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Supervised by: Jan Schwarz
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Anna Hofman
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New Holocaust Literature:
Third-Generation Identity, Memory, and the Reader in
Hanna Rajs' *Under månen* (2020)

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Foreword

As a Jewish woman of the third generation, born and raised in Sweden, and whose parents emigrated from Ukraine, explorations of Jewish authorships and the way in which Jewish authors construct, portray, and communicate Jewish identity in literature are dually important. First, I believe that it is essential to highlight texts by contemporary Jewish authors in Europe, to combat unfamiliarity and silence surrounding contemporary Jewish life in Europe. To quote Dara Horn's 2021 title, *People Love Dead Jews*¹ and so, it is not amiss to underline the fact that we are *still* here and continue to write. Second, studying texts by young Jewish authors is not only an opportunity to research contemporary literary Jewish identity construction, in its many forms, but gives us an indication of the ongoing negotiations and destabilizations of falsely monolithic national, geographical, and linguistic borderlines of identity. This can then also be transferred to other writers on the margin. To see where we are headed, we must engage with the present, as much as the past.

Introduction

*“If a poet does not tell the truth about time,
his or her work will not survive it.”*

– Eavan Boland (1995).²

As we move further into the third decade of the 21st century, we are arguably at the precipice of a new post-Shoah world.³ With the number of remaining survivors rapidly decreasing, subsequent generations, children and grandchildren, are left to carry the legacy of family memory but also a larger collective Jewish memory of the Holocaust, along with the time immediately before and after the event; all to assure that the Holocaust does not fall to the files of history, and its victims are not further relegated to anonymity and generalization. In contrast to Theodor W. Adorno's oft cited (and even more debated) statement “to write after Auschwitz is barbaric,”⁴ Jews have continued to put their experiences and reflections post-Holocaust in writing (much, but perhaps not all, of which can be gathered under the umbrella term of

¹ Dara Horn, *People Love Dead Jews: Reports from a Haunted Present*, New York: W.W. Norton, 2021.

² Eavan Boland, *Object Lessons: The Life of the Woman and the Poet in Our Time*, Manchester, Carcanet Press, 1995, 153.

³ *Shoah* (Hebrew שואה), meaning “catastrophe”. Hebrew word for Holocaust. In this thesis Shoah and Holocaust will be used interchangeably.

⁴ Theodor W Adorno, *Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997, 33.

Holocaust Literature). While many, particularly survivors, have grappled and still grapple with what truly can be said after such horrors, writing about the Holocaust is, nevertheless, a fact – indeed it was even before the end of the Second World War in ghettos, camps, among partisans, in hiding, and by refugees. Now, Holocaust writing is shifting shape and contents, once again, along with the generational turn at this moment in time. From the first generation, the first-hand witnesses and survivors of the Holocaust, to the second generation, the *postmemory* generation (as coined by Marianne Hirsch),⁵ to the third generation i.e. the grandchildren of survivors.⁶ The borders of such terminological divisions are not always clear, however, the idiosyncrasies of each generation are not few, and the third generation is undeniably marked by their temporal position – twice removed from the Holocaust, and plausibly the last to know first-hand witnesses personally.

Hanna Rajs is an interesting example of a burgeoning authorship and a rewarding point of departure into wider questions surrounding an expanding field of third generation authorship, and scholarship exploring the same. While there are no academic publications on Rajs’ writing to date, this fact presents both a challenge and an opportunity to discover the character of this poetic expression and what new insight it might offer to studies on third-generation writing. I defer to William Blake’s famous introductory line to his poem “Auguries of Innocence”: “To see a World in a Grain of Sand”.⁷ Whilst I cannot draw sweeping or generalizing conclusions about Jewishness, or a finite direction of third-generation writing going forward – and neither is this my aim – Rajs’ poetry serves as a way to catch a glimpse and deconstruct how one young, third-generation author envisions Jewish identity in diaspora (specifically in Sweden), the Jewish lyrical subject’s position, as well as the relationship to the readers. As such this thesis will explore the following research questions: *How does Rajs portray and construct Jewish identity and collective memory in Under månen? How is collective Jewish identity communicated, utilising the poetic form?*

Furthermore, whilst this thesis aims to explore and dissect Hanna Rajs’ *Under månen*,⁸ I will intermittently use the poet’s debut collection *Armarna* (2018) in a contextualising and at times comparative fashion.⁹ It should be noted that the topic of this study overall has great

⁵ Originally in Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

⁶ Notably, a fourth generation is also emerging and will certainly bring new perspectives and challenges to the literary scene, alas, inquiries into this generation will have to be reserved for the future.

⁷ William Blake, “Auguries of Innocence” in *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake* [4th print, with revisions], ed. David V. Erdman, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970, 481.

⁸ Hanna Rajs Lara, *Under månen*, Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 2020.

⁹ Hanna Rajs Lundström, *Armarna*, Stockholm: 10TAL Bok, 2018.

comparative potential across Jewish authorships and borderlines of various kinds of identities and belongings, and such is the aspiration of this writer for future academic endeavours on the topic. Thus, this thesis should be seen as a precursor to a wider, comparative, mapping of third-generation literary expressions which I am to undertake in the future. In some respects, this thesis is a trial or experimentation aimed at finding fruitful points of exploration in connection to the interactive poetic form within the frame of Holocaust Literature, the theoretical field of literary memory studies, and third-generation writing in Europe.

Writing has always served the purpose of re-telling the stories, and trials, of the Jewish people, who despite being targets of what is sometimes called “history’s oldest hatred” continue to persevere and think, create, and contribute to the world. Second generation literary explorations, across various genres, such as Eva Hoffman’s *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust* (2004) or Art Spiegelman’s *Maus I-III: A Survivor’s Tale* (1980–1991), most commonly attempt to reconcile the past with the present. Third-generation survivors, however, contend with the past along with the present, in addition to the unknown future, all at once. The implications of such anachronous but also forward-facing sensibilities, and the stakes as well as responsibilities of underpinning living memory and Jewish existence, have influenced much of Jewish third-generation literature. The third generation is, in many ways, the latest frontier in Jewish cultural production. Young Jews, although deeply concerned with antisemitism, operate, in an increasingly public fashion, from a point of resistance and pride. Max Czollek, Sasha Salzmann, Gabriel Itkes-Sznap, Johanna Adorján, and Hanna Rajs are all examples of young Jewish writers in Europe who in one way or another explore and display Jewish identity publicly, and, consequently, centre the complex experience of the third generation, in-between past, present, and future, in-between pride, joy, hate, and confusion, online, in physical spaces, and in writing. All while portraying and centring a diverse Jewry, intersecting with representations of bi- or multi-racial identities, “third culture kid” existence, LGBTQIA+ narratives, and stories of migration more distinctly than ever.

There is already a great scholarly effort dedicated to the Jewish third generation. In alignment with the studies of previous generations, the study of the grandchildren of survivors appeared first in connection to intergenerational trauma and its psychological aftereffects, most prominently, perhaps, in the works of Israeli psychologist Dan Bar-On.¹⁰ While psychological

¹⁰ See e.g. Dan Bar-On, *Fear and Hope: Three Generations of the Holocaust*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.

trials and socio-anthropological surveys about the third generation and their thoughts on identity, belonging, faith, community, and family have offered insight into this generation's existence,¹¹ literary explorations have arguably come to reveal more about the complexity of identity construction of this generation in a time marked by e.g. identity politics, in-betweenness, and social media. This thesis sets out to seek the "new," and whilst I am convinced that I will find much novelty, not least in Rajs' use of the poetic form, it is important to clarify that the study of third-generation literary explorations is not new. Scholars such as Victoria Aarons have already pondered the question of novelty on the part of the third generation in e.g. *Third-Generation Holocaust Narratives: Memory in Memoir and Fiction* (2016).¹² However, to date, much of the literary examinations of Holocaust literature about the third generation and their self-conceptualization has been centred around memoirs and novels. Autobiographical, and autofictional writing, such as Johanna Adorján's *Eine Exklusive Liebe* (2009) and Michel Laub's *Diário da Queda* (2011) or fictional works, including titles such as Jonathan Safran Foer's *Everything is Illuminated* (2002), Julie Orringer's *The Invisible Bridge* (2010) and Joseph Skibell *A Blessing on the Moon* (1997).¹³ Although the focus on other genres than oral ones is perhaps unsurprising, there is much to be gained from exploring the novelty of third generation poetic expressions and the implications of utilising traditional oral forms, even when the content is heavily autobiographical, as is the case in *Under månen*. Poetic expression is especially fascinating, as memory – the cornerstone of intergenerational transference – is in its purest form a communicative tool. Orality, speech, and performativity are all ways of disseminating transmission of communicative memory onward through poetry. As poetry is an art form read aloud, and where readers step into the words (and worlds) of the poet and attempt to internalize the lyrical subject's position (if there is one), the poetic form is particularly fruitful when looking at the establishment of the Jewish lyrical subject and its subsequent interaction with intergenerational memory transference relayed to a variety of readers. Is it possible to invite others in to take part in memory acts of this character? What does this look like? How do third-generation authors interact with their readers? What kind of communicative possibilities does the poetic form invite?

¹¹ See e.g. Ari Y. Kelma, et. al., "The Social Self: Toward the Study of Jewish Lives in the Twenty-first Century," *Contemporary Jewry*, Vol. 37:1, New York: Springer, 2017, 53–79. In a Swedish context, see: Anna Sarri Krantz *Tredje Generationens Överlevande*, Lund: Lunds universitet Media-Tryck, 2018.

¹² Victoria Aarons, "Introduction: Approaching the Third Generation" in *Third-Generation Holocaust Narratives: Memory in Memoir and Fiction*, ed. Victoria Aarons, London: Lexington Books, 2016, xi–xxii.

¹³ For recent example of research on the topic see e.g.: Victoria Aarons and Phyllis Lassner (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Holocaust Literature and Culture*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. While poetry appears as its own subsection, only first-generation writing is discussed.

This thesis is, as such, an attempt to close a gap in a field which already is filling a societal lacuna in which contemporary Jewish experiences and narratives reside. In addition to breaking with the exclusion of more performative genres such as poetry and drama, the aim stands in alignment with breaching the gap of studies on third-generation authors writing in Europe specifically. “Europe is charged with a past that has defined contemporary Jewish identity in a most crucial manner. And yet contemporary Europe also must be seen as a framework that offers the possibility of renegotiating the relationship between Jewish and non-Jewish cultures and providing the space for unique modes of articulation and enunciative positions” Vivian Liska and Thomas Nolden underline in *Contemporary Jewish Writing in Europe*.¹⁴ With exceptions, such as Adorján’s *An Exclusive Love* and Salzmann’s novel *Außer Sich* (2017) or drama *Muttersprache Mameloschn* (2012), most academic works pertaining to the Jewish third generation have centred literature written outside of Europe, specifically in the U.S. A shift toward studying the third generation out of Europe, in Europe, which is the aim of this thesis, can be seen as a part of an academic move to de-Americanize Holocaust literature and map transcultural and multilingual modes of existence, highlighting Jewish presence and culture production in the space where the Holocaust happened. As Liska and Nolden note, understanding the situatedness of Jewish identity in literature, especially third-generation literature, means facing forward as well as outward.

¹⁴ Vivian Liska and Thomas Nolden, “Introduction” in *Contemporary Jewish Writing in Europe*, ed. Vivian Liska and Thomas Nolden, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008, xv–xxxiii, xix.

Framing the Study: Previous Research

From Holocaust Literature to Holocaust Literatures

In the introduction to *Literature of the Holocaust* (2004), Harold Bloom states

The most celebrated aesthetic remark about the Holocaust was Adorno's, who told us that after Auschwitz all poetry was barbaric. The distinguished American-Jewish poet Anthony Hecht once said to an equally eminent American-Jewish poet, Mark Strand, what could they do if Adorno was right, to which Strand replied: "After Auschwitz, we still eat lunch." I confess that I do not know exactly what "Holocaust literature" is, and to avoid merely vulgar misunderstandings, I add that almost all of my own father's and mother's families were slaughtered by the Germans and their eager Polish, Ukrainian, Romanian, Hungarian, and other European helpers. If I remain sceptical about the literature of the Holocaust, my recalcitrance has to do with what is or is not possible to represent in imaginative literature. I doubt that a committee of Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, and Blake, despite their superhuman gifts, could be equal to such an endeavor.¹⁵

Harold Bloom's introduction to *Literature of the Holocaust* (2003) may very well count as part of the pantheon of Holocaust writing produced since 1945. Nevertheless, he cannot, or chooses not to, define it because of the difficulty of the feat of representing the Holocaust. How should one define a genre that deals with that which is so difficult to express? In *Encyclopedia of Holocaust Literature* (2002) David Patterson, Alan L. Berger, and Sarita Cargas introduce their collective edition by stating that "Holocaust literature arises in response to an event that would render the capacity both for response and for literary expression impossible. *And yet* it is there".¹⁶ As such, what is *it*? In "The Problematics of Holocaust Literature" (2004), Alvin H. Rosenfeld responds to his own question "[i]s there such a thing as Holocaust Literature?" by describing what Holocaust literature should do.¹⁷

Holocaust Literature occupies another sphere of study, on that is not only topical in interest but that extends so far as to force us to contemplate what may be fundamental changes in our modes of perception and expression, our altered way of being-in-the-world. What needs to be stressed is this: the nature and

¹⁵ Harold Bloom, "Introduction" in *Literature of the Holocaust*, ed. Harold Bloom, Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004, 1.

¹⁶ David Patterson, Alan L. Berger, and Sarita Cargas "Introduction" in *Encyclopedia of Holocaust Literature* ed. David Patterson, Alan L. Berger, and Sarita Cargas, Westport: Oryx Press, 2002, xiii–xviii, xiii.

¹⁷ Alvin Rosenfeld, "The Problematics of Holocaust Literature" in *Literature of the Holocaust* ed. Harold Bloom, Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2004, 21–47, 21.

magnitude of the Holocaust were such as to mark, almost certainly, the end of one era of consciousness and the beginning of another.¹⁸

Holocaust literature, as per Rosenfeld, cannot signify “a large but loosely arranged collection of novels, poems, essays, and plays about a *subject*,” but must dwell on the magnitude of writing which transgresses the border of “death-and-life” and, through which writing becomes a “retrieval of human life”.¹⁹ A similar call for profound and anchored writing can be found in Yehuda Bauer’s famous essay “Against Mystification” (1978), where Bauer argues that any kind of mystification, malicious or well-intentioned, illegitimate (e.g. Holocaust denial in various forms) and legitimate (e.g. literary production by survivors in various forms) must be paired with conversations and inquiries into processes before, during, and after the Shoah, looking at the socio-cultural and political consequences, Jewish existence in Israel and diaspora, and the responsibility of “the free world”.²⁰ Only when we ask such questions “Katzetnik, Wiesel, Abba Kovner, Nelly Sachs, and the others become intelligible and meaningful. Without a return to the very hard and arduous task of actually knowing something about the Holocaust, the symbolic descriptions that occupy, quite legitimately, the center of the literary stage in Holocaust literature, become just another escape route for the superficial”.²¹ According to Bauer, the same rhetoric can be applied to a process of “academization, of turning away from the abyss, of escape by way of a footnote”.²² Whilst the debate on mystification and the possibility of fictionalizing the Holocaust has occupied many scholars, it was perhaps most famously Elie Wiesel who voiced that fictionalization of the Holocaust contributes to its misrepresentation and deterritorialization. “A novel about Treblinka is either not a novel or not about Treblinka” Wiesel states in “The Holocaust as Literary Inspiration” (1977) underlining that Holocaust literature is oxymoronic and that those who lack first-hand experience cannot and should not attempt to illustrate it.²³ Dorian Stuber, in *Critical Insights: Holocaust Literature* (2016), notes that, albeit well-intentioned, “Wiesel’s distinction between testimony and literature” however, is “untenable and does more harm than good. [...] For Wiesel, that is,

¹⁸ Rosenfeld, 21.

¹⁹ Rosenfeld, 22.

²⁰ Yehuda Bauer, *The Holocaust in Historical Perspective*, Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1978, 46.

²¹ Bauer, 47.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Elie Wiesel, “The Holocaust as Literary Inspiration” in *Dimensions of the Holocaust*, ed. Elie Wiesel et al. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1977, 7. Wiesel has expressed similar sentiments regarding feature films and other audio-visual fictionalization commercializing the Holocaust. See: Elie Wiesel, “Art and the Holocaust: Trivializing Memory,” *The New York Times*. Published on: 11-06-1989. Accessed on: 29-03-2021.

the only writing worthy of the name Holocaust literature is that which has been produced by someone who lived through the experience”.²⁴ Stuber argues that the authenticity and truthfulness, demanded by Wiesel, are unattainable and misleading measures, as literature is representation and “language is by definition pure mediation; it is always standing between experience and understanding, even as it is the vehicle for that understanding”.²⁵ Stuber, does in the end, however, also note that whilst all literature is mediated by language and its very form, Holocaust literature comes with a certain responsibility – “[w]hen we translate those experiences – whether our own, if we are survivors, or of others, if we are novelists, poets, or playwrights writing about those survivors – into representation, we risk distorting them [...] there’s something unseemly about any representation or shaping of Holocaust experience”.²⁶ It is clear that Holocaust literature, albeit a paradoxical genre, is heavily anchored in socio-political as well as historical matters, and must remain so. If not, fictional representations risk becoming the ruling representations of the Shoah.

Having established these initial remarks and acknowledgements of the ethical difficulty of writing Holocaust literature, narratives about the Holocaust have, nevertheless, arisen consistently since 1945, and even before then. The question of *if* Holocaust literature “can be” must exist alongside, if not give way to, the question of *what* counts as Holocaust literature.

Initially, Holocaust literature ascribed writing by first-hand witnesses of the Shoah. “Memoirs and autobiographies by members of the first generation represented people, places, and events that had happened [...] therefore, no element of fiction intruded onto events that the writer reported as historical, authentic events during the Holocaust,” writes Rebekah Slodounik in “Changing Concepts of Holocaust Literature” (2016).²⁷ Holocaust literature signified, above all, testimonial writing by survivors such as Elie Wiesel, Aharon Appelfeld, Vasily Grossman, and Primo Levi. However, David G. Roskies and Naomi Diamant note, in *Holocaust Literature: A History and Guide* (2012), that many frequently forget about the actual first wave of Holocaust writing, between 1938–1945.²⁸ Roskies and Diamant term this kind of literature “Wartime Writing” – a “literature of destruction”.²⁹ An example of literature written during the

²⁴ Dorian Stuber, “On Holocaust Literature” in *Critical Insights: Holocaust Literature*, ed. Dorian Stuber, Amenia: Grey House Publishing, 2016, xvi–xxxiv, xvii.

²⁵ Stuber, xx.

²⁶ Stuber, xxviii.

²⁷ Rebekah Slodounik, “Changing Concepts of Holocaust Literature” in *Critical Insights: Holocaust Literature* ed. Dorian Stuber, Amenia: Grey House Publishing, 2016, 32–43, 34.

²⁸ David G. Roskies and Naomi Diamant, *Holocaust Literature: A History and Guide*, Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2012, 8.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

Holocaust is Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947) and collections of writings by *Oyneg Shabbes*, a testimonial archive collective spearheaded by Emanuel Ringelblum which operated in the Warsaw Ghetto.³⁰ In terms of poetic or artistic efforts, Yitzhak Katzenelson, Abraham Sutzkever, and Simkhe Bunem Shayevitsh are all examples of authors and poets displayed as part of the *true* first phase of Holocaust Literature. There is also a third kind of Jewish wartime writing during this time: *reportage* or journalistic writing from far away. "The first people who got the message out to the West were those who like Glatstein³¹ and Arthur Koestler, consistently lived in two worlds," Roskies and Diamant infer.³² Koestler wrote in 1944 in the *New York Times Magazine* that "[w]e the screamers [...] have been at it now for about ten years".³³ This is a clear expression of trying to convey the atrocities occurring in the present to an audience halfway around the globe. This phase was, Roskies and Diamant theorize, followed by Communal Memory (1945–1960), Provisional Memory (1960–1985), and lastly Authorized Memory (1985–Present).³⁴ Roskies and Diamant, who establish a clear connection between writing and memory, note that it is the second phase, "Cultural Memory" (1945–1960) which is perhaps most prominent in public consciousness, especially in retrospect, and, as discussed, was imbued with testimonial, diary and documentary writing and among which we find titles such as Elie Wiesel's *Night* (1956), Primo Levi's *Se questo è un uomo* or *If this is a Man* (1947), and Paul Celan's oft anthologized "Todesfuge" (1948). The period between 1945–1960 was a period of rich literary production by survivors in Yiddish, major European languages, as well as Hebrew. Simultaneously, it is also a time permeated, in Europe, by political and national silence, something which for a long time was perceived as being due to "silent survivors".

In "Guilt and Shame among Communities of Experience, Connection and Identification" (2016), Mary Fulbrook offers insight into the mechanics of silence in

³⁰ Ibid., 46. *Oyneg Shabbes* came to be foundational for the Department for the Collection of Witness Testimony in Yad Vashem, founded by Rokhl Auerbach, a surviving member of the collective. See: Malin Thor Tureby, "Memories, testimonies and oral history. On collections and research about and with Holocaust survivors in Sweden" in *Holocaust Remembrance and Representation*, SOU 2020:21, Stockholm: Elanders, 2020, 67–92, 69. Another example of archival efforts during the Holocaust is Isaac Schneerson's documentation, which led to the establishment of the *Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation* (CDJC) in France. See: Sébastien Ledoux, "Remembering the Holocaust," *Mass Violence and Resistance – Research Network* [online], Sciences Po. Published on: 01-06-2015. Accessed on: 18-05-2022. URL: <https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/remembering-holocaust.html>.

To read about wartime-archival work in Swedish context, e.g. professor Zygmunt Lakocinski archival collections at Lund University beginning in 1939, see: Thor Tureby, 69–70.

³¹ Referring to poet and Yiddishist Jacob Glatstein (1896–1971).

³² Roskies and Diamant, 28.

³³ Ibid., 29.

³⁴ Ibid., 8.

connection to guilt as “[g]uilt and shame provided complex emotional links with a past that could not be laid to rest”.³⁵ Fulbrook explains that survivor’s guilt was planted early, even prior to deportations, tracing back to the “de-individualization” in ghettos and thereafter becoming progressively direr as “people were actively ‘shamed,’ and their individual identities erased” upon arrival to the concentration camps.³⁶ Fulbrook maps the intricate relationship between Holocaust survivors and their past leading to various degrees of reminiscing or recounting. In many cases, survivors of concentration camps hid their experiences and their Jewish background altogether. While silence due to reluctance, fear, and shame was indeed common, and many survivors remain(ed) silent until very old age, the conceptualization of the silent victim is misdirected and has come to be re-evaluated in the past years – instead, inquiries into silent historians have emerged.³⁷

The perception of silent survivors became somewhat of a diversion of discourse until the 1960s and later, but was, alas, only a symptom of a larger silence surrounding the Holocaust in its immediate aftermath. In the case of Germany, Ernestine Schlant, in *The Language of Silence: West German Literature and the Holocaust* (1999), famously evaluates the various silences in Germany following the Holocaust, looking more specifically at the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), as East Germany/the German Democratic Republic (GDR) did not recognize their role in the Holocaust and remodelled themselves as a communist and, therefore, antifascist-by-proxy state.³⁸ Schlant highlights that even when public commemoration was enacted, a lack of personal dealing with the past resulted in a pervasive silence in the FRG – “if not accompanied by affective mourning, public rituals will assuage the individual’s conscience without self-questioning and will foreclose any insight into the need for action”.³⁹ West Germany’s tendency toward public memorialization was accompanied by the sense of needing to move forward, as Helmut Kohl famously cast those who came after the Second World War lucky (and, in effect, free of responsibility), as such marking Germany’s

³⁵ Mary Fulbrook, “Guilt and Shame among Communities of Experience, Connection and Identification” in *Reverberations of Nazi Violence in Germany and Beyond: Disturbing Pasts*, ed. Stephanie Bird, Mary Fulbrook, Julia Wagner, and Christiane Wienand, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016, 15–31, 15.

³⁶ Fulbrook, “Guilt and Shame among Communities of Experience, Connection and Identification,” 20.

³⁷ There is a considerable effort on the part of scholars of Holocaust studies and history in later years to revise the idea of silence amongst survivors. These scholars are underpinned by, not only, later collections of audio-visual recounting by survivors for Yad Vashem, USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation, and the British Library, but also early recording and publishing of stories written during the Holocaust, and immediately after. Aside from the poetry, fiction, and memoirs written during the Holocaust, collection of witness statements and testimonials about the events were collected to e.g. be used in trials against perpetrators. See: Malin Thor Tureby, 2020.

³⁸ Ernestine Schlant, *Language of Silence: West German Literature & the Holocaust*, New York and London: Routledge, 1999, 5.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

move onward.⁴⁰ Concerning the Soviet Union, and the GDR by association, Roskies and Diamant posture that “[c]ommunism was the enemy of communal memory. The communal was a vestige of capitalism”.⁴¹ “Under Communism,” furthermore, “where the dead could not be divided, local pasts were driven underground. The suffering of all Soviet peoples was subsumed under the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945). There were no Jewish victims, only generalized, formulaic victims of fascism”.⁴² Looking at other Eastern European countries, many surviving Jews outside of the Soviet Union ended up in Germany as displaced persons (DPs), either due to the impossibility of return, because of not uncommon events such as the Kielce pogrom in July 1946,⁴³ but also “rather pragmatic or tragic reasons – for example they could not obtain a visa for the U.S. or another country; they were gravely ill, or they had serious doubts about their strength to start anew time and again” as Susanne Y. Urban articulates it.⁴⁴ Looking to Sweden, which until recently fashioned itself as a “neutral” country, Karin Kvist Geverts argues that “as in other countries, there has been a myth of silence surrounding the Holocaust. But [...] there never was a total silence but rather a kind of uneasiness to talk about the Holocaust”.⁴⁵ Although, as Kvist Geverts maps, academic activity regarding the Holocaust existed in the 1970s, it was first during the 1980s and 1990s these efforts came to light, and Sweden’s “good” status came into question.⁴⁶ This public discursive shift was, to a large extent, brought on by the distribution of the pamphlet *om detta må ni berätta... En bok om Förintelsen i Europa 1933–1945*.⁴⁷ All while survivors such as Zenia Larsson and Cordelia Edvardson had published their experiences of the Holocaust already decades prior.⁴⁸

It is first during the phase of “Provisional Memory” that the wall of perceived silence begins to disintegrate. Now, with the distance of a few decades and to the background of the

⁴⁰ “Gnade där späten Geburt” (orig. German). For further analysis on implications of this rhetoric and the fall of the Berlin Wall, see: Sander L. Gilman, “German Reunification and the Jews” in *New German Critique*, No. 52, Durham: Duke University Press, 1991, 173–191.

⁴¹ Roskies and Diamant, 89.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ “The Return to Life in the Displaced Persons Camps, 1945–1956,” *Yad Vashem*. Accessed on: 08/03/2021. URL: https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/dp_camps/index.asp

⁴⁴ Susanne Y. Urban, “At Issue: The Jewish Community in Germany: Living with Recognition, Anti-Semitism, and Symbolic Roles,” *Jewish Political Studies Review*, Vol. 21:3–4, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2009, 31–55, 32.

⁴⁵ Karin Kvist Geverts, “Refugee Policy in Sweden during the Holocaust. A historiographical overview” in *Holocaust Remembrance and Representation*, SOU 2020:21, Stockholm: Elanders, 2020, 143–161, 147.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 143.

⁴⁷ Another catalyst of overturning Sweden’s image during the Second World War was a book, published in beginning of the 1990s. See: Maria-Pia Boëthius, *Heder och Samvete: Sverige och andra världskriget*, Stockholm: Norstedts, 1991.

⁴⁸ For a comprehensive mapping of Holocaust literature and Jewish testimonial writing in Sweden and Scandinavia after the Holocaust, see: Anders Ohlsson, “Men ändå måste jag berätta”: *Studier i skandinavisk förintelselitteratur*, Nora: Nya Doxa, 2002.

Cold War, as well as e.g. the Six-Day War, “witnesses were finding entirely new ways of describing nightmarish past, in a language at once familiar and strange” under the term of “Holocaust”.⁴⁹ Authors such as Abba Kovner, Abraham Sutzkever, Aharon Appelfeld, and, Chaim A. Kaplan, arose to the surface in a myriad of languages and literary genres, from prose to poetry. The phase of “Provisional Memory,” named after the feeling of provisional estrangement from and silence about the Holocaust, was a time of great contestation, debate, and cultural movement. It is also a time during which Roskies and Diamant see a shift in the sphere of production in connection to Holocaust literature, as fictionalizations by Jewish authors who are not survivors themselves, such as Philip Roth appear.⁵⁰ It is also during this time Holocaust memorialization takes an “American” and “Hollywoodian” turn.⁵¹ The entrance of this new kind of Hollywood Holocaust culture, no longer defined or produced by survivors, signposts the increasing Americanization,⁵² and deterritorialization of the Holocaust, in addition to the entrance of Roskies and Diamant’s fourth phase of Holocaust literature: Authorized Memory (1985–present).

Authorized memory is defined by its focus on the conceptualization of the *self*. It is the era of literature where testimonies and literature by survivors are joined, in public, with fictionalizations and writing by second- and third-generation writers, children and grandchildren of survivors, such as Spiegelman’s *Maus*⁵³ and Daniel Mendelsohn’s *The Lost* (2006). Now, America, to a large extent, comes to dominate the output of Holocaust literature,

⁴⁹ Roskies and Diamant, 126.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁵² The Americanization and universalization of the Holocaust and discourse surrounding it was brought to light by, among others, Alvin H. Rosenfeld (see: Alvin Rosenfeld, “The Americanization of the Holocaust,” *Commentary*, Vol. 99:6, New York, 1995, 35–40, citing various reasons for this displacement of focus. Rosenfeld proposes, first, that universalization of the Holocaust occurred as part of an initiative to bring more people with experience of marginalization to feel connected to the event, contending that “to mingle the victims of these very different historical experiences, therefore, is to metamorphose the Nazi Holocaust into that empty and all but meaningless abstraction ‘man’s inhumanity to man’” referencing Edward Norden (36). A second reason, in Rosenfeld’s understanding, is cultural depiction of the Holocaust as a, for lack of better words, less abyss-like event, followed by a “tendency to downplay the dark” (37). Here, Rosenfeld references renderings of e.g. Anne Frank’s *Diary of a Young Girl*, in American schools, as a work of inspiration and light, rather than a testament to the brutality of the Holocaust, by, for example, omitting the deportation and death of Frank (37). The final example Rosenfeld provides is the reorganization of Holocaust remembrance, shifting focus toward the gentile rather than the Jew – “we are in an age which has elevated to heroism not the Jewish victims of Nazism, and not even the Jewish resistance movement, but ‘righteous Gentiles,’ ‘helpers,’ ‘liberators,’ ‘rescuers,’ and ‘saviors,’ the ones who managed to exemplify virtue during a time when basic goodness was otherwise hardly to be found” (38). This Americanization has also been highlighted more recently by memory studies in Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2006, where the scholars point toward a tendency toward universalizing and the impact of “cosmopolitan memory” of the Holocaust as a general measure of “good” and “evil,” rather than part of a particular group’s personal history and memory (132).

⁵³ *Maus, volumes I-III*, were published between 1980-1991, and as such bridge “Provisional Memory” and “Authorized Memory”.

and Europe (above all Eastern Europe) progressively develops into a literary landscape to *return to*, one “to be negotiated, confronted, and internalized” in the search for the *self*.⁵⁴ With this in mind, Roskies and Diamant, unbolt the boundaries of Holocaust literature by including those that come *after*. The two scholars propose a working definition of Holocaust literature which “comprises of all forms of writing, both documentary and discursive, in any language, that have shaped public memory of the Holocaust or been shaped by it”.⁵⁵ This broad definition is the one I adopt in this thesis. This is not only due to the multitude of genres, languages, and forms included but also the generous formulation in terms of temporalities within Holocaust literature. While some texts have had a profound impact on commemoration, such as Anne Frank’s *Diary of a Young Girl* or Primo Levi’s *If This Is a Man*, I believe it is important to note that works that have appeared later, and those that continue to be published also come to shape and impact commemoration, as much as they have been impacted or shaped by it. As per Roskies and Diamant, this transtemporal movement of Holocaust writing, which lies at the centre of third-generation literature, is intrinsic to Holocaust literature as the genre functions like memory itself – “Holocaust memory unfolded both backward and forward: backward, as previously unknown works are published, annotated, translated, catalogued, and promptly forgotten; and forward as new works of ever greater subtlety or simplicity come into being”.⁵⁶

Roskies and Diamant’s definition of Holocaust literature is imperative in shifting the understandings of generations that come after the survivors, relying on memory to self-conceptualize in the light of the Holocaust. “Self-positioning, in this phase of Holocaust memory – the phase in which we live today – is a search for personal identity in a vertiginous time and silenced space. It has become impossible to separate the archaeology of place from the archaeology of self” Roskies and Diamant note.⁵⁷ This kind of archaeological excavation and return does not only serve self-positioning in terms of location but also memory-wise, or mnemonically. Authorized memory, as such, comes to include writing influenced by a kind of belated postmemory. In “The Generation of Postmemory” (2008) Hirsch contends that the expanding field of “memory studies” has, to a large extent, “been fuelled by the limit case of the Holocaust and by the work of (and about) what has come to be known as ‘the second generation’”.⁵⁸ Indeed, much of the contemporary accounts of Jewish identity construction post-1945 are synthesized by the children of Jewish survivors, a generation which are

⁵⁴ Roskies and Diamant, 159.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁵⁸ Marianne Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” *Poetics Today*, Vol. 29:1, Springer, 2008, 103–128, 105.

categorially not survivors themselves, yet inhabit what Hirsch deems “a parental past, described, evoked, and [...] has come to be seen as a ‘syndrome’ of belatedness or ‘post-ness’ and has been variously termed”.⁵⁹ One such term, which Hirsch’s theorization relies on, is James E. Young’s concept of “received history,” underlining the movement of receiving and *handing over* the past.⁶⁰ Hirsch writes:

To be sure, children of those directly affected by collective trauma inherit a horrific, unknown, and unknowable past that their parents were not meant to survive. Second generation fiction, art, memoir, and testimony are shaped by the attempt to represent the long-term effects of living in the proximity of the pain [...] by the desire to repair, and by the consciousness that the child’s own existence may well be a form of compensation for unspeakable loss.⁶¹

The second generation are left with a need to process their family history, identity, and Jewishness to the background of events they did not live through but have inherited, and which engulf their own lived experiences, impossibly surmounting to the trauma of their parents, resulting in continuous and lasting intergenerational effects. Second generation authorship is, by and large, either a *seeking* literature, as in Spiegelman’s case, or a reflective literature which aims to unveil and unpack the aspects of living in the shadow of communicated or hidden memory and trauma, and how it impacts one’s life as a child of a survivor. In *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust*, Eva Hoffman illustrates the mnemonic locus of the second generation:

It is no exaggeration to say that I have spent much of my life struggling with this compressed cluster of facts. They were transmitted to me as my first knowledge, a sort of supercondensed pellet of primal information—the kind from which everything else grows, or explodes, or follows, and which it takes a lifetime to unpack and decode. The facts seemed to be such an inescapable part of my inner world as to belong to me, to my own experience. But of course, they didn’t; and in that elision, that caesura, much of the postgeneration’s problematic can be found. [...] The Holocaust, in my first, childish reception, was a deeply internalized but strangely unknown past.⁶²

⁵⁹ Ibid., 105.

⁶⁰ James E. Young, “Toward a Received History of the Holocaust,” *History and Theory*, Vol. 36:4, Wesleyan University, 1997, 21–43. Cited in Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” 105.

⁶¹ Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” 112.

⁶² Eva Hoffman, *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust*, New York: Public Affairs, 2004, 6.

Hoffman does not only encapsulate a sense of belatedness that comes to define her as an adult but underlines further that “the generation after receives its first knowledge of the terrible events with only childish instruments of perception, and as a kind of fable”.⁶³ Receiving memory and trauma through childhood is something which, of course, also concerns the third generation and other readers who learn about the Holocaust as children.⁶⁴ Hoffman, like Spiegelman, grows up in a landscape where parents *speak*, even if it is “speech broken under the pressure of pain. The episodes, the talismanic litanies, were repeated but never elaborated upon,” however, there are of course those who must search on their own or who simply do not know what to search for.⁶⁵

Much like characteristics of the first generation appear more clearly in retrospect through second generation literature, second-generation idiosyncrasies come to light in the third generation’s writing as well. In third-generation literature, it is not uncommon for subjects to see their parents as a mediating generation whether they lack knowledge of family history and Jewishness or inhabit the same. The former case can be seen in e.g. Adorján’s *An Exclusive Love* where Adorján, trying to understand her grandparents’ lives after their passing, alongside her own Jewish identity, also uncovers that which her father and aunt missed out on in connection to Jewry and familial history.⁶⁶ Third-generation authorship is also where the question of the second generation’s individualism often is echoed. “I suspect that, in our progress to adulthood, most children of survivors were caught on their private see-saws, oscillating between the demands of autonomy and attachment, self-sacrifice and self-interest” Hoffman writes.⁶⁷ Unsurprisingly some second-generation survivors try to distance themselves from the particularity of their Jewishness and the post-Holocaust legacy, leaning into national or universal belongings. This kind of scenario is staged in Salzmann’s drama *Muttersprache Mameloschn*, where the second-generation character, Clara, clings to German identity, trying to distance herself from her mother by way of her Jewish identity.⁶⁸ This contrasts Michel Laub’s novel *Diary of the Fall*, where, at the beginning of the novel, the protagonist’s father speaks to his son of Jewishness as intertwined with the Holocaust and the present dangers of

⁶³ Ibid., 16.

⁶⁴ “For young readers, the Holocaust comes in small doses, sometimes cloaked in fantasy.” Roskies and Diamant, 16–17.

⁶⁵ Hoffman, 11.

⁶⁶ See citation: “He kept them entirely out of that area of his life, which obviously meant so much more than led us to believe. If I am perfectly honest, that makes me not only sad but even a little angry. For he stole a part of my identity as well...” Johanna Adorján, *An Exclusive Love*, trans. Anthea Bell, London: Vintage, 2012, 75.

⁶⁷ Hoffman, 97.

⁶⁸ See: Sasha Marianna Salzmann, *Mameloschn Mother Tongue* [orig. *Muttersprache Mameloschn*], trans. Katy Derbyshire. Unpublished manuscript. Copy in possession of the author of this thesis.

antisemitism to the extent that the son adjudges it as “performance”.⁶⁹ In each case, the second-generation characters end up in a space not dissimilar from that described by Hoffman or Hirsch – shaping themselves against the backdrop of their parents’ trauma. As such, both second- and third-generation authorships rely on retrospective reflection. Thomas Nolden in “Contemporary German Jewish Literature” (1994) writes that “rather than pursuing the literary project of representing the experience of the Holocaust, the writing of the second and the third generation is primarily concerned with [...] this problem of confronting and remembering the past of the former generation”.⁷⁰ Even when second- and third-generation authors go back, setting their literature in the Holocaust, like Joseph Skibell’s magic realist novel *A Blessing on the Moon* (1997) or, once again, Spiegelman’s *Maus*, the idea is not to represent the totality of the Holocaust, but rather understanding it through a specific lens of those that came before. For descendants of Jewish survivors, a reconstruction of the Holocaust is a reconstruction of personal or familial history lost or unknown, rather than general reconstructions of didactical or moral nature.

Continuing, Alan L. Berger argues that the third generation, like their parents, enact postmemory.⁷¹ Berger cites Hirsch explaining that postmemory “is distinguished from history by deep personal connection,” but also, as Berger reflects, “from memory by generational distance”.⁷² This leads me to a central question: what differentiates the third generation’s writing from second-generation writing?

The most apparent aspect is, arguably, the generational distance. The third generation writes twice removed from the experience of the Holocaust – for them, it is a retold, reconstructed, remembered family memory, completed with the family memory of others, and general Holocaust knowledge and commemoration. In *Remembering the Holocaust* (2015), Esther Jilovsky writes that

it is the third generation which will carry these memories of survivors and their contemporaries into a future where one day there will no longer be anyone alive who remembers the atrocities of Nazi Europe and the lost world pre-Holocaust European Jewry. For these reasons, I classify the third generation as

⁶⁹ Michel Laub, *Diary of the Fall*, trans. Margaret Jull Costa, London: Vintage Books, 2015, 47.

⁷⁰ Thomas Nolden, “Contemporary German Jewish Literature” in *German Life and Letters*, Vol. 47:1, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994, 77–93, 78.

⁷¹ Alan L. Berger, “Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and Identity in Third Generation Writing about the Holocaust” in *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, Vol. 28:3, 148–158.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 150.

the 'bridging generation', a term which describes their role connecting lived memories of the past with people of the future, born after the last eyewitness has passed away.⁷³

Berger, denotes another kind of overarching socio-temporal locus, of the third, bridging, generation by stating that "the grandchildren are more culturally diffuse and tend to be suffused with postmodernist concerns".⁷⁴ Aiming to conceptualize what is "new" about these "custodians of memory," Victoria Aarons, in *Third-Generation Holocaust Narratives* (2016), does not come to any finite conclusion, but underlines the recurrence of writing about a fragmented self, as part of self-positioning through reconstruction and return.⁷⁵ The scholar also underlines the third generation's temporal and societal loci as one of the central conflicts of this novel writing, stating that "[t]he patterns of predation and victimization that have come to characterize late-modernity would seem to limit the open destiny of life promised by liberal democracy and its possibilities for a future not mortgaged to the devastations and pathologies of the past".⁷⁶ As Aarons denotes, the third generation finds themselves at a time defined by the unknown future, and of socio-political as well as economic ever-growing contrasts, in addition to ecological catastrophe and an emotionally loaded social climate which at once is permeated by a sense of disillusionment.

The next aspect of novelty I would like to dwell on is that of particularity. Without "overstating the differences between the second and third generation" as Stephan Braese has instructed in "Writing against Reconciliation" (2008),⁷⁷ third-generation Jews increasingly operate in a realm of particularity, both by calling themselves Jews explicitly, but also in their writing when depicting the Holocaust. As Victoria Aarons and Alan. L. Berger note in *Third-Generation Holocaust Representation: Trauma, History, and Memory* (2017), the "attempt to grasp the particularity of experience is characteristic of third-generation narratives and understandably so. For as we move farther and farther away from the events, the Shoah risks becoming increasingly academic, unexceptional in its place in the lineup of other atrocities".⁷⁸ Third-generation authors, engaged in the task of self-positioning, operate against

⁷³ Esther Jilovsky, *Remembering the Holocaust: Generations, Witnessing and Place*, London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2015, 94.

⁷⁴ Roskies and Diamant, 157.

⁷⁵ Aarons, "Introduction: Approaching the Third Generation," xi.

⁷⁶ Victoria Aarons, "Memory's Afterimage: Post-Holocaust Writing and the Third Generation" in *Third-Generation Holocaust Narratives: Memory in Memoir and Fiction*, ed. Victoria Aarons, London: Lexington Books, 2016, 17–38, 17.

⁷⁷ Stephan Braese, "Writing against Reconciliation" in *Contemporary Jewish Writing in Europe*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008, 23–43, 26.

⁷⁸ Victoria Aarons and Alan. L. Berger, *Third-Generation Holocaust Representation: Trauma, History and Memory*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2017, 75.

anonymization of those killed in the Holocaust, by zooming in on individual persons, places, and experiences, in turn, centring the particularity of the Jewish experience. However, particularity is not without its challenges, as Aarons and Berger note.⁷⁹ In writing about the Holocaust, collectivism is necessarily evoked, in many ways unavoidable, and as such, third-generation authors constantly oscillate between the collective and the individual.⁸⁰ This kind of expansive movement is, according to Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, also a sign of the global times.⁸¹ As Holocaust memorialization becomes increasingly consumable and more time passes since the event, memory slips through the hands of institutions and nations and instead becomes more individualized.⁸² “On the one hand, memory becomes more concrete, with new biographies and individual faces of victims seeing the light of day. On the other hand, the humanising of the victim allows for abstract identification [...] the universal grows out of the particular”.⁸³ Importantly, humanization here should be understood in the greater context of Americanization of the Holocaust and deterritorializing production of memory by focusing on and utilising the Holocaust as a springboard into discussions on general and universal values, as previously noted.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, how to bridge universalization of the particular if these are intertwined? In some ways third-generation writing avoids universalization by recentring specific Jewish collectives, such as family members, an adding new perspectives of interpretation. The third generation is by no means under the pretence of having first-hand experience but uses their fragmented knowledge to seek out specifics and connect to them, through them, allowing others to follow along. An illustrative example of this can be found in Adorján's memoir: “The deepest feeling known to me is the sense of not belonging. I grew up with that feeling. [...] As if everyone was round and I was square, or vice versa. [...] I am all alone. It is as if Erszi had given me a treasure. What extraordinary news — my grandmother felt just like me?”.⁸⁵ By seeking knowledge from someone (Erszi) who can aid her in piecing together her grandparents' past, Adorján envisions two individual sensibilities becoming a collective one. It is a testimony to third-generation narratives being one's of learning, exploring, and negotiating self-conceptualizing by relating personal experiences to those that came before.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Aarons and Berger, 76.

⁸¹ Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2006, 133.

⁸² Ibid., 133.

⁸³ Ibid., 133.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 132.

⁸⁵ Adorján, 50.

The Problem of Generations

A central point of departure in the thesis is generational terminology. Throughout this thesis, I already have and will continuously situate Rajs as a “member” of the third generation, considering the various implications of this kind of belonging and authorship. Indeed, Rajs herself has actualized the term in connection to the publication of *Under månen*. In an interview on Swedish television (Nyhetsmorgon, TV4, 09–2020), when asked about her relationship to her grandparents and the Holocaust, Rajs responded that “it is something one, in one way or another, inherits,” and that “the more time passes, the more distance there is, which means more history, statistics, numbers. The personal relationship becomes less and less apparent; that is why, I think, that I and others that are second- and third-generation survivors, as we are sometimes called, continue to recount about our families, to create that personal connection”.⁸⁶

As I have outlined the characteristics of second- and third-generation authorships, I believe it is now of interest to discuss “generations” as a terminological choice. Especially, because generational conceptualizations are not without their complexities and drawbacks.

Susan Rubin Suleiman notes in her article “The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust” (2002) that the generational concept is in many ways a “given” by nature, an intrinsic continuity from grandparent to parent to child, and so forth.⁸⁷ While other identity markers bind people together, generational belonging is perhaps some of the most pertinent conventions according to which one has come to understand different experiences during one historical period, Suleiman presents.⁸⁸ However, by offering a new kind of generational belonging – the 1.5 generation made up of “child survivors of the Holocaust, too young to have had an adult understanding of what was happening to them, but old enough to have *been there* during the Nazi persecution of Jews” and who are situated in-between the first and second generation – Suleiman, questions the idea of any totalizing generational belonging at its core.⁸⁹ While Suleiman, like other scholars, finds generational

⁸⁶ Swedish orig.: “Det är någonting som man på ett eller annat sätt ärver”; “Ju längre tid det går, desto mer avstånd blir det ju på något sätt, så blir det mer historia, statistik, siffror, de här personliga relationerna blir mindre och mindre tydliga, därför är det viktigt, tror jag, att jag och andra som är andra och tredje generationens överlevande, som vi kallas ibland, fortsätter berätta om våra familjer, för att få den där personliga kopplingen”. See: “Hannas släktingar blev offer för Förintelsen: ‘Det är ett trauma i familjen’,” Nyhetsmorgon, TV4, 02-09-2020. Accessed on: 18-05-2022. URL: <https://www.tv4.se/klipp/va/13289278/hannas-slaktingar-blev-offer-i-forintelsen-det-ar-ett-trauma-i-familjen>.

⁸⁷ Susan Rubin Suleiman, “The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust,” *American Imago*, Vol. 59:3, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002, 277–295, 278–279.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 278–279.

⁸⁹ Rubin Suleiman, 277.

conceptualizations difficult due to “troubles” of the “temporal and spatial” kind,⁹⁰ the generational concept has become something of a Holocaust studies default, as Gary Weissman notes in “Against Generational Thinking in Holocaust Studies” (2016).⁹¹ Questioning who will carry the duty of telling about the Holocaust, as the number of remaining survivors decreases, Weissman responds by underlining that academia consistently refers to the descendants of survivors, i.e. the second and third generation, as those who will carry the weight of Holocaust memory going forward.⁹² Whilst Weissman does not oppose the use of generational concepts in connection to the descendants of survivors, the scholar questions the implications of muddling the terminology, especially in the cases where academic works have come to “include persons who lack a direct familial connection to victims of Nazi persecution”.⁹³ One such example can be found in Ellen S. Fine’s article “Transmission of Memory: The Post-Holocaust Generation in the Diaspora” (1998), where the scholar maintains the use of “post-Holocaust generation” instead of the term “second generation,” as such, “including those who did not directly participate in the Holocaust but who have come to endure the psychic imprint of the trauma”.⁹⁴ Whilst many can be, and indeed are, impacted by the Holocaust and the consequences of trauma and memory thereafter, the relation to the Holocaust strongly varies, depending on whether one is e.g. of the Jewish or German second generation. As such, whilst the generational concept might be problematic and too narrow for Fine, and “post-Holocaust generation” is a useful term in theory to assign those of various ages born after the Holocaust, I argue that when treating one specific generation Fine’s terminology is more confusing than helpful. The idea of using “first,” “second,” and “third” is also useful in assigning the clear communicative *handing-over* of memory from one generation to the next, whereas “post-Holocaust generation” could be misinterpreted to signify all those that simply come *after*. Fine’s, as well as Suleiman’s reformulations, evoke inquiries into the limits of generational terminology as terms seem either too broad or too narrow.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Ibid., 280.

⁹¹ Gary Weissman, “Against Generational Thinking in Holocaust Studies” in *Third-Generation Holocaust Narratives* ed. Victoria Aarons, London: Lexington Books, 2016, 159–184.

⁹² Weissman, 161.

⁹³ Ibid., 162.

⁹⁴ Ellen S. Fine, “Transmission of Memory: The Post-Holocaust Generation in the Diaspora” in *Breaking Crystal: Writing and Memory After Writing*, ed. Efraim Sicher, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998, 185–186.

⁹⁵ This kind of terminological difficulty has been widely discussed in connection to the very concept of Holocaust survivor as well. Since 1945 the term, which initially included survivors of concentration camps, ghettos, and those involved in partisan movement who were alive on May 9th, 1945, has, in later years, come to be widened and include e.g., Kindertransport children, refugees, those in hiding and/or living under forged documents. This shift has come as part of institutionalized efforts of the USHMM as well as Yad Vashem. In this thesis I am guided by definitions including all Jewish survivors who were threatened by “the Final Solution” and were alive on May

To zoom in on the way the generational concept is conceived of in this thesis, it is most helpful to return to Karl Mannheim’s foundational text “The Problems of Generations” (1928). “Members of a generation are ‘similarly located’, first of all, in so far as they all are exposed to the same phase of the collective process” Mannheim sets out.⁹⁶ Responding to positivist scepticism concerning generational theory, Mannheim supplies a number to define the borderlines of a generation; thirty years, “many assessing it at 15 years (e.g. Dromel), but most taking it to mean 30 years”.⁹⁷ This kind of divide still, however, fails to account for discrepancies in experience within one generation. To Mannheim, the problem of generations is a social one – “between the natural or physical and the mental spheres there is a level of existence at which social forces operate”.⁹⁸ Mannheim’s generational theory accounts for two of the main ideas, and problems, tied to memory – first, how memory is transferred between generations, and second, who is included in a generation and how to reconcile the differences among people born within a span of thirty years. Mannheim illustrates what he calls “the anarchy in the social and cultural sciences, where everyone starts out afresh from his own point of view (to a certain extent, of course, this is both necessary and fruitful) [...] to that the contributions of the various disciplines to the collective solution could be planned”.⁹⁹ Mannheim’s theorization, thus, contrasts the romantic notion of a person receiving knowledge “out of the blue”.¹⁰⁰ The theorist notes that the generational concept does not stand in opposition to the concept of “fresh” perspectives entirely, but rather contributes to the birthing of the same, and the exchange of the old for the new.¹⁰¹ As such, without handing over (old) cultural frameworks and memory, the past is lost and the continuity of collective social relations with it. This sentiment is developed further in writing on Holocaust literature. In *Remembering and Imagining the Holocaust* (2006), Christopher Bigsby writes “collective memory is what the present chooses to make of the past”.¹⁰² This kind of statement does not only echo generational thinking, but evokes Maurice Halbwach’s theorization of “collective memory,” as something which exists in the

⁹th, 1945, by any means necessary. See example of such in: Rebecca Clifford, “Who is a Holocaust Survivor?,” *The British Academy*. Published on: 27-01-2016. Accessed on: 18-05-2022. URL: <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/blog/who-holocaust-survivor/>. For further reading on survivor hierarchies see: Ellen Spicer, “‘One sorrow or another’: narratives of hierarchical survivorship and suffering in Holocaust survivor associations,” *Holocaust Studies*, Vol. 26:4, Routledge, 2020, 442–460.

⁹⁶ Karl Mannheim, “The Problem of Generations” in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, ed. Paul Kecskemeti, London: Routledge, 1952, 276–322, 297.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 278. Referencing J. Dromel.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 283–284.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 287.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 287.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 287.

¹⁰² Christopher Bigsby, *Imagining and Remembering the Holocaust: The Chain of Memory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, 86.

exchange between and within social collectives, and, thus, shapes society whilst simultaneously being shaped by its socio-cultural demands.¹⁰³

I return to the initial problem of who should/can be seen as part of one generation. Mannheim deduces that “[y]outh experiencing the same concrete historical problems may be said to be part of the same actual generation; while those groups within the same actual generation which work up the material of their common experiences in different ways, constitute separate generation units”.¹⁰⁴ The theorist finds that while generational divisions are imperative, “generation units” are “a much more concrete bond than the actual generation as such”.¹⁰⁵ Mannheim explains that not “all social groups, around the world, experience the same thing as they belong to the same generation, but rather [...] contemporaneity becomes sociologically significant only when it also involves participation in the same historical and social circumstances”.¹⁰⁶ What binds a generation together is not identical experience, but rather the influence the generation receives, and the mode of response to such influences or events. Mannheim makes a distinction between “generations in actuality” and those who “*potentially*” have the same generational response.¹⁰⁷ Suleiman, whilst noting the discrepancies even in the 1.5 generation between “children” and “adolescents,” reiterates “Mannheim’s idea of the generation as a ‘social location,’ itself divided into differentiated, sometimes antagonistic generation-units, allows us to consider various sub-groups—Jewish versus non-Jewish, victims versus perpetrators—as generation-units of the Holocaust”.¹⁰⁸ As such, Suleiman sees the opportunity to adhere to age first, and then to other kinds of belonging. However, I propose rather the opposite. Unlike Mannheim’s generational concept, post-Holocaust generations are not bound by age. Holocaust-related generational terminology operates more so as that relating to migration (e.g. first-generation British or second-generation immigrant), which is unbound

¹⁰³ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed., and trans. Lewis A. Coser, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992, 50. Halbwachs, considered the catalyst of Memory Studies and defining of the first wave of this theoretical approach, formulated “collective memory” in *La memoire collective* (1950). Influenced by sociologist Émile Durkheim, Halbwachs proclaims that memory is a phenomenon which necessarily occurs in relation to a collective. The nature of the “collective” in connection to which memory arises and exists varies not only in size and formation, but also in relation to the evoked *cadres sociaux*, or social frameworks, constructing a particular collective memory frame. Memory is, as such, interconnected with social identity, an entity which moves in a pendulum-like fashion between personal self-positioning, collective recollection, and their interconnection within smaller and larger communities. Halbwachs, 38.

¹⁰⁴ Mannheim, 304.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 304.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 298.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 303.

¹⁰⁸ Rubin Suleiman, 280.

from age but bound to experience of an event.¹⁰⁹ However unlike generational terminology relating to migration, the post-Holocaust generations are bound to one specific event at one point in time, and, while it can be and is paired with other kinds of generational belongings, it cannot appear anew. It is the singularity of the Holocaust which is quintessential to post-Holocaust generational terminology.

While Suleiman's distinction is important in relation to first-hand Holocaust witnesses, and no conception of post-Holocaust generations can be conceptualized without a historical linearity in mind, we must still consider new terminological avenues and modifications befitting current cultural processes and literary productions. First-, second-, and third-generation belonging transgresses temporal measures, and thus, generational units become unfit as classifications. One could argue that age could indeed be a generational unit within post-Holocaust generations, but instead I propose seeing generations as an intersecting web of belongings. Especially, as we move further away from the Holocaust in time. With this viewpoint in mind, generational belonging does not have to be exclusive. As will become clear in my discussions on the form and style of *Under månen*, age-related generational belongings are highly relevant in this thesis. Nevertheless, in the scope of writing about collective memory and identity formation, belonging to a particular Jewish post-Holocaust generation must, to a large extent, eclipse that of age at this time.

On the Primary Material: Reception of *Under månen*

Whilst there are no scholarly publications published, to date, on Hanna Rajs' poetry, there are many reviews by journalists and a few academics across the Swedish news landscape and a select number of literary magazines.¹¹⁰ I will now briefly overview the reception of Rajs' *Under månen*, exploring the way content and form have been received, separately and in intertwinement.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. "Although birth and death dates overlap too much to fall into clear categories, "generations" might be differentiated by the experience of events. Whether we are thirty or fifteen, a chasm of experienced time separates those of us who did not live through World War II from those who participated in it" See: Robert Darnton, "The High Enlightenment and the Low-Life of Literature in Pre-Revolutionary France" in *Past and Present*, No. 51, Oxford University Press, 1971, 81–115, 92.

¹¹⁰ NB! Throughout this thesis I have referred, and will continue referring, to Hanna Rajs as Hanna Rajs in-text, rather than the author's previous surnames under which she wrote *Armarna* (Hanna Rajs Lundström) and *Under månen* (Hanna Rajs Lara). Note that reviewers, at the time of reviewing, refer to Rajs using the previous iterations of the author's surname. Previous versions will also appear when citing primary material.

Broadly, reviewers identify three wider themes in *Under månen*, corresponding to the description of the book by the publisher. “The happiness in the love poems, sorrow in the poems about losing someone and the vulnerability in the poems about belonging to a persecuted minority in Sweden, the Jewish one” as Stefan Eklund describes it.¹¹¹ Indeed, a large portion of the poetry collection is dedicated to, as noted, Rajs’ meeting and experiences with her wife, as well as reminiscing on friends lost, like Cristina to whom Rajs often refers to, and who the author dedicates her debut novel *där var du större än bokstäverna som bildar ditt namn* (2022), subtitled “Cristinaboken”.¹¹² Above all, reviewers emphasize the Jewish thematics of *Under månen* in relation to inherited trauma and the descriptions of an impending outer threat of antisemitism. One example is Anna Hellgren’s review, titled “Her fears are unfortunately justified”.¹¹³ Hellgren states that Rajs’ 2020 collection balances inheritance, trauma, but also love, making life easier in a world which wishes one harm.¹¹⁴ These notions of threat and fear were already emphasized in reviews of *Armarna*, despite the minimal content about Rajs’ family history and experiences of antisemitism in the present, aside from in the closing poem “CHAI” which came to be the focus of nearly all reviews of *Armarna*.¹¹⁵ In many ways *Armarna*, and “CHAI” especially, is a thematic precursor to *Under månen*.

Regarding formalistic aspects, most reviewers emphasize two aspects of Rajs’ poetic fashioning or style: the language and the expressions of generational particularity in relation to age. Rajs’ language in *Under månen* is cast as “the internet generation’s language” by Sofia Roberg in the critical collection *Poesiåret 2020: Litteraturkritisk Kalender* by literary

¹¹¹ “...lyckan i kärleksdikterna, sorgen i dikterna om att förlora någon och utsattheten i dikterna om att tillhöra en förföljd minoritetsgrupp i Sverige, den judiska.” Stefan Eklund, “Starka dikter om kärlek och utsatthet” in *Kristianstadsbladet*. Published on: 06-11-2020. Accessed on: 18-05-2022. URL: <https://www.kristianstadsbladet.se/kultur/starka-dikter-om-karlek-och-utsatthet-e7a557c1/>. In this thesis all primary material will be cited in original, in part on account of “untranslatability” (see: Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*, London and New York: Verso, 2013). Secondary sources in Swedish will be translated in-text to English. Original citations will be found in corresponding footnotes.

¹¹² Hanna Rajs, *där var du, större än bokstäverna som bildar ditt namn*, Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 2022. This novel was published on 12-04-2022, i.e. during the writing of this thesis. I have chosen to not treat the text as part of the analysis as this thesis is occupied with portrayal and communication of Jewish identity and collective memory in poetic expressions.

¹¹³ Anna Hellgren, ”Hennes rädsor är tyvärr befogade” in *Expressen*. Published on: 12-11-2020. Accessed on: 18-05-2022. URL: <https://www.expressen.se/kultur/bocker/hennes-radslor-ar-tyvarr-befogade/>. For another example see e.g.: Alva Lundin, “Bokrecension: *Under månen* – Hanna Rajs Lara” in *KULT*. Published on: 12-10-2020. Accessed on: 18-05-2022. URL: <https://www.kultmagasin.se/bokrecension-under-manen-hanna-rajs-lara/>

¹¹⁴ “Under månen kretsar främst kring det ärvda traumat efter Förintelsen, och om kärleken som trots allt förmår skingra tyngden av att vara vid liv i en värld som vill en illa. För den som är judinna och gift med en invandrad kvinna finns mycket att frukta.” Ibid.

¹¹⁵ See: Sebastian Lönnlöf, “Antisemitismens gift i vardagligt tugg” in *SVD*. Published on: 05-08-2018. Accessed on: 18-05-2022. URL: <https://www.svd.se/a/e1B3V9/antisemitismens-gift-i-vardagligt-tugg>.

magazine *Örnen och Kråkan*.¹¹⁶ This echoes reviews of *Armarna* deemed as “poetry for a restless generation”.¹¹⁷ As per Roberg, in *Under månen*, Rajs “forms a completely contemporary subject, but simultaneously ties it in with a religious and cultural tradition which permeates the poems’ content as well as their sometimes near-liturgical address”.¹¹⁸ Others have underlined that Rajs’ style, developed in *Armarna* and affixed in *Under månen*, bears strong kinship to spoken word,¹¹⁹ hip-hop,¹²⁰ and slam poetry.¹²¹ Despite its supposed frivolity, due to the spoken or every-day/text message stylistic, the poetry in *Under månen* is carefully crafted and edited, and seemingly thrown, sporadic word choices are ordered into rhyming, albeit oftentimes slant, patterns of various kinds. This kind of calculated internet-like language and style is not only a testament to Rajs’ age or her contemporaneity but elevates the performative nature of her poetry. It is performative both in the sense that it is *to be performed*, but also in its very stylization. “In the talkative tone there is both precision and timing. So also in the collision between the solemn content and a spelling which can appear silly” Aase Berg writes, encapsulating this kind of form-related tension.¹²² Similarly, Lars Hermansson (*SR*, 19-11-2020) proclaims that “many of the poems in the new book, like in those prior, sound of rap and spoken word, i.e. non-textual poetry”.¹²³ Hermansson envisions Rajs’ poetry as made for the stage, and not for being read on a book page.¹²⁴ It seems as though the juxtaposition between spoken language and its curation is what creates the character of *Under månen* – balancing superficiality, even clichés, with sharpness, creating an explicit tension in *Under månen*, which in turn mimics the tension of the content. While Rajs’ Jewishness is a mark of authenticity regarding family memory and the Holocaust, as well as in connection to an infected socio-political climate where antisemitism is on the rise, the poetic form has been perceived as less “authentic” but rather more performative.¹²⁵ The performative form, coupled with the authentic

¹¹⁶ “Hanna Rajs Lara använder internet-generationens språk...” Sofia Roberg, “Världen genom språket. Sofia Roberg om Hanna Rajs Laras *Under månen*” in *Poesiåret 2020: Litteraturkritisk Kalender*, ed. Magnus William-Olsson, *Örnen och Kråkan*, 2021, 177–182, 177.

¹¹⁷ Alicia Hansen, “Poesi för den rastlösa generationen” in *BON*. Published on: 11/06/2018. Accessed on: 05-05-2022. URL: <https://bon.se/article/poesi-for-den-rastlosa-generationen/>.

¹¹⁸ “...och gestaltar ett helt samtida subjekt, men knyter samtidigt an till en religiös och kulturell tradition som genomsyrar dikternas innehåll såväl som deras ibland närmast liturgiska tilltal”. Roberg, 177–178.

¹¹⁹ Aase Berg, “Bitvis överrumplande. Hanna Rajs Lara följer en ny riktning i samtidspoesin” in *DN*, 23-01-2021.

¹²⁰ Henrik Lång, ”Omskakande med Hanna Rajs Lara” in *Folkbladet Västerbotten*, 04-28-2021.

¹²¹ Hellgren, ”Hennes rädsor är tyvärr befogade”.

¹²² ”I det pratiga tonfallet finns både precision och tajmning. Så även i krocken mellan ett gravallvarligt innehåll och en stavning som kan verka flamsig.” Berg, ”Bitvis överrumplande”.

¹²³ ”Många av dikterna i nya boken, liksom i tidigare, genljuder av rap och spoken word, alltså icke-textuell poesi...” Lars Hermansson, “‘Under månen’ – växlar obesvärat mellan klyschor och förtätningar” in *SR*. Published on: 19-11-2020. Accessed on: 18-05-2022. URL: <https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/7595770>

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

voice/content points toward the political stakes of Rajs' poetry and poetic address, demarcating her position as a Jewish author in a Swedish literary landscape.

This kind of position is anything but new. Rajs, akin to so many others, moves in several intersecting literary traditions at once: Swedish literature, Jewish literature, and Holocaust literature, merging into one cross-cultural and multilingual Swedish-Jewish literary space. A zone of intersection which has steadily grown since the first Jew settled in Sweden, Aaron Isaac in 1774, and has come to include names such as Oscar Levertin, Sophie Elkan, Marcus Ehrenpreis, Nelly Sachs, as well as Göran Rosenberg, Jackie Jakubowski, and Hédi Fried.¹²⁶ To this day, considering the size of the Jewish community in Sweden, the Jewish literary output, both non-fiction and fiction included, is rather remarkable. Alongside writers such as Itkes-Sznajder and Joanna Rubin Dranger, Rajs is, arguably, at the centre of the latest wave of Jewish authors in Sweden.

¹²⁶ For further reading on Swedish-Jewish literary history, see: Hilde Rohlén-Wohlgemuth, "Svensk-Judisk litteratur 1775–1991—en litteraturhistorisk översikt," *Nordisk Judaistik/Scandinavian Jewish Studies*, Vol. 12:2, 1991, 130–154, 131.

Chapter I: Collective Identity and Mnemonic Travel

What should we do with all that we've inherited?

ja e spänd
ja e rädd
rädd för att prata om allt som har hänt
varje skämt
irl å online e ja rädd
rädd för att ta mig hem ensam på kvällen
vissa ställen
räddast e ja ändå på centret
ja e spänd
ja e rädd vilket skämt
kolla mig se en svensk
va ska ja göra me rädslan ja ärvt (lines 1–10)¹²⁷

It is in this way that Rajs commences the second poem of her poetry collection *Under månen*. From the outset of “ARV” the poetic subject is situated amid a social milieu of fear, and the need to hide or blend in – asking what she is supposed to do with the fear she has inherited. While writing from a position of a first-person lyrical subject, it is already at this stage an unmistakably collective experience which propels the fears and experience of identity portrayal present. The motive of fear returns in many of Rajs’ poems in *Under månen*. Not seldom in connection to security. In “MOT SKOGEN” Rajs writes:

en akut medvetenhet om vem jag är hela tiden
varje gång jag besöker synagogan
metalldetektorer utanför pridegudstjänsten
väktare på kollot där jag jobbat
polisen tränar på att landa sina helikoptrar
inställda sportlovskollon, maten som vi skickar tillbaka
tystnadsplikten och sociala medier-förbuden
övningar i krissituationer, vart ska vi springa
mot skogen, mot vattnet, mot vägen
ta så många barn du kan och bara spring (lines 9–18)¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Rajs Lara, 10.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 44.

Filtered through personal experience, “MOT SKOGEN” portrays a wider collective experience on the part of the Jewish community in Sweden. Needless to say, the Swedish Jewish community is all but homogenous, involving several subgroups and waves of Jewish migration. The first group of Jews, who came with Aaron Isaac in 1774, emigrated from Mecklenburg-Schwerin to Sweden.¹²⁹ In the late 19th and beginning of the 20th century a new, Eastern European, community immigrated – initially creating tensions between the then-established, assimilated, Jewish families and the more traditional, Yiddish-speaking, newcomers. However, following the law change of 1870, equalizing all religions in Sweden, Jews from Eastern Europe rapidly became influential in the Swedish cultural, business, and bureaucratic landscapes.¹³⁰ During the Second World War Jews fled to Sweden from Denmark, and in 1945–1946 Holocaust survivors after the liberation of concentration camps arrived in Sweden on the White buses and White boats.¹³¹ More recently Jews from Poland migrated to Sweden in the 1960s and 1970s, from former Yugoslavia during the 1990s, in addition to other groups of Jews (not necessarily in waves) from the former Soviet Union and the Levant. Nonetheless, despite its heterogeneous and diverse composition, the experience of being Jewish in Sweden, the measures taken on the part of communities and individuals, and the acute awareness reflected by Rajs, is something which is transposed collectively. As enhanced in e.g. “MOT SKOGEN,” synagogues, summer camps, schools, holidays, happy occasions, or memorials – all activities and spaces are intertwined with a threat to one’s security, and the tangible need for the same in the most practical sense (guards, police, protective gear, social media bans), but also a frustration because of that. The movement between individual and collective in this context is palpable – while one is threatened because of being part of the collective, one takes measures both on levels of communal safety as much as individual everyday life. In “CHAI,”¹³² the final poem in Rajs’ debut collection *Armarna*, the poet writes:

min bror har ett halsband me stjärna men han går knappt med det
 å mamma har ett chai för ingen vet va de e
 hon brukar säga: dom som vet dom vet
 chai e ett tecken som står för livet
 ett tecken vi bär i hemlighet
 de spelar ingen roll hur långa armarna e

¹²⁹ Per-Martin Meyerson, *Judiskt liv i Europa 1786–1933*, Stockholm: Dialogos, 2016, 366, 358.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 366–368.

¹³¹ See: Sune Persson, “Folke Bernadotte and the White Buses,” *The Journal of Holocaust Education*, Vol. 9:2, 2000, 237–268.

¹³² “Chai” (Hebrew: חי), meaning “alive,” “live,” or “living”.

när dom målar hakkors nu på vasa real¹³³ å på moskén
å kastar brandbomber i synagogan hur sjukt e de
å ja gör aliya å sjunger starkt så de ekar
å när vi kommer ut ur gogan står vakterna å pekar
upp mot nybrogatan där nmr¹³⁴ demonstrerar
å ja sänker mina armar
kippan i handen å handen darrar
handen på hjärtat å hjärtat darrar
å ja sänker mina armar (lines 66–80)¹³⁵

Here, Rajs does not only speak about the threat from neo-Nazis to the Jewish community as well as Muslim communities of Sweden, but the implications of such a threat on an individual everyday basis, and the common practice of hiding Jewish attributes in order not to be recognized. In comparing the symbols of the *Magen David* and the *Chai*, Rajs underlines the notion of being *in the know*. While the former is a well-known symbol, the latter will only be recognized by some. Moreover, only some will relate to the experience of wearing one or the other in public. This concept of hiding one's attributes, specifically the Magen David reappears in *Under månen* in "MOT SKOGEN".

hotbilderna är inte nya för oss vi som är födda med det
vi, födda misstänksamma, med skavda kragar
där vi stoppat stjärnan innanför tröjan för många gånger
min tjej ber mig gömma den när vi är på stan
samma dag som nazister demonstrerar
dom ska alltid vara nära gogan
dom vill vara i vår riksdag med (lines 26–32)¹³⁶

Suspicion (line 27) as a social response is portrayed as an intrinsic trait, passed down from one generation to the next or absorbed at an early age, and as such a figment of collective memory and response in the past as much as the present. Rajs operates from a point of plurality, or

¹³³ An upper secondary school (classes 5–9) in Stockholm, Sweden. Vasa Real includes a Jewish upper secondary school, between years 7–9. The school has been repeatedly defaced, e.g. in 2014 when antisemitic statements such as "judeäckel" (disgusting jew) and "judesvin" (jew swine), in addition to Nazi symbols such as the swastika and "1488" were written across the building. See: Linn Matikka and Alexander Hammarlöf, "Nazistiskt klotter på Vasa Real," P4 Stockholm, *SR*. Published on: 10-03-2018. Accessed on: 22-05-2022.
URL: <https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/5805092>

¹³⁴ Pan-Nordic Neo-nazi movement Nordiska Motståndsrörelsen (NMR) or the Nordic Resistance Movement.

¹³⁵ Rajs Lundström, 95–96.

¹³⁶ Rajs Lara, 44–45.

collective consciousness and memory. The poetic subject speaks to the experience of Jews in Stockholm, but also, in Sweden more broadly, and in turn, by association, about the unstable security situation among Jewish communities across Europe in general.

Furthermore, Rajs portrays that it is not only Jews but those with close relationships with Jewish persons who come to understand the implications of being visibly Jewish. For example, in “MOT SKOGEN” it is a girlfriend who implores hiding and not the subject herself who takes the initiative. The act of physical chafing, from feeling like one has to hide Jewish symbols at once evokes the mental chafing, the emotional consequence of hesitance toward the outside world. As such, while the melancholy, even disparaging, tone is apparent, there is also a sense of change in Rajs’ depiction of visibility from *Armarna* to *Under månen* – perhaps she does not wish to hide any longer. This sense of frustration exists already in “CHAI,” as Rajs writes about wearing Jewish symbols despite backlash and comments received.¹³⁷ However, the element of frustration in the face of such response becomes clearer in *Under månen*. Not only, regarding symbols but also physical appearance and the faulty, but oft referred to concept of “looking Jewish”. In “CHAI” Rajs pens:

ja kan fråga mormor å morfar dom minns hur de va förut
förra gången du vet, hur de inte tar slut
utan växer och växer minut för minut
deras mördade familjer vänder sig i graven nu
de e ett nytt år å ja vågar knappt gå ut
på yom kippur å då har ja ändå tur
för ja e blond å blåögd å ser inte ens judisk ut (lines 21–27)¹³⁸

In *Armarna*, physical appearance, and “looking Jewish,” or rather not doing so, is described as a “stroke of luck” (albeit a conditional one at that), possibly shielding the subject from physical harm, but not emotional harm – as the heavy presence of threat, interconnected here with the grandparents’ memory, remains. In “ARV,” however, the perspective shifts, and now, not “looking Jewish” is described as a lack instead.

inget klär mig
mitt face avslöjar inte arvet som bär mig

¹³⁷ “å ja går me min magen david ja trodde ja tappat / å min klasskompis stirrar på mig på vår lunchrast / säger: fint örhänge, men ja fattar de e sarkasm / ja säger: börja inte ens för ja har inge tålamod kvar” (lines 42–45), Rajs Lundström, 94.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 93–94.

historien som när mig
ja kan inte visa de me sättet ja klär mig
för mig
när ja säger till folk dom förhör mig
pratar om saker som inte berör mig
eller inte tror mig
för ja ser inte ut som min mormor och morfar
 min mamma å bror nej
ja ser ut som mig
ser ut som mig själv
men va ska ja göra me allt som ja ärvt (lines 13–24)¹³⁹

What does it mean for Rajs’ self-conceptualization to feel visually displaced or “unrecognizable”? While first urging the reader to see her as a Swede, recognizing the benefit of such visuals, now, the lack of recognition becomes alienating. The subject fails in being recognized as part of her family, in the totality of what it means to be Jewish, and therefore also the legacy and weight (in the double sense of heaviness but also significance) of such heritage. As much as Rajs does not, according to herself, “look” like someone with her legacy or memory she still carries it with her. One could ask how one should interpret the inclination toward demarcating physical Jewishness beyond everyday experience, when such a concept is highly intertwined with racial classification and Otherness?

In “Looking Jewish, Seeing Jews” (1999) Matthew F. Jacobson explores the concept of “a Jewish face” and the scholarly discourse surrounding Jews as historically racialized.¹⁴⁰ Jacobson finds that “from the outset scientific writings on Jews in Europe tended to focus upon questions of assimilation, most often emphasizing the race’s stubborn immutability – which is to say, its unassimilability”.¹⁴¹ Referencing eugenicist Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, Jacobson showcases the racial scientific discourse surrounding the “Jewish face” due to its remaining “the same as it appears on the Egyptian paintings of three or four thousand years ago”.¹⁴² Similarly, Robert Knox, “leaving little doubt as to the further question of racial merit” as Jacobson notes, also concerned himself with Jewish physical features concluding that “the Jewish face never can [be], and never is, perfectly beautiful,” not least because of its, what

¹³⁹ Rajs Lara, 10.

¹⁴⁰ Matthew F. Jacobson, “Looking Jewish, Seeing Jews” in *Theories of Race & Racism*, 2nd ed., ed. Les Back and John Solomons, London: Routledge, 2009, 238–252, 238–239.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 243.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 243.

Knox calls, “African character”.¹⁴³ In the end, Jacobsen deduces that “[w]herever ‘difference’ was cast as race, certainly, the weight of the culture in general tended most often toward negative depiction”.¹⁴⁴ It is unsurprising that being seen as “not Jewish,” but rather White, has been considered a positive from the perspective of beauty, aesthetics or attractiveness, and that hiding or changing one’s appearance has been encouraged to this day in addition to identity markers and public displays of Jewishness – the notion that it is “easier” for Jews to change or hide, under the guise of “lucky” camouflage, to be accepted are deeply antisemitic, and, unfortunately, oft internalized.¹⁴⁵

Simultaneously, Jacobson explains that the concept of racial Jewishness and “a Jewish look” has at several times also been reclaimed by Jews themselves.¹⁴⁶ Jacobson refers to John Efron stating that “Jewish race science represented ‘a new form of Jewish self-defence’”.¹⁴⁷ The concept of a strong Jewish particularity, visually as well, was a concept which infused both Zionist and Yiddish Socialist/Bundist movements, accentuating the importance of Jewish peoplehood beyond religion.¹⁴⁸ This idea of reclaiming Jewish particularity can be traced to today, online and in real life, where second and third-generation Jews demarcate their belonging openly, whether or not they are considered to have “a Jewish face”; showcasing Jewishness becomes one way to display pride and a multitude of diverse Jewish “looks”.

¹⁴³ Jacobson, 244.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 246.

¹⁴⁵ While the examples and persons to which I have referred, through Jacobson, predate the 20th century, there has been research done on “racial” recognition of Jews in academic settings as late as 1959, e.g., in Leonard D. Savitz and Richard F. Tomasson, “The Identifiability of Jews,” *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 64:5, 1959, 468–475. In the study, using Jewish and non-Jewish judges as well as subjects, the scholars found that while Jews were better in recognizing fellow Jews, Jewish subjects were more often deemed non-Jews overall, than the other way around. This, the scholars, deduced could be due to the presence of a “liberal bias” on the part of the judges that they assign the higher status of non-Jew when in doubt (474). In what way this is liberal can surely be questioned – the assumption rather rings of antisemitism and speaks to lasting antisemitic sentiments. The researchers also found that “anti-Semitic individuals show the opposite disposition to judge more individuals to be Jews” (474). On this point the study corroborated previous research findings in Frederick H. Lund and Wilner C. Berg, “Identifiability of Nationality Characteristics,” *Journal of Social Psychology*, 24:1, 1946, 77–83. While one can note the time which has passed since these studies were made, the conclusions are still interesting in connection the idea of *seeking out* Jews in contemporary times, but also the pervasive idea of misjudging the number of Jews in the world. In a survey on attitudes toward Jews, Israel, and antisemitism in Europe from 2018, CNN found that “about two-thirds of the respondents in the survey guessed too high when asked what percentage of the world is Jewish, and similar numbers got the answers wrong for their own countries”; 25% of Hungarians estimated that Jews made up more than 20% of the world, whilst 20% of Polish and British interviewees had the same answer, meaning “they were off by a factor of 100,” as the world Jewish population stands at about 0.2%. See: “A Shadow over Europe,” *CNN*, 2018. Accessed on: 18-05-2022. URL: <https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2018/11/europe/antisemitism-poll-2018-intl/>.

¹⁴⁶ Jacobson, 246.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 244.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 240.

Finally, one should also briefly mention the discourse surrounding Jews who “do not look Jewish” away from false positivity. Laurel Richardson, in her personal essay “Looking Jewish” (2003), describes a sense of displacement not unlike the one Rajs touches on in her poetry. “I didn’t belong. I would never belong. That’s what I made of it. I was not *really* Jewish. Neither Gentile nor Jew would *see* me as Jewish. My outer wrapping would conceal my heritage” Richardson commences her essay.¹⁴⁹ Richardson’s situation is made complex not only by being mistaken for a non-Jew by Jews, or by being suspected of having had surgery to “adjust” her face to look less Jewish, but also by the way in which the “outside world” perceives her.¹⁵⁰ One telling example is Richardson’s meeting with her mother-in-law who “had never seen a Jew in real life, but she had seen photographs. ‘You don’t look Jewish,’ she says. Reaching for my head, she asks, ‘Is your hair hiding your horns?’”.¹⁵¹ These kinds of statements recall Medieval-era antisemitism and conspiratory notions about “Jews not looking Jewish” as part of hiding, and are as such connected to conspiracy theories about “the elusive Jew” infiltrating society and “replacing” White Christians.¹⁵²

There is a strong element of being “revealed” as a Jew. Rajs underlines that because of her not “looking Jewish,” persons around her do not accept such an acknowledgment. Instead they question her, berate, and interrogate her. There is a sense of frustration present surrounding not only not being seen for who you are, but having to argue, showcase, prove, and then, once people believe you, defend or explain yourself. It is amid this historical and collective background which Jewish identity is negotiated and portrayed in the poetry. At the end of the day, no matter what she does or how she looks, the subject carries her heritage with her and all that it encapsulates.

Materialization of Memory through Writing and Reading

While being seen as part of the Jewish collective is something which both unites and estranges the poetic subject from her family, there are other aspects of belonging which very clearly unite

¹⁴⁹ Laurel Richardson, “Looking Jewish,” *Qualitative Inquiry*, Vol. 9:5, 2003, 815–821, 815.

¹⁵⁰ Richardson, 816.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² This type of theory, under the name of “Great Replacement,” has been evoked in connection to e.g., the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlotte, Virginia, USA, also called the “Charlottesville Riots” in 2017, as well as the Pittsburgh *Tree of Life* (or L’Simcha Congregation) Synagogue Shooting (27-10-2018) which Rajs evokes in *Under månen* (see: pp. 13–14), and which will be discussed further in this analysis. Contemporary “Great Replacement” rhetoric is inspired by Renaud Camus’ *Le Grand Remplacement* (2011), which, in turn, draws on Édouard Drumont’s *La France Juive* (1886). Drumont was a, if not the most, prominent figure in accusing Alfred Dreyfus during the Dreyfus Affair.

Rajs with the collective of her family. One such, is the materialization of memory through writing, as exemplified in “ARV”.

min familj va poeter
morfar har sagt till mig
va alla heter
djurica
morfars älskade storebror
började skriva i lägret ba elva år
hann inte speciellt långt för han dödades
allt de som hände
så långt innan ja föddes
bär ja på huden som om ja va märkt
hjärtat förvarar de
blicken e skärpt
men va ska ja göra me allt som ja ärvt (lines 26–38)¹⁵³

Rajs describes the feeling of carrying history with her as if having been marked by it physically, drawing a direct parallel to the experience of her family but also others in concentration camps, whether they perished like her grandfather’s brother Djurica or survived. The act of writing is upheld by the lyrical subject as a point of intertwinement and connection with those who came before, exemplifying the ways in which “family memory” as a category of “collective memory” materializes here through poetry.¹⁵⁴ In “Locating Family in Cultural Memory Studies (1995), Astrid Erll notes that “families serve as a kind of switchboard between the individual memory and larger frames of collective remembrance”.¹⁵⁵ Erll, impresses the importance of family memory, as “everyday-memory,”¹⁵⁶ echoing Jay Winter’s proclamation that “when the link between family life and commemoration is broken, a powerful prop of remembrance is removed. Then, in time, remembrance atrophies and fades away”.¹⁵⁷ Compiled, these sentiments underline the stakes of continuous living memory, and the danger of it being traded

¹⁵³ Rajs Lara, 11.

¹⁵⁴ “Family memory” which is at the centre of memory transference intergenerationally is evoked already by Halbwachs in his foundational theory: “No matter how we enter a family – by birth, marriage, or some other way – we find ourselves to be part of a group where our position is determined not by personal feelings but by rules and customs independent of us that existed before us” Halbwachs, 55.

¹⁵⁵ Astrid Erll, “Locating Family in Cultural Memory Studies,” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, Vol. 42:3, University of Toronto Press, 2011, 303–318, 315.

¹⁵⁶ Erll, “Locating Family in Cultural Memory Studies,” 306.

¹⁵⁷ Jay Winter, “Sites of Memory and the Shadow of War” in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* eds. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008, 61–76, 72. Cited in Erll, “Locating Family in Cultural Memory Studies,” 310.

for historical commemoration.¹⁵⁸ While Halbwachs introduced collective memory, it was Pierre Nora, in *Les Lieux des mémoire* (1984–1992), who most prominently developed the theorization within a national frame, dissecting the space where memory turns into history – so called *lieux de mémoire*, i.e. physical or non-physical *sites of memory*.¹⁵⁹ In “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire” (1989), Nora outlines the need for “sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory”.¹⁶⁰ Nora makes a distinction between “true” living memory, which occurs spontaneously, and sites of memory which demand an effort to recollect.¹⁶¹ Nora’s distinction evokes important points about the definitions of memory. Indeed, memory, by nature, is fleeting, fragmentary, subject to change, and what is more, often used to signify a myriad of terms such living memory, postmemory, and commemoration to name a few, as Mary Fulbrook maps.¹⁶² Simultaneously, Nora’s definition, by and large, ignores new kinds of spontaneous evocations of memory by those who come after.¹⁶³ While Rajs’ poetry is indeed material and curated, and Nora would perhaps term it a site of memory, I would rather see it as a “contact zone”¹⁶⁴ of cultures as much as living memory, where spontaneous evocation and remembrance meets recollection and reconstruction through poetry. Poetic expression is evoked as one point of connection binding Rajs to Djurica, who was also a poet, but whose opportunities to be published were taken away along with his life. The weight of this comparison is further emphasized by the repetition at the end of each stanza in the poem asking precisely what Rajs should do with this kind of inherited experience, and with this memory and trauma. For the lyrical subject, memory arises through evocations in the every-day, such as conversations with Rajs’ grandfather. History becomes too distanced, and poetry like this demands, instead, a transitional view of memory which considers the immediacy with which memory continues to appear.

¹⁵⁸ The line between memory and history has been a central topic of debate within the history field, Memory Studies, and Holocaust studies, since Halbwach’s theorization came to light, drawing a dividing line between the two concepts. For further reading on debate see e.g.: Stefan Berger and Bill Niven, “Introduction” in *Writing the History of Memory*, ed. Stefan Berger and Bill Niven, London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014, 1–23, 5.

¹⁵⁹ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” trans. Marc Roudebush, *Representations*, No. 26, University California Press, 1989, 7–24, 7.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Mary Fulbrook, “History writing and “collective memory” in *Writing the History of Memory*, ed. Stefan Berger and Bill Niven, London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014, 65–88, 68.

¹⁶³ Nora’s conceptualization, marking the entrance of the “second wave of Memory Studies,” has also been criticized for situating “cultural memory” as “national memory,” as Nora, operating from a French point of view, disregards transcultural and culturally intersecting mnemonic realities, as such reiterating a falsely monolithic understanding of “culture”. See: Astrid Erll, “Travelling Memory” in *Parallax*, Vol. 17:4, 2011, 4–18, 7.

¹⁶⁴ Borrowing term from Mary Louise Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone” in *Profession*, New York: Modern Language Association, 1991, 33–40.

In “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity” (1995), Jan Assmann proposes a distinction between “communicative memory” (i.e. “everyday memory”) and “cultural memory” and where the former turns into the latter, as such keeping the notion of living memory alive.¹⁶⁵ As per Assmann, “communicative memory” is defined by “its limited horizon. As all oral history studies suggest, this horizon does not extend more than eighty to (at the very most) one hundred years into the past, which equals three or four generations”.¹⁶⁶ “Cultural memory,” on the other hand, Assmann notes is not limited by time, but rather “has its fixed point; its horizon does not change with the passing of time. These fixed points are fateful events of the past, whose memories are maintained through cultural formations (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance)”.¹⁶⁷ These kinds of theoretical pathways allow us to investigate how one should understand memory when one lives in an environment of memory and cannot forget, not only because of the importance of remembering or the fear of forgetting but also because the memory in and about one’s family, even in its absence, is alive.¹⁶⁸ Rajs recollection of Djurica is part of the “communicative memory” which she has received, which is then turned into “cultural memory” through poetry. However, through poetry Rajs also allows Djurica back into the “every-day,” to be communicated onward by way of the oral genre.

Djurica, his memory, and the memory of him appear repeatedly in *Under månen*, first in “ARV” and then again in Rajs’ poem “VILKEN DAG”.¹⁶⁹ Each time, Djurica appears as part of a fragmented remembrance, fleeting and unprovoked, yet materialized through his own medium of communication. Albeit in fragmentation, the knowledge handed over to the lyrical subject is always available as sporadic, recurring images and thoughts. This kind of spontaneous recalling showcases how fragmented memory travels and takes shape in the minds of those to whom these memories have been retold. In “VILKEN DAG” Rajs shifts and travels between present and past days, mapping them in fragmentation.

vilken dag vilken dag
jag har byggt om köket idag
brände mig ordentligt idag

¹⁶⁵ Jan Assmann, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity” in *New German Critique*, No. 65, Duke University Press, 1995, 125–133, 127.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Assmann, 129.

¹⁶⁸ “Most Jews here and abroad of my and my father’s generation needed the Shoah not to be a past event; we need it to be part of our daily reality”. Gilman, 1991, 175.

¹⁶⁹ Rajs Lara, 31–33.

tänkte på min framtid idag
längta efter sommarn idag
jag läste morfars bok idag
spelade kingdom hearts idag
vilken dag vilken dag
vilken dag va

läste gamla brev idag
skrivna av mina släktingar
vissa skrev dom på sin sista dag
nu finns bara breven kvar (lines 1–13)¹⁷⁰

At this point in the poem, the lyrical subject is still very much in the present, recounting what she has been doing throughout one day, representing “any day”. The second stanza, however, begins to pre-empt the temporal travel through memory which will occur later in the poem. This movement is set forth by the act of reading letters, the only remnant of family members murdered – another fragmented representation of what was lost. The poetic subject moves backwards to the stories of her family members, and into the future from their perspective. Here, proximity is emphasized through mnemonic travel, but equally so a distance is created between the various voices in the poem, as the subject and the reader know what fate the family members will meet. However, on the way to the family members, the poetic subject first bypasses her grandparents’ experience during the Holocaust.

mormor lämna ruma idag
flydde till novi sad idag
lämna sina saker kvar
mormor lämna allt idag

morfar fördes bort idag
gömd men han blir hittad snart
molnen hänger tungt idag
för många är det sista dan (lines 14–21)¹⁷¹

The two strophes cited above are the only ones who recall the past, whilst situating them in present tense. One could speculate as to why that is... perhaps family memories of survivors

¹⁷⁰ Rajs Lara, 31.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

such as these appear more present due to actual proximity and knowledge beyond letters. Aarons and Berger impress that “[m]emory is the structural and foundational link among those who write about the Holocaust from direct experience as well as from the haunting legacy that takes the shape of imaginative return”.¹⁷² This statement does not only underline the stakes of memory, or lack thereof, but also the way in which recalling functions. While evoked in connection to memoirs and novels, the imaginative return can still be traced in Rajs' poetry, e.g. in the description of the clouds and the heavy atmosphere, encircling not only the events of the past but, in turn, also the present within which the poetic subject is situated. This description of atmosphere is, like the present tense, evoked only in connection to Rajs' grandparents – as if the poetic subject attempts to internalize their positions and imagine herself there. Memory becomes a mode through which the poet operates mnemonically, and travels between people, mediums, cultures, linguistic, political, and geographical borders, as well as temporalities, as Astrid Erll proposes in “Travelling Memory” (2011).¹⁷³ This kind of cross-temporal memory increasingly escalates in Rajs' poetry, when looking at the three following stanzas in “VILKEN DAG”:

10 oktober 1941 var en dag
morbror andrej skrev till jelena, hustrun sin
»ta hand om dig och barnen
med mig går det som gud vill«

8 december 1941 var en dag
det sista brevet morfars mormor sidonja
från sin man franja nånsin fått
»jag älskar er
jag behöver ett örngott«

10 januari 1945 var en dag
tant rozsi skrev en dikt precis som jag
»skall jag någon gång få ett fridfullt hem,
sitta vid ett dukat bord?
skall mina armar krama min son?

¹⁷² Aarons and Berger, 41.

¹⁷³ Erll, “Travelling Memory,” 11. Erll’s conceptualization of “Travelling Memory” has since 2011 come to heavily impact the “third wave” or third phase of memory studies. Within this phase, “scholars [...] show new interest in studying the outcomes and tangible manifestations of memory work beyond national borders and in a global context” as noted in: Aline Sierp, “Memory Studies: Development, Debates and Directions” in *Handbuch Sozialwissenschaftliche Gedächtnisforschung*, ed. Mathias Berek. et al., Wiesbaden: Springer, 2021, 1–11, 9.

jag väntar och väntar på svar från dig,
väntar ständigt
min herre, var mig nådig! hjälp mig
och om min själ klarar frestelsen
ta mig åter till tizzas stränder« (lines 22–40)¹⁷⁴

Throughout these passages, Rajs not only describes but makes direct parallels between reading and writing in the present with writing in the past, by mediating the voices of the past in a twofold present (the present during the Second World War, and the present of the lyrical subject). The tonality underlines the repetitive nature of days passing, and shifts between prayers, exclamations, and almost comical requests for pillow cases, highlighting the rift between the days experienced by the poetic subject and the family members, respectively. Continuing, the lyrical subject fuses her voice with her family members' and mediates their writing as part of her own. Rajs goes beyond imaginative return and transgresses into mediation of a polyphony of voices. In a sense Rajs become the epitome of Erll's conceptualization of mnemonic travel as one of the "carriers of memory" i.e. "the individuals who share in collective images and narratives of the past, who practice mnemonic rituals, display an inherited habitus, and can draw on repertoires of explicit and implicit knowledge".¹⁷⁵ In including the writings of others through fragmented letters and citations, Rajs, in a way, allows her family members to speak in their own voices. It becomes a kind of memorialization of the Shoah in the words of the victims themselves. The effect of this kind of mediation is especially interesting when it comes to the writing by those who Rajs makes clear perished in the Holocaust. In the seminal essay "The Drowned and the Saved" (1989) Primo Levi writes:

I must repeat we the survivors are not the true witnesses... We survivors are not only an exiguous but also an anomalous minority: we are those who by their prevarications or abilities or good luck did not touch bottom. Those who did so [...] they are the complete witnesses, the ones whose deposition would have a general significance. They are the rule, we are the exception.¹⁷⁶

This account becomes a, if not *the* marker of the immense difficulty of aptly describing the Holocaust, even amongst survivors. Through Rajs' mediation, it is almost as if the readers are allowed to be transposed to that time and take part in a "true" witness account, in an act of

¹⁷⁴ Rajs Lara, 32.

¹⁷⁵ Erll, "Travelling Memory," 12.

¹⁷⁶ Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal, New York: Vintage, 1989, 83–84.

prosopopoeia – speech of the dead.¹⁷⁷ While uncanny, this is perhaps the most profound way the lyrical subject enacts living memory, by allowing her family member to speak and be heard.

vilken dag vilken dag
jag beställde lamm till pesach idag
satte på en tvätt idag
jag åt mackor med pastrami idag
vilken dag vilken dag
lyssnade på en pod idag
tvättade mitt hår idag
läste morfars bok idag
alla dessa rop idag
skuggor bakom mig idag
jag har druckit vin idag
vilken dag va

11 augusti 1941 var en dag
morfars bror djurica skrev i lägret i smyg
»denna bok skriver jag när jag bara är elva år
låt oss börja nu« (lines 41–56)¹⁷⁸

These two final stanzas of “VILKEN DAG,” additionally, highlight another kind of temporality, intermingled with present and past – the discombobulated future. The clearest marker of a parallel movement between separate futures is Djurica’s final line, which is followed by a total emptiness. For Djurica, and Rajs’ other family members, this was their last day, and as such there can be no continuation, only loss. For Rajs, this is a beginning within which emptiness and loss are constantly present (as demarcated by the shadows on line 50) – but the future is still ahead. The beginning marks an end, and the end a new beginning. The legacy Rajs and other third-generation survivors carry is not only that of which *was* but the search for everything that *could have been*. The motive of the unknown future (what *will be*), entangled in the past and present, can also be detected in “ARV”:

inget e överdrivet
de underdrivet
inget e överdrivet

¹⁷⁷ Scott Brewster, *Lyric*, London and New York: Routledge, 2009, 40.

¹⁷⁸ Rajs Lara, 32–33.

å de e inget skämt
 finns anledningar till att säkerheten skärps
 vi e rädda efter allt som har hänt
 en del som har hänt oss
 en del som vi ärvt
 en del som ska hända men inte hänt än
 de som händer våra barn
 de skrämmer oss mest
 så va ska vi göra me allt som vi ärvt (lines 64–75)¹⁷⁹

For those with experience of antisemitism, trauma, and fear, the past becomes an intrinsic *known*, whilst the impending future is still unknown, even if anticipated. In “ARV” the poetic subject moves between that which has happened to the Jewish collective and that which is yet to happen (anything *not* happening is simply not an option), but also between that which “we” have experienced in person and what “we” inherit, demarcating first the general experience of the Jewish people, and then a specific generational belonging. Finally, Rajs notes that what is most freightening is the impending threat to “our kids” (line 73). The present tense of “händer” (“happening”) emphasizes the on-going nature of the issue, but also its continuous repeating nature. Writing in the first-person plural, representing the collective “we,” acknowledges that children are both individual children, but also the next generation of Jewish children more broadly. The poem ends by, once again, repeating the question of what to do with the inheritance in question. This time, however, it is no longer a question for the individual, but one which includes the collective – what are we supposed to do with all that we have inherited?

Materialization of Memory through Food

Aside from reading/writing, the other theme which evokes memory, and against which the poetic subject’s Jewish identity arises and is constructed, is food. Food appears across many of the poems studied thus far in this thesis, such as “ARV” and “VILKEN DAG,” however, the theme is most directly addressed in poems “KÄNSLA FÖR MATEN E NÅGOT JA ÄRVT / KÄNSLAN E DELAD FÖR MATEN E KÄRLEK / MEN OCKSÅ MINNET AV SVÄLT”¹⁸⁰ AND “I ISTRIEN”.

¹⁷⁹ Rajs Lara, 12.

¹⁸⁰ From now on referred to in abbreviated form as “KÄNSLA FÖR MATEN”.

Commencing with the former, in “KÄNSLA FÖR MATEN” it is described that:

alla har vi varsin kaka
varje år på födelsedagen
mormor vet vad hon ska baka
min brukade vara kokosrullad
mamma och tom har kexchoklad
ja har bytt till krempita
kusinerna går på olika dieter
min fru gillar bomba torta å reform
men minns aldrig vad dom heter
å en gång om året får alla smaka
på morfars mamma ostkaka
för fet för att äta oftare än så
så bara när morfar fyller år (lines 1–13)¹⁸¹

This poem, following “ARV” in order, encapsulates Rajs’ intrinsic transcultural identity. Here, Serbian, Swedish, and Jewish food cultures, intermingle through krempita, bomba torta, reform torta, chocolate covered wafers *Kexchoklad*, and the special family cheesecake. The combinations and intersections of dishes reflect a larger mode of transculturalism and multilingualism within Jewish culture. “Throughout most of their history, the Jews were a multilingual nation, both in fact and as part of their identity consciousness. Their history was marked by the movements of a small Jewish minority from one land and culture to another, and by the multilingual library of texts which they carried with them” Benjamin Harshav writes in *The Polyphony of Jewish Culture* (2007).¹⁸² While Swedish is the dominating language in *Under månen* and the setting for many of the poems is Sweden, the Serbian or Balkan influences feature heavily, both linguistically and culturally, in the poetry collection.¹⁸³ Simultaneously, the poetry oft testifies to an ambivalent relationship to Serbia, due to Rajs’ maternal family being Jewish. In “ARV” it is relayed:

dom kom hit från serbien
mamma min moster mormor å morfar men
du får aldrig höra dom kalla sig serber

¹⁸¹ Rajs Lara, 13.

¹⁸² Benjamin Harshav, *The Polyphony of Jewish Culture*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007, 23.

¹⁸³ See example: “jag säger kom igen / jag säger skynda / men mormor och morfar kommer inte / förrän jag skriker/ ajde idemo!” (lines 4–8), in Rajs Lara, “MINNE AV ATT VA LITEN,” 15. For other example see: ”BROR JAG FUCKING ÄLSKAR SERBISKA,” in Rajs Lara, 54–55.

å hade dom vart de så hade historien
 varit en annan å fler hade
 varit här för att berätta den
 oavsett vad så ska vi snart dit igen
 hälsa på dom som finns kvar i familjen
 men all burek å kajmak å sremiska i världen
 eller de att belgrad känns som ett andra hem
 ändrar inte nånsin hur de känns
 aldrig bekväm me att kalla mig serb
 så va ska ja göra me allt som ja ärvt (lines 39–51)¹⁸⁴

While the connection to Serbian cuisine and Serbia itself is expressed as emotionally close to the poetic subject, none of it can make her forget the crimes committed against her family. How can one reconcile the actions of a country in the past with one's sense of affection for it in the present, because that is where one's family has lived, and some of them still live? How to fit all of this into one person's heritage? This unease is not only that of the lyrical subject but, once again, an inherited matter as part of the Jewish heritage. Rajs is, thus, constantly in motion between the memories, feelings of proximity and alienation, and various cultural belongings. The negotiation very aptly evokes Erll's concept of "transcultural memory".¹⁸⁵ Erll envisions "transcultural" to encompass previously established terms, such as "cosmopolitan"¹⁸⁶ but also "transnational, diasporic, hybrid, syncretistic, postcolonial, translocal, creolized, global".¹⁸⁷ With this kind of broad terminology, drawing on a shift in academia overall towards finding new spaces and patterns of movement, transcultural memory allows us to see and explore the transgressive spaces of identity, as well as new intersections and circulations of cultural expressions. This kind of opportunity is, in part, the reasoning behind anchoring the analysis of Rajs' poetry in literary memory studies, rather than e.g. postcolonial theorization. While one could see Rajs within a "third space" of hybridity as "neither the one nor the other," as Homi K. Bhabha has phrased it, this nevertheless implies a merging of two or more separate cultural spheres, or "imagined communities" to borrow a term from Benedict Anderson,¹⁸⁸ into a new space of existence, no matter how openly one conceives of them.¹⁸⁹ Rajs, however, as a

¹⁸⁴ Rajs Lara, 10.

¹⁸⁵ Erll, "Travelling Memory," 5.

¹⁸⁶ Here referring to "cosmopolitan memory" as presented in "Chapter 2: Cosmopolitan Memory" in Levy and Sznajder, 23–38.

¹⁸⁷ Erll, "Travelling Memory," 9.

¹⁸⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London and New York: Verso, 1983.

¹⁸⁹ Homi K. Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 1994, 37.

Jewish author already exists transgressively across borders, combining and merging cultural influences. Similarly, regarding languages and circulation, looking now to Rebecca Walkowitz’s “The Location of Literature: The transnational book and the migrant writer” (2013), there is often a distinction made between national/migrant writing, and whilst this is rightfully re-examined by Walkowitz since literature and socio-cultural relations travel, it is not circulation, personal migration, or globalization which shapes Rajs’ transcultural position or memory; it is intrinsic to her as a Jew, especially in diaspora.¹⁹⁰ Furthermore, one must note the complex nature of using terms that, in effect, perpetuate “Othering” of marginalized authors or subjects – this is perhaps one of the pitfalls of postcolonial theory. Finally, postcolonial theory operates traditionally within North-South, Occident/Orient binaries, and while Jewish hybridity and marginalization have been studied, the theory is frequently practised without Jewishness in mind. Memory studies allow for Rajs’ perspective and situatedness to prevail as the “inside” or dominating voice/perspective, whilst still being conscious of her position as part of the Jewish minority and other intersecting belongings, generating a cumulative multicultural perception and construction of identity.

Returning to “KÄNSLA FÖR MATEN,” there is yet another aspect of intermingling or parallel movement in the poem – one reflected already in the title.

bergen belsen, fyrtiofem
 diarrén som dödar en
 faster hämtar läkaren
 som bor i den andra baracken
 sårpulver på en knivspets
 en extra skiva bröd kanske
 borde dött men lever än (lines 14–20)¹⁹¹

Alongside indulgence and celebration there is the intermittent notion of starvation and death, paralleling the experience of birthday festivities and the Shoah. It does not only emphasize the recurring notion that identity, like memory, exists at the borderline of contrasts, but the ever-presence of darkness even in the lightness of celebrating life. This kind of antithesis leads me on to the perhaps most interesting mnemonic expression in “KÄNSLA FÖR MATEN”.

¹⁹⁰ Rebecca Walkowitz, “The Location of Literature: The transnational book and the migrant writer” in *Global Literary Theory: An Anthology*, ed. Richard J. Lane, London and New York: Routledge, 2013, 923–928.

¹⁹¹ Rajs Lara, 13.

nu har vi channuka i stureby
 med bringa å latkes av pumpa å sufganyiot
 me saffran å dulce de leche för ja
 vill låna smaker från suri å kuba
 å jul för den kommer vi inte ifrån
 även om dom inte sammanfaller i år
 å bringa e kanske en pesachgrej mer
 men ja vill skapa egna traditioner
 mormors kusin har aldrig varit med å firat förut
 men kommer att delta i år tillslut
 in i Pittsburgh skjuter dom judar igen
 å ja har inte vågat mig till gogan än (lines 21–32)¹⁹²

It seems no coincidence that this third and final stanza commences with the words “nu har vi channuka i stureby” (line 21) following “borde dött men lever än” (line 20). In this kind of setting, the movement between death and life, darkness and light are encoded in the grander collective history and remembrance of Chanukah, the Jewish eight-day festival, which in its essence is a celebration of light in the dark, of overcoming destruction through a miracle, but also unified resistance against those who seek to annihilate the Jewish people.¹⁹³ Chanukah is celebrated in memory of war against the Greco-Syrian Seleucid Empire, helmed by the Maccabee family, and subsequently the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. It is, as such, a holiday deeply intertwined with self-determination and strengthening of Jewish identity, especially in contexts where Jews are urged, if not directly forced, to assimilate. In “At Christmas We Don’t Like Pork, Just Like the Maccabees,” Nir Avieli (2009), maps that “[a]ccording to the Book of Maccabees, Matityahu, the Hashmonai patriarch, refused an order by a Seleuk officer to sacrifice a pig in his own temple, slaughtered the officer and run away with his sons, the Maccabees, to the mountains, from where he launched the rebellion”.¹⁹⁴ The defiance against Hellenism and the instruction to break kosher, does not exist in isolation but is a part of a larger push to break with Jewish tradition. In that sense, the revolt against the Greeks was a revolt against losing Jewish identity and for continuity of Jewish tradition. This element of continuity is made explicit in “KÄNSLA FÖR MATEN” through the notion of

¹⁹² Rajs Lara, 13–14.

¹⁹³ Chanukah (Hebrew: חנוכה). The spelling of “Chanukah” which Rajs utilizes replicates the phonetical sound “kaf” [chaf] of the Hebrew spelling and pronunciation.

¹⁹⁴ Nir Avieli, “‘At Christmas We Don’t Like Pork, Just Like the Maccabees’: Festive Food and Religious Identity at the Protestant Picnic in Hoi An,” *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol. 14:2, Sage Publications, 2009, 219–241, 239.

creating one's own Jewish traditions (line 28) for the future. The notion of the temple, physical and figurative, is embedded in the poem, both in the movement between creation/continuity and destruction but also in the linearity established between Chanukah, the Shoah, and the shooting in Pittsburgh. When the synagogue in Pittsburgh was attacked, that temple became another image of the threat of destruction of Jewish life and culture, evoked in the remembrance of Chanukah, but also the Shoah – a *khurban*.¹⁹⁵ In true third-generation fashion, Rajs oscillates between continuity, facing the future, whilst demarcating the memory of the past, and the threats in the present. It is a constant negotiation of positions in the poem, mirroring the interaction with and movements between cultural influences.

While I have discussed the Serbian intertwinement with Jewishness in-depth, the Swedish one has yet to be dissected beyond food. The most pronounced “Swedish” influence is that of Christmas, to which the poetic subject expresses an ambivalent relationship (line 25). In another poem in *Under månen*, Rajs writes “på fest på julafton var jobbiga jävla judar / fuck julafton å fuck dj antisemit / ja jag sa fuck julafton” (lines 66–68, in “SYSTER”).¹⁹⁶ The episode recalled is similar to one found already in *Armarna*.¹⁹⁷ Whereas Christmas in *Armarna* is something Rajs is subjected to, like hate speech, Christmas in *Under månen* is more frustrating, unwanted, yet seemingly inescapable. Whilst inviting cultural influence, by familial connection or by intermarriage, the poem is at once again a reminder of the fine border between influence and assimilation, evoked also by the demarcation of the temporal proximity between Christmas and Chanukah (lines 25–26).

Unlike in “KÄNSLA FÖR MATEN” where the poetic subject travels through time, in very last poem of *Under månen*, “I ISTRLEN,” return is enacted through physical travel, equally common among the third generation. Like third-generation authors before her, such as Safran Foer in *Everything is Illuminated* or Adorján in *An Exclusive Love*, Rajs travels back to the country from which her family emigrated to search for her history. Unlike Safran Foer's journey back to Ukraine or Adorján's return to Hungary, Rajs' visit, or travel, to Serbia is a common recurrence. Nevertheless, the *seeking* motive is made equally explicit in “I ISTRLEN” as in Safran Foer and Adorján's works.

¹⁹⁵ Yiddish (חורבן) used to mean the Holocaust, or “destruction of Jews in Europe”. Comes from Hebrew (חורבן) meaning “destruction,” used in text to signify “destruction of the Temple”.

¹⁹⁶ Rajs Lara, 27–29, 29.

¹⁹⁷ ”skicka låtar som vi hittat på till hon johanna / som kasta ut oss från en fest för vi va jobbiga / å kalla oss i dörren för jävla judar / på julafton inte minst vilket helvete va / haters gonna hate eller va va de vi sa” (lines 19–30), ”500 DAR,” Rajs Lundström, 25–26.

sommarens första krempita
i istrien och jag
flyter i adriatiska havet kusten
och nationalparken där
mina morföräldrar träffades
för första gången 1955
jag äter burek och letar efter
resterna från
sommarlägret på punta corrente
för judiska ungdomar efter kriget (lines 1–10)¹⁹⁸

“I ISTRIEN,” like “KÄNSLAN FÖR MATEN,” commences, once more, with a reference to the dessert krempita. The emphasis on personal experience of food and location is directly followed by a form of return, a mnemonic movement to her maternal grandparents’ first meeting in 1955. Just like the first analepsis materializes through krempita, so does the second through burek. Now, Rajs reminisces of her grandparents’ experience at a Jewish summer camp, ten years after the liberation of concentration camps. The contrast and movement between Rajs and her grandparents, and arguably also sweet to savoury, recalls the movement between present and past, love and trauma. The poem which, in part, depicts a meeting between two people who fall in love is imbued not only with a sense of nostalgia for summer and youth but also images from the Holocaust.

mormor välkomnar morfar och
ber honom tvätta sina händer
tjejerna till vänster killarna till höger
morfar tänker på Auschwitz
han svarar: måste jag? men han gör det
en slarvig netilat yadayim som varar i
mer än sextio år
när han är klar sträcker han händerna mot henne
frågar: är det bra så? (lines 13–21)¹⁹⁹

Like in “KÄNSLA FÖR MATEN” the past and present, joy and trauma occur all at once. The parallel emotions and situations are enhanced by contrasting traditional Jewish daily practices,

¹⁹⁸ Rajs Lara, 70.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

such as the *netilat yadayim*,²⁰⁰ and the days in Auschwitz, through the image of women and men queueing in separate lines. Auschwitz is, notably, the only capitalized word in the entire poetry collection, otherwise written in lowercase letters. Amid all these contrasts and antitheses it is almost as if marriage comes to correspond with the perpetuity of trauma. This fleeting movement between happiness and grief is encapsulated by acknowledging the longevity, sixty years, plausibly referring to the grandparents' marriage (line 19). However, because of its temporal situatedness, it additionally seems as though these sixty years also signify the increasing number of decades which pass since the Shoah, during which the grandparents have remembered the events together – once again a bittersweet portrayal how past and present live side by side in the every-day.

Moreover, the concept of intermingling of celebration and the Shoah returns in “I ISTRIEN” as well, where the grandparents' meeting is further explored.

dom ses på gatan sen i belgrad
 mormor har den där broschen med
 balettdansösen på sig
 den hon ger mig sen när jag är tolv år
 trevande och utdraget möts dom igen och igen
 dansar och promenerar
 in i evigheten (lines 22–28)²⁰¹

These lines showcase the physical handing over of history to the next generation, in parallel with the physically ungraspable act of intergenerational memory transference. The broach becomes a material manifestation of communicative family memory. Its importance and intergenerational significance are further impressed by the time stamp of the handing over. The age of twelve signifies the age of coming to adulthood in Judaism – in a way it signifies her grandmother handing over adulthood to Rajs. Rajs in turn wears the broach when she is married (“jag har broschen på mig / när jag gifter mig och mormor / gråter när hon ser den”), stepping into a yet another chapter of adulthood (lines 29–31).²⁰² Notably, whilst the handing over represents continuity, breaching past and present, the Bar and Bat Mitzvah are sometimes seen as particularly painful events on behalf of survivors. In the article “The Holocaust and Its Effects on Survivors: An Overview” (1999) Paul Chodoff notes that “very common among the

²⁰⁰ Netilat Yadayim (Hebrew: נטילת ידיים) is the ritual of washing one's hands before eating bread and after sleep, followed by a special blessing.

²⁰¹ Rajs Lara, 70.

²⁰² Rajs Lara, 71.

survivors were depression and feelings of guilt, the former often intensifying at times of holidays, anniversaries, and in connection to events reminding them of the past, such as the Eichmann trial”.²⁰³ For many, events like Bar and Bat Mitzvah remind survivors of guilt due to remaining alive, but also the children who were lost and therefore never stepped into adulthood. In “Holocaust Messages from the Past” Naomi Mor relays a witness statement made by a survivor for the Israeli film “Because of that War”.²⁰⁴ The survivor, who lost his wife and child in the Holocaust, describes the scene when he celebrates the Bar Mitzvah of his son with his new family, stating that:

There were lights, loaded tables, many people... but the whole happiness of the occasion was spoiled: suddenly, I remembered my family lost in the Holocaust. I had nobody left; I was facing this “Bar Mitzvah” without them; no grandparents, no uncles or aunts, no one but me, and my wife; all the rest were strangers.²⁰⁵

This kind of difficulty is experienced also on the part of those who were children during the Holocaust, and therefore, missed out on this important *coming of age* event themselves. In a psychological study on Holocaust survivors, “The meaning, challenges, and characteristics of art therapy for older Holocaust survivors” (2021), Roni Israeli, Dafna Regev, and Limor Goldner quote interviewee “D,” a psychotherapist, who contends that “every day they experience the memory of the Holocaust in some way. Even when they are invited to a bar mitzvah, they think of the bar mitzvah they did not have”.²⁰⁶ In summary, occasions that mark life, and youth, are at once also reminders of death or trauma, much like food is a reminder of starvation. As such, these categories always remind of each other, and swing both ways, from light to dark, from dark to light. Rajs concludes “I ISTRIEN” with writing “judiska ungdomsklubben i belgrad / 1957 och dom där leendena / i dom där leendena / syns inte kriget alls” (lines 36–39).²⁰⁷ These final lines in the poem, and Rajs’ entire poetry collection, underline just how present and alive memory is, even when not at the forefront of one’s mind.

²⁰³ Paul Chodoff, “The Holocaust and Its Effects on Survivors: An Overview,” *Political Psychology*, Vol. 18:1, Columbus: International Society of Political Psychology, 1999, 147–157, 154.

²⁰⁴ Naomi Mor “Holocaust Messages from the Past,” *Contemporary Family Therapy*, Vol. 12, Springer, 1990, 371–379, 372.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Roni Israeli, Dafna Regev and Limor Goldner, “The meaning, challenges, and characteristics of art therapy for older Holocaust survivors” in *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, Vol. 74, Elsevier, 2021, 1–7, 3.

²⁰⁷ Rajs Lara, 71.

Chapter II: Addressing the Reader

Reading a Contemporary Subject

In *What Is Found There: Notebooks on Poetry and Politics* (1993), Adrienne Rich famously instructs “[y]ou must write, and read, as if your life depended on it”.²⁰⁸ Rich professes, in a highly politicized fashion, that poetry must be written

as if your life depended on it: to write across the chalkboard, putting up there in public words you have dredged, sieved up from dreams, from behind screen memories, out of silence—words you have dreaded and needed in order to know you exist. No, it’s too much: you could be laughed out of school, set upon in the schoolyard, they would wait for you after school, they could expel you. The politics of the schoolyard, the power of the gang. Or they could ignore you.²⁰⁹

As Rich underlines, the stakes are not only those of the poet “as poet” but of the poet as a person in front of the reader. This, of course, is highly present in Rajs’ *Under månen*. As much as poetry enacts a poetic *self*, a Jewish poetic *self* in this case also reveals a Jewish poet, in addition to a lesbian poet, a poet with prior addiction problems, and much more. The question of control, mediation, and address, all become relevant for the socio-textual relation between reader and writer, here cumulatively referred to under the umbrella of communication in poetry. How does Rajs’ lyrical subject communicate Jewish identity and memory to the reader(s)? While Rich highlights the stakes of writing, there is, however, yet another plausible effect of writing across the chalkboard – “they” might not understand you. The reader-critic might not laugh, not expel, not ignore, but, nevertheless, acknowledge that they cannot go beyond this point. As Bonnie Costello notes in *The Plural of Us* (2017), “speech is rarely explicit—it depends on the interferences listeners make, based on their expectations”.²¹⁰ Poetic speech, much like narrative, is a matter of filling in gaps of potentiality based on prior expectations and knowledge.²¹¹ Whether, and what, a reader can merge and internalize the

²⁰⁸ Adrienne Rich, *What Is Found There: Notebooks on Poetry and Politics*, New York & London: W W Norton & Company, 1993, 32.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

²¹⁰ Bonnie Costello, *The Plural of Us: Poetry and Community in Auden and Others*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017, 4.

²¹¹ Referring to Wolfgang Iser’s formulation of “gap,” or *leerstellen*. “...we are made more conscious of what she [the author] does not *tell* us, and as a result the characters in the novel take on a degree of independence from the author that is not dissimilar to the gap between the characters and the reader. And the more independent, the less we know of them, for we have nothing but their words to understand them by—just as in real life—a person’s statement void of any background are liable as much to obscure as to enlighten.” Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied*

position of the lyrical subject depends not only on the reader's expectation and prior knowledge, but the direction of curation and explicit and implicit formulations either inviting or estranging the reader.

It seems that in relation to *Under månen*, reception has not only been bound-up in the perception of inclusion/exclusion of Rajs as a Jewish woman and poet, but also of a certain kind of reader in the poetry. Aase Berg reviews *Under månen* stating that

The only element which I experience as impenetrable is the "I"'s relationship to god. Is it religion which drives her to the synagogue despite being afraid, or is it tradition? God is the unknown constant which can only be understood by those familiar. She does not even try to fashion the possible, underlying god-faith, she stops at the rituals [...] it is suddenly I who feel like an outsider. The community she moves in becomes closed.²¹²

Berg's experience of being an outsider demarcates a movement in *Under månen* which topples hierarchies in a society where the majority's horizon of expectations dominates, whilst still being anchored in a very concrete, Jewish, minority experience. Berg underlines that it is unclear what brings the "I" to synagogue – is it tradition or religion? To Berg, Rajs does not even attempt to fashion, perhaps even *explain*, the kind of relationship she, or her poetic double, has with God. The fact, however, is that the choice between tradition and faith is a false dichotomy in connection to Judaism and, one should ask why a lyrical subject should have to explain, or indeed choose, between these two deeply intertwined entities. It appears this kind of outsiderhood of the majority, then, is both acknowledged as a poetic feat, but still seen as an act of provocation. Why is the lyrical subject not more revealing? Why does the poet not explain? These are inquiries the poetry at hand cannot respond to, and the poet should not have to respond to.

The difficulty experienced seems to be an expression of confusion regarding how to categorize Jewish identity and cultural expressions.²¹³ Readers, no matter their position, are left with a gap of understanding or interpretation. Whether, and with what, knowledge or

Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974, 236–237.

²¹² Swedish orig.: "Det enda jag uppfattar som ogenomträngligt i diktsamlingen är jagets förhållande till gud. Är det religion som driver henne till synagogan trots att hon är rädd, eller är det tradition? Gud är den okända konstanten som bara kan förstås av insatta. Hon försöker inte ens gestalta den eventuella, underliggande gudstron, hon stannar vid ritualerna. Här lämnar hon mig som läsare utanför, och det är plötsligt jag som känner mig som en outsider. Gemenskapen hon rör sig i blir sluten." Aase Berg, "Bitvis överrumplande".

²¹³ Cf. the suggested dichotomy between the forming of a contemporary subject ("ett samtida subjekt") and "a religious and cultural tradition" ("en religiös och kulturell tradition"), in Roberg, "Världen genom språket," 177.

experience they can fill it with depends on the reader in question. It seems that *Under månen*, in the title as well as in the poetry, is engulfed by a sense of categorical, as well as temporal, destabilization. Ironically, the destabilization also occurs in correspondence with God, implicitly and explicitly.

månen är
ett uppskuret kranium halva tiden
och jag tror knappt på den
solen snurrar i sin hastighet sen
när gamla dagar faller
landar dom som mark
under dom här tunna benen
månaderna
ett år är
ett helt liv
om man fortfarande
skakar som ett barn är det
långt ifrån färdigt vill inte skriva
tom men tom och förfärligt ensam ja
det syns det lyser armarna och håret
jag har
en kall hand överallt jag har
tagit ner tiden och sparat den
en dag är
ett år är
ett helt liv
månen rör sig inte sakta
lyser som av egen kraft
utsträckt mellan värld och värld
jag tror knappt på den²¹⁴

“ÄNDRAS,” cited above, is the very first poem in *Under månen* and marks a transition between Rajs’ debut in 2018 and the poetry collection at hand by recalling the former through the embodied motives of body parts, and specifically the arms. Above all, this poem showcases the interchanging nature of all that occurs.²¹⁵ It is beneath the fleeting moon that Rajs positions

²¹⁴ Rajs Lara, 9.

²¹⁵ Notably, the poem’s title already demarcates a temporal movement, either translated as the infinitive “to change” (but without the “to” which in Swedish would be “att” (i.e. “att ändras”). Due to the present tense of

and frames her poetry, and it is in parallel with the moon that Rajs underlines the ever-changing nature of being, of life; a day turns into a month which turns into a year... Simultaneously, Rajs questions whether she even believes in the moon (lines 3; 25). The moon, as oft reiterated in Judaism, does not produce light of its own but rather reflects the light coming from the sun. The sun, as such, is the ideal – the prototype.²¹⁶ The moon, on the other hand, waxes – disappears and reappears, and every month, despite it seemingly almost being gone it appears anew, it renews, it changes. Rajs portrays the light shining down on the poetic subject’s hair, arms, and legs. This kind of embodied narrative can be traced back to *Armarna*, where the arms and hands become physical symbols of Rajs’ poetic *self*. In “ÄNDRAS” Rajs writes “jag har / en kall hand överallt jag har / tagit ner tiden och sparar den” (lines 18–20).²¹⁷ The concept of bringing down time to earth mirrors the adoption of the moon’s movements as quantifiable time as the Jewish calendar is a lunar one. Moreover, the concept of bringing the moon down to earth is not only tied to the Lunar calendar but representations of God. In the Talmudic tractate Sanhedrin, or The Synod, on the proper way of blessing the moon, Rabbi Aha bar Hanina cites that “anyone who blesses the new month in its proper time, it is as if he greets the Face of the Divine Presence”.²¹⁸ Despite there being no explicit references to blessing the moon, the moon’s renewal and its disappearance/reappearance in Rajs’ poems implicitly ties it to the holiday Rosh Chodesh which marks the beginning of a new month and, thus, celebrates the “head of the month” (transl. from Hebrew), before which one announces the new month/new moon and asks for God to bless the moon. The image of the head, or a version of it, is, indeed, also mirrored in “ÄNDRAS,” as Rajs visualizes the moon as a cranium, a mark of transience or death, as such circling back to time.

Rajs’ uncertainty can, as such, be put in correspondence with a theological discussion on the function of the moon and sun, and the creation of these “lights” (Genesis 1:14).²¹⁹ In Bereishit Rabbah, a discussion on the meaning of the moon, and God’s creation of the two

“ändras,” a more accurate translation would, as such, in this context, be “changes”/ “changing” which emphasizes the changeability and temporal complexity formulated in the poem.

²¹⁶ The sun and moon are sometimes paralleled with the relationship between Moshe (Moses) and his brother Aharon (Aaron). Moshe who received the Torah is, as such, a guide into divinity, whereas Aharon, is postulated as someone more closely connected with the people and teaches them to become reflectors of the sun, like the moon. For parallel between Moshe and the sun, see e.g.: Likutei Moharan, Part II, 5:15:18, trans. Moshe Mykoff. Accessed on: 18-05-2022. URL: https://www.sefaria.org/Likutei_Moharan%2C_Part_II.5.15.18?ven=Likutei_Moharan_Volumes_1215_trans_by_Moshe_Mykoff_Breslov_Research_Inst._1986-2012&vhe=Likutei_Moharan_Tinyana_-_rabenubook.com&lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en

²¹⁷ Rajs Lara, 9.

²¹⁸ Sanhedrin 42a:3, in b. Talmud (c. 450–c.550 CE), trans. William Davidson, *Sefaria*. URL: https://www.sefaria.org/Sanhedrin.42a?ven=William_Davidson_Edition_-_English&vhe=Wikisource_Talmud_Bavli&lang=en

²¹⁹ Genesis 1:14, JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003, 2.

polar bodies since the moon does not cast light, proposes that the sun and moon serve a double function of casting light metaphorically on the idolatry or monotheistic tendencies of the people.²²⁰ As such light is also a kind of enlightenment. The concept of light as enlightenment could also be posited outside of a theological realm, and, instead, in a socio-political one, still emphasizing the cyclical, continuous nature of time or existence. What happens in a day, a month, a year? How can one believe in change (the moon) when time passes, whilst the world (as in society) continuous to repeat and perpetuate hatred? The common trope of “history repeating itself” comes to mind and emphasizes that the moon does not only reflect change, but also that which does not change, that which continues to return despite the passing of time. The moon is a symbol of the dynamic, the moveable, the turning and returning – hard to define and grasp, much like the poetic subject’s relationship to identity, memory, cultural belonging, grief, love, address to God, or, indeed, self-conceptualization.

Whereas in “ÄNDRAS” expressions of life-death intermingle with faith in an implicit manner, the poem “TSUNAMI 2” is much more explicit in its tone, evoking new questions of address, beyond the identity of the poet and the lyrical subject’s identificatory locus.

och jag brukade va velig
 sökte svar och inte tecken
 men varje stund med dig är helig
 det är shabbes hela veckan

om jag gör nåt jag inte vågar
 kan du svara om jag frågar
 inte vad jag blir men
 för vet nån så vet hashem

[...]

jag såg döden klädd i vågor
 den största döden jag sett
 och med tiden kommer frågor
 gör jag rätt eller på rätt sätt

om jag får ännu ett tecken gud

²²⁰ Bereishit Rabba 6:3, in b. Talmud (500 CE). Community translation. Accessed on: 29-04-2022. URL: https://www.sefaria.org/Bereishit_Rabbah.6.1?ven=Sefaria_Community_Translation&vhe=Midrash_Rabbah_-_TE&lang=en&with>About&lang2=en

jag svär på dig det räcker nu
om jag får ännu en vardag gud
jag svär på dig då drar jag gud (lines 5–12; 17–24)²²¹

First, in this poem there is a general notion of pleading to God in desperation, in relatively “every-day” terms, saying “jag svär,” as well as what could be interpreted as a negotiation on the part of the lyrical subject (lines 22; 24). Recalling death (as tsunami), reasonably the tsunami in 2004 which had a significant cultural impact on Sweden, Rajs moves, once again, between past and present. Is she negotiating with God in the present, in the lyrical moment, or is it a memory of the past? Whilst there are many questions, there is also a shift in mentality present in Rajs’ poetry, no longer looking for answers, but rather signs (lines 6; 21). The questions of what signs and from whom remains. Who is the “you” Rajs turns toward? The reader? God? Rajs’ childhood friend Cristina? The answer is clearly beyond the realm of the earth. This in contrast to the earthly materialization of death through a geological event, the tsunami. Moreover, “TSUNAMI 2” recentres God in the Jewish realm, using the terms “hashem”²²² as well as “shabbes”.²²³ While overarching understanding may be gathered from the context, the use of Hebrew and Yiddish underlines not only Rajs’ existence in a Jewish multilingual space, but the gaps into which a reader, without prior knowledge of the terms, may fall. Here, rather than the concept of a relationship to God, it is language use which estranges or alienates readers outside of a traditional, Jewish knowledge sphere. However, while terminologically complicated, “TSUNAMI 2” is not the most explicit negotiation of communication and readership or exclusion/inclusion in *Under månen*. As such, having overviewed the conceptualization of change, in relationship to Jewish tradition and faith, I will now dedicate the rest of this final chapter to exploring the writer-addressee and writer-reader relationship further.

Who are “We”?

jag har tänkt på varför jag inte varit förvånad
som mina vänner varit när dom förstått
att nazister går runt på våra gator
eller kanske i vilken utsträckning, hur många dom är

²²¹ Rajs Lara, 56.

²²² “HaShem,” (Hebrew: הַשֵּׁם) meaning “the name,” used to assign God.

²²³ “Shabbes,” as well as “Shabbos,” are Yiddish (Ashkenazi) pronunciations of “Shabbat” (Hebrew: שַׁבָּת).

rädslan är ovan för dom men känns för mig bekant
och jag förstår att det är för att det inte är nytt för mig (lines 1–6)²²⁴

“MOT SKOGEN” begins by untangling the central idea of who understands and who does not. While being initially considerate of friends who have not felt a sense of threat like the lyrical “I,” the poem moves to be very clearly situated in a referential context framed linguistically and culturally in a Jewish tradition. “MOT SKOGEN” contrasts Rosh Hashana and the 2018 parliamentary elections in Sweden, situating the poem, thus, in a most explicit Jewish context, within a Swedish context.

mina morföräldrar kommer sitta där med mig
äta kalkon, läsa brachot, skåla för 5779
ska jag se dom och le och inte tänka på
att människor med samma övertygelse
som dom som nu är riksdagskandidater
satte min morfars mamma och bror i bussar
kopplade avgasröret i passagerarutrymmet lät
männen i familjen gräva sina egna gravar och sköt sen
ner dom i groparna
ska jag inte tänka på mormor med gifttabletter
för att allt var bättre än att bli tillfångatagen, även så
döden
det ska jag inte tänka på
när jag äter min challa och dricker mitt vin (lines 42–55)²²⁵

The poetic subject exclaims the difficulty, even impossibility, of remaining calm and not considering the parallels between the trauma of the past, and the threat in the present, permeated by Nazis marches and demonstrations, but also political parties with similar affiliations who gain power institutionally through elections. All while in a markedly Jewish context, where, throughout the poem Rajs mentions “kosherian” (line 19), “gogan” (line 31), “rosh hashana” (line 34), “brachot” (line 43), “5779” (line 43), “challa” (line 55), and later on also “aliyah” (line 62), “shana tova umetuka” (line 67), and “l’chaim” (line 67). Some of these terms, like Rosh Hashana, are explicated, albeit in passing, but most require specialized knowledge and are left unexplained. One clear example of something which requires further knowledge is the

²²⁴ Rajs Lara, 44.

²²⁵ Ibid., 45.

time stamp of the poem. How to know that it is the 2018 election, and not 2014 which is referred to? The conclusion is reached by recognizing that 5779 is a numeral which assigns the year it is in the Jewish calendar, and that Rosh Hashana, which falls in the autumn, meant that the changeover between 5778 to 5779 occurred in 2018. Looking at the linguistic aspect, some words are fashioned as slang, such as “gogan” which is an abbreviated form of “the synagogue” whilst some are inherently tied to religious practices, such as “brachot”.²²⁶ Specific terms, like “aliyah,” also showcase the way language operates on various levels of implicit/explicit meanings.

vi med våra planer på att lämna
flytta, fly, göra aliyah²²⁷
dom av oss som inte har andra hemländer dom av oss
som har hemländer
som hatar oss ännu mer än här
mot skogen, mot vattnet, mot vägen
shana tova umetuka och l'chaim
till livet, eller ja, ni vet (lines 61–68)²²⁸

While Rajs is clear that she speaks of fleeing, moving, and leaving, and expresses the complexity of being without a homeland – the use of aliyah, once again, underlines not only the various layers of readership of her poem but also the various layers of language, where Hebrew and Yiddish become almost like a code for those who understand.²²⁹ “Dom av oss som inte har andra hemländer” (line 63) Rajs writes.²³⁰ Without an understanding of the term aliyah this connotation may very well relate to the country within which one resides in diaspora, albeit complex. However, with an understanding of aliyah, the poem opens to mean that Israel is the homeland without which one has no other safe place. As such, the poetry is very clearly anchored in a landscape of Jewish social multilingualism.²³¹

While being emotionally explicit, “MOT SKOGEN” is, more ambivalent communicatively in terms of address. From addressing friends without experience to a

²²⁶ “Brachot” (Hebrew, ברכות) is the plural form of “bracha” (Hebrew, ברכה), meaning blessing.

²²⁷ *Aliyah* (orig. Hebrew עלייה) meaning ascension or “going up” is a term for migrating to Israel, as well as Torah reading. For use of the latter form see: “CHAI” (line 74, on page 31 in this thesis).

²²⁸ Rajs Lara, 46.

²²⁹ This type of linguistically coded poetry, using Hebrew or Yiddish, is not an uncommon motive in Holocaust literature and poetry. See e.g.: Irena Klepfisz, *A Few Words in the Mother Tongue*, Portland, O.R.: Eighth Mountain Press, 1990.

²³⁰ Rajs Lara, 46.

²³¹ Harshav, 25.

speaking in a linguistically defined Jewish context, the lines (63–65) once more evoke a Jewish context, to then, swiftly, shift again toward ambiguity in the final lines. First, the poetic subject frames the speech as to/about “dom av oss” who have certain experiences of displacement, hatred, or belonging, imprinting the sensibility of what it is like to be Jewish in diaspora. While these lines evoke the previous sense of running away for security, either for now (as in during the summer camp) or for the foreseeable future (making aliyah), the very final lines (67–68) once more intermix anchored Jewish context – Rajs writes “shana tova umetuka och l’chaim,” of which the first part is a real greeting in Hebrew on Rosh Hashana and the second an expression of “cheers to life,” which situated amid misery and emotional scraps reads ironically or like a rant more than anything. The final line offers a clarification of “l’chaim” as Rajs writes “till livet” and then “eller ja, ni vet” (line 68), questioning, once more, *who* reads and precisely *who* knows *what*. Are you part of the ones who know or the ones who do not?

In “MOT SKOGEN,” Rajs presents a distraught poem, speaking within a very clearly defined Jewish setting, using language to assign the same. Nevertheless, while the poet remains inquisitive, and perhaps even understanding in the beginning, the sardonic end signifies a shift in tonality, which is then carried into the following poem – “BERÖRD OCH FÖRVÅNAD” where the tone and style take a turn toward interrogation.

bara en goy e förvånad
en minister förvånad
lärare förvånad
ja e inte förvånad
e du förvånad?
bara en goy e förvånad
en vän e förvånad
polis e förvånad
din mamma förvånad
ja e inte förvånad
e du förvånad?
bara en goy e förvånad
en pappa förvånad
journalist e förvånad
kan du tänka dig?
ja ja kan tänka mig
eller nej

ja behöver inte tänka mig²³²

There is a sense that while “MOT SKOGEN,” which speaks from within a Jewish realm, ends almost as if the air has gone out of the lyrical subject, “BERÖRD OCH FÖRVÅNAD” turns toward the elevation and highlighting of distress by those who have not sensed it before – only then does it become all-known, public, and, thus, acute. Only then does it become emotional for those on the outside of communities who are always threatened. As such, in this poem, elevated emotional responses are represented as non-Jewish behaviour, whilst the lack of emotional engagement, is represented as a communal response on behalf of those who sense and have consistently sensed an ever-present threat to existence.

“BERÖRD OCH FÖRVÅNAD,” monotonous in its repetition, is antagonizing. The systematic exposure to threats morphs into a near-lethargically laconic poetic form and tone. In turn, the monotony implies a kind of antipathy regarding those who do not *know*. If it has been difficult for the reader on the outside to merge with the poetic voice due to a firmly socially anchored lyrical subject, this feat becomes even more challenging now that the poetic “I” pushes against the non-Jewish reader by employing certain language choices, especially “goy”.²³³ Whether seen as playful or provoking, the use of “goy” is the clearest distinction of readership, either Jewish or not, and also a most prominent demarcation of ostracization of the gentile reader. In *Lytic*, Scott Brewster sustains that most commonly “[l]yrics are seen to position us in the presence of a real speaker who acts in character, usually oblivious to an auditor. The addressee is often absent or, at best, implied; the reader/listener must eavesdrop to identify imaginatively with the speaker or the addressee”.²³⁴ Contrastingly in “BERÖRD OCH FÖRVÅNAD,” the positions of various speakers and addressees is made clear, to the point of confrontation. Rajs writes “en minister förvånad” (line 2), “en vän e förvånad / polis e förvånad / din mamma förvånad” (lines 7–9), and “en pappa förvånad / journalist e förvånad” (lines 13–14). Note that the second address to “du” is angled at the addressee’s mother. This expression can either be read as an insult using slang or as a direct address to “you,” i.e. the non-Jewish reader. The evocation of “your” mother, emphasizes the address to the gentile reader, shining the interrogative light on readers of the “majority,” outside of the Jewish community, as portrayed by Rajs. From the beginning, Rajs posits a binary between the “I” and “you,” the lyrical voice, and the addressee. The repeated exchange “ja e inte förvånad / e

²³² Rajs Lara, 47.

²³³ For genealogy of the term “goy” and its various meanings throughout time, see: Ishay Rosen-Zvi and Adi Ophir, “Goy: Toward a Genealogy,” *Dine Israel*, Vol. 28, 2011, 69–122.

²³⁴ Brewster, 35.

du förvånad?” (lines 4–5; 10–11) emphasizes the antagonistic nature of the poet’s speech. Simultaneously, surprise is framed as a matter of inquiry or survey and not a definite claim. As such, various layers of readers are invited to engage with the text. While the Jewish reader merges with the poetic subject, the gentile reader is confronted due to their own constructed ignorance and estranged by way of the term “goy”. Simultaneously, despite being demarcated as a non-Jewish “other,” as Rajs’ personal and communal experience is centred, this outsider perspective is still centred in the poem as part of society at large, at once turning the outsider back into the insider, and Rajs into the outsider.

The constant exchange and movement of positions of dominance between the majority and the minority, is further emphasized in the final lines when the relationship between “I”-subject, and “you”-addressee is turned on its head. The final four lines utilize the inquisitive form once more, “kan du tänka dig? / ja ja kan tänka mig” (lines 15-16), but this time it is the poetic subject who responds to the inquiry at hand, rather than leaving the response open, at once adding “eller nej / ja behöver inte tänka mig” (lines 17-18). The response impresses and amplifies the chasm between the social realities of the minority and majority experience. The subject does not have to imagine, or exclaim surprise, simply because she already *knows*. Note that, Rajs never explains over what the surprise arises.

Rajs’ poetry lives in the borderland of destabilization, of memory and boundaries between death and life, space and time, between the personal and the collective, and between a multitude of addressees and readers. Whilst Rajs consistently references a lyrical “I,” there is also a highly present “we,” to which this thesis in many ways is dedicated. “We,” however, as Costello notes, has been perceived as a most “treacherous” pronoun.²³⁵ In its plurality “we” can be, as Costello upholds, “interrogative, collaborative, improvisatory, invitational, and above all in the optative mood,”²³⁶ but also “projective, parabolic, and provisional”.²³⁷ “We,” like the boundless second-person plural form of “you,”²³⁸ lives in the realm of potential address. Whilst “some poetry seeks to harness the rhetorical power of the first-person plural to posit and community, often where there is social fragmentation” the use of “we” also reminds of the risks of using such a diffuse concept, Costello deduces.²³⁹ Filtered through every-day speech, “we” traverses into a lyrical space within which the pronoun’s rhetorical complexity and gaps

²³⁵ Costello, 9.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

²³⁸ Considering theorization in Martin Buber, *I and Thou* [orig. *Ich und Du*, 1923] trans. Ronald Gregor Smith, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1937.

²³⁹ Costello, 3

are magnified. “Poetry thrives on the gaps and imprecisions of natural language and intensifies them even as it seeks clarity” Costello proceeds.²⁴⁰ Precisely this kind of “play” between imprecision, clarification, and construction of the “we,” is evoked in Rajs’ perhaps most polemic poem “(((HANNA RAJS)))”.

om jag lovar att jag aldrig offrat kristna barn
om jag ger dig svar på tal
går i försvar
om jag gör det varje dag
du vet jag minns knappt nine eleven
är ingen råtta eller virus
bara lite kriminell
helt normalt intelligent
om jag lovar, svär på allt
har inga band till israel
politiskt eller emotionellt
kulturellt, intellektuellt
om jag är lugn och rationell
om jag backar, om jag är snäll
vad gäller pesten eller aids
har inget finger med i spelet
har aldrig sagt att shoah ger mig ensamrätt i lidande
eller om jag spelar med
säger lita aldrig på en jude (lines 1–19)²⁴¹

At this stage, the poem operates from the voice of a first-person singular “I”. Whilst reflecting Rajs’ lyrical subject, this “I” represents a broader experience, a general Jewish “I”. Rajs, as such, begins by blurring the borders between a personal and a collective Jewish “I”. Throughout *Under månen*, the poetic subject circles back to enactment of a collective Jewish voice, and a communally attributed speech. This, in many ways, recalls a kind of liturgical address, the ritual of recitation and reply, mirrored in the shifting between one lyrical subject speaking to/for the community, and then speaking through the community as if in one unitary voice.²⁴² The intermingling of individual and communal voice gives further weight to constructions of the “we” in “(((HANNA RAJS)))”. Who, then, is the “you” which the poem

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 5.

²⁴¹ Rajs Lara, 24.

²⁴² The notion of liturgy is also recalled by Rajs in the love poem “LITURGI”. Rajs Lara, 52.

is addressed to? Rajs writes “du vet jag minns knappt nine eleven” (line 5) as such including an addressee, unspecific and throw-away in character. At this stage of the poem, Rajs poses “om jag...” utilizing a conditional tense – however, it is impossible to discern where this conditional is headed temporally. Logically “if I...” should be followed by “then...” however, this part is omitted from the poem, left implicit, as a gap to be filled by the reader. Looking to the myriad of “ifs” present, most of them are angled toward Jews either confirming their position as victims, as meek, without control, without power, and with no affiliation or sympathies in connection to Israel – perhaps by enacting all of that which Rajs spells out, and confirming the conspiracies, “the Jew” will become accepted. Alas, as the conditional relies on the construction of the Jew and not actual Jewish people this projected “goodness” will always, necessarily, fail. The address creates a dichotomy between “I” and “you”. This kind of relationship is later mirrored using plural pronouns as the poem escalates in tone.

vi är sluga parasiter
ja, vi är reptiler
så ofta fördrivna
att de måste vara vårt fel
så att de minsta ni kan göra
sätta namn i parenteser
eller listor och register
vi är mångkulturalister
vi är rika terrorister
vi är neurotiska nazister
vi är snåla satanister
vi är kroknästa marxister
vi är bleka globalister
vi är fega sionister
på nåt sätt är vi socialister
och samtidigt världens kapitalister
vi har två lojaliteter
infiltrerar myndigheter
och äger era banker
kontrollerar media
ger er corona
och styr era tankar
vi har inavlade brister
laktosintoleranser
ätstörningar och cancer

vi är new world och khazarer
vi är soros och cabaler
vampyrer, kannibaler
vi är illuminati
finns inte en konspiration
som vi inte är mitt i
och om shoah var på riktigt
var det strategi
för att göra det olagligt att va antisemit
och om shoah var på riktigt
har vi överdrift
pressat siffror för att vinna sympati
och jag är imponerad av vår fantasi
sjukare historier än en sci-fi-dystopi
jag kan fortsätta så länge jag lever (lines 20–60)²⁴³

What is a Jew? In “(((HANNA RAJS)))” the poet demarcates the difference between being Jewish and personal identity, portrayed and negotiated throughout the poetry collection, and the construction of “the Jew” as a phenomenon fuelled by conspiracy theorists’ imagination. Rajs runs through virtually all conspiracy theories and expressions associated with Jews: blood libels, epidemics, control over banks and media, illuminati, double loyalties, and so forth. “If the Jews did not exist, the anti-Semite would invent him” Jean-Paul Sartre famously stated, underlining the antisemitic construction of the Jew as a phenomenon.²⁴⁴ In the collaborative book *Jude i Sverige* (2021), collating essays and poetry on Jewish life and identity in Sweden today, Göran Rosenberg similarly states that “modern antisemitism is a conspiracy theory which invents the Jews it needs – also where no Jews exist”.²⁴⁵ In “(((HANNA RAJS)))” the poetic voice speaks from a first-person plural “we” position, opposing a second-person singular as well as plural “you”. Turning the tables on address in a satirical fashion, here it is the “we” rather than the “you,” which describes and postures all that Jews “are”. An ironic, warped, statement of admission which underlines the absurdity of the Jew as antisemitic construction. This kind of inversion of pronouns radically increases the tension between reader and poet. The inversion does not only emphasize the absurdity of the labels Jews are falsely associated with but reflects another antisemitic trope – that Jews are the cause of antisemitism. The “you”

²⁴³ Rajs, 2020, 24–25.

²⁴⁴ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, trans. George J. Becker, New York: Schocken Books, 1948, 13.

²⁴⁵ Göran Rosenberg, “Att vara jude” in *Jude i Sverige: En antologi*, Stockholm: Faethon. 2021, 358–373, 366.

here plays the role of unveiling the Jewish conspiracy, enacting the conspiratory “truth”. As Rajs writes, it is “de minsta ni kan göra” (line 24) constructing a necessarily antisemitic addressee – creating lists, registers, and putting Jews’ names in three parentheses, as in the title “(((HANNA RAJS)))”, as part of unravelling the “scheme”.²⁴⁶ Notably, at the time of publication in 2020, Rajs had not changed her name yet, and, as such, modified it for the poem, featuring only her Jewish family name as part of the poetic performance. As part of the inversions of pronouns and lyrical positions, the placement of Rajs’ surname in the parentheses operates twofold – both as a performance of the Jew as constructor and causer of antisemitism, feeding into the antisemitic narrative, additionally writing e.g. “lita aldrig på en jude” (line 19), and as the Jew whom others speak for, project, and construct.

“To identify in some fashion with the speaker, we have to live out the fiction and remain in a perpetual moment of impossibility. It is as if lyric says, as proof of its authenticity: ‘Here you have it in writing. The lyric moment is right here, right now, in front of you. Just reach out and embrace it’” Brewster writes, drawing on Jonathan Culler and the sense of lyricism existing between mystification and demystification.²⁴⁷ Poetry, moves between “sincerity of the speakers’ plea, yet simultaneously shows its artificiality”.²⁴⁸ So too we find in Rajs’ poetry. *Under månen* always balances between the personal/collective experience, (the plea) whilst the poetic form enhances the content by underlining its constructed, performative sensibility. By using the construction of poetry and address, Rajs manages to underline the construction of “the Jew” in the public eye, at once circling back to the societal anchoring of the poetry. What does this, then, mean for the identification Brewster speaks of? As has been made clear, throughout the whole poetry collection there are always various layers of readers present and interacting with the lyrical subject. All readers are nevertheless forced to merge with the poetry and engage through reflecting on the position of the “I,” “we,” “you,” and “us” – it is through this diffuse, general, language which particular reader positions arise.

Whether antagonizing or engaging it becomes clear that the poetry collection hinges on others listening, and negotiating their space in Rajs’ poetic universe, and therefore also actual social relationships. The fact is that the reader, whoever they may be, is needed. Furthermore,

²⁴⁶ Commonly referred to as an “echo,” the multiple parentheses are a written practice by right-wing sympathisers and neo-Nazis, most commonly on the internet. The echo is used to demarcate that the person or assignation written on the inside of the multiple parentheses is Jewish. See: “Echo,” *Anti-Defamation League (ADL)*. Accessed on: 18-05-2022. URL: <https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/echo>. As of late, the symbol has been re-appropriated by some young Jewish activists online on e.g. the social media platform Twitter as an act of resistance through irony. It has become a way of showcasing Jewish identity and pride publicly.

²⁴⁷ Brewster, 41.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

it would be unfair to state that Rajs is only questioning the *outside* and never the Jewish collective itself as she envisions it. About halfway through the *Under månen* the poem “B&R” showcases another, if not interrogative then, negotiating address.

tänk om vi levde i en värld
som kände oss för vad vi gjort
och inte för vad som gjorts mot oss
om vår kultur var annat än vår död
våra familjers död
och lidande
tänk om vi kunde
prata om annat
skämta om annat
sörja nåt annat
fira nåt annat
äta tillsammans²⁴⁹

This is a poem which very clearly operates on more than one level of address and readership. Rajs pens “tänk om vi levde i en värld / som kände oss för vad vi gjort / och inte för vad som gjorts mot oss” (lines 1–3) posing a central question regarding contemporary Jewish collective identity, all too often falsely connected with passivity, victimhood, and hiding. What if Jewish culture was something else than dead Jews? This imagining and hope of Rajs’ is angled toward the world, and as such both those who *see* Jews from the outside, but also Jews themselves. What if “we” could talk about something else? Grieve something else? Or focus on celebration, instead. These kinds of expressions are not meant to denigrate the significance of the Holocaust, as is apparent due to its presence and importance in the poetry collection overall, and indeed in this poem, but to note that Jewish culture and identity exist beyond the Holocaust. While the tone of this poem is serious, even solemn perhaps, the message becomes ideological in effect, especially considering that “B&R” most plausibly is an abbreviation of “born and raised,” emphasizing the inheritance of mindset and the need to visualize identity beyond the trauma which has been handed over, albeit difficult, even impossible.

There has not been a single moment in Jewish history in which there weren’t anti-Semites determined to eradicate Judaism and the Jews. But the Jews did not sustain their magnificent civilization because they

²⁴⁹ Rajs Lara, 53.

were anti-anti-Semites. They sustained it because they knew who they were and *why* they were. They were lit up not by fires from without but by fires in their souls”.²⁵⁰

The matter of Jewish identity, beyond what has been done to Jews, is a matter of life or death, as Bari Weiss clearly outlines in *How to Fight Antisemitism* (2020). This sensibility permeates *Under månen* and interconnects the poetry collection further to third-generation authorship. While the Holocaust may be present in “B&R” through its absence, a gap of speech, the automatic *filling in* becomes part of the poem’s messaging. Even when not spoken of explicitly, Jewish life and grief are associated with the Holocaust, in the eyes of others, and, albeit unavoidably, perhaps also in their own eyes.

This brings me to my very final point of discussion, the underlining of absence. As discussed, Rajs often operates from a standpoint of omission or gaps, left to be filled with the reader’s horizon of experience and expectation (whilst playing with the same ones). However, it is not only the addressee’s or reader’s silence which comes into question in *Under månen* – but also Rajs’ own silence, or absence of speech.

sen min familj flyttade till sverige
har vi tydligen anammat vissa seder
och jag vet att jag pratat om folks tystnad
men det är dags att jag pratar om min egen

[...]

jag fattar att jag måste aktivera mig
eller ångra det så länge jag lever
för jag vet att jag pratat om folks tystnad
men det är dags att jag pratar om min egen

för man blir så: wow
när folk pratar om det
wow, när man hör om det, läser om det
wow, när man ser folk skriva om det
wow, när folk inte skriver om det (lines 1–4; 17–25)

²⁵⁰ Bari Weiss, *How to Fight Antisemitism*, London: Allen Lane, 2020, 168.

In the above cited poem “MIN EGEN,” the poet portrays silence as a Swedish rite or convention. Silence, it seems, does not come naturally but is produced and constructed by the surrounding society. While one can speculate into what *it* is that the lyrical subject wishes for others to speak about, one, as reader, cannot know, only guess. Indeed, the notion of omission of speech, in a poem about silence, provokes considerations of what it is the subject urges others, and herself, to speak about. The act of speculation, in the grander context of the poetry collection, is like a mirror put up in front of the reader. Whatever the gap of speech is filled with reveals as much about the interpreter as the gap itself. Rajs invites the reader to inhabit the “I,” whilst still being highly personal. “MIN EGEN” operates on a level of plurality of voice – plausibly dominated by Rajs’ voice, but inhabitable by any reader. What is it that Rajs does not speak about? What is it that one as reader does not speak about? The invitation to engage, and the difficulty of the feat, echoes throughout the poetry collection and is ultimately a stamp of *Under månen*. Whether one *knows* or not, whether one is on the inside or outside of Rajs’ poetic collective consciousness, the reader necessarily takes part in the poetry. As part of engaging with the poetic acts, the reader engages with the transcultural construction of identity and the memory acts present. It is precisely this movement outward and inward, and the tug-of-war between inviting in and estranging the reader which demarcates the new era of Holocaust literature ushered in through performative forms such as poetry, but also the negotiation of self-positioning. Whomever you are, whether one can internalize the poetic subject’s position or not, one must always, in the end, contend with the literature at hand. Not merely view it, perceive it, graze past it, but merge, intermingle, and find oneself in it. Operating as both cultural and communicative memory at once, New Holocaust Literature becomes the ultimate antidote to silence.

Discussion: Where to next?

By performing a close reading of *Under månen*, using the author's debut poetry collection *Armarna* intermittently as an additional contextual and comparative supplement, this thesis has mapped, explored, and dissected the ways in which Hanna Rajs portrays and constructs Jewish identity and collective memory in and through poetry. In *Under månen*, Rajs represents Jewish identity as intertwined with transcultural and transtemporal travel. The poetic subject engages in mnemonic time travel, brought about by actual spatial/geographical return, reading/writing, and evocations of food. Ultimately, it is at the border of various worlds the lyrical subject is situated – transgressing and moving across as well as between borders of linguistic, social, cultural, and geographical kind, but also figurative borders of the personal/collective, of life/death, present/past, light/dark, love/loss, sweet/savoury, and of memory. By exploring the enactment of and engagement with literary address, through e.g. the use of pronouns, it becomes apparent that Rajs' communicative point of departure in *Under månen* is rather contradictory – inviting, heartfelt, vulnerable, but also at times antagonizing and interrogative. The Jewish poetic subject lays bare her fears, wishes, memories, and questions whilst simultaneously exposing the various layers of readerly positions present. The poetry's plurality or polyphony both regarding the other “voices” appearing, such as Rajs' family members mediated by the poetic subject, but also the “you” (singular and plural) which Rajs intermittently addresses, evokes inquiries into what the implications are of such address and such ambivalent communication with the reader. What does it mean in the frame of Holocaust literature?

This thesis set out by underlining the element of novelty in Rajs' *Under månen* and third-generation poetic expressions as part of Holocaust literature, to which little academic attention has been dedicated. As I have underlined, Rajs' voice and perspective are transgressive in many ways, but one way in which it subverts majority/minority dynamics is through the establishment of an explicit and particularly Jewish lyrical subject and voice. Rajs flips back-and-forth, estranging the majority “you,” whilst consistently reminding the reader of the difficulty and complexity of being of the Jewish minority in Sweden, and in diaspora more broadly. Through this flipping of perspectives, and use of collective pronouns, Rajs showcases the construction of social hierarchies but also the poetic form. *Under månen* is not meant to be perceived, but to be interacted with. Stylized and carefully curated, Rajs' poetic style imitates and uses both liturgical speech, collective in expression and communication, and internet-, or social media-language; sharp, concise, and emotionally loaded. This kind of mixed

modus forces the reader to engage further, by reacting and responding. Whether the poetry fights back or invites one in, it forces readers to take part in memory acts pertaining to the Holocaust, the once again increasing problem of antisemitism in the present, conspiracy theories, compliance/silence, but also Jewish culture and richness of tradition, joy, celebration, transcultural and multilingual fusion, as well as continuity.

“Poetry, more than any other genre, when it wrestles with political and ethical concerns, does so within the arena of *language*” Bonnie Costello writes.²⁵¹ At several points throughout this thesis I have touched on the political aspect of Rajs’ poetry, content-wise and form-wise. Rajs’ poetry is explicitly anchored in the difficulty and experience of e.g. antisemitism, and to choose an oral, performative, genre to explore these topics can, in turn, be seen as a political move. One could ponder whether the next step in research of Rajs should turn toward the political, or activist, implications of Rajs’ poetics. Especially, when considering the collective aspirations of the poetry and the use of the pronoun “we”. As Evelina Stenbeck highlights in *Poesi som politik: Aktivistisk poetik hos Johannes Anyuru och Athena Farrokhzad* (2017), the matter of voice and representation is one which goes beyond the lyrical “I”.²⁵² Stenbeck argues that “[c]ollectivism as poetic strategy is an attempt to unite the aesthetic and the political relation to representation”.²⁵³ The communal “we” in Farrokhzad and Anyuru’s poetry is used, as Stenbeck sees it, in order to produce communal identity, whether among family members, or larger collectives. A similar argument could be made about Rajs’ poetic formulations, and her construction of a unified Jewish collective, as a background to which she positions and negotiates her own Jewish identity. Nevertheless, I am reluctant to call Rajs’ poetry activist. Rajs’ poetry, as stated, is political in the sense that the personal becomes political; in the sense that existence as a Jewish, lesbian woman, and as a child of a migrant is political. As noted in connection to Adrienne Rich, poetry and writing is political because it comes with a responsibility of authenticity, to write as if one’s life depended on it.²⁵⁴ However, as Rich also notes, the politics of this writing comes into being through reading, and the reactions one faces as author. Writing is, as such, a political project both in its tension between the individual and the collective, but also in its very form. Similarly, in the very beginning of this thesis, I cite Boland’s statement, evoking the concept of telling the truth about time. In this thesis, I have

²⁵¹ Costello, 4.

²⁵² Evelina Stenbeck, *Poesi som politik: Aktivistisk poetik hos Johannes Anyuru och Athena Farrokhzad*, Lund: Ellerströms, 2017, 213.

²⁵³ “Kollektivism som poetisk strategi är ett försök att förena det estetiska och det ideologiska förhållandet till representationen”. *Ibid.*, 214.

²⁵⁴ Rich, 32.

chosen to focus on the aspect of time as a transtemporal and mobile mode, which is always occurring and through which third-generation authors like Rajs travel. What then about the truth? What is the truth about “our time”?

As literature is always mediated, the concept of truth becomes notoriously slippery, unproductive even. Simultaneously, in the context of third-generation writing, which above all is concerned with self-positioning (an autobiographical or auto-fictive matter), truth, in all its ambivalence, still raises important questions. What is the truth in Rajs’ poetry? The answer firmly anchors Rajs to a broader third-generation motive, and signifies the experience of two different yet parallel experiences; one connected to an intra-communal tension between personhood and collective conceptions of e.g. Jewishness, and second, extra-communal questions of how Jews are treated, seen, and represented by and for those outside of Jewry. What kind of image do Jews have? What kind of conversations are being had? The latter aspect becomes increasingly critical in a socio-cultural landscape imbued with identity politics, personality cults, and social media.

Like other third-generation authors, Rajs’ writing is highly autobiographical and anchored in social reality, tethered to “collective memory” of various kinds. Rajs like other Jewish third-generation writers named in this thesis negotiates her identity and position amid a changing socio-cultural, historical, and political landscape. This is in addition to the question of self-positioning in a contemporary, globalized, society. It is a constant mediation between personal and collective positions, underlining a central aspect of identity-centred third-generation writing: Jewish existence is always necessarily intersectional, transcultural, and multilingual. Similarly, Rajs’ writing transgresses spatial, linguistic, and temporal borders – an aspect which also tethers Rajs firmly to third-generation writing, as well as the broader tradition of Holocaust literature. Like other third-generation writers, Rajs, and the poems which I have chosen to analyze, evokes questions such as: What is one’s place in history? What is one’s place in contemporary society? What is the “truth” about one’s family past? Or about what happened in a specific place at a specific time? About family members’ experiences which have been kept hidden? The realities of Jewish life today in Sweden today, and in diaspora more broadly? Descriptions of experiences and kinds of antisemitism today? All of these are bound up with the third-generation motive of seeking and portraying personhood and finding one’s own truth, and perhaps also coming to terms with the fact that one may never know certain “truths” about oneself or the past.

As I see it, Rajs' aim is not to go back into the Holocaust but to conceptualize her own Jewish identity and grasp collective memory and Jewish history through it. Notably, whilst Rajs often goes back to the Holocaust or the implications of Holocaust memory and its intermingling with the present, Rajs does not engage with the time before the Holocaust and does not treat her mother's generational position in-between Rajs' grandparents and herself. What to make of this? This kind of question could indeed transform into its own separate exploration, beyond the confines of this thesis. However, within this thesis, I would argue that this very clear correspondence between Holocaust and present, and therefore also the first and third generation, is a mark of the time we are in now. I have termed Rajs' poetry as part of what I envision as New Holocaust Literature. New, not because inquiries into the third generation are new, but because of the innovative visions and possibilities these authorships offer research regarding where we are headed next. Not least because of its formal aspects, such as the language, mixing traditional, collective forms and fragmented social media/text-message jargon as much as spoken-word performative characteristics. Holocaust literature, as a kind of Jewish literature, has always been multilingual and cross-cultural, however, with the third generation the element of transcultural travel through memory is more pronounced than ever. As I noted in the introduction to this thesis, my reading of Rajs' *Under månen* is experimental and should be seen in a wider context of third-generation literary mappings. Looking ahead I believe that questions of literary identity construction and portrayal of self-positioning at this critical time, in the words of a bridging generation, offer a glimpse into history as it is made. Explorations of this kind will not only offer insight into a multitude of authorships and intersecting positions/belongings, but tell us something about the functions of identity, and the destabilization of such through transcultural travel through language, form, and circulation in the most practical sense. Rajs' poetry is poetry for the global age, poetry for the future. It epitomizes the combination of communicative memory and cultural memory all at once, and I believe this kind of literature can tell us something about memory transference further, beyond the limits of familial generations, because it forces, through form and content, us as readers to engage.

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