

**“How do you know who you are if you don’t understand where you came from?”:
Navigating the Holocaust in Two Third-Generation Graphic Memoirs**

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I will focus on two contemporary Holocaust graphic memoirs, Amy Kurzweil’s *Flying Couch* (2016) and Nora Krug’s *Belonging: A German Reckons with History and Home* (2018), that together speak to the complex web of motivations and negotiations through which the Holocaust is “witnessed” from contrasting yet overlapping perspectives. Kurzweil is the grandchild of survivors; Krug is the grandchild of perpetrators. Taken together, these two graphic narratives represent two current and intersecting directions in Holocaust representation: the emergence of third-generation Holocaust writers and the evolving genre of Holocaust graphic novels. Through the hybrid medium of comics narratives, both graphic novelists call attention to their precarious positions as distanced third-generation arbiters and custodians of Holocaust memory. Both Kurzweil and Krug, writing from an increasingly remote generational position in relation to the Holocaust and to the fragmented narratives of the events that came to shape the lives of their families, enter the space of the traumatic past. Each, through divergent yet overlapping artistic and structural executions, attempts to compensate for her lack of knowledge as well as for the vast chasm of time and continents. Both confront the accidents of birth and incident by taking on history through direct confrontation with the stories, artifacts, and traces of the past. Through a variety of manipulations of text and image and through the verbal-visual tensions and juxtapositions characteristic of the genre of the graphic novel, these third-generation graphic artists humanize the history of the Shoah by uncovering their families’ pasts but also by confronting their own anxious places in that legacy.