The Questionnaire:

Why did you go into Jewish Studies?

Benjamin M. Baader

Associate Professor of History and Coordinator of Judaic Studies, University of Manitoba

In the 1960s and 1970s, when I grew up in Munich and later West Berlin, Jewish life in Germany was ossified. Paralyzed. Bound and gagged by a past that was not over yet. As has been described by scholars such as Michal Bodemann, postwar German-Jewish communities were fortresses, where survivors locked themselves in to find protection from a mostly self-absorbed or even hostile German society and a not very sympathetic Jewish international public.

Whatever comfort was to be found within these small and often suffocating communities, I did not have much access to it, as I grew up at their margins. My Viennese father, though Jewish and marked by his experience as a camp survivor, was a socialist, not affiliated Jewishly, and he passed to me only faint echoes of a Jewish practice. My non-Jewish mother communicated to me that my father's heritage was an obligation to me, but she was not able to provide much content beyond the story of persecution and extermination of those who came before me. So I grew up with a strong sense of difference and purpose. I was bound to something that I knew reached deep into the past, far beyond the abyss of death and destruction, but that I did not have much concrete information about.

Thus not surprisingly, in my twenties I began searching for what Judaism was beyond concentration camps. I began learning Hebrew and enrolled in a Judaic Studies university program. I also formally joined the Jewish community of Berlin and underwent a conversion to regularize my status. At that time, I started falling in love with the richness of Jewish texts and with the complexities of Jewish history; the shiny fabric of Jewish learning has not ceased to delight and enchant me since. And while my Jewish Studies career unfolded in North America, Jewish life in Europe began to resurge. Due to the influx of post-Soviet Jews, the German-Jewish population is more than three times larger now than it was in the 1980s, and today new generations of European Jews assert themselves and establish novel, diverse, inventive, and often provocative forms of Jewish life. The shadows of the Shoah are still long, but they have become less overwhelming and impenetrable. I have gone into Jewish Studies in post-genocidal Germany in the search for what is alive in the Jewish experience, and the Jewish capacity for sustaining and recovering aliveness lets European and German Jews today shape new and distinct local Jewish cultures.

Cynthia Baker

Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Bates College

Three decades ago, as a young college student, I studied in Jerusalem. Ripe for the encounter, I fell intensely and fearfully in love with that place, *ha-makom, ha-aretz*. With the loss of political innocence and the heartbreak that followed, I have often felt myself caught in a seemingly hopeless attempt to make sense of it all, caught like a fly in the sticky interconnections of the web into which I've flown. Jewish Studies at times illumines for me diverse strands in this web of love and grief.

As I grow older, I find I am increasingly bemused by the human world, its confounding disparities, and perplexing preoccupations. As a child of Western education and culture, I have come to know Jew as a name by which to take hold of and wrestle with bemusement, alienation, and ambivalence; to own the strange as familiar and the familiar as strange; to recognize self in/as Other. Jewish Studies provides me many ways to face and embrace that ambivalent Jew.

Throughout my life, I have been intrigued by complex questions; by ideas that open out to other ideas, other questions, multiple possibilities. And I yearn to live within a sense of the sacred that reaches beyond common parochialisms. These impulses surely ground my choices of an academic profession and, within that, the field of religious studies. I come to Jewish Studies through religious studies, seduced—and sustained—by delight in the play of ideas and words, the resonant multivocality of practices like midrash, and by deep pleasure in a tradition that, at its best, honors questioning, challenging, and learning as sacred acts.

Deborah Green

Associate Professor of Religious Studies, University of Oregon

In 1995, I was working for a human resources consulting firm as a marketer. I was living in Madison, Wisconsin, and flying out to the Los Angeles office for two weeks each month. I spent a lot of time in airports and on the phone. I did my job quite well and could probably do it in my sleep. The pay was very good, and my staff was really terrific, but I felt unfulfilled. I wanted to work at something in which I would need to learn constantly and where I could interact with bright, highly curious people every day. One day the rabbi of my synagogue in Madison asked me to speak to some church groups on the weekends because he had more invitations than he could handle. I agreed and spent the next year or so researching and speaking on topics such as, "The Jewish View of Jesus," "Jews at the Time of Jesus," and "What Kind of Jew was Jesus?" Needless to say, I became very interested in Bible and Hellenistic and early rabbinic Judaism. When my now ex-husband landed a job that moved us to Chicago, I thought, "Here's my chance. I'll take off for a year or two and see what grad school feels like." I enrolled in a terminal MA program at the Divinity School at the University of Chicago. The dean of students kept asking me, "Don't you want to enroll in the regular MA program? What if you decide to go on for a PhD?" I didn't consider his questions seriously. But on the first day of orientation, I sat in this magnificent room on campus, listened to presentations about the upcoming intellectual rigors, and gazed up at the wood-carved angels on the beam ceiling who were singing hymns. At the break, I went downstairs and changed my track from "terminal MA" to "MA toward PhD." I was home; I've never looked back.

Atina Grossmann

Professor of History, Cooper Union

I am trained as a modern European and German historian and did not "go" or "get" into Jewish Studies via any conventional academic route; Jewish Studies captured and captivated me because that's where my research led me. My work on Jewish survivors and displaced persons in postwar occupied Germany, which initially emerged from questions about the German experience of defeat and occupation, pushed me not only to a more particular focus on Jewish history but, quite literally, into new territory, beyond the borders of Germany and German history, into Poland, the Soviet Union, Palestine/Israel, and now even toward Iran and India as I explore the experiences of European Jewish refugees during and immediately after World War II. Jewish Studies quite simply offered the transnational, border-crossing, and interdisciplinary perspectives and methodologies I needed to investigate and make sense of topics that fascinated me. Not so simply, I have found myself launched, at first slowly, almost without noticing, and now in a way that feels familiar and (almost) legitimate into a new academic universe, with different (and sometimes overlapping) conferences, seminars, colleagues, for which I am not in fact formally qualified—but which has become integral to my scholarship and, indeed, to which my own scholarship contributes. If I had only known in the 1960s that this was the path my research would take I might have paid more attention in Hebrew School and picked oranges on a Kibbutz where everyone didn't speak German, but my path into Jewish Studies speaks, I think, to a more general opening of a once tightly patrolled field that in so many ways seems peculiarly suited to address current wide-ranging scholarly and political preoccupations with cosmopolitanism, migration, displacement, multiple identities, and memory. Last but not least—and this warrants a longer complicated conversation having to do with the life cycle of the "second generation"—Jewish Studies offers a space within which I can experiment with linking family stories to collective histories.

Melanie Landau

Lecturer of Jewish Studies, Monash University

Eight years ago I was employed as a Lecturer in Jewish Studies when I returned to Melbourne, Australia, after four years in Jerusalem. My colleagues and I developed a community education program for the university and then we raised money from local family foundations for our salaries. Our university positions involved half-time community education with university branding and half-time regular academic teaching and research. This model was a great success for the university. We changed the nature of discourse in the community, attracted our target audiences, and we succeeded in bringing in several new chairs because of the exposure that our program gave the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation.

My first monograph (converted from my PhD) is currently in press. *Tradition and Equality in Jewish Marriage: Beyond the Sanctification of Subordination* (Continuum) is both an analytical and a constructive project. It looks at alternatives to traditional Jewish marriage from within the traditional sources (such as conditional marriage and *derekh kiddushin*) as well as showing how traditional marriage is nonreciprocal and detrimental to women (and the marriage relationship) as well as exploring the role of values in halakic determinations. This project represents both my embrace and my wrestling with the tradition.

All the courses I have been involved in developing and/or teaching have had a transformational goal in mind: "Jewish Law"; "Reading Gender in Judaism"; "Rethinking Australian Jewish Community"; "Post conflict: Memory, Justice and Reconciliation"; and an overseas trip to Israel and the Palestinian Territories called "Israelis and Palestinians: Between War and Peace."

I currently live in Jerusalem with my family on sabbatical and also work half-time as Director of Facilitation for Encounter, which is an educational organization dedicated to providing global diaspora leaders from across the religious and political spectrum with exposure to Palestinian life. I am thriving in this environment where relationship is at the center and I have the privilege (and burden) to be a "boundary-crosser" and move between Israel and Palestinian Territories, carrying both my grounded-ness in the tradition as well as the consideration of our Jewish participants and our Palestinian partners.

Olga Litvak

Associate Professor of History and Michael and Lisa Leffell Chair in Modern Jewish History, Clark University

As a matter of fact, I didn't go into Jewish Studies. What I did was go to Columbia in order to study with Michael Stanislawski for a few years before settling down to a real job, the only one I've wanted since the age of four: teaching. I had no particular interest in Jewish Studies, but Stanislawski proved such a gifted, inspiring mentor that I would have been prepared to go into his field no matter what it was (except, possibly, organic chemistry). I had no stake in the academic profession for the first three years of graduate school and no sense of my contribution to "Jewish Studies" until I finished my first book. Actually, I resisted studying anything that was even remotely connected to Russian-Jewish history because I worried about people assuming that I couldn't do anything else. With Stanislawski, that was not a handicap. Quite simply, he took my intellect more seriously than my background and made me see my early Jewish education and native knowledge of Russian as assets rather than liabilities. In the course of things, I met several other people whose friendship and respect I now treasure. It so happens that most of them were also working in Jewish Studies. I've come to share their interests and I think they now share some of mine. I love the fact that we read many of the same books and obsess about the same questions. And I love that they want to read my work. However, I remain firmly convinced that my professional choices were largely (and happily) contingent; I often wonder about the possibility of going back to my real roots—a lifelong obsession with narrative—and writing something about Chekhov or Dickens. But as long as I can write about Sholem Aleichem, I probably won't.

Alan Mintz

Chana Kekst Professor of Hebrew Literature, Jewish Theological Seminary

My entry into Jewish Studies was the solution to a problem.

I began my freshman year at Columbia University with the intention of becoming a rabbi or a Jewish educator, but I became enthralled by the explosion of literary theory (J. Hillis Miller, Barthes, Foucault, and others) and soon forgot about my earlier vocational plans. Instead of rabbinical school, I continued on at Columbia in the doctoral program in English with a focus on Victorian fiction. Outside my graduate studies I was deeply involved with the New York Havurah and the spiritual and cultural ferment of the Jewish youth culture. As I met students from Zionist and radical

movements and learned more about the Holocaust and Soviet Jewry, I realized how parochial had been my upbringing within the youth movement of Conservative Judaism. I began to feel connected to the national historical experience of the Jewish people and not only to its religious practices.

After my oral examinations, I took some time off to consider what had become a pressing dilemma. Although my enthusiasm for English studies had not abated, I began to question whether I had a sufficient depth of personal commitment to make it my life's work and to go to a remote location to practice it. My deepest commitments were now to the Jewish people, and I wanted to find a way to insure that whatever intellectual gifts I had would leave their mark on its culture. But I felt I was starting too late and could never make the switch into another field of study. A fateful conversation with the late theologian and man of letters Arthur A. Cohen forced me to confront my defenses and re-imagine my future. The decision was made, and I experienced an enormous release of intellectual energies. I would complete my degree by writing a dissertation on George Eliot and the novel of vocation. Only in retrospect did I realize that I had chosen a topic that described the ordeal I had been undergoing. At the same time and during several postdoctoral years, I would "retool" in Jewish Studies. I first pursued midrash and then medieval Hebrew poetry and finally found my home in modern Hebrew literature. Only in retrospect, as well, did I realize that my chosen field was a solution to yet another problem: how to remain deeply connected to Israel and to Hebrew while making a life in America.

Anita Norich

Professor of English and Judaic Studies, University of Michigan

Why not? Why wouldn't I "go into" Jewish Studies? That seems to me a good Jewish (Studies) answer, partly because it underscores the insistence on questions that is central to study of any kind, partly because it made me pause over where I was coming from and what I was going to when I began my study of Yiddish, Jewish culture, thought and history, partly because it assumes that people choose to go into a field called Jewish Studies. A generation ago literature students could not have chosen such a field, though the training we received in English, German, Slavic Studies, and other disciplinary homes has, I think, stood us in good stead.

The question suggests to me a coming of age because it assumes that Jewish Studies, while not a discipline or a methodology, is nonetheless a field people choose. I entered it initially, I am now a bit sorry to confess, partly out of pique. When I was getting my PhD in English and Comparative Literature (with a focus on Victorian Literature), I took language exams in French and German and then asked to take them in Yiddish as well. It seemed wrong for someone who was as educated as I was about to become to be functionally illiterate in her native tongue. My spoken Yiddish was excellent, but my reading was . . . let's just say neglected. Columbia refused my request (hence, the pique) until, following my advisor's suggestion, I said that I wanted to do a comparative field in the Yiddish novel. I don't think I could have named half a dozen Yiddish novels at that point but once I started reading I did not want to stop. I "discovered" a wealth of modernist poetry and satirical novels, funny characters, and those caught between what academics have been taught not to call tradition and modernity, stylistic experimentation and realism: in short, everything I knew about English literature. But in Yiddish and, for the most part, concerning Jews. Since both mattered a great to me personally, I wondered if they might matter professionally as well. And they have.

Vanessa L. Ochs

Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Jewish Studies, University of Virginia

I didn't go into Jewish Studies. I landed there.

A dozen years ago, the Dean of the College of Arts and Science at the University of Virginia decided the time was ripe to create a Jewish Studies Program and a major in Jewish Studies. My partner, Peter Ochs, who has a great imagination, was asked to bring it into being and initially, I was invited to join the faculty. I was just finishing my PhD in Anthropology of Religion at Drew University at the time and was a senior fellow at CLAL, the National Jewish Center for Leaning and Leadership in New York. But mostly, until that point, I was a writer who taught classes in Writing and Women in Religion.

After a year of teaching at UVA and being responsible for the fledgling undergraduates studying Judaism at UVA, my department chair told me that the dean wanted me to be the director of the Jewish Studies Program. I said I was flattered and would think about it, and the chair said, no, this was the dean's decision, not mine.

Was this plausible? I had picked up skills in fundraising and dealing with donors from my work at CLAL, so I figured I could do that part, and as one of the directors of the International Committee for Women of the Wall, I had learned to speak persuasively in public. But I had no experience in any other aspects of academic administration: creating a faculty, negotiating, programming, grant writing, hiring, and so forth. Beyond that, I didn't picture myself as a Jewish Studies scholar (I had in mind people who seemed to fit the bill: Judith Baskin, Deborah Dash Moore, David Ruderman, and the late Judah Goldin, a friend of mine at the time). True, my work as a writer and anthropologist focused on Jews, but still . . . the turn to "cultural studies" for Jewish Studies scholarship had yet to have the status it does now.

I didn't yet know that for most academics who take on administrative responsibilities, it is "Amateur Hour," at least initially. And I didn't yet know that most people who find themselves in Jewish Studies, even those directing programs, consider themselves, compared to others who are "legit," to be imposters. It turned out that the dean had good instincts: I learned on the job and embraced my new identity as the first Ida and Nathan Kolodiz Director of Jewish Studies, a role that my colleague Gabriel Finder is now interpreting in his own way.

Todd Presner

Professor of Germanic Languages and Comparative Literature and Director of the Center for Jewish Studies, UCLA

In the mid-1990s, I went to Germany to study the language and deepen my knowledge of German philosophy. Among other places, I spent time in Weimar, a city famous not only for being the birthplace of Goethe and Schiller but also the first location of the Bauhaus and home to the Nietzsche archive. A short bus ride up a hill outside the city leads to Buchenwald, a massive, sprawling concentration camp, marked—at the time—by giant anti-fascism monuments erected by the Soviets. The horrible proximity of Weimar and Buchenwald was, to me, the distillation of Adorno's culture/barbarism dialectic, a complex history of civilization and violence that simultaneously entangled and estranged German and Jewish.

Inspired by Walter Benjamin's writings on urbanism, I lived in Berlin for a large part of 1995 and 1996, trying to piece together the history of the city as the city tried to piece itself back together. Monuments and museums for the Holocaust were debated almost every day in the press, while on the ground, traces of the Jewish past were often very hard to find. I spent several days looking for Berlin's Judenhof, only to find apartment courtyards and parking lots. I first found the Judenhof on a 1772 map of the city, and I used that, like a palimpsest, to guide my search in the present. Not unlike Benjamin, I found the streets conducted me downward in time, into a thickly layered past. I walked to the Anhalter train station, which was now just a ruin, knowing that Kafka, Celan, and Benjamin had entered and left Berlin from this station. Birch trees grew through its derelict tracks.

I went into Jewish Studies initially to untangle the German-Jewish dialectic but found that I could only tarry with it. German-Jewish Studies was and still is a spatial practice for me, marked not only by spaces of memory and oblivion but storytelling and way-finding, marking and annotating places of encounter, productivity, and destruction. I felt an obligation to map these histories as places, to struggle with their otherness, and to develop a kind of relational ethics between the then and there and the here and now. Jewish Studies became a way of listening, an attentiveness to the many pasts, which called out, however faintly, to a different future. I am a cultural historian of these pasts.

Na'ama Rokem

Assistant Professor of Modern Hebrew Literature, University of Chicago

Let me begin by laying my cards bare: I work on Jewish literature because it is what I know and where I come from. Navel-gazing, pure and simple. Moreover, I never quite decided to get into Jewish Studies. I studied Comparative Literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and then at Stanford University, and as I evolved as a student and a scholar, Jewish authors more often than not wrote the texts that attracted and compelled me. This determined the languages I learnt (I originally took up German because I was completely fascinated by Freud's figurative language) and the fields I specialized in (the cultural history of Zionism, Modern Hebrew literature). In retrospect, I've come up with several types of rationalization for what I do, for both personal and professional purposes. One of them emerges from my experience of teaching Israeli literature and culture, which has become one of the parts of my job that I value most. For me, teaching the history of Zionism and Israeli literature and culture at an American university is a fascinating opportunity to explore the power of literary texts and other cultural phenomena to expand and challenge our world-views, or, in other words, it is an opportunity to reflect on the very value of the humanities and of literary studies. Students often come to these classes with firmly entrenched perceptions about the politics of the Middle East. I see it as my role neither to confirm these views nor to change them, but rather to expose my students to complex, multivalent objects that defy the either-or logic of politics and open up spaces for reflection. Studying the contact-zone between German and Hebrew has been for me an entryway into precisely such a challenging space of reflection, forcing me to reconsider some of my basic perceptions about Hebrew culture before and after the Holocaust. So, to return to where I started, I work on Jewish literature because this allows me to question what I think I know about where I came from and because this opens a conversation with peers—colleagues and students—that I value.

Seth Schwartz

Professor of History and Classics and Lucius N. Littauer Professor of Classical Jewish Civilization, Columbia University

American stories are supposed to feature moments of redemption and new beginnings, but my story does not. I cannot remember ever having wanted to do anything other than what I actually do. From very early childhood, I was obsessed with the accumulation of information about a Jewish past I was convinced was utterly different from my own and my parents' American Jewish experiences. I was and am an inveterate reader and re-reader of encyclopedias (what a blessing to live in the era of Wikipedia) and really got something to sink my teeth into when the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* came out, around the time of my bar mitzvah. Though I was a dutiful rather than enthusiastic Bible and Talmud student as a kid, long before my bar mitzvah I had devoured Graetz's *History of the Jews*, a variety of other old fashioned works of scholarship, Maimonides's *Guide*, a volume called *Otzar Havikuhim*, which includes the disputation of Nahmanides and Pablo Christiani, and a Hebrew translation of Josephus, *Against Apion*. A bemused but sympathetic summer camp librarian gave me as a gift the library's neglected copy of Jacques Heurgon, *Daily Life of the Etruscans*, around the same time. The last fact points to some ambivalence, which set in during adolescence and has never disappeared. My self-image as a Jewish historian has vacillated asynchronously with my job description. I studied classics in college (admittedly at Yeshiva University), ancient history in grad school, and have subsequently experienced periods of having proprietary feelings neither about Jewish Studies (which in the U.S. has a modernist orientation) nor about ancient history (a field not really interested in the Jews, in the final analysis). So I am now in the perfect—maybe perfectly untenable-- position of being 37.5 percent a Jewish historian, 37.5 percent an ancient historian, and 25 percent a classicist.

Lara Trubowitz

Assistant Professor of English, University of Iowa

I came to Jewish Studies not because I was in the right environment for studying Jewish culture and history—for instance, my native New York and the Yiddishkeit of my extended family—but rather because I found myself in the wrong one—Iowa, where "Jewish" is still a somewhat exotic adjective, and where seemingly banal encounters can bespeak, not anti-Semitism exactly, but a kind of benign obliviousness to the history of anti-Jewish rhetoric. In this agreeably unconducive environment, I have become a Jewish Studies scholar who studies non-Jews, or who studies the ways in which Jewishness can be misinterpreted or misspoken.

A brief example: at Passover a few years ago, I went to the local Co-op (an enclave of liberalism and cosmopolitanism) to buy matzos, only to find they had discontinued their line of Passover products. I wrote a letter of complaint, emphasizing the Co-op's importance to its Jewish shoppers. In response, I was told politely that the store could not cater to "individual communities" and that they could only purchase "clean product lines." Incidents like this one make me suspicious of politeness; in my work I seek a vocabulary for describing sociable behaviors that disguise or belie more insidious forms of prejudice. I am especially intrigued by smart and self-reflective people who

still don't know what to do with Jews (this includes many of my favorite writers, for instance, Djuna Barnes and Virginia Woolf). I theorize what I call "civil anti-Semitism," a form of anti-Jewish rhetoric that can easily coincide with a disdain for outright bigotry. I treat such "civil" hate speech as a form of rhetorical argumentation, one that may be "useful" or "productive" despite, or because of, its complexity and subterfuge.

James E. Young

Distinguished University Professor of English and Judaic Studies and Director of the Institute for Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Without knowing it, I "went into" Jewish Studies the moment I veered into an interdisciplinary PhD dissertation on Holocaust literature. This would have been around 1979 or so, when I realized that the twin, interdependent aims of my research and writing on the Holocaust would always have to be both what happened and how this history has been passed down to me. That is, I needed to know both the hard history of this period and the ways this history has been shaped and remembered in narrative, poetry, music, film, art, and architecture, among other media. My study would necessarily cut across all kinds of disciplinary boundaries, to the consternation of some but not all my mentors at the time.

Among my dissertation readers, Murray Baumgarten, Sidra Ezrahi, Yehuda Bauer, and Hayden White all understood my approach and by 1981, they were encouraging me to present parts of my dissertation at the MLA, CAA, and AHA—and I did. But there was only one annual conference that had room for all of my research preoccupations (obsessions), and of course, this was the AJS—a professional organization composed of every possible discipline under the sun.

Indeed, as an area study, Jewish Studies has always been interdisciplinary, an amalgam of historians, linguists, Biblical scholars, literary comparatists, political scientists, and sociologists. More lately, the tent has expanded to include researchers and teachers working on Jewish themes in Art History, Musicology, Communications, Anthropology, Folklore, and Women's Studies, among others. Some of these fields are themselves area studies, while others hew more closely to traditional departmental disciplines. In fact, over the years, Jewish Studies has even served as a model for further interdisciplinary area studies programs, such as Gender Studies, Islamic Studies, and even Memory Studies.

As it turns out, enlarging the tent of Jewish Studies to include the research and teaching of scholars from such a disparate pool of disciplines has done wonders for the field overall. And as becomes clearer with every passing year, Jewish Studies continues to create a space where work in other, more traditional disciplines can find innovative and entirely unexpected expression. Rather than asking scholars in Jewish Studies to define their work as constitutively "Jewish," we ask each other to do the best work possible in our respective disciplines, allowing it both to inform a traditional discipline's offerings and to enrich that which we call Jewish Studies. As it turns out, choosing to do my work within the reciprocal, invigorating exchange between disciplines is when I "chose" to go into Jewish Studies.

Froma I. Zeitlin

Emerita Professor of Comparative Literature and Classics and Ewing Professor of Greek Language and Literature, Princeton University

I came to Jewish Studies, by the back door, as it were. The granddaughter of two rabbis and (a Litvak to boot) raised in a deeply committed family to all things Jewish, my own Jewish education was quite remarkable for its time. Yet despite my very strong background from an early age on, including Hebrew and much more, my major academic field turned out to be Classics. Luckily, I was given an opportunity at Princeton both to found and build a program in Jewish Studies (which I directed for nine years) as well as an appointment in Comparative Literature that gave me more flexibility in teaching. The courses of Jewish interest I have taught take two paths: the first was "Gender, the Body, and Sexuality in Judaism from the Bible to Contemporary America." I had already taught gender courses in antiquity and it was an exciting moment to transfer (and expand) my expertise into a broader cultural context. But what held much greater urgency for me was the Holocaust and the desire to bring relevant courses to the curriculum. I was a child of the time. Growing up in the years of World War II, I was haunted by what might have been in my own life, and my absorption in the topic only increased as the years went on. My richest experiences at Princeton have been the two courses I teach under the aegis of Comparative Literature. The first is entitled "Texts and Images of the Holocaust" and the second, which branched off from the first, is called "Stolen Years: Youth and Adolescence under the Nazis in World War II." Oddly enough, these courses increasingly attract non-Jewish students, many of whom return again and again to seek my advice (and write recommendations for them), since more than one has declared to me, even many years later, that this was a course that changed their lives. While I have published several articles on the subject of Holocaust literature (and film) and have given presentations and participated in conferences, ranging from Dreyfus to Berlin Holocaust memorials, my primary engagement has been in my teaching, although I hope that further writing is on the horizon.