have the message of strategic practice – that it must never happen again, and that through our remembrance, we are working

towards a better future. However, Simon, Rosenberg, and Eppert note that despite all of this remembrance, there continues to be both local and global violence (4). They propose a third form of pedagogy, one that works through the question of “the learning that enacts the possibilities of hope through a required meeting with traumatic traces of the past” (5). This identification of an ideal way of encountering the Holocaust again creates room for authors of Holocaust literature to create fictional representations.

Kenneth Kidd sums up what seems to be a consensus among critics of Holocaust literature: “the Holocaust is at once history and the neverending story, the primal scene forever relived and reconstructed. It is something that must be spoken about but that remains inaccessible. The Holocaust is simultaneously an event that we’ve moved beyond and one that we cannot and must not forget” (122). This idea of an event that cannot be fully represented but one that we must continue to struggle to represent is one that seems to be accepted by authors of Holocaust fiction. As James E. Young writes, “what is remembered of the Holocaust depends on how it is remembered, and how events are remembered depends in turn on the texts now giving them form” (1).

2.2 Young Adult Holocaust Literature

Literature for children and young adults that deals with the Holocaust is subject to the same issues of contention as any work of art made about the Holocaust, if not more. With children or young adults as an intended audience, authors have a different set of considerations about audience and the amount and type of information that it is appropriate to represent. Hamida Bosmajian, in “Narrative Voice in Young Readers’ Fictions about Nazism, the

Holocaust, and Nuclear War,” writes about the implied readers of Holocaust fiction aimed at younger readers. Her point of view is most closely aligned with the three primary texts studied here. She writes that the implied authors of narratives about the Holocaust “avoid authoritative attitudes so that the young reader can question and explore life-threatening myths, paradigms, and emotions by which humanity has led itself to disastrous dead-ends” (309). Similarly to Holocaust literature for adults, “authors have struggled with the question of how much to reveal and how much to conceal in texts concerned with horrific events. Naturally, it is imperative to be even more mindful of these issues with impressionable young readers than with mature ones.... the stakes are higher in writing for children” (Sokoloff 444). In regard to the concern for historical authenticity in Holocaust literature, M.P. Machet writes,

Novels can help children become aware of the Holocaust by conveying some of the complexity of the historical situation and also by personifying the events through fictional characters with whom children can identify. However, if one wishes to achieve these aims then it is important to choose books that are authentic. (114)

The three primary texts studied in this thesis have found a balance between representing the atrocity and shielding their audience to a certain extent from the true horrors of the Holocaust.

As Naomi Sokoloff writes in her review of Lydia Kokkola’s *Representing the Holocaust in Children’s Literature*,

[I]t is important to bring children’s literature more centrally into Holocaust studies and its controversies. Currently, children’s literature is for the most part ignored by the scholars in this area. Even in recent encyclopedias that focus specifically on literature and the Holocaust, writing for children has not been emphasized. While, as Kokkola successfully demonstrates, the study of adult literature brings important issues to light for children’s

literature, the reverse is also true. Children's literature puts adult writing and critical debate into a new perspective, and it deserves more widespread recognition. (447)

Kenneth Kidd would agree, writing: “[d]espite the difficulties of representing the Holocaust, or perhaps because of them, there seems to be a consensus now that children's literature is the most rather than the least appropriate literary forum for trauma work” (120). Children's literature has been accepted as a forum for representation of the Holocaust, although it continues to be a site of contention.

2.2.1 Education and Didacticism

In the 1980s and 1990s, in England and in the United States, the Holocaust became part of the school curriculum for children (Sokoloff 175, Short 197), and consequently the amount of literature for children about the Holocaust grew dramatically. Children's literature itself has a long history of didacticism, stemming from the fact that it is almost always adults who are writing for children, and rarely children writing for children. Didacticism is part of the definition of children's literature, according to Karin Lesnik-Oberstein: “this is what ‘children's literature’ means in its most fundamental sense to every critic who uses the term: books which are good for children, and most particularly good in terms of emotional and moral values” (15-16). However, later in the same article, she states, “the outstanding characteristic of ‘children's literature’ is that it is supposed to speak to the reading child through amusement and inherent appeal, and not through primarily didactic messages, which are described as being merely instructive, coercive, intrusive, or dull to the reading child” (21). Still, “the children's literature critics' didactic-literary split continues and maintains its career as one of the ultimate judgements of the value –

and therefore definition – of children’s literature” (25). Because of the study of the Holocaust in school curricula, much of the literature that tackles the topic of Holocaust literature meant for children and young adults comes from an educational viewpoint.

Rogers addresses this educational basis and the use of fiction in the classroom in “Understanding in the Absence of Meaning,”:

In this post-Holocaust age, in which much witnessing will soon rely on symbolic memorials and on written testimonies – on texts that are sometimes fragmentary, textualized, and whose narrators are in many ways not completely reliable – many questions arise when we consider the ways in which classrooms become sites for taking on the difficult pedagogy of such an event through literature. (261)

Using the literature of the Holocaust in the classroom is often fueled by the pedagogical justification of remembrance – that “in order to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past, we must learn the lessons of history” (Simon, Rosenberg, and Eppert 2). While “such literature can play an important role in helping children develop historical-political understandings” (Mitchell and Smith 51), which is one aspect of Holocaust and historical education, ensuring that this is actually the case is incredibly difficult. Often in education, “stories [are] meant to fill in the details and provide the human dimension of history” (Simon, Rosenbert, and Eppert 17). This can be controversial as the particulars of a fictional story have the potential to take over the historical truths.

Deborah Britzman argues in “If the Story Cannot End: Deferred Action, Ambivalence, and Difficult Knowledge,” that “school curriculum doesn’t have an adequate grasp of conflict in learning” (37). She refers to both the conflict within the learner and the conflict within knowledge itself, making both the material and the delivery problematic. Britzman believes that

the education approach seeks to make the other familiar, in order for understanding to become easier to evoke (44). Bosmajian is also aware of the limitations of education: “without substantive learning over an extended period of time, Holocaust education can easily be reduced to sentimental education, an instance where the young person connects tenuously and momentarily with a survivor” (*Sparing the Child* 142).

Mitzi Myers writes in “Storying War: An Overview,” that “[a]lthough war stories are sometimes categorized as pure adventure or combat zone tales, they are inherently didactic: they inculcate patriotic moral values or, more often, question the morality of war” (19). Implicit in this view is the assumption that literature can affect the ways in which readers think, believe, and act in the real world (Kokkola 11). Supporting this view of literature, Shavit writes: “children’s literature plays an important role in the formation of the child’s world view, as part of his or her socializing process” (294). Bosmajian agrees: “children’s literature has always been perceived as formative in the young reader’s socialization and in the development of aesthetic sensibilities” (*Sparing the Child* xix). Fiction is also used to connect contemporary students with history and allow them to imagine the atrocity of the Holocaust. This is justified by Kokkola: “since no one will really know about the Holocaust, learning to ask appropriate questions and recognize that parts of the Holocaust are ‘unspeakable’ is as much as we can expect from a text” (46). She believes that this is a more meaningful and ethical way to communicate with children about the Holocaust. Similarly, Myers believes that there is a place for didacticism in war literature for children, but that the texts should also seek to “teach the skills of peace” (23).

2.2.2 Crossover Literature

While in this thesis, the three primary texts, *Briar Rose*, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, and *The Book Thief* will be discussed as children's literature, I would argue that both *The Book Thief* and *Briar Rose* are examples of crossover literature, in that they are aimed at and consumed by both young adults and adults. My classification of *Briar Rose* and *The Book Thief* as crossover novels introduces further levels of possible study into how and what the books represent in the genre of Holocaust literature, as well as how they are aimed at their audience. In regard to the difficulty of classifying Holocaust literature, Theresa Rogers discusses Adrienne Kertzer's chapter, "Do You Know What Auschwitz Means?": "Holocaust literature renders all definitions of children's literature problematic, in that these works for children and young adults seem to exist outside of any historical variations in presenting evil" ("Understanding in the Absence of Meaning" 261). Further to this, "Narrating the center of Auschwitz, she [Kertzer] intends, is often avoided in stories for children and young adults because there is no heroism, no victory, no hope to be found there; traditional structures of narrative fall apart or are rejected" ("Understanding in the Absence of Meaning" 261). This narration of the center of the camps is not present in *The Book Thief*, but is touched upon in *Briar Rose* and *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*.

2.2.3 Writing the Holocaust for Children

Lydia Kokkola's *Representing the Holocaust in Children's Literature* is centered on the issues that arise when representing atrocity to a younger audience. Kokkola's study's comprehensive history of the literature of the Holocaust presents others' arguments clearly, and

her stances on the issues that she discusses are pertinent to my study as well. Kokkola presents the “moral obligation” of historical accuracy in writing about the Holocaust (3), while at the same time discussing the unique advantages that fiction has in reaching young readers and expressing the historical facts (7). According to Kokkola, children’s literature about the Holocaust is “particularly susceptible to ideological shaping,” resulting in authors taking on “a highly moralistic set of ideologies in shaping their texts” (7). Despite this, the Holocaust breaks the taboo that “children are not to be frightened,” as Holocaust literature “introduces the child to a world in which parents are not in control, that survival does not depend upon one’s wits but upon pure luck, where evil is truly present, and worst of all, a horror story that is true” (11).

Kokkola paraphrases Terrence Des Pres’ basic principles for Holocaust writing: that the Holocaust be represented as a unique event, that representations are as faithful as possible to the facts, that the Holocaust should be approached as a sacred event, that we must not forget, and that all writing about the Holocaust should adopt an ethical position that fosters resistance to fascist philosophy (qtd. in Kokkola 10-11). In contrast to this, Kokkola writes later that, “[a] book that contains silence (informational gaps) can be more informative on an emotional level than a book which attempts to provide all relevant background” (Kokkola 25). Bosmajian, in *Sparing the Child: Grief and the Unspeakable in Youth Literature about Nazism and the Holocaust*, also identifies one goal for Holocaust literature for children:

The young reader is to become conscious of the Nazi era and the suffering of its victims and, through the act of reading consciously, critically, and emphatically, appropriate a memory – or rather post-memory – that is not part of his or her experience but is supposed to ensure that “never again” will there be a repetition of such a disaster. (xv-xvi)

So, while there will undoubtedly be gaps in the representation of historical details, it is hoped that the implied child reader will identify the need to ensure that nothing of this magnitude happens ever again.

2.2.4 Authorial Strategies

In Sarah D. Jordan's "Educating Without Overwhelming: Authorial Strategies in Children's Holocaust Literature," she states: "One of the best pedagogical tools for educating youngsters about the facts of the Holocaust, for conveying the importance of remembering what happened without explicitly divulging emotionally disturbing information, is children's literature" (199-200). This statement supports an aim that many educators and authors keep in mind: that of educating the future generation about modern history and the Holocaust in general. Jordan repeats throughout her article that one of the major motivations for writing about the Holocaust for children is the importance of remembering "so that they can prevent its happening again" (202). She outlines several ways in which authors "avoid disturbing children by inundating them with information that is too graphic or too emotional for them to handle" (199). These include using child narrators and personalized stories, allegory, Gentile protagonists, and fantasy; some of these strategies are used by Jane Yolen, Markus Zusak, and John Boyne in their novels studied in the coming chapters. Bosmajian states that narratives of survival through the Holocaust are "desperate attempts to justify and make sense out of experience" (322). Furthermore, "[n]owhere is that struggle more evident than in first-person narration" (322), as it is in *The Book Thief*.

Adrienne Kertzer, in *My Mother's Voice: Children, Literature, and the Holocaust*, agrees in many ways with Kokkola. For example, she identifies the effort that authors for children put into including the element of hope: “children’s books about the Holocaust have little interest in traumatized voices. By the end of the story, the child knows more, and what she knows, because it works within the representational limits of children’s books, still allows her to hope” (13). This is certainly in contrast to Langer’s views on art and the Holocaust. Kertzer, in “The Anxiety of Trauma in Children’s War Fiction,” identifies this move towards protecting the child when she writes -- in response to Kenneth Kidd’s observation of the presence of trauma in children’s literature -- “children’s war fiction must be the exception to the norm, given how such fiction continues to be dominated by a variety of narrative strategies intended to soften the depiction of trauma and thereby negate the likelihood of secondary traumatization” (207). She recognizes that children’s fiction often includes fewer details of historical events and fewer representations of the trauma of the witnesses (209).

2.2.5 Endings

While many texts for children representing the Holocaust do have happy endings, Maria Nikolajeva believes that there is actually a trend against this; “In contemporary novels for children, we notice a deviation from the obligatory happy ending, on a structural as well as a psychological level. Instead of closure ... we see a new opening, an aperture” (“Beyond the Grammar of the Story” 7). She even goes so far as to say, “aperture seems a more natural ending for a children’s novel, since child characters are always left halfway in their maturation; they are by definition not fully developed as individuals” (7). However, Bosmajian believes that writers

of Holocaust narratives should produce texts that replace the definitive close with “insistence on irony and open-endedness that encourage[s] participatory and dialogical interactions within the text and between reader and text” (“Narrative Voice” 309). The happy ending is part of “conventionalizing the experience and the survival of Holocaust trauma in narratives that are predictable” (*Sparing the Child* 134). These features -- irony, negation of closure, textual blanks, and author-narrator ambivalence toward revealing specifics of historical trauma (“Narrative Voice” 309) -- are present in *The Book Thief*, *Briar Rose*, and *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*.

Kokkola sees the prevalence of positive endings in Holocaust literature as one way that authors make reading about the Holocaust appealing; the ending should provide some sense of psychological closure, preferably a return to normalcy (132). Additionally, “reading about the Holocaust is not supposed to be ‘fun,’ but if authors are to get their message across to their young readers, they are going to have to provide them with material that keeps them turning the pages” (Kokkola 132). The interaction between attraction and repulsion, or fear, is what creates this page turning quality. Michael J. Martin identifies a trend in recent Holocaust texts for children in which the texts “attempt to move within and beyond this ineffability [of the Holocaust] through disallowing readers a protected space outside of the text” (316). However, authors who attempt this rarely do so successfully; instead, “the reader is typically drawn back to a safe and hopeful narrative space where the text re-subscribes to traditional notions of children’s literature” (316).

Martin aligns this point with Bosmajian’s: that “the Holocaust cannot be seen simply as a life affirming event, but must be recognized as an event embedded in a darker philosophy” (Martin 317). To conclude that a Holocaust narrative is life affirming is to make meaning from it, something that is not acceptable to Martin and others. Instead, Martin supports Bosmajian’s and

Kertzer's call for narrative including "such contrary notions as hope and despair, protection and loss, and faith and uncertainty" (317). This coexistence is important, despite the Western Holocaust narrative's tendency to see hope and loss as existing in a binary relationship (317). Because it is impossible to resolve within a narrative, the reader is encouraged to recognize the atrocity of the Holocaust. Consequently,

[a]n interest in the subject matter, the reading of a single text, even a semester of study does not give one control over or understanding of the event. Instead, the adolescent is left with questions, information, and knowledge that must be worked through, remembered, and then imported into some action larger than self-understanding. (326)

Martin falls squarely into the school of thought that believes in not over-protecting the child reader of the Holocaust text.

2.2.6 Protecting the Younger Reader

However, the adult view of children as needing protection is problematic. It is vitally important to continually present our history, as "children are socialized to repeat the patterns of the adult world" (Bosmajian xii). The instinct to shelter young adults from a topic as important to our understanding of history as the Holocaust reflects a theoretical and ethical position that views children and young adults in a dangerously simplified light. As M.T. Anderson said in his 2007 Printz Award Honour acceptance speech, "there is only one taboo left in young adult literature ... the one element which still gets a *few* adult readers up in arms about whether a book is appropriate for kids – is intelligence" (Anderson). Anderson's *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation; v. 1: The Pox Party* was a Printz Award Honor book in 2007;

Zusak's *The Book Thief* was a Printz Honor Book in the same year. This view of adolescence as full of intelligence and curiosity is presented in these novels, which include complex narrative structures and difficult subject matter. Instead of sheltering adolescents from the world, novels and other forms of stories can help them to further understand it. Anderson continued in his speech to say, "Our children will inherit the legacy of our disdain for complex understanding of the world." Anderson's comment has particular importance when applied to young adult literature dealing with the Holocaust. Elizabeth Goodenough and Andrea Immel also subscribe to this view; in the "Introduction" to *Under Fire: Childhood in the Shadow of War* they write "children, like adults, can be offered challenging texts showing the tragic interplay between private lives and impersonal forces that suggest just how complex negotiations between the demands of memory, imagination, and historical truth can be" (4).

Kenneth Kidd writes in "'A' is for Auschwitz: Psychoanalysis, Trauma Theory, and the 'Children's Literature of Atrocity,'" that there has been a "shift away from the idea that young readers should be protected from evil and toward the conviction that they should be exposed to it, perhaps even endangered by it" (120). This "exposure model" is necessary because "we no longer have the luxury of denying the existence of or postponing the child's confrontation with evil" (121). Kidd argues that a "children's literature of atrocity has been authorized within the last decade, asserted around both the power and limitations of narrative" (121). Even beyond this idea of children's Holocaust literature being authorized, Kidd believes that historical fiction for children in general "has become more than ever a metadiscourse of personal suffering that in turn demands pain from readers as proof of their engagement" (134). Shavit agrees that the "protective approach to children's literature is no longer popular in Western culture" (294). This

idea can be connected to the “difficult return” approach to remembrance identified by Simon, Rosenberg and Eppert.

Bosmajian agrees with these critics when she writes, “if sparing the child is part of the rhetoric of Holocaust narratives for young readers ... then the belief that reading about historical trauma will prevent recurrence is illusory” (*Sparing the Child* xvii). Additionally, the fact that the implied readers are young adults and children, and therefore are likely to have limited knowledge of the historical details of the Holocaust means that “the very limitations of the reader enable the narrator to shape experience into a story that the narrator can bear to tell and the child supposedly can bear to hear” (*Sparing the Child* 137).

While understanding of the scope and full experience of an event such as the Holocaust may be impossible, it is important to make the effort to understand as much as we can. Gillian Avery, quoted in Karin Lesnik-Oberstein’s article, “Essentials: What is Children’s Literature? What is Childhood?” believes that “[the child] has his own defence against what he doesn’t like or he doesn’t understand in the book.... He ignores it, subconsciously perhaps, or he makes something different from it.... [Children] extract what they want from a book and no more” (19). I have found this to be true in my own experiences reading books as a child and re-reading them as an adult. Although these novels do communicate a part of the disaster, children’s natural defenses against what they can’t or don’t want to understand will shield them from what they can’t handle. As Langer writes, “[n]arratives with heroism, resistance, and spiritual uplift do little to help students enter the veiled spaces of the concealed self” (*Preempting the Holocaust*, 189). The balance between representing enough of the atrocity to access this concealed self and to recognize the Holocaust without obscuring it is integral to the success of a Holocaust narrative.

2.2.7 The Child as Narrator

Many texts for children on the Holocaust use the point of view of a child narrator; one example is *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*. Shavit finds that this use of a child narrator can be problematic, however. She writes that an “adherence to the child’s perspective exempts the texts from having to provide insightful presentations of the historic events” (131). This can lead to the war being presented as “a montage of personal experiences,” which can result in a story that ignores significant events and instead focuses on the protagonist (135). This can, to some extent, be said to be true of the protagonist, Bruno, in *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*. A similar idea of the narrator’s presentation of events is present in *The Presence of the Past in Children’s Literature*, edited by Ann Lawson Lucas. She writes that “narrators are didactic for they aim to teach a better future,” and identifies the fact that “children’s writers, in presenting the past, often communicate opinions.... these opinions tend to be relevant to their own era rather than the one described” (xv). The use of a child narrator, or the following of a child protagonist, can result in this expression of opinion.

This idea can be connected to Bosmajian’s identification of an emphasis on the victim in children’s literature of the Holocaust. She writes, “it is this emphasis on the victim and neglect of the perpetrator that make doubtful the effectiveness of the official intent of narratives about Nazism and the Holocaust for young readers, namely the development of the ability to recognize the signs that could lead to a new disaster” (*Sparing the Child* xxii). This focus on the victim avoids the understanding necessary to actually prevent an atrocity like the Holocaust from happening again. However, it is incredibly important for children’s Holocaust literature to present a balance between representing the Holocaust authentically, and protecting younger readers, as “there is an undeniable possibility of doing genuine damage to children by shocking

them and exposing them to unbearable details at too young an age” (Sokoloff, “Childhood Lost” 267).

2.3 Alternative Narratives in Young Adult Holocaust Fiction

The three primary texts studied here, *Briar Rose*, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, and *The Book Thief*, are indicative of a trend of using alternative narrative forms to represent the Holocaust. Noting this, Rogers writes,

[I]n recent coming of age memoirs and fiction of the Holocaust, the distinctions between narrative structure may have less to do with literary genres and their fluid boundaries, given they are all literary representations, than with changing understandings of how the Holocaust may now be represented in the context of the dilemmas of passing into a ‘post-memory’ generation. Traditional narrative structures are altered or even abandoned, as with other symbolic memorials of the Holocaust. (“Understanding in the Absence of Meaning” 261)

Perhaps, realizing that the Holocaust needs to be represented, authors are turning to different strategies to represent atrocity in an authentic but sensitive way. As Alvin H. Rosenfeld writes in *A Double Dying: Reflections on Holocaust Literature*,

This literature has not occasioned any new kinds of writing, but it has greatly complicated all the literary forms it has occupied and seems to be in the process of breaking them down in an effort to find some new, more adequate measure of chronicling a radical evil and the range of human responses to it. (6)

This speaks to the alternativeness of these texts and the fact that many authors of Holocaust fiction have used an alternate form of narration to tell their stories. The Holocaust does not fit easily into any form, and this could be one factor that pushes authors to represent it in a different way. There is a trend in recent war fiction to experiment with both representational form and didacticism (Myers 25). Additionally, the “differing strategies that artists have formulated in their work to provoke history and memories to create respectful remembrance” (Liss 120), are important to research because of their subject matter and because of the importance of authentic and responsible representation.

Considering that children’s books are often thought to present events chronologically, as neither *The Book Thief* nor *Briar Rose* do, among other things, these texts are alternative in their construction, their frames, and their narrators (Nikolajeva 12). *The Book Thief* tells a “highly fragmented, dramatic, and amplified version” (Klassen 3) of Liesel’s story; fragmentation is a feature of Holocaust narratives written as memoirs, according to Kertzer. Robyn McCallum writes that “narrative modes employed in children’s novels tend to be restricted to either first person narration by a main character or third person narration with one character focalizer” (“Very Advanced Texts” 138). Some features of experimental children’s writing include overly obtrusive narrators, such as Death in *The Book Thief*, and parodic appropriations of other texts, like the Sleeping Beauty fairy tale in *Briar Rose* (McCallum 139). By drawing attention to their story-telling function, as Death in *The Book Thief* does, the narrator “seek[s] to validate the status of their narrative as ‘truth’” (McCallum 142).

Referring to Carol Matas, a prolific Holocaust writer for children, Kertzer writes, “[h]er fiction repeatedly demonstrates how and why Holocaust children’s books deviate from the narrative patterns found in ‘mainstream’ fiction” (“Canadian Mosaic” 37). Kertzer wishes to

acknowledge the “problematic nature of revelations in recent Holocaust literature, the way that the secret of the past is rarely fully revealed” (37). She argues against the “universalist reading position” that identifies the home/away/home pattern in Holocaust narratives and compares them to other contemporary literature. To Kertzer, this “minimizes any authentic recognition of historical difference, a recognition that surely is part of the reason that we read historical fiction” (38). This same universalist discourse “keeps readers safe; the very specific details of historical events do not. Children’s literature in general resists representations of painful history” (39). This discussion highlights the complexity of representing the Holocaust authentically for younger readers.

Framing has long been discussed in fantasy fiction, but here in my study it has a more generic purpose: that of creating a recognizable narrative from the numerous events of life. In connection to Holocaust literature, Kokkola comments that the “unusual frequency with which framing is used in Holocaust literature... [is] a consequence of the need to establish normalcy” (155). Altman’s discussion and definition of framing coincides with the use of the fairy tale in *Briar Rose* as a framing device, establishing normalcy for the reader in between the discovery of the survival of Gemma through the Holocaust. This framing is also present in *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* in the form of the fable; the structure of the story frames it in a different way than if the story was simply framed as fiction.

2.3.1 Fairy Tales as Alternative Forms

Jack Zipes has been an important source for my chapter on *Briar Rose*, and also informed my chapter on *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*. His work on fairy tales ties together the fairy tale

form, the Holocaust and children's literature. His description of myths and fairy tales can be connected to the (hopeless) search for meaning in the Holocaust: “[m]yths and fairy tales seem to know something that we do not know. They appear to hold our attention, to keep us in their sway, to enchant our lives.... We keep returning to them for answers” (*Fairy Tale as Myth* 3). Zipes points to the role of the fairy tale in German politics before, and during, the Holocaust (*Utopian* 9). Fairy tales were so much a part of the propaganda of Nazi ideology that the Allied occupation forces banned the Grimms' fairy tales “during a brief period for contributing to the barbarity of the Nazis” (*Utopian* 25).

Indeed, according to Andrea Reiter, “allusions to fairy tales have the same function as religious associations in the camp reports” (185). Fairy tales are a means for former prisoners to explain their experience, serve as a moment of escape, and have an underlying pattern of bad people being punished while the good people were rewarded – this pattern was reversed within the camps (Reiter 185-186). After the war, survivors who wrote memoirs or representations often turned to fairy tales to help them express their experiences: “Fairy tales offered themselves, more readily than other literary forms, as a model for survivors to come to terms with the experience of the camps” (186). This use of the fairy tale, as in *Briar Rose*, is an example of a “literary coming to terms with experiences” (Reiter 189).

Authors' use of fairy tales to frame narratives of the Holocaust has been mentioned by many critics of Holocaust literature. Kidd writes, “fairy tale motifs surface in other kinds of texts about war and especially the Holocaust” (122). He adds, “[t]hrough the fairy tale, people tell stories about challenge and survival, hardship and hope” (132). Goodenough and Immel believe that “[f]airy tales offer ‘portals’ through which children can venture into the dark and forbidding realms of adult experience” (15). In the same collection of essays, Maria Tatar writes that, “fairy

tales... serve as appealing structures for war narratives precisely because they map a symbolic geography that captures the competing energies of wartime experience” (241). Because of this separation from reality, “danger, distress, and trauma are located, not in the here and now but in the ‘once upon a time,’ at a vast remove from reality” (242). This function is very apparent in Jane Yolen’s *Briar Rose*.

2.4 Narratology

2.4.1 Focalization

My research into the field of narratology began with Gerard Genette’s *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, published in 1980. Although many critics and theorists have built upon his theories, his contribution remains important. Genette has had a lasting contribution to the narratologists’ discussion of point of view. He believed that most theorists did not distinguish properly between mood and voice in point of view. He asked strategic questions of narrative; in order to distinguish mood, he proposed asking: “who is the character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective?” (10). To distinguish voice, Genette asked: “Who is the narrator?” (10). These questions have become some of the most important in the formation of the ideas of focalization and the abandonment of “point of view.” From this point, the next question to be asked is whether the character is also the narrator, or if the narrator is someone else who speaks of him in the third person (10). Much of the rest of Genette’s theory classifies terms under the headings of order, duration, frequency, mood, and voice. However, for this study most of

what I researched was from Genette's theories of mood and voice. Much of the narratology that has come after Genette bases its research on his foundation of study.

Mieke Bal critiqued and expanded upon Genette's and others' ideas in *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, originally published in 1985, and in *On Storytelling*, published in 1991. She defines focalization as "vision in language" (*Storytelling* 3); she argues that Genette never explicitly defines focalization, and instead uses it as a synonym for vision, field, or point of view (*Storytelling* 83). Bal introduced the components of change, causality, and an experiencing subject in building upon Genette's work. For example, Bal proposes changes to Genette's categories of focalization (Jahn 101). Bal splits the concept of focalization into different categories in terms of levels: simple, with one focalizer; compound, with more than one focalizer; and complex, when the focalization of a narrative is ambiguous or indeterminate (O'Neill 89). Bal criticizes Genette's theory for his definition of focalization excluding the "psychological meanings of point of view" (*Story-telling* 91).

In comparison to Bal, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan splits the concept of focalization into a three-fold distinction: fixed focalization, in which the same focalizer is maintained throughout the narrative; variable focalization, with two different character-focalizers; and multiple focalization, which combines several types of focalization (O'Neill 86). David Herman describes the concept of focalization in the following way: "to say that an event or object or participant is focalized in a certain manner is to say that it is perspectively indexed, structured so that it has to be interpreted as refracted through a specific viewpoint and anchored in a particular set of contextual coordinates" (303).

Manfred Jahn, in his chapter on "Focalization" in the *Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, describes the division of narratology into two parts: narration and focalization (94).

Narration is the telling of a story in a way that respects both the needs and the cooperation of the audience, while focalization is the submission of narrative information to a “perspectival filter” (94). He describes the narrator’s role as being “the functional agent who verbalizes the story’s nonverbal matter, edits the verbal matter, manages the exposition, decides what is to be told in what sequence, and establishes communication with the addressee” (96). He warns against taking Genette’s questions to determine the difference between mood and voice too literally, and modifies Genette’s definition of focalization to be not only who sees, but the “gradable feature of ‘restriction of narrative information’” (97). Jahn sums up his synthesis of ideas of focalization with the statement that “narration and focalization come out as mutually reinforcing and mutually dependent factors of storytelling” (102).

While many critics have expanded on Genette’s narratological terms, others have argued against them completely. Monika Fludernik in *Towards a “Natural” Narratology*, critiques the concept of focalization, as conceptualized by Genette and Bal, because a precise definition has never been agreed upon (344). Further to this, she believes that the options of focalization are not as variable or combinable as they (Genette and Bal) maintain. She writes: what the “extensive debate on focalization has really demonstrated is that the category is an interpretive one and *not* exclusively a textual category” (345).

2.4.2 Narratology in Children’s Literature

Although Maria Nikolajeva suggests that “narratologists seldom know anything about children’s literature” (11), narratology nevertheless can be applied to produce valuable insights into how children’s literature works. Nikolajeva also notes that “children’s literature research has

a tendency to lag behind general literary theory” (154). This knowledge gap between the literary theory of narratology and the in-depth study of children’s literature is where my research fits. A narratological reading of young adult fiction employing alternative forms of narration to tell about the Holocaust has not yet been done to my knowledge. Narratology asks the question: “How?” in regards to how different components function within a text, and I will use theories of narratology to theorize about how this alternative narration works and how it affects what spaces and places of the Holocaust are represented.

Robyn McCallum, in *Ideologies of Identity in Adolescent Fiction*, writes in support of the pairing of narratology and children’s literature: “theories of narrative, combined with more recent narrative theory, provide ways of analyzing narrative strategies and techniques that have gained popularity in contemporary children’s and adolescent fiction” (10). For example, she identifies the use of multiple narrative strands, multiple narrational voices, the mixing of literary and nonliterary genres and the mixing of discourse styles in contemporary children’s literature (10). Of historical children’s literature, McCallum writes: “historical fiction for children is primarily oriented toward the development of an understanding of the present and of the relations between one’s self, time, place, and others through attaining a sense of history” (168). She argues explicitly for a dialogical approach for historical children’s literature, as it aims to stimulate readers to respond critically to the interpretations offered (170). McCallum also echoes ideas of the limits of textual representation from critics of the Holocaust in literature when she writes, “[i]nsofar as history is generally written, by and from the point of view of the dominant social and cultural groups within a society, accepted versions of history tend to reflect and validate the ideologies and values of the dominant culture” (246). McCallum’s article is a useful combination of narratology and criticism of the possibilities for children’s historical fiction.

Nikolajeva, in “Beyond the Grammar of Story, or How Can Children’s Literature Criticism Benefit from Narrative Theory?” writes that “[n]arratology is gradually becoming a hot topic in children’s literature research” (5). While many theories look at the social context, the author’s intentions, or the reader in children’s literature, Nikolajeva believes that narratology can study the elements of children’s literature that are different from adult literature, such as composition, characterization, and perspective. She also argues against the educational aspect of children’s fiction, as it has “seriously impeded a development toward complex psychological characters, even though we can find examples of these already in certain nineteenth-century children’s texts” (8). She suggests that the use of narratology in critiquing children’s novels allows us to understand why “certain devices work well in children’s books while others do not,” as well as facilitating a historical comparison of themes, values, and aesthetic form in children’s texts (14).

While some narrative theories have been applied to children’s literature in the past, there is a gap in the scholarly application of complex theory to complex youth literature. Many critics have identified the need to look closely at children’s literature with a theorist’s lenses; John Stephens articulates this need: “attention to the language of children’s fiction has an important implication for evaluation, adding another dimension to the practices of judging books according to their entertainment value as stories or to their socio-political correctness” (67). In other words, paying close attention to the use of language in children’s literature will add an additional layer to the assessment of the quality of children’s literature.

2.5 Methodology

Moving forward from the field of narratology, I came across Rick Altman's *A Theory of Narrative*, on the recommendation of my colleague, Kathie Shoemaker. Altman seeks to combine narratology with other theories in order to "disclose the mutual dependence of form and content" (14), something that is certainly true of young adult Holocaust narratives.

2.5.1 Altman's Theory of Narrative

Rick Altman identified a hole in the study of narrative, rooted in the fact that "of all the aspects that characterize narrative, only a few have been singled out for special attention, thus privileging a particular type of narrative and making it all but impossible to give adequate treatment to the full historical range of narrative" (2). He argues that his theory has the capacity to address the reader's relationship to the text, the internal textual connections, and the large categories into which texts may be divided (315). Altman starts with a discussion of several definitions of narrative presented chronologically, and moves from there to his own three-part definition of narrative:

Narrative material encompasses the minimal textual characteristics necessary to produce narrative. *Narrational activity* involves the presence of a narrating instance capable of presenting and organizing the narrative material. *Narrative drive* designates a reading practice required for narrative material and narrational activity to surface in the interpretive process. (10)

Based on this definition and Altman's explanations of his sub-points, I will be focusing on his concept of narrational activity, which includes the concepts of "framing" and "following."

Framing is what keeps texts from being “all middle”; it gives texts a beginning and an end (18). Altman explains that “[t]o recognize ‘some’ narrative, all we need are narrative material and following, but ‘a’ narrative is recognizable only when it has been fully framed” (18). However, framing does not guarantee any organization between the beginning and the end; it is simply the frame of the narrative. Additionally, the process of framing “lends such importance to certain events that they readily appear as the actions required by narrative” (21).

Following, as Altman defines it, “involves the reader’s sense of following a character from action to action and scene to scene” (15), which is where we detect the actions of a narrator – someone or something deciding who will be followed (16). In *The Book Thief*, for example, Death as the narrator first introduces himself, and then overtly shifts the following-pattern to the actions of Liesel’s story. The term “following” seems to me to be appropriate and clear, as it implies both the visual – in the implied camera angles in Altman’s descriptions of his terms -- and the plot patterns.

“Following-units” is Altman’s term for the “series of segments each made up of that portion of the text where a character (or group of characters) is followed continuously” (22). The transitions between following-units are termed “modulations” (23), which are divided into three types -- metonymic, metaphoric, or hyperbolic -- depending on the type of contact between the following-units (24-25). The “following-pattern” of a narrative heavily influences the reader’s perception of it; each following-pattern has specific functional and symbolic purposes, and Altman has identified three different types that are “implicitly recognized and emulated by practitioners” (26-27). These patterns he identifies as single-focus, dual-focus, and multiple-focus.

The terms of Altman's theory will be used to identify in each of my selected primary works the type of narrative (ie. single-, dual-, or multiple-focus), who is being followed in each particular segment, and what the results of this following pattern are. The three texts being studied are all examples of alternative forms of narration, whether it is Zusak's use of Death as a narrator, Yolen's use of a fairy tale as a frame, or Boyne's use of the fable. While Altman does not use the terms point-of-view and focalization, these terms used by other narratologists will round out my discussion of alternative narrative forms.

2.5.2 Spaces of the Holocaust

Theresa Rogers' theory of spaces of the Holocaust, from her paper, "Disrupting Childhood Landscapes: Mapping Gendered Bodies on to Coming of Age Narratives of the Holocaust" builds somewhat on Margaret R. Higonnet's "Introduction" in *Reconfigured Spheres: Feminist Explorations of Literary Space*. In this paper, "space" is described as the "literary representation of space," which "intertwine[s] physical, social, and political territories" (1). This representation of space, applied to literary representations of the Holocaust, allows for a discussion of what is represented and how in a given text.

Rogers outlines the represented spaces of the Holocaust: hiding/confinement, displacement/transit, and forced labour/imprisonment (1). Since the publication of her article, Rogers has expanded these categories to include discrimination, ghettoization, transportation, camps, marches, witnessing, resistance, liberation, and post-Holocaust memory for generations (personal communication, 25 Nov. 2009). Dividing the representations of spaces of the Holocaust into these categories allows for a discussion and interpretation of how the three

different narratives I have selected represent these spaces. Here, spaces refer to both the physical spaces and the literary spaces in which these categories are represented. For example, of the three books to be studied here, *The Book Thief* represents hiding/confinement, displacement/transit, forced labour/imprisonment, as well as discrimination, marches, witnessing, and post-Holocaust memory. *Briar Rose* represents all of these spaces, while *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* represents camps, witnessing, and post-Holocaust memory. Beyond listing what these narratives represent, this division allows for a discussion of the alternative forms of representation in narration and how the narrative forms allow for particular spatial representations of the Holocaust.

2.6 Conclusion

This literature review informs my study of the alternative narrative forms and the spaces of the Holocaust represented in these three young adult Holocaust texts: *Briar Rose*, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, and *The Book Thief*. The overview of the main arguments in the field of literature from the Holocaust is important in order to shed light on the consensus that the importance of representation outweighs the concerns of those such as Theodor Adorno, who stated, “[w]riting a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric” (qtd. in Kokkola 18). Instead, “[t]he Holocaust *is* spoken, *has* been spoken, *will* be spoken” (Lang, “Holocaust Genres” 18). In fact, in time, “the boundaries separating the historical moment from its imaginative rendition will be blurred” (Langer, “Fictional Facts” 118). The issues when representing the Holocaust for children become multiplied because of the age of the implied audience, and the different approaches – protecting the child from a full sense of knowledge, using authorial strategies to

limit the impact, or providing a hopeful ending – arsupported by various critics. The outline of the main developments around point of view in narratology provide a background for the application of Altman’s theory in my study, and allow for a more balanced understanding of the strengths of Altman’s theory of narratology. A discussion of Theresa Rogers’ theory of spaces supports its application in the coming chapters.

3.0 *Briar Rose*

“Writers and storytellers are the memory of a civilization, and we who are alive now really must not forget what happened in that awful time or else we may be doomed to repeat it.”

-Jane Yolen (RoseEtta Stone Interview)

3.1 *Briar Rose, the Sleeping Beauty Fairy Tale, and the Holocaust*

As stated in the “Introduction” to this study, the origins of *Briar Rose*, by Jane Yolen, are in Terry Windling’s collection of fairy tale adaptations. Yolen originally turned down the project as she thought that the Holocaust was too emotionally taxing a story to deal with so soon after writing *The Devil’s Arithmetic* (Yolen, “Briar Rose,” n. pag.) However, she soon changed her mind, and the story came into being. *Briar Rose* was originally written as an adult novel, but was soon labeled a young adult, or even crossover story, as evidenced by the numerous children’s literature awards it has received, and its reissue by Tor Publishers as a young adult title in 2002 (Stone n. pag.). Yolen describes her book as being

a novel by definition; it uses the fairy tale motif as both a thematic underpinning and as transitional material. But some (including my editor), would say the book itself is a fairy tale in that it uses fairy tale logic and has a fairy tale at the core since no women actually escaped from Chelmo. (Stone n. pag.)

Bruno Bettelheim refers to Tolkien’s statement that one essential component to a fairy tale is the happy ending (143); The novel *Briar Rose* ends on a relatively positive note, with Becca reflecting on whether Gemma’s life was a happy one (39). However, at the end of the story, in the “Author’s Note,” Yolen opposes her “happy” ending when she writes: “I know of no woman who escaped from Chelmo alive” (241). This functions as a paratext, one strategy for signaling

factuality, to tell younger readers how much of the text is based on historical evidence (Kokkola 57). Kenneth Kidd writes that this repudiation of her happy ending allows Yolen to suggest that “while this particular plot element isn’t accurate, the novel is still true to history – that is, to deeper psychological truths” (132). Jack Zipes writes: “Yolen demonstrates that fairy tales can be used to address the most atrocious crimes of the Nazi period in a manner that generates hope in readers who, Yolen believes, must come to terms with Auschwitz and its consequences” (*Fairy Tale as Myth* 152).

Yolen is not the first or the only artist to connect the form of the fairy tale to the Holocaust; the Hansel and Gretel fairy tale was used in *Kindergarten* by Peter Rushforth, published in 1980; *The True Story of Hansel and Gretel*, by Louise Murphy, published in 2003, also retells the fairy tale as a story of the Holocaust, and critics have seen the movie *Life is Beautiful*, by Roberto Benigni, released in 1997, as a fairy tale as well. While Yolen has not commented in interviews on why she chose the Sleeping Beauty fairy tale for this novel and for this representation, her previous interest is shown in an earlier illustrated book adaptation, *Sleeping Beauty*, published in 1986, as well as a short story adaptation, “The Thirteenth Fey” (Zipes, *Fairy Tale as Myth* 156). Robin Mara identifies several reasons to use fairy tales in traumatic stories for children in her article on Yolen’s *Briar Rose*.

The Sleeping Beauty fairy tale, in particular, has a long history, from oral tale to the collected tales of Giambattista Basile, Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm (de Vos and Altman 271-2), and as with many fairy tales, can be seen in endless permutations. In Terry Windling’s “Introduction” to *Briar Rose*, she mentions that it is the German version of the tale, titled “Briar Rose,” which Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm collected; this is the version that Yolen builds her story from (xii). However, Yolen’s adaptation is unique in its revealed subject matter

– the Holocaust -- and its narrative patterns. Gail de Vos and Anna Altman, in *New Tales for Old: Folktales as Literary Fictions for Young Adults*, analyze the changes, additions and deletions of different versions. Perrault’s version has a less well-known second part, in which Briar Rose goes to live with her new husband’s mother, who turns out to be an ogre and tries to eat her and her children (de Vos and Altman 269). This “gruesome coda to the tale no longer appeared after the eighteenth century in children’s editions” (271), which demonstrates the continual editing of material for suitability for children, as well as editing to suit the changing of values in society. In more modern times, most of the general public knows the Disney version of the fairy tale, in which the first part of the story wraps up in a happy ending, and, as in many Disney versions, important details and commentaries are removed and sanitized (Zipes, *Subversion* 193). Yolen’s version does no such thing.

De Vos and Altman write of Yolen’s *Briar Rose*, “[t]his is a difficult book to summarize, as the myriad of layers and stories are interwoven so well that the individual threads are often too complicated to unravel, particularly for the mere satisfaction of analysis” (299). They use “tale type” to discuss the different components of the fairy tale and list the motifs. Of the ones listed in their selection, the version of Sleeping Beauty that Yolen uses includes the following: “Fairy takes revenge for not being invited to the feast,” “Fairy lays curse on child,” “Magic sleep through curse,” “ Castle in which everyone is asleep,” “Hero finds maiden in (magic) castle,” and “Waking from magic sleep by kiss” (270). This pattern is fairly minimalistic compared to the longer and more complicated version that Perrault tells (268). However, its power to express an experience of the Holocaust to modern readers cannot be denied. Jack Zipes, in *Fairy Tale as Myth, Myth as Fairy Tale*, sums up Yolen’s *Briar Rose*:

It moves through memory, flashbacks, and a retelling of “Sleeping Beauty” from the present to the horrors of the Holocaust. In her haunting narrative that reads something like a mystery novel, Yolen demonstrates that fairy tales can be used to address the most atrocious crimes of the Nazi period in a manner that generates hope in readers who, Yolen believes, must come to terms with Auschwitz and its consequences. (152)

This mystery-novel function contributes to the narrative pace of *Briar Rose*, as well as adding to its accessibility. The ability to generate hope in a narrative dealing with the Holocaust is an important one, which must also be balanced with a responsible representation of the actual events. According to Zipes, Yolen has been “transforming the traditional fairy tales into problems without solutions” for the past twenty years (*Myth* 155). In *Briar Rose*, Yolen treats the problem of the Holocaust without giving a definitive answer, other than that its effects are traumatizing and must be recognized by the generations that come after the event. Yolen also “honors Gemma’s inability to tell her own tale” (Kokkola 30) in the hidden way in which the story is presented.

Flashbacks occur in alternating chapters in Yolen’s novel, illuminating Becca’s memories of her grandmother telling her own version of “Sleeping Beauty,” a much darker story than the ones her friends have heard. When Gemma dies after repeating her only dying words, “I am Briar Rose” (17), Becca resolves to find out the historical truth behind this claim, revealing a dark history and Gemma’s experiences during the Holocaust. Moving between the flashbacks to the repetition of Gemma’s story and Becca’s search for Gemma’s history is a narrative technique that provides suspense and tension and paces the story in a much more interesting way than if it were simply organized chronologically. The flashbacks also work to protect the younger reader emotionally; while Gemma’s horrifying experiences during the Holocaust are uncovered, they

are broken up by the retreat to a safe childhood memory of the safety of story time, even if the truth behind story time becomes more and more gruesome. The flashbacks to a fairy tale allow the younger reader to “partially deal with the truth by writing it off as a fairy tale, as fantasy, yet they [the readers] can never completely deny its validity as Yolen herself asserts the story’s fictitiousness” (Kokkola 209). In this way, the delicacy of representing atrocity for children and young adults is respected. In line with this thought, Rogers writes, “This narrative move calls to mind the argument found in the literature about the Holocaust that in the face of cruelty beyond the imagination of sane people, it may be reasonable to draw on fantasy” (*Understanding in the Absence of Meaning* 264). For Gemma, at least, this departure into fantasy is the only way she can express her past. Kokkola contends that “this use of silence to indicate the problems Gemma faces in integrating her past with her present, her loss of voice and, therefore, agency as a survivor passing on her tale to her community is a powerful means of presenting the enormity of events” (30). The flashbacks mete out the enormity of the Holocaust in more manageable sizes to the reader.

Briar Rose has been used in educational settings to bring to light a more personal account of the Holocaust, while basing it in the comfortable realm of a familiar fairy tale (Yolen, “Briar Rose,” n. pag.). Several guides to teaching the Holocaust to young adults as a way to bridge the gap between History and English literature mention *Briar Rose* as a useful text (Byrne n. pag., St. Leo’s Catholic College n. pag., University of the State of New York 16). Martin L. Davies and Claus-Christian W. Stejnmann quote David Bloxham and Tony Kushner’s statement: “in Britain [the] study of the Holocaust is now on the national curriculum, an educational imperative” (xxv). While using fiction to represent history can be problematic, it does create a personal connection to the facts of history and a bridge to understanding for students. It is used in

many classroom situations to cultivate a sense of empathy and understanding for different groups of people. It does teach young readers about historical events in particular ways. The spaces of the Holocaust represented in Holocaust literature for children and young adults are the re-creation of history in a fictional setting, allowing for the audience to vicariously experience parts of the historical period. The authors create fictional spaces where these events could have happened, and in this way, they connect with the “real” history of the Holocaust. This is a re-creation of history, like all historical fiction, but it does reflect the real events of the Holocaust. Most writers try to represent the historical places as truthfully (versus accurately) as they can.

Kallie George, in her thesis, “Spinning the Wheel: The Use of Folktales in Fascist Germany and in Contemporary Young Adult Fantasy,” identifies two schools of thought on the use of the fairy tale or of fantasy in works dealing with the Holocaust. The first group believes that the folktale function is a “consolatory narrative device to ease readers into such horrific history” (17). This viewpoint connects to the idea of consolation as an important part of children’s literature. The second group believes that the folktale is a “historically valuable narrative, an oft-rewritten literary genre that captures part of the society and time in which it is retold” (18). This viewpoint makes a strong connection to the psychological function of the folktale, which can be used as a way to deal with trauma. *Briar Rose* could be used as an example of both of these groups.

3.2 Narratology Applied to *Briar Rose*

The Sleeping Beauty fairy tale is used as a framing device in this particular novel in several ways. Framing is an important part of Rick Altman’s theory of narrative and it becomes

integral to the structure of *Briar Rose*. According to Altman, framing “gives a text its beginning and end. Framing delimits the text but does not guarantee any particular internal textual organization” (18). The process of framing provides the structure for revealing a focus for the story. While in many narratives, the framing simply allows for an understanding of a beginning and ending of the narrative, in *Briar Rose*, the framing has even more meaning. The framing device of the Sleeping Beauty fairy tale is used as a structure for Gemma’s recounting of her life story, as the trail of clues for Becca to follow in her search, and as the final chapter of the novel, integrating Gemma’s story, Becca’s discoveries, and the original fairy tale into the complete version of the altered story that Gemma had always told her grandchildren. As Kokkola states, “Gemma is trying to pass on her history to her grandchild but can only express herself through the framework of a fairy tale” (31). The framing pattern works in tandem with the flashbacks, creating the tension of a mystery story combined with an interesting alternative to a familiar fairy tale.

Every second chapter of *Briar Rose* begins with a snapshot memory of story time with Gemma. This fragmented story is told over the length of 33 chapters; it is only with the last chapter of the book that Gemma’s life story (as told through fairy tale) is completed, despite Gemma’s death occurring in the second chapter. Each of the fairy tale’s components is a metaphor for Gemma’s own life and her experiences during the Holocaust, whether it is a conscious connection that she has made, or a buried memory, which she is only able to express in this way. The components that most closely resemble the version of the story that Gemma adapts are from the Grimms’ representation. Their “Sleeping Beauty” fairy tale includes:

- (a) a wished-for child;
- (b) a celebration when the child comes, to which 12 fairies of the land are invited;

- (c) the 12 fairies giving blessings to the child;
- (d) the 13th, uninvited fairy cursing the child to die when she pricks her finger on a needle;
- (e) one good fairy softening the curse by decreeing that the child will fall asleep;
- (f) Briar Rose [the princess] pricks her finger on a spindle and falls asleep;
- (g) her parents and the court fall asleep at the same time;
- (h) a prince kisses the princess to wake her up after 100 years;
- (i) the story ends with Briar Rose [the princess] waking up. (de Vos and Altman 276-277)

The Sleeping Beauty fairy tale's events can be read as metaphors for the Holocaust in a number of ways. Within the story, the character of Briar Rose represents Gemma, the bad fairy is "in black with big black boots and silver eagles on her hat," mirroring the image of German soldiers (19), and a mist is defined to Becca as "an exhaust" (43), calling to mind the deadly gas of the gas chambers. Gemma's prince is a homosexual partisan who rescued her and revived her with his own breath (207); not only is he the one to bring Gemma back from her "sleep," but his nickname since his theatre days was "Prince," because of "his manner and because the student [in the partisan group] had known something of the Potocki family, being a Pole himself" (182); however, his family's connection to Polish aristocracy was "more a matter of long memory than money" (165). Josef relates his own life to a fairy tale when he is told about his mother's love for his real father: "He never was to know whether that story was, like all her stories told to him late at night, a fairy tale or real" (188). The thorns that grow around the castle in the fairy tale are matched by the barbed wire fences surrounding Chelmo, and the 100-year sleep that anyone in the castle is put under lasts forever, underscored by Gemma's response to Becca's questioning: "Is a hundred a lot?" "A hundred years is forever" (44). The parallels between the two stories,

the Sleeping Beauty fairy tale and *Briar Rose*, are striking enough to question how no one had retold this tale in this way before.

In terms of the narrative technique that Altman refers to as following, most of the novel follows Becca, although an important part of the story follows Joseph Potoki, Gemma's prince. While Altman doesn't use the term focalization, his theory's description does touch on the function of focalization: "the position or quality of consciousness through which we 'see' events in the narrative.... Usually the narrator is our focalizer, but it is important to keep in mind that focalizing is not necessarily achieved through a single consistent narrative consciousness" (Abbott 190). Following can be distinguished from point of view, or focalization, as point of view always involves "the use of a character as a secondary filter of information" (Altman 22), while wherever there is narrative, there is following. Altman describes the following pattern of a narrative in the following way: "[r]evealing narrational activity while organizing the narrative material, the process of following contributes heavily to narrative rhetoric and meaning" (21). Additionally, the process of following "convinces us of the existence of a character" (21). Therefore, when a character is followed, as Becca and Joseph are, he or she becomes a more believable character and has the opportunity to convince the reader to subscribe to their view of the world.

In his narrative theory, Altman uses the term "following-unit," which is "a series of segments each made up of a portion of the text where a character (or group of characters) is followed continuously" (22). These following-units, when linked together, form the following pattern for a particular narrative. In *Briar Rose*, the following pattern is neatly organized by chapter breaks; one section will follow Becca as a child listening to Gemma's recurring story, and the next will follow Becca as a young adult unraveling the mystery of her grandmother's

life. While each of these sections could be termed one following-unit, the organization and separation of the chapters support the argument that each chapter following Becca is its own following-unit; the change in temporality from childhood and the past to Becca's present is another aspect of this separation. In this case, the following-units alternate and form a fairly complicated following pattern.

The "following pattern" is an important part of Altman's theory, and an important feature of *Briar Rose*. It contributes to our understanding of the text because "[o]ur perception of any given narrative is heavily marked by the interdependence of individual following-units and the overall following-pattern perceived in the text" (Altman 26). Here, the following-pattern, which switches from Becca's present to past, and then to Josef, contributes to the mystery-novel-like feeling of the story, and to the suspension of information; it is not until the end of the novel that the reader has access to the whole fairy tale or to the actual events in Gemma's past. In the last third of the novel, the following pattern shifts and Josef Potocki is followed in the text. Each chapter following Josef begins with the same pattern: "You must understand (he said) that this is a story of survivors, not heroes" (163); "Picture if you can (he said) an enormous semicircle, the outside edge enclosed by the arched stone wall" (174); "Forget every romantic notion you have ever had about the partisans (he said) for they were all incorrect" (180); "It is difficult to believe (he said) that Josef P. made it to his stepfather's estate alive and unharmed" (187); "How does one become a man of honor (he asked); how does one redeem a life?" (196); "'Ein Tag-ein tausend,' (he said)" (212). By repeating "(he said)" at the beginning of every chapter that Josef narrates, Yolen emphasizes the fact of his secondary narration aimed at Becca and her friend Magda. Josef is a character in his own following-units; he is followed both in the present, as he narrates his tale, and in the past, as he describes the path his life took during the Holocaust. His

section of the novel ends when his narrative ends and the mystery of Gemma's past is revealed to Becca and to the reader.

According to Altman's division of narratives into single-focus, dual-focus, and multiple focus narratives, *Briar Rose* belongs in the multiple-focus category as there are multiple characters and viewpoints that focus the narrative. As mentioned above, Becca's, Gemma's, and Josef's stories are told. This corresponds to Altman's characteristics of a multiple-focus narrative: "[a] following-pattern that attends, in turn, to several different characters," "[h]yperbolic modulation between successive following-units ... marked by the use of white space, chapter divisions, or other separation devices," "[p]resentation of separate sections as preexisting, whether borrowed from tradition, written accounts, documentary footage, or reality itself," "[d]ependence on plot devices justifying contact among diverse characters (crowd scenes, carnivals, wars, natural disasters, etc.)," "[p]resentation of multiple separate views of the same event, thereby lending depth, volume, and complexity, while contesting simplistic explanations of the event," and "[s]ignification that works like a mosaic and its tesserae: the separate following-units of multiple-focus narrative eventually signify as a whole something quite different from what they represent individually" (289). This last point is especially important; without the portions of the story in-between Gemma's story, we would have only a fairy tale that sounds as if it has been changed slightly, without any of the overt connections to the Holocaust at all.

This analysis of the following pattern and of *Briar Rose* is important as it reveals the spaces of the Holocaust that are represented through the framing of the story as a retelling of a fairy tale. The function of following allows the characters, and therefore the readers, into the spaces of the Holocaust. The sole purpose of Josef's narrative is to represent the particular spaces

of the Holocaust that are present only in his story and his information about Gemma's experiences. Therefore, it is appropriate to the flow of narrative information in *Briar Rose* that Josef's narrative comes at the end of the story. While Gemma does represent the Holocaust throughout the novel in her retelling of *Sleeping Beauty*, it is not until the end of the novel that this representation becomes clear.

3.3 Spaces of the Holocaust in *Briar Rose*

The concept of spaces, explained in Chapter 2, and based in Rogers' analysis of the spatial representations of the Holocaust in young adult literature, brings an explanation of what spaces of the Holocaust are represented in these young adult novels. Her work leans on the work of literary theorists such as Margaret R. Higonnet, who argues in her "Introduction" to *Reconfigured Spaces* that the female bodies in literature are often inscribed onto the symbolic representation of space in literary works. Space means *only* literary space, and represents physical space, or geographical and historical places; this broad understanding of space allows for a connection between historical literature and historical events. This particular understanding of place allows for a representation of historical literature. *Briar Rose* represents many of the spaces identified by Rogers as spaces of the Holocaust: discrimination, hiding/confinement, displacement/transit, forced labour/imprisonment and camps, post-Holocaust memory, witnessing, and resistance (1). The only spaces not represented are ghettoization, death marches, and liberation. Many of these spaces that are present are represented within Josef Potocki's narrative as it is his story that reveals many of the details of Gemma's experiences to Becca.

Discrimination is represented in Josef's recounting of his experience at the beginning of the war. He thought that he would be safe from the prosecution that other groups in Poland and in his community were experiencing, but this was not the case. This narrative section brings to mind the repetition in a picture book that comments on the Holocaust, Eve Bunting's book, *Terrible Things: An Allegory of the Holocaust*, published in 1989, which itself alludes to those who stood by and said nothing when others were persecuted against. The repetition in Yolen's section explaining the progression of Josef's thinking brings a poetic tone to the representation of discrimination:

Why did he stay in Germany? Why did anyone stay? The music still played in the cafes and nightclubs: "At Katrina's with the golden hair ... tum-de-dum ... The boys and girls are dancing there ... tum-de-dum ..." The drinks were cheap. The theatres were still open. And Josef was not Jewish. He turned his eyes away from the yellow stars on the coats, the beatings. Hadn't he survived his own floggings in school, survived his own tauntings? And the music still played in the cafes.

Why did he stay in Germany? Why did anyone stay? There was an electric current of national pride in the air. Wine ran like blood from the open necks of bottles in the beer halls. Slogans charged the walls of every street... He did not really notice when the Communists began to disappear, and the Gypsies. He had a protector in the Berlin government. They laughed at the Fuhrer, that ugly little man, but only at night, only in bed, only within the circle of their own arms. And the music still played in the cafes.

Why did he stay in Germany? Why did anyone stay? Children on the street corners jumped rope to rhymes... The pamphlets about the Jews multiplied. He heard rumours of internment camps for antisocial elements like Jehovah's Witnesses and

socialists. And faggots. The kind who cross-dressed and were flagrant with their habits. The kind who sang falsetto and approached men on the streets. The kind who had to wear pink triangles. The 175ers. He did not have a lover for a year. But the music still played in the cafes. (167-169)

This expressive section allows for the representation of the space of discrimination while also giving a possible explanation for why many people didn't flee Europe at the first sign of trouble.

Hiding/confinement is loosely represented through the presentation of Josef's partisan story. This type of hiding and confinement is different from what Rogers originally outlined -- that of the hiding of the Jews in order to avoid deportation and death, as in the case of Anne Frank and her family. However, this is a type of hiding and confinement that can be combined with resistance. When Josef escapes from the concentration camp and joins the first partisan group, his story becomes one of hiding. The partisan story is a space of the Holocaust not often represented in children's literature; however, one young adult novel that does so in-depth is Christa Laird's *But Can the Phoenix Sing*, published in 1995. It is a part of World War II history that is often highlighted by governments in order to show the way that the people resisted the Nazi takeover (Shavit 205). For example, Zohar Shavit identifies the popularity of "active resistance movements... in the historical discourse" (214). For this reason, among others, it is an important part of the Holocaust to represent authentically in Holocaust literature for younger readers. Josef and the partisans are in hiding, and yet they do have a certain amount of freedom in that they do have a small range of choices available to them. A less physical facet of hiding in the representation of the partisans is their concealment of their true identities. Josef explains to Becca and Magda that "[a]ll of them [the partisans] were liars because they were afraid or because they were brave or because they could not care or because they cared too much" (180).

The partisans had to hide from the Nazis, and hide from themselves and the people they had been before the extreme circumstances during the war.

Resistance is shown in the actions of the partisans. It is also shown in the thoughts of Josef as he reads the signs posted at Sachsenhausen:

THERE IS A ROAD TO FREEDOM.
 ITS MILESTONES ARE:
 OBEDIENCE, INDUSTRY, HONESTY
 ORDER, CLEANLINESS, SOBRIETY,
 TRUTHFULNESS, SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE AND
 LOVE OF THE FATHERLAND. (173)

Josef's response to this is, "It was hard not to be obedient and sober when a gun was at your head... 'But I am damned if I am going to love the fatherland doing it'" (173). This quote and Josef's internal resistance demonstrates the possibility of resistance through thought when action is not available.

Displacement/transit is represented briefly in Josef's story in his description of his arrival at Sachsenhausen: "The train that Josef was on arrived at the station midday, and the cattle cars opened. Prisoners were hauled out but Josef managed to jump down on his own" (171). As the prisoners walk from the trains into the camp, they are pelted with stones and insults by the Polish villagers. The images of prisoners being transported in cattle cars have become ones that are often represented in historical and fictional accounts of the Holocaust, and in this case the cattle cars are represented quite briefly in *Briar Rose*.

The space of forced labour/imprisonment and camps is represented in several ways, mostly within Josef's story. He is imprisoned in Sachsenhausen, "a labour camp, not strictly a

death camp, and not an extermination camp. The distinction was lost on the 100,000 people who died there. But for Josef that distinction meant a half-life of almost a year's duration" (171).

Gemma is imprisoned in Chelmo, which in contrast, is described not as a forced labour camp, but as an extermination camp:

A rumor came to Josef's group from the Warsaw ghetto partisans. But it was rumor only. It was said there was an extermination camp fifty kilometers from Lodz. The rumor was horrible enough. Yet they had all seen the horror. They were men and women who had been tortured, who had numbers burned in their arms, who had buried their butchered babies or seen them thrown into a fire, who had been in a building where the drains ran red with human blood. (197)

This forced imprisonment was survived by "[f]our men. And one woman" (196). However, part of this statement is revealed to be fiction by the "Author's Note" at the end of the novel. The four men who survived are part of the non-fiction historical record, but Yolen states, "I know of no woman who escaped from Chelmo alive" (241); these are the last words of the book. The distinction between Sachsenhausen, a labour camp, and Chelmo, an extermination camp, is quite clear, but both seem to be accurate representations of the space of forced labour/imprisonment. Josef relates first his own experience of a labour camp, while Gemma's experience, also present in the novel, is more shrouded within the frame of the fairy tale. Josef doesn't know much about Gemma's experiences within Chelmo, and Gemma herself has hidden those traumatic memories behind her only words about her past: the Sleeping Beauty fairy tale. Becca tells Josef, "I don't honestly think she remembered. Not you, not my grandfather, not any of it consciously. It had all become a fairy tale for her. She must have told us the story of Briar Rose a million times. But it was all there, buried" (231). The camps themselves are represented with the most detail in

Josef's description of Sachsenhausen, which "was an ill-kept secret. Only Josef seemed never to have heard of it.... The local industries used the inmates for hard labor. Everybody knew" (170). Josef describes the differences in treatment of the various groups in the camp – the Poles, the Jews, and 175ers (the homosexuals) (175-176). The "Author's Note" at the end of the book is an important part of the representation of the camps because it takes away the assurance that the form of the fairy tale gives, and in this way, the representation becomes more truthful and authentic.

Post-Holocaust memory is the space most represented in this novel. It is the thread that runs throughout the whole story and informs both Gemma's and Becca's actions. Gemma's admission that she is the Briar Rose from her version of the fairy tale sends Becca on a search for the truth, resulting in her increased knowledge of the Holocaust in general and of Gemma's history in particular. Gemma's continual repetition of the story of Briar Rose represents her unconscious striving to keep post-Holocaust memory alive in her grandchildren. Becca's quest for the truth brings her into contact with the physical spaces of Gemma's past, as well as the memories of Josef. Josef himself imparts post-Holocaust memory to Magda and Becca, who will presumably share parts of their knowledge with others. Yolen contributes to post-Holocaust knowledge within *Briar Rose*, as well as within the very act of her writing the novel.

Connected to the space of post-Holocaust memory, the space of witnessing is represented in several ways in *Briar Rose*. Josef's entire recitation of the past is a form of witnessing as he is recounting his experiences as well as the experiences of others, specifically Gemma's, during the Holocaust. The partisans also witness the atrocities committed at Chelmo when they hear rumours about the camp and then watch as hundreds are murdered and thrown in a pit. This act of witnessing leads to the rescue of Gemma from the pile of bodies, and her resuscitation.

Gemma's repetition of her Briar Rose story and her last words to Becca, "I am Briar Rose" (17), are a form of witnessing, as Gemma is expressing her experiences in her own way, in order to pass on her experiences – whether she knows it consciously or not.

Rogers' spaces are well represented in *Briar Rose*; this novel balances many of the representations, while putting the most emphasis on the spaces of post-Holocaust memory, forced labour/imprisonment and camps, and witnessing. The following pattern of *Briar Rose* allows for a more gradual revealing of the spaces of the Holocaust, with many of the spaces concentrated within Josef's story and therefore firmly in the past. Although many of the spaces are represented within Gemma's bedtime stories, they are not as explicit, and are therefore more subtly shown than those within Josef's portion. This analysis of the following-units and following pattern, combined with the spaces represented allows for a more detailed reading of *Briar Rose* from a narratological perspective. The combination of the "artfulness of the fairy tale frame" with the "temporary suspension of information" (Kokkola 32), which is a result of the following-pattern, allows for a representation of the Holocaust that shows enough of the atrocity to authentically represent it.

4.0 *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*

“It is not about subjects. It’s about how you write about them. It’s about context. I don’t think that there are any subjects that you can’t explore in children’s literature. But you’ve got to be sensitive. You’ve got to be careful. You’ve got to think about your audience and not try to frighten them.” (– John Boyne, Agnew Interview)

4.1 *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas, the Fable, and the Holocaust*

The writing of *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* began with an image for John Boyne, in which he imagined two boys separated by a fence beyond their control and understanding. This image began as the central struggle of the story, which Boyne describes in an interview:

The image I had that made me start the book was just that: I saw these two boys sitting at the fence, just talking to each other. I knew where that fence was, and I knew that theme was going to be at the centre of the book. I knew that it was going to be about them: two boys who didn’t understand what they were doing there, who were trying to understand what sort of place it was and having similar experiences in many ways but very different in other ways. (Agnew n.pag.)

Many elements make this image work as a central setting for the story, including the two boys’ contrasting naivete, the presentation of the story through Bruno’s eyes, and the sense of injustice that comes with both the situation as a whole and with the ending, or moral. The setting of the story within a fable allows for Boyne to represent not just one camp and two boys, but other camps, and some of those who have tried to learn more about the Holocaust. In the “Readers’ Guide” at the back of the 2006 American edition, Boyne responds to why he kept the language so vague about the setting for the book, for example, replacing “Aushwitz” with “Out-with” throughout the story. Boyne writes, “by not specifically basing it there, it broadened it. It could

represent other camps of the time, and other camps after that” (9). He goes on to say in another interview that “*The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* is *not* a novel about Auschwitz, it is about two boys on either side of a fence at a concentration camp during World War II” (TeenReads.com n. pag.). This answer displays Boyne’s awareness of the issues of representation involved in writing about the Holocaust.

The form of the fable is an important aspect of *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, both stylistically, and because of the spaces that the form allows to be represented. In *Children’s Literature and Critical Theory*, Jill P. May presents a multifaceted definition of the fable in children’s literature:

Children’s literature often refers to the stories in LaFontaine’s and Aesop’s fables as the fable. These short stories contain talking beasts and quickly told adventures that reveal a moral about human behaviour. The story is often being told to explain and/or justify a cultural code for behaviour. Although these stories hold the archetypal pattern of the fable, they are not the only kind of fable. A modern fable can be an allegory which suggests that the fictional situation in the story compares with a modern one and entails a way to react in similar situations. (199)

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas conforms well to this definition of a fable, as it most closely fits into the category of an allegory; it contains no talking animals whatsoever. The novel does not conform to Bruno Bettelheim’s explanation of the fable, however: “[o]ften sanctimonious, sometimes amusing, the fable always explicitly states a moral truth; there is no hidden meaning, nothing is left to our imagination” (42-43). Boyne defends his choice to subtitle the novel as a fable as a way to protect himself and the book from potential criticism of the subject matter. He responds,

I just thought because I was changing some facts of the camp, and was making it one step away from reality, a little bit, it was better to call it a fable and have it represent all the camps. I thought it would put a halt, right at the start, to some of the potential criticism, you know, that at a camp the fence would be electrified, and so on. I could say ‘It’s a fable; you’re not supposed to look for the absolute, definitive facts. It’s a fiction with a moral at the centre of it.’ (Agnew n.pag.)

This defence connects to May’s definition of a fable or an allegory having a moral to be learned. The last few sentences of the book refer to this moral, with the ironic statement: “Of course this all happened a long time ago and nothing like that could ever happen again. Not in this day and age” (216). Thus, the book’s classification as a fable is overtly stated and central to its overall meaning. A fable usually has an overt message, and doesn’t necessarily include irony. This ironic content will be discussed later in this chapter.

This definition of a fable differs from May’s definition of a literary fairy tale in that the fairy tale “resembles folk literature in its use of patterns and motifs.... if the author uses a well-known tale for the core of his retelling, the author is purposely recreating a folkloric pattern in order to extend, spoof, refocus, or change the original tale” (201). As mentioned in the “*Briar Rose*” chapter, the use of fairy tales and fables to represent the Holocaust is not new; Peter Rushforth’s *Kindergarten*, and Louise Murphy’s *The True Story of Hansel and Gretel* are two such examples. Similarly, the movie *Life is Beautiful* also overtly refers to itself as a fable in the introductory voiceover: “This is a simple story, but not an easy one to tell. Like a fable, there is sorrow, and like a fable, it is full of wonder and happiness.” Using the fable or fairy tale to frame the story of the Holocaust has been very effective for these narratives, as it allows for a familiar structure to balance the stories of atrocities (Jordan 205).

The fable, or allegory, has a comforting structure for the young reader as it implies a lesson to be learned within the story. Boyne has written a book that unequivocally has a message about the Holocaust, while still addressing younger readers. Boyne ends his story with a tone of hope despite the deaths of Bruno, Shmuel, the other prisoners behind the fence, and the millions of others murdered in the Holocaust. This conforms to research done on representing the Holocaust for younger audiences (Kertzer, *My Mother's Voice* 13).

The question of what audience the story is appropriate for is often asked of any narrative with the Holocaust as its subject, and authors have different strategies to deal with these inquiries. *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas'* crossover appeal is clear in its publication with both a children's cover and an adults' cover, and even in Boyne's own recognition of the novel's reception. He responds, "my initial audience I want to be children, but I don't see it just as a children's book. I think the very best children's writing isn't just for children; I think anyone should be able to appreciate the story and be moved by the characters" (Webb, n. pag.). This crossover appeal is especially clear in the book's translation into movie form; it was not marketed as a children's movie in any way. By representing the story visually, the partial obscuring of the atrocity is no longer effective and the movie becomes accessible only to a more mature audience, or arguably, to no audience at all. The most effective part of the novel is the representation of the limited perspective of Bruno. As stated in Bob Mondello's review of the film on the National Public Radio website, "[t]he faux-naïve point of view probably worked better in the novel; the literalness of film renders certain of the story's conceits overly precious" (n. pag.). The story's translation into film disposes of the factors that make this novel work so well as a children's book and as crossover literature.

4.2 Narratology and *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*

The form of the fable is used as a framing device in *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*. The fable has a moral to tell, which is distinctly conveyed here; this lesson was a conscious inclusion by Boyne. While Rick Altman's framing "delimits the text but does not guarantee any particular internal textual organization" (18), in *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* the framing component does function within the story. Unlike the fairy tale frame in Yolen's *Briar Rose*, the fable does not have a structural function, but instead affects the content and the overall form. The fable form also allows Boyne to be more vague about what he is representing in terms of the Holocaust. Although it is specifically Auschwitz that Bruno moves to with his family, by not using the actual term and by titling his novel "A Fable," Boyne gives himself some room in terms of the necessity to include historical factual details.

Bruno is almost invariably followed throughout this book. *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas'* following pattern is not as complicated as the patterns in *Briar Rose* or *The Book Thief*. However, the act of following Bruno was a conscious choice by Boyne, who, as a non-Jew writing in contemporary times, did not feel that he could ethically represent a Jewish viewpoint, and chose a German one instead (Kandell n. pag.). While this comment is problematic as Boyne is also not German, it does point to his awareness of the sensitive nature of representing atrocity in literature. In this same interview, Boyne indicates that he felt that it would not be appropriate for him to place the narrator inside the camps because he (Boyne) doesn't have a personal story to tell (Kandell n. pag.). In order to represent the camps, Boyne represents Bruno's naïve point of view. By following someone with such limited understanding of the wider situation that he is in, Boyne can represent spaces of the Holocaust without conveying as much of the sense of horror

as representations of the camps traditionally do. Bruno takes in his new environment with a sense of adventure; his ambition to someday be a real explorer is evidenced in his optimistic curiosity:

There was one good thing that Herr Liszt had taught him about in their history lessons: men like Christopher Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci; men with such adventurous stories and interesting lives that it only confirmed in Bruno's mind that he wanted to be like them when he grew up. (102)

This curiosity is what eventually leads Bruno to the fence, and to his discovery of a friend, Shmuel, the “dot that became a speck that became a blob that became a figure that became a boy” (106). Bruno is so delighted to have found a friend that he doesn't worry too much about Shmuel's own circumstances and learns very slowly about his life beyond the fence. Bruno's intense naivete results in representation without too much additional trauma for the audience, as well as authentically representing the confusion in the view and the mind of a sheltered child during war. However, Zohar Shavit identifies potential issues with texts which use a child-narrator; she writes that an “adherence to the child's perspective exempts the texts from having to provide insightful presentations of the historic events” (131).

The following-pattern is a consistent one, following Bruno continually throughout the story. The following of Bruno is what allows for the limited perspective of the story, and therefore is what allows for its success as a children's book. There are only two following-units in the book, comprised of the first portion, which follows Bruno, and then Chapter Twenty, titled “The Last Chapter,” shifts to an overview of what the consequences of Bruno's disappearance for Bruno's family were. This chapter is still tied closely to Bruno's activities as it chronicles the attempts of his family to understand what had happened to him. His father, the Commandant, is connected to Bruno in his actions: he “examined the area and looked to his left and looked to his

right just as Bruno had done” (214); he then “did a little exploration of his own and discovered that the base of the fence here was not properly attached to the ground as it was everywhere else” (215); when he finally discovers what Bruno had done, he “ended up sitting on the ground in almost exactly the same position as Bruno had every afternoon for a year, although he didn’t cross his legs beneath him” (216). This comparison contributes to a sense of continuity with the first part of the book; the tone of this last chapter is consistent with the rest of the book as well, still referring to Auschwitz as “Out-With” as Bruno had done throughout. There is one interesting, inexplicable anomaly to these following-units, and that is one sentence in Chapter Nineteen: “It was almost (Shmuel thought) as if they were all exactly the same really” (204). For this one moment and no other, Shmuel’s inner thoughts are commented upon. It is also the only point in the first portion of the book where anyone’s thoughts other than Bruno’s are related. This anomalous sentence has no purpose for the narrative, as the information contained could easily come from Bruno’s thoughts. It is an interesting inconsistency that doesn’t seem to have a purpose.

According to Altman’s division of narratives into single-, dual-, or multiple focus narratives, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* falls into the single-focus category. It has “[a] following-pattern that concentrates on a single individual,” “[a] text generated by the protagonist’s desire, often expressed through a departure into previously unexplored territory, behaviour, or thought,” “[s]econdary characters who serve as models for the protagonists, often taking the form of father figure, tempter, mediator, or teacher,” “[a]ltered repetition that gives both reader and protagonist ample opportunity to measure the protagonist’s progress, through moral mirrors, repeated scenes, reiterated locations, or developmental metaphors,” and “[p]rotagonists who are constructed as a combination of actor and observer and thus alternate

between the roles of viewer and viewed object” (189). The secondary figure who acts as a mediator could be argued to be Shmuel, in the way that he influences Bruno’s curiosity and his identification with the Jewish boy. Bruno certainly acts as both actor and observer, particularly near the end of the novel as he enters Auschwitz and the gas chamber.

Repetition is one traditional component of children’s literature, and the presence of repetition is one consequence of representing Bruno’s viewpoint in this story. As Boyne describes in an interview, “Bruno tends to parrot phrases that he has heard. And he gets them a bit wrong... He has heard these things and he doesn’t fully understand them but he likes to repeat them to make himself sound more grown-up. I think kids do that a lot” (Agnew n. pag.), and this feature has a dual purpose: to shield the reader from the full knowledge of the atrocities being committed right under Bruno’s nose, and to build in the repetition of key words and phrases that is a strategy to comfort a younger audience. At the beginning of the novel, Bruno refers to “even the things he’d hidden at the back that belonged to him and were nobody else’s business” (1), and again at the end of the first chapter he worries that Maria (the family maid) would find “even the things he’d hidden at the back that belonged to him and were nobody else’s business” (10). In the first chapter, Bruno also introduces the phrase, “three best friends for life” (7), which is repeated several times in the first few chapters and then sporadically throughout the book. He also repeatedly refers to his sister Gretel as a “Hopeless Case” (10), and the phrase “if he was honest with himself – which he always tried to be” (21) occurs throughout the text. This contributes to the book’s tone as represented by nine-year-old Bruno as well.

The artfulness of the format of the fable or the fairy tale allows for the ability to follow a character, here Bruno, and to represent his experience as more universal. The character being followed allows for particular spaces of the Holocaust to be represented, and therefore to be

remembered. Therefore, the form of the fable, or allegory, allows Boyne to represent certain spaces that otherwise would be inappropriate for representation to a younger audience. The younger audience becomes reachable because of the naïve viewpoint of Bruno.

4.3 Spaces of the Holocaust in *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*

The spaces of the Holocaust represented in *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* are discrimination, forced labour/imprisonment and camps, post-Holocaust memory, and a small part of witnessing. *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* has fewer spaces represented than *Briar Rose* or *The Book Thief* in large part because of the choice of character being followed and his naïve perspective. However, the spaces that are represented are represented thoroughly. Boyne is aware of some of what he has represented, and relays this awareness in his comment on the blindness of the world during the Holocaust and the issues that remain after the genocide: “So, Bruno is kind of representing that blindness, in a way. When he goes to the fence, and when he asks that question [why Shmuel is wearing striped pajamas], he is kind of representing the rest of us who are trying to understand the Holocaust and find some answers to it” (Carnevale n. pag.). Representations of these spaces are fairly thorough and quite clear.

The space of discrimination is represented overtly from the time that Bruno and his family move to “Out-with.” Although discrimination in the form of anti-semitism was unquestionably present in Berlin before their move, Bruno was blissfully unaware of it. His Grandmother in Berlin is the only voice of reason against his father’s “career,” and the unquestioning way in which he is proud of his duties: ““That’s all you soldiers are interested in anyway,’ Grandmother said, ignoring the children altogether. ‘Looking handsome in your fine

uniforms. Dressing up and doing the terrible, terrible things that you do. It makes me ashamed” (92). Bruno encounters discrimination towards others in the way he observes Pavel to be treated, in the way Schmuel is treated when he is ordered to serve within Bruno’s house, and even in Lieutenant Kotler’s treatment by Bruno’s father when it is discovered that his father held “radical” views in a German university. Bruno himself doesn’t automatically ascribe to these views, despite his upbringing: “What exactly is the difference? He wondered to himself. And who decided which people wore the striped pajamas and which people wore the uniforms?” (100). Bruno does not necessarily understand that what he is seeing is hatred and discrimination, but the space is nevertheless represented in these situations. Bruno certainly feels uncomfortable when he witnesses the abusive way Lieutenant Kotler speaks to Pavel: “Pavel came towards them and Kotler spoke to him insolently, despite the fact that he was young enough to be his grandson” (76). Bruno comes close to understanding why these things are happening at a much slower pace than does the audience. Additionally, it is quite clear in several conversations that the logic being used to imprison those in “Out-with” is discrimination at its worst. One example is Bruno’s father’s explanation for why Bruno shouldn’t be concerned with the people beyond the fence:

“Those people... well, they’re not people at all, Bruno.”

Bruno frowned. “They’re not?” he asked, unsure what Father meant by that.

“Well, at least not as we understand the term,” Father continued. “But you shouldn’t be worrying about them right now. They’re nothing to do with you. You have nothing whatsoever in common with them. Just settle into your new home and be good, that’s all I ask. Accept the situation in which you find yourself and everything will be so much easier.” (53)

This conversation also serves as commentary about the attitude of those who hid from what was happening during the Holocaust and did not speak out -- most chose to listen to and obey Nazi propaganda. In contrast to Gretel, when Bruno first sees the people beyond the fence, he is confused that the people who he thought were children, “weren’t children at all. Not all of them, at least. There were small boys and big boys, fathers and grandfathers. Perhaps a few uncles too. And some of those people who live on their own on everybody’s road but don’t seem to have any relatives at all. They were everyone” (30). This phrase is repeated several times, and represents Bruno’s more unprejudiced view of the world.

The space of forced labour/imprisonment and camps is represented throughout the novel, although it is represented with varying degrees of detail. When Bruno and his family move to “Outwith” because his father is promoted, Bruno and his sister do not understand what this really means. While his sister initially stays willfully blind to the situation outside of their new home, Bruno does some exploring and learns in a very limited way of the camps. In his dealings with Pavel, Bruno is slightly confused when the old man says that he used to be a doctor, but he doesn’t question his new role as a waiter in Bruno’s house. The exact details of Schmuels existence within the camp don’t become clear until the end of the book, when Bruno crosses the fence to help him find his father and finds that life behind the fence isn’t as pleasant as he had imagined before: “there were crowds of people sitting together in groups, staring at the ground, looking horribly sad; they all had one thing in common: they were all terribly skinny and their eyes were sunken and they all had shaved heads” (207-8). Bruno is still confused at this point as to why all of these people are there, and observes only the differences between them: “In fact everywhere he looked, all he could see was two different types of people: either happy, laughing, shouting soldiers in their uniforms or unhappy, crying people in their striped pajamas,

most of whom seemed to be staring into space as if they were actually asleep” (208). In *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, life on the edge and outside of the camps is represented most clearly, with an incredibly naïve, but questioning, mind on the outside looking in.

Post-Holocaust memory is represented in the ending of the story. The overt moral at the end bridges the gap between this historical representation and the meaning of the message today: “Of course all this happened a long time ago and nothing like that could ever happen again. Not in this day and age” (216). This ironic statement concerns the fact that although the story does try to express a moral, calling for the end of genocide, genocide is still very much present in our society today. Although the story itself doesn’t go into the message any more than the last few sentences, the dramatic ending and overt moral are strong enough to carry the representation of the space of post-Holocaust memory. Boyne explains that although he didn’t want to force a lesson; he is most interested in seeing how people “[find]ing their own lessons, educate themselves on the subject and learn about it. And I think in a novel, it shouldn’t be didactic in that sense” (Kandell n. pag.). What is most important for Boyne to pass on in his story is “the power of the story and the emotion of the story, which would lead you to understand and to question and to want to learn about it” (Kandell n. pag.). This seems to be the goal of many books about the Holocaust: to represent the time in order to preserve the memory and the narrative of those times (Bosmajian, *Sparing the Child* xv-xvi). Boyne’s intention was to “write a literary work that would address innocence and evil, without either trivializing the events of the time or pandering to contemporary political correctness” (TeenReads.com n. pag.), an admirable goal and one that takes into account the greater need for responsibility and authenticity when representing the Holocaust. The space of post-Holocaust memory for generations is implied mostly within the moral to the story as opposed to being a component of the story itself.

Witnessing is represented in Bruno's friendship with Shmuel, even though Bruno has such a limited and naïve understanding of what is really going on. He is nonetheless present to witness the atrocities of the death camps. As such, the book itself is a form of witnessing the events of the Holocaust in that it represents historical events for a contemporary audience. The combination of the form of the fable as a framing device, and the following-pattern of representing such a naïve point of view results in an emotionally taxing ending and a memorable story for young readers.

5.0 *The Book Thief*

“I remember being stunned by the ugly world I was told about, but more so by the moments of beauty that existed there as well. I wanted to write about those moments, and it’s here that I need to acknowledge that I’m extremely fortunate to have parents who not only have great stories, but also have the ability to tell them in a beautiful, meaningful, and compelling way.” (-Markus Zusak, Printz Award Speech)

5.1 *The Book Thief* and the Holocaust

Markus Zusak, like John Boyne, wrote *The Book Thief* with an image in mind. He grew up in Australia listening to his German parents’ stories about their childhood, including several dramatic stories about their experience of the war in Germany. Zusak’s childhood gave him the German perspective of the Holocaust that he presents in this book. As he describes in the “Reader’s Guide” to *The Book Thief*, he felt that the sympathetic German perspective was not often represented in Holocaust literature; he wanted to show the viewpoint of people who were not in agreement with Nazi ideology and who actually tried to do something to help those who were being murdered (10). His mother told him the story of a man in her German town watching the march of prisoners to a concentration camp; the man gave one of the prisoners a piece of bread and both were punished for it (Neill n. pag.). In novel form in *The Book Thief*, this story from his mother’s life was translated into the narrative in this way:

It happened so quickly.

The hand that held firmly on to Liesel’s let it drop to her side as the man came struggling by. She felt her palm slap her hip.

Papa reached into his paint cart and pulled something out. He made his way through the people, onto the road.

The Jew stood before him, expecting another handful of derision, but he watched with everyone else as Hans Hubermann held his hand out and presented a piece of bread, like magic.

When it changed hands, the Jew slid down. He fell to his knees and held Papa's shins. He buried his face between them and thanked him.

Liesel watched.

With tears in her eyes, she saw the man slide farther forward, pushing Papa back to cry into his ankles.

Other Jews walked past, all of them watching this small, futile miracle. They streamed by, like human water. That day, a few would reach the ocean. They would be handed a white cap.

Wading through, a soldier was soon at the scene of the crime. He studied the kneeling man and Papa, and he looked at the crowd. After another moment's thought, he took the whip from his belt and began.

The Jew was whipped six times. On his back, his head, and his legs. "You filth! You swine!" Blood dripped now from his ear.

Then it was Papa's turn.

A new hand held Liesel's now, and when she looked in horror next to her, Rudy Steiner swallowed as Hans Hubermann was whipped on the street. The sound sickened her and she expected cracks to appear on her papa's body. He was struck four times before he, too, hit the ground.

When the elderly Jew climbed to his feet for the last time and continued on, he looked briefly back. He took a last sad glance at the man who was kneeling now himself, whose back was burning with four lines of fire, whose knees were aching on the road. If nothing else, the old man would die like a human. Or at least with the thought that he *was* a human. (394-5)

Like many writers on the Holocaust, Zusak uses this inherited story to guide what he represents in fiction. He felt most comfortable writing from a German perspective.

However, others believe that this German perspective *is* represented quite often. According to Hamida Bosmajian, and paraphrased by Sokoloff, there may actually be an over-representation of stories of those who surreptitiously helped the Jews during the Holocaust:

[C]hildren’s literature in post-World War II Germany doesn’t touch on the topic of the Holocaust until the 1960s; even then, few texts focus on Jewish suffering. Instead, West German books emphasize antiwar messages and German suffering during World War II, while East Germans take pride in their antifascist and pro-Soviet stances. (Sokoloff 178)

On a related note, Michael Geyer and Miriam Hansen describe the German recovery of the past and the continued importance of representing the Holocaust in a truthful way; they describe how in the 1970’s and 1980’s, “[a German] post-war youth, separated from the one that had directly experienced war and annihilation, received the Nazi period as image and narrative” (187). This experience of the Holocaust through image and narrative and the way it is represented is important both in the past and now.

One aspect of Zusak’s novel that has received a large amount of critical attention and the thing that sets this story apart from many others is the choice of narrator. Zusak’s choice to represent the story through the eyes of a personified Death is unique. Instead of having Death be

something malicious and worthy of fear, Death is instead frightened by humans and the terrible things they do to each other. He is touched by the poignancy of Liesel's story and decides to revisit it and pass it on to the readers of *The Book Thief*. Zusak originally struggled with this choice; he first wrote the character of Death to be enjoying his work, but then realized that, "Death was to be exhausted from his eternal existence and his job. He was to be afraid of humans because, after all, he was there to see the obliteration we've perpetrated on each other throughout the ages – and would now be telling this story to prove to himself that humans are actually worth it" ("Reader's Guide" 10). While Death as a worker tired of his job has been represented in a comic way before – for example, in Mitchel Leisen's 1934 movie, *Death Takes a Holiday*, and Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* series -- his near-humanity and depth of emotion for people have never been connected to the Holocaust in such a way. A further discussion of Death as a narrator will follow in the section on Narratology.

As discussed above, many authors have spoken about the need for a hopeful ending in Holocaust literature for children, and this belief is represented in the large numbers of books in which such an ending is present. *The Book Thief* is no exception. Lydia Kokkola writes that "the most common endings in Holocaust literature either focus on the moment of liberation of the camps or the end of the war... as a consequence of the need to reestablish normalcy" (155). *The Book Thief* ends with Death wrapping up his story with comments on the last time that he met Liesel, in Australia when she finally dies at the end of a long life:

I wanted to explain that I am constantly overestimating and underestimating the human race – that rarely do I ever simply estimate it. I wanted to ask her how the same thing could be so ugly and so glorious, and its words and stories so damning and brilliant.

None of these things, however, came out of my mouth.

All I was able to do was turn to Liesel Meminger and tell her the only truth I truly know. I said it to the book thief and I say it now to you.

*** A LAST NOTE FROM YOUR NARRATOR***

I am haunted by humans. (550)

The story ends on a note of hope, but not an uncomplicated one. Liesel has lived a long life and possibly even found happiness. Death gets to greet her at the end of her life and tell her how much her book touched him. However, the commentary on humanity is not necessarily hopeful; Death sees the battle between good and evil happening all the time and is haunted by what he sees. This comes very close to what some critics see as presenting a lesson to be learned from the Holocaust, “not merely omitting troubling details, but also attempting to provide a balanced picture, highlighting the good as well as the evil inherent in any discussion of the Holocaust” (Jordan 200). This ending is problematized by Klassen as he posits that at the end, “Death sums up what appears to be the implied author’s lesson when he finally takes the now elderly Liesel’s soul in the final pages” (5); Klassen also classifies the ending as a “shallowly disguised encouragement to the reader to think of his [Death’s] volume in the same way he has treasured Liesel’s. When faced with bleakness and despair, find encouragement through stories of children and innocence. This softens the tragedy” (6). This comment on the narrative in *The Book Thief* connects to what critics of the Holocaust in children’s literature both call for and warn against: the lesson at the end of the story.

5.2 Narratology Applied to *The Book Thief*

The framing present in *The Book Thief* is of a different variety than that of *Briar Rose* or *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*. Instead of presenting framing in the form of a pre-existing fairy tale or the fable, the narrator speaks directly to the reader, even referring to the reader as “my friend” (138). Framing, using Altman’s definition of the term, occurs as Death overtly addresses the reader and introduces his point of view and which story he is relating – the book thief’s: “It’s the story of one of those perpetual survivors – an expert at being left behind.... I saw the book thief three times” (5). Death interjects throughout the story, foreshadowing what will come and commenting on the situations as they happen. This brings the framing techniques to the forefront of the novel, making it as much Death’s story as Liesel’s. Death is constantly making general statements about the particular situations, linking them with his overall experience of humankind; in reference to Hans’ experience in the First World War, he states,

* * * A SMALL BUT NOTEWORTHY NOTE * * *

I’ve seen so many young men
over the years who think they’re
running at other young men.

They are not.

They’re running at me. (174-5)

The framing of this story draws attention to its most unique feature, its narrator, and makes for an alternative narrative of the Holocaust.

Death’s personality is well-developed throughout the novel, with his comments throughout the story acting as a reference point for the reader in the more harrowing parts of this Holocaust narrative, especially with his comments about his attention to the colours of the sky:

“Personally, I like a chocolate-colored sky. Dark, dark chocolate. People say it suits me. I do, however, try to enjoy every color I see – the whole spectrum. A billion or so flavors, none of them quite the same, and a sky to slowly suck on. It takes the edge off the stress. It helps me relax” (4). Death acts to mediate what Sarah D. Jordan refers to as a “Gentile protagonist,” one of the ways in which authors educate children about the Holocaust without overwhelming them with the presentation of the atrocity, as the Gentile protagonist “can tell of what happened but never *personally* experiences it for him- or herself” (209). He represents the view of a Gentile protagonist in telling Liesel’s story; Liesel “has a unique perspective on the Nazi persecution of Jews because of an interaction or friendship with a Jewish character” (Jordan 209). At the same time, Death as a narrator acts as a contemporary of the reader; instead of a time-slip fantasy facilitating this, as in the case of Jane Yolen’s *Devil’s Arithmetic*, Death is present at all times, including our own, allowing him to share the contemporary readers’ perspective. According to Jordan, this strategy “allows a high level of identification with the protagonist on the part of the reader, but still ultimately shields the reader from too strong an experience of the atrocities of the Holocaust” (213). While Death’s perspective, especially his attention to colors, can act as a strategy of comfort, at points he switches to the opposite type of interjection: “For me, the sky was the color of Jews” (349). This function connects to the use of Death as a framing device, reminding the reader that it is through Death’s words that we are accessing the story at all. While narration in the first-person “in historical trauma gives the illusion of high reliability because of the great number of facts and experiences absorbed by the narrator” (Bosmajian 309), Death is not necessarily a reliable conduit for the story.

The following pattern adheres to the whims of Death as the narrator. His voice is so clear throughout the story it is evident that it is his thought pattern that the story is following.

However, within this following-unit, several others are present. While Death presents this narrative as the story of the book thief, he alternatively follows Max on his journey to relative safety and his friendship with Liesel. In this way, he weaves the threads of the story together and the following pattern, while always following Death, shifts between Max and Liesel's stories. This speaks to Altman's division of narratives into single-focus, dual-focus, and multiple-focus narratives. In the case of *The Book Thief*, the presentation of Death's, Max's, and Liesel's views qualifies the novel as a multiple-focus narrative. For example, the narrative pattern in *The Book Thief* exhibits the traits of "[a] following-pattern that attends, in turn, to several different characters," "[p]resentation of separate sections as preexisting, whether borrowed from tradition, written accounts, documentary footage, or reality itself," "[d]ependence on plot devices justifying contact among diverse characters (crowd scenes, carnivals, wars, natural disasters, etc.)," and "[r]ecourse to narratorial commentary, parallel scenes between otherwise unrelated characters, and realm-tying metaphors" (Altman 289). Death's entire personality is based upon his narratorial commentary.

The novel starts with Death explaining his role in general, and in particular, explaining which story he is telling and how he will structure it: "I saw the book thief three times" (5). In the first few chapters, Death keeps the narrative centred on himself, even though he is telling Liesel's story. For example, he explains where he first met her, but with his own thoughts at the forefront: "I buckled – I became interested. In the girl. Curiosity got the better of me, and I resigned myself to stay as long as my schedule allowed, and I watched" (7). From the beginning of "Part One," although he does interject quite often and explain the events surrounding Liesel and his own role in them, he moves in and out of focusing more explicitly on Liesel's experiences, as read in the book that she had written that was dropped one of the last times that

Death met her, in a street made of fire. As Jonathan Klassen explains in “Anything but Normal: Narrative Control in Markus Zusak’s *The Book Thief*,” Death has “fallen so much in love with her [Liesel’s] story that he has imagined her story well past the facts of what he actually knows. The story he loves and relates is not simply Liesel’s story, but his version of that story” (2). This brings to light the position of the narrator in the story as mediator for the stories he relates to the reader.

The following pattern eventually shifts, within Death’s narrative, to an introduction of Max: “A few hundred miles northwest, in Stuttgart, far from book thieves, mayors’ wives, and Himmel Street, a man was sitting in the dark. It was the best place, they decided. It’s harder to find a Jew in the dark” (139). From here, although the following pattern does shift back and forth between Liesel and Max, the road to their narrative collision begins. Max and Liesel’s relationship is a centerpoint of the book in several ways. Not only does this relationship shed light on the relationship between those Germans who did not support Hitler and who helped and hid the Jews and others who were also persecuted, it is also a touching story of friendship. It is within these following-units, in which Liesel and Max interact, that some of the more interesting aspects of the text appear. For example, the book that Max writes for Liesel, *The Standover Man*, sheds light on their friendship and what it means to Max after all that he has been through (224-236). These pages were written over a white-washed *Mein Kampf*, to thank Liesel for her friendship and explain some of his feelings about his situation as a man in hiding. An elaboration of this point from the perspective of identity formation in postmodern texts comes from Klassen: “we see identity construction through appropriating others’ stories and reimagining them for our own purposes. Death does this with Liesel’s book, Liesel does it with Max’s, and Max does it with Hitler’s” (9). This section also shows some similarities to another Holocaust narrative,

Maus, in that Max's representation of himself is of a crow; this is an allusion to Liesel referring to his hair looking like feathers: "Liesel noticed that his hair was no longer a nest of twigs, but rather a collection of feathers, flopping about on his head" (216). The next meta-text within these following-units with both Max and Liesel is given to Liesel after Max is forced to leave; the text is called *The Word Shaker* and is referenced later by Liesel when she sees Max within the forced march to the camps (445-450). The combination of these texts made by the characters within *The Book Thief* and the representation of the story that Death tells as being from Liesel's own book makes the novel a very complex story of the Holocaust.

While Altman's text does not introduce the ideas of sub-following-units or patterns, within the consistent following pattern of Death's narrative there are several different following-units that are woven together. These patterns, as well as the framing, contribute to the complexity of the story and the alternativeness of the narrative. These aspects also contribute to the classification of the story as a multiple-focus narrative, especially because Death himself acts as a "realm-tying" metaphor.

According to Altman's classification of narratives as single-, dual-, or multiple-focus, *The Book Thief* would be categorized as a multiple-focus narrative. *The Book Thief* includes "[a] following pattern that attends, in turn, to several different characters," "[p]resentation of separate sections as preexisting, whether borrowed from tradition, written accounts, documentary footage, or reality itself," "[d]ependence on plot devices justifying contact among diverse characters (crowd scenes, carnivals, wars, natural disasters, etc.)," and "[r]ecourse to narratorial commentary, parallel scenes between otherwise unrelated characters, and realm-tying metaphors" (289). This "realm-tying metaphor" is Death, a metaphor as a narrator, and one that ties all the separate characters of the story together through this choice of what to narrate.

5.3 Spaces of the Holocaust in *The Book Thief*

The Book Thief represents several spaces of the Holocaust, despite the setting of the story being fairly static – not involving a journey in search of the truth like *Briar Rose*. The spaces represented are discrimination, hiding/confinement, displacement/transit, forced labour/imprisonment and camps, post-Holocaust memory for generations, witnessing, and resistance. Death, as the narrator, could ostensibly represent any and all of the spaces of the Holocaust. What is interesting about *The Book Thief* is that not all of the spaces are represented; while the viewpoint that Zusak has chosen to write from has the capacity to see everything, a more limited (although touching) story is told. This tension between the possibility of what could be told and what is actually represented could be caused by Zusak’s decision to tell the stories from his own family’s background. He most fully represents the experiences of German witnesses instead of, narratologically speaking, going all the way into the camps; this could be because his self-perceived lack of authority as a non-Jewish person changes what he feels more comfortable representing.

While Rogers’ conception of the space of discrimination was specifically referring to discrimination against Jewish people, I prefer to expand the conception of this space. The space of discrimination is represented at the beginning of the story, as Liesel’s father has been taken away from the family before she was old enough to remember him: “There was really only one thing she knew about her father. It was a label she did not understand. * * * A STRANGE WORD * * * *Kommunist*” (31). Because of the political discrimination of the fascist Nazi government against Communism, among other political groups, Liesel is sent to live with the Hubermanns, her foster family. Discrimination is present in the novel when Hans, who has chosen not to join the local Nazi chapter, is not given enough work: “Once the persecution

began, his work slowly dried up. It wasn't too bad to begin with, but soon enough, he was losing customers. Handfuls of quotes seemed to vanish into the rising Nazi air" (180). Hans' actions, or lack of them, result in his being indirectly punished for his unspoken political views: "Toward the end of 1938, when the Jews were cleared out completely after Kristallnacht, the Gestapo visited. They searched the house, and when nothing or no one suspicious was found, Hans Hubermann was one of the fortunate: He was allowed to stay" (183). Although losing work is far less dire than losing one's life, Hans is still discriminated against. Discrimination is also shown in the representation of the initial terrorizing of the Jews who had lived in Molching, and in the representation of the treatment of any Jews present in the story. But most of all, it is represented in Max's part of the story.

Max's thread of narrative comes in explicitly, with Death saying, "Now for a change of scenery. We've both had it too easy till now, my friend, don't you think?" (138). The story shifts to Max, who is in hiding; he is in the process of attempting to find Hans Hubermann, an old friend of his father's from the First World War, whom he has never met. Discrimination is present in Max's story in the fact of his hiding and in his need to continue to hide. His story is clearly also where the space of hiding/confinement is represented. When he is first introduced, he is hiding in a secret storage room; previously, he had spent more than two years hiding in his friend Walter's apartment, eating sparingly and seeing no one else. From there, when Walter is sent to war, Max is transported through a tense voyage on a train, on which he hides his identity with a fake identity card and a copy of *Mein Kampf*, and then finally, to his spot in the basement of the Hubermann house.

Again, Rogers' conception of spaces is meant to include only the displacement and transit of Jews in cattle cars from their homes or the ghettos to the death camps. However, here Liesel is

also displaced because of the earlier discrimination against the political views of her father. Displacement/transit is broadly represented in Liesel's original transport to Molching; on that voyage, her brother died and she lost her mother forever, but she made it into a safe home. Max travels to Molching with the help of friends and strangers, and ends up with the Hubermanns. When he is forced to leave their home, he is transported to a concentration camp near the end of the war, facilitating the representation of further spaces. While Liesel and Max differ greatly from each other, their stories of displacement mirror each other, despite Liesel's displacement being less severe and ending with a happy home, however briefly. This comparison alludes to the displacement of everybody involved in a war, whether they are part of the nation of aggressors or are the victims.

Forced labour/imprisonment and camps are represented only in passing, as Max is taken away to a camp after he is forced to leave the Hubermanns' because of Hans' actions – the gift of a piece of bread to the Jew during the forced march (394-5). Max “walked up Himmel Street with a suitcase full of food and warm clothes. German air was in his lungs. The yellow stars were on fire” (397). His time in the camp is not represented very clearly. It is alluded to in reference to what is happening in Liesel's life at the same time:

There was no slackening off in terms of war-making, nor was there any scaling back on the extermination and punishment of a Jewish plague. While most of the camps were spread throughout Europe, there were some still in existence in Germany itself.

In those camps, many people were still made to work, and walk.

Max Vandenburg was one such Jew. (507)

The only clues given as to how Max ended up in the camp are his words to Liesel when he is marched through Molching: “[T]hey got me a few months ago.’ The voice was crippled but it

dragged itself toward her. ‘Half-way to Stuttgart’” (511). There are a few references to how weak Max is at this point and to the incredible fear in his face, but that is the extent of the representation of the camps: their effect on Max. This lack of representation in itself is interesting, as Death is inarguably *most* present in the death camps of the Holocaust. However, ostensibly because it is not central to the story of the book thief, the inside of the camps is never represented. Hans is forced to labour in another way when he is sent to work because of his lukewarm support for the Nazi party, and is separated from his family during that time. This type of forced labour is not precisely what Rogers refers to in her discussion of spaces, but it is an alternative point of view on the application of force.

Resistance, one of the spaces that does not fit into a chronological pattern of spaces of the Holocaust, but is instead present throughout the Holocaust, is presented in *The Book Thief* in several ways, but most strongly in the fact of Max’s story of mostly successful hiding. The Hubermanns hide Max and resist the wishes of the Nazi party, and all of the other people, including the German friend who originally hid him, resisted in their way as well. Resistance to the Nazi ideology in the people of Molching is also represented in Liesel and Rudy’s game of throwing bread into the groups of Jews forced to march through their town on the way to Dachau. Liesel steals a book from the book burning, as well as showing a quiet resistance in her hatred of the Nazi youth groups and their organization. Hans resists joining the Nazi party as long as he can without negatively affecting his family too much, and shows through his actions, but not his words, that resistance can be present without it being spoken publically. This is certainly a soft resistance, not comparable with the stories representing partisans or other resistance groups, but it is probably one that is more representative of more people.

Much as in any work based on the Holocaust, post-Holocaust memory for generations is represented in the fact of the story's existence. In addition to that, Death has kept Liesel's story with him in order to share with the reader and in order to remind himself that humankind is worth it despite all the ugliness in the world. Death wants to explain to Liesel when they do finally meet, that he is "haunted by humans" (550). These are reflective words from the personified Death, and they display Zusak's thoughts on life after the Holocaust. Whenever Death addresses the reader and says, "Come with me and I'll tell you a story. I'll show you something" (544), he is representing the space of post-Holocaust literature for generations. He (and Zusak) sees that there is something worth sharing, that needs to be shared in the book thief's story. For Death, what needs to be shared connects back to his last words to Liesel, and to the "lesson" of the Holocaust: the absolute evil of the Holocaust combined with the good that was present in the actions of a few. Here, an alternative point of view of the Holocaust is presented in a unique way.

Witnessing is represented throughout this narrative. Death witnesses all of humanity's faults, is touched by them, and passes them on through his narrative. Although he most consistently witnesses Liesel's trials, he continually comments on his witnessing of the Holocaust in general – but without any of the graphic details that would be expected of Death's experiences of the Holocaust. Instead, he makes haunting comments about the atrocities that humans commit against each other and keeps the details to the parts of his narrative that have to do with Liesel. A general comment from Death reads like this:

Sometimes I arrive too early.

I rush,

and some people cling longer to life than expected. (9)

Death's witnessing of humankind is where the opportunity for some of his most poetic comments comes into play. The moments when he observes some of the aspects of the Holocaust are often presented through the eyes of others. Much like post-Holocaust memory for generations, the space of witnessing is represented in the very fact of this story's existence.

The spaces of the Holocaust that are represented in *The Book Thief* are present in a much less obvious form than might be expected from a narrative that is told by Death. While Death is a unique narrator to use to present images of the Holocaust, the narration is done in a way that handles the Holocaust in a sensitive way and allows for this book's categorization as a young adult or crossover novel. The combination of the unique following pattern, allowing for Death to act as a contemporary commentator, as well as to mediate the story of a Gentile protagonist, Liesel, and the represented spaces result in a complex, interesting, and alternative representation of the Holocaust.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Findings

The alternative forms in these three novels -- *Briar Rose*, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, and *The Book Thief* – allow for different spaces of the Holocaust to be represented. By using the form of the fairy tale, the fable, and the unique narrator of Death respectively, the authors of these novels offer different levels of access to the spaces of the Holocaust than the authors otherwise would have. I have used the lens of Altman’s theory of narrative to identify the ways in which these narratives function according to his categories of framing, following, and single-, dual-, or multiple-focus narrative. Using Rogers’ spaces of the Holocaust, it becomes possible to compare the three narrative approaches and the represented spaces they afford. The issue remains, however, of how to responsibly represent the Holocaust in these spaces, especially for younger readers. These authors took three very different approaches to representing the Holocaust in fictional narrative form.

6.1.1 *Briar Rose*

In *Briar Rose*, Yolen uses the frame of the fairy tale to interweave a mystery story and a representation of one woman’s experience during the Holocaust. Yolen identifies the possibility that her novel is a fairy tale in itself because it “uses fairy tale logic and has a fairy tale at its core since no women actually escaped from Chelmo” (RoseEtta Stone). The importance of the happy ending in children’s literature is one area that is problematic in Holocaust literature, as I have discussed in my “Literature Review”; Yolen faces this issue by having the story in the novel end

relatively happily -- with Becca reflecting on whether her grandmother's life was a happy one -- and then removing the comfort from the ending by stating in her "Author's Note" that, "I know of no woman who escaped from Chelmo alive" (241). Of this reversal and the status of fairy tales as historical accounts, Kenneth Kidd writes,

Yolen can repudiate the happy-ever-after scenario precisely because we now expect fairy tales to be both not happy—i.e., therapeutic rather than conventionally satisfying—and history. It's as if Yolen is suggesting that while this particular plot element isn't accurate, the novel is still true to history—that is, to deeper psychological truths. (132)

Yolen's presentation of Gemma as a survivor who can only tell her story in this one, concealing form coincides with the fragmentary way that many Holocaust memoirs are written. One function of the following-pattern of *Briar Rose* is that most of the spaces of the Holocaust that are represented come at the end of the narrative, when Josef is being followed. Josef's part of the narrative allows for the spaces of discrimination, hiding/confinement, displacement/transit, forced labour/imprisonment and camps, and resistance to be represented. The frame of the fairy tale allows for a story of the Holocaust to be told in a metaphorical way, with Josef's narrative translating this account into the "truth" of what Gemma experienced.

6.1.2 *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*

The frame of the fable in *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* was a strategy of Boyne's that he hoped would allow him to bypass some of the issues of writing fiction set during the Holocaust ("Reader's Guide" 9). This concern reveals the truth of what Leak and Paizis write in *The Holocaust and the Text*: Holocaust writers are "not as unfettered in their creation as might seem

to be the case: they are not free to create any meaning for the world, but instead find themselves constrained by additional, and possibly unique, concerns for truthfulness and authenticity” (9).

Boyne refers to his use of the form of the fable and his response to potential criticism when he says, “It’s a fable; you’re not supposed to look for the absolute, definitive facts. It’s a fiction with a moral at the centre of it” (Agnew). This intent to generalize, however, runs counter to what Langer writes in “Fictional Facts and Factual Fictions: History in Holocaust Literature”:

“literature generalizes human experience, while the events of the atrocity we call the Holocaust insist on their singularity” (119). The combination of the form of the fable and Bruno’s naïve point of view make for a story that represents the Holocaust without conveying too much of the atrocity. However, Shavit makes this use of a child narrator problematic when she writes, an “adherence to the child’s perspective exempts the texts from having to provide insightful presentations of the historic events” (131).

Boyne uses repetition throughout the story, contributing to the sense of this novel as children’s literature, as well as contributing to the book’s tone. While Boyne’s ending is not necessarily hopeful – Bruno walks into the gas chambers and his family grieves – it does end with a lesson, or a moral: “Of course all this happened a long time ago and nothing like that could ever happen again. Not in this day and age” (216). This statement connects the past with the present and the hints at the failure of one of the motivations of Holocaust literature: that of “never again,” as we still live in a world of violence and genocide.

6.1.3 *The Book Thief*

The Book Thief uses yet another alternative narrative form: that of a personified Death as a narrator. Zusak aims to present a German point of view, as he believes that it is a perspective that is not often represented in Holocaust literature; *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* also presents a German view. As I have discussed in the “Literature “Review,” this is not necessarily the case. Bosmajian believes that there has actually been an over representation of the German point of view.

Death as a narrator holds out a complicated hope for humankind as he sees both the good and the evil present in people’s actions towards each other. While the ending to *The Book Thief* is relatively hopeful, Klassen comments on the “shallowly disguised encouragement to the reader to think of his [Death’s] volume in the same way he has treasured Liesel’s. When faced with bleakness and despair, find encouragement through stories of children and innocence. This softens the tragedy” (6).

Death controls the framing and following elements of the story, determining when it begins and ends, as well as determining whose story is followed – for example, Liesel’s or Max’s. Instead of the Holocaust itself, it is Max and Liesel’s relationship that is at the center of this narrative. One interesting aspect of using Death as a narrator is that even though Zusak has chosen a narrator that would theoretically have access to all of the spaces of the Holocaust, he has chosen to represent a very select story and not all of the spaces. For instance, the narrative of *The Book Thief* never goes right into the camps, other than in Death’s general comments about the nature of his work during World War II; this results in a tension between what Death ostensibly knows and what is represented for the reader.

6.1.4 Authorial Strategies

Many authors of Holocaust literature for children and young adults use strategies to represent the Holocaust in a way that avoids the “undeniable possibility of doing genuine damage to children by shocking them and exposing them to unbearable details at too young an age” (Sokoloff, “Childhood Lost” 267). Sarah D. Jordan discusses some of these strategies in “Educating Without Overwhelming: Authorial Strategies in Children’s Holocaust Literature,” including the strategies of child narrators, the use of allegory, gentile protagonists, and fantasy. The following-pattern of *Briar Rose*, in which alternating chapters introduce the repetition of the same story over Becca’s childhood, functions to bring the reader back to the safety of childhood in between the chapters in which a narrative of the Holocaust is being revealed. Additionally, the story of the Holocaust is “paralleled to a well-known story that children do understand” (Jordan 205), that of Sleeping Beauty. The naïve narrator of *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, Bruno, shields the reader from the knowledge that he himself does not have. According to Jordan, an allegory is “a relatively easy and non-threatening way to tell a story of the Holocaust to children” (205); the combination of the fable (or allegory) and Bruno’s naivete allows for the explanation of a “sometimes incomprehensible topic” (Jordan 205) in a way that younger readers can understand. This use of a child narrator personalizes history and allows for a gradual awakening to the truth of the atrocity (Jordan 201). Death, in *The Book Thief*, is almost un-intimidating; Zusak uses the strength of the personality he has created for Death to narrate Liesel’s story in a way that shows how much he cares for her. Liesel functions as a Gentile protagonist, whose friendship with a Jewish character allows for the representation of spaces of the Holocaust without her actually having experienced them. The prevalence of strategies of comfort in Holocaust literature for children, and specifically in these three texts, speaks to the delicate

balance of pairing children's literature – and the didacticism and censorship that it entails – and the authentic and responsible representation of the Holocaust.

6.2 Contribution to Existing Scholarship

Through this study, I have sought to answer my research question: -- “What are the alternative narrative forms in three young adult Holocaust novels, and what are their effects in terms of the representation of the spaces of the Holocaust?” – through the use of Altman's *A Theory of Narrative* and Rogers' categorization of the spaces of the Holocaust. This study has contributed to existing scholarship in its connection of Altman's theory to Rogers' categorization of the spaces of the Holocaust, and to these three young adult and crossover texts. Using these theories in conjunction with each other allows for a more detailed discussion of what spaces of the Holocaust are represented and how in these narratives. The use of alternative narratives in young adult and children's Holocaust literature was discussed in my “Literature Review” as a fairly common strategy, and the alternativeness of these narratives has been identified: the alternative narrative forms are the fairy tale (*Briar Rose*), the fable (*The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*), and the use of Death as a narrator (*The Book Thief*). Finally, I have addressed the effects of these alternative forms in terms of the Holocaust in young adult literature.

While all of the components of my study have been researched before, this combination of theories and texts has not been written about. This study contributes to the field of Holocaust studies, to the study of children's and young adult literature, and to narratology in different ways.

While there continues to be controversy surrounding the literary representation of the Holocaust, the consensus seems to be that the “Holocaust should be written about because of a

moral ground” (Leak and Paizis 27), and that the “events and character of the Holocaust require authenticity in representation” (28). This consensus has changed over the years, from Adorno’s statement that “Writing a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric” (qtd. in Kokkola 18), to those, like Lang, who write: “the Holocaust *is* spoken, *has been* spoken, *will be* spoken” (“Holocaust Genres” 18). Bosmajian’s warning becomes more relevant as time passes: “the deep motivation for ‘lest we forget’ or ‘never again’ will become shallow as the time of the disaster becomes more abstract” (*Sparing the Child* 209). Continuing this thought, she writes: “it is important... that there be continued study of the rhetoric with which fictional recountings of the Holocaust are constructed, including, and especially so, narratives for young readers” (*Sparing the Child* 211). The Holocaust has captured the literary imagination, and authentic and responsible representation will become more and more important.

In regard to children’s literature of the Holocaust, Kertzer writes in “Canadian Mosaic”: “Learning to know more in and about recent children’s books about the Holocaust teaches us that knowledge of the Holocaust remains fragile, partial, and, on occasion, misleading. What we learn about ourselves is equally disturbing” (54). The study of the Holocaust is present in curricula around the world, and teachers, parents, and children look for fictional representations that bring together knowledge of history and a personalization of the events. While historical accuracy is a lot to ask from a fictional text, that is exactly what Holocaust literature demands. Children’s literature is “evolving towards complexity and sophistication on all narrative levels” (Nikolajeva 207), and this connection between complexity, sophistication, and the Holocaust is promoted by the use of alternative narrative forms. The representation of the Holocaust in children’s literature is important to examine because of the constraints of historical accuracy and audience. This study examines the represented spaces of the Holocaust in children’s literature, and the ways in

which narrative approaches both constrain and allow for specific aspects of the Holocaust to be revealed.

Altman is a professor of cinema and comparative literature at the University of Iowa. Connecting his theory to children's literature of the Holocaust has not been done before, although Kathie Shoemaker is using his theory in her PhD in the Language and Literacy Education Department at UBC. Altman does write that his theory should be applicable "wherever humans tell stories or implicitly refer to previously told tales" (338), and he certainly attempts to prove that this is the case. Using his theory to critique children's literature responds to McCallum's call for "theories of narrative, combined with more recent narrative theory, [that] provide ways of analyzing narrative strategies and techniques that have gained popularity in contemporary children's and adolescent fiction" (*Ideologies of Identity* 10).

6.3 Areas for Further Research

It was impossible to cover all aspects of this topic in this study, and there are many areas for possible further research. Issues surrounding the representation of the Holocaust continue to be commented upon, and children's literature will be a contentious topic as long as we are creating texts for children. Questions of what can and should be represented in children's literature will continue to be asked, especially with regard to the literature of atrocity. The boundaries between literature for children and adults are permeable and continue to move; crossover literature has inspired many recent studies, including Sandra Beckett's in 2009 as well as Rachel Falconer's in 2009. Whether the Holocaust should be taught, and when, is an area of study that was not included in this thesis, although it was touched on. Issues of who can write

Holocaust literature continue to be on the minds of authors and literary critics, as evidenced by interviews with Boyne and Zusak in which they state that they felt that their options of what to represent were limited by their personal backgrounds. Myers' statement in "Storying War" addresses several of these important questions:

More than any other juvenile category, war stories foreground basic questions: What counts as "children's literature," and how does that literature differ from works for an adult audience; what constitutes permissible subject matter and how may horrors like Nazi crematoria and American atomic destruction be represented for young audiences so as to inspire and not paralyze moral action; and how can juvenile literature foster humane thinking and global peace when youngsters grow up saturated with media violence? (24)

The topic of this thesis, and ones like it, is full of exciting and important research opportunities.

6.4 Concluding Thoughts

As Cynthia Ozick writes in *Quarrel and Quandary*, there is a "conflict between the freedom to invent and an honest confrontation with the constraints of the historical record" (111). I believe that what these three children's authors struggle with in different ways in their texts is the balance between representing the Holocaust in an authentic way, writing for a younger audience, and writing an engaging story. The constraints that these three considerations place upon an author would be hard to deal with gracefully. While Yolen, Boyne, and Zusak struggle with these challenges to differing degrees and in different ways, I believe that all three of these novels are successful in using alternative narrative forms to represent the spaces of the Holocaust. The large number of texts for children and young adults dealing with the Holocaust

speaks to its continued importance in contemporary Canadian society. Kertzer, in “Anxiety of Trauma,” writes: “The notion of the unrepresentable derives from a distinction between traumatic and ordinary memory, one that may seem to privilege adult texts’ representations but really makes all narrative representations of trauma – not just children’s war fiction – necessarily inadequate” (208). While they may be inadequate, it is important to attempt to represent the Holocaust authentically. Jane Yolen, John Boyne, and Markus Zusak succeed at this attempt in three very different ways.

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