This thesis examines two novels that broaden conversations about the Holocaust by using fantastic elements to examine Holocaust identity issues. “Fantasy” and “fantastic” are understood here in a broad sense, accounting for all fantastic subgenres and even the neighboring genre of science fiction. The sections on *Briar Rose* and *Wolf by Wolf* are each divided into two portions: 1) an analysis of that novel’s particular use of fantasy to model the difficult process of studying the Holocaust, an event that is both distant and seemingly unbelievable and 2) an analysis of how the various fantastic elements in each novel explore the construction and persecution of identity categories.

*Briar Rose* uses two forms of fantasy: fairy tale and “the fantastic” as understood by Tzvetan Todorov. Todorov’s understanding of the fantastic relies on the hesitation to believe the fantastic event. This mimics studying the Holocaust, when we are confronted again and again with the seemingly impossible. The novel moves between fairy tale and history, eventually settling the hesitation as “the fairy tale prince” debunks the fairy tale with a narrative grounded in historical accuracy. Challenging both Holocaust and heteronormative fairy tale expectations, the “prince” is a homosexual survivor and his narrative explores gay identity as defined by himself and as defined by Nazi rhetoric. *Wolf by Wolf* is an alternate history novel, which, with the addition of shapeshifting, operates similarly to a science-fiction universe or an immersive fantasy as defined by Farah Mendlesohn. The protagonist’s ability to shapeshift engages the identity theories of essentialism and intersectionality to explore how identities become fixed by ideology and political systems, and the ways in which identities are or are not mutable inside those systems.

As we move further and further from the events of the Holocaust, remembering and keeping it relevant become more and more pressing. I have concluded that the use of fantasy is these novels is one effective way of doing this because it provides alternate routes for accessing a very difficult history while also revitalizing our study of that history. The fantasy elements in these novels work to demythologize the Holocaust and posit a more dynamic relationship to history. Through the various fantastic elements we engage with aspects of the Holocaust that are not typically studied, such as pink triangle persecution; the explorations of identity construction and persecution ask us to think critically about how and why these things happen; and, since identity persecution is an increasingly relevant issue today, a conversation is opened between history and present, moving the Holocaust from the distant past to present day relevance.