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Keeping Memory Alive: Jewish Identity, Lyric Address, and Third Generation Poetics

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This article explores the characteristics of Jewish third-generation (post-Shoah) experiential writing through the poetry collection *Under månen* (2020) by author Hanna Rajs. Discussing the portrayal of Jewish identity, coupled with a specific generational situatedness, twice removed from the Shoah yet carrying the responsibility of its memory into the future, the article reveals how the lyrical subject negotiates belonging and memory on various levels: individual, familial, communal, and collective. By engaging with acts of self-positioning, the subject travels dynamically across temporal and spatial borders through memory. This, in turn, underlines the forward direction of third-generation writing as well as its outward reach, combining cultural and communicative memory and playing with lyric address. The poetry drives readers to engage with memory of the Shoah and the experience of being Jewish today as mediated through one lyrical subject's lens.

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1. Introduction: Situating the Third Generation

Literary memory studies of the past decade have increasingly focused on writing by the Jewish third generation, grandchildren to survivors of the Shoah, and on these authors' acts of "self-positioning" (Roskies and Diamant 2012, 158) within the frame of Jewish identity and collective Shoah memory. While prose, novels and life-writing, has garnered significant academic attention (cf. Berger 2010; Aarons 2016; Aarons and Berger 2017; Aarons and Lassner 2020; Egger 2020; Hofmann and Reuter 2020), third-generation poetry and drama are yet to be studied.[1] In this article, I intend to broaden the discussion with regard to this body of literature by utilizing previously overlooked poetic material. Poetry, as I will argue, is especially apt to capture the ways in which third-generation Jewish writers *travel* (cf. Erll 2011a) mnemonically into the past (similarly to the second-, "postmemory," generation) but also to the future through the present, by way of the lyrical genre's succinct form. It is the ability to balance and travel across three temporalities at once, which, I argue, is one of the defining characteristics of third-generation poetics, mediating and connecting individual lyrical subjects to a larger Jewish collective, navigating their position as the "bridging generation" (Jilovsky 2015, 94). In the following, I will present an analysis of Hanna Rajs' poetry collection *Under månen* (2020)[2] and begin to show what defines third-generation experiential, testimonial poetics and its communication. In order to do so, I will explore the poetic construction of the lyrical subject's Jewish identity and the relationship outlined between the individual subject and its surrounding collectives of belonging. I will also investigate the effect of poetic communication and lyric address, "illuminating the world" (Culler 2015, 8), by discussing the relationships constructed between lyrical subject, addressee, and reader(s).

The key contention of the article is that third-generation poetry, by way of its intersection between identity and memory through utilizations of the poetic genre's spatio-temporal means and concise articulation, presents a new kind of testimonial writing; it engages readers, also those without immediate collective and/or family memory, who, thus, actively come to take part in Shoah memory acts and negotiate their own position in relation to the same. The "identity boom," and Jewish identity

[1] An exception is Olivia Landry, "Jewish joke telling in *Muttersprache Mameloschn*: performing queer intervention on the German stage," *Women and Performance* 26, no. 1 (2016): 36–54. Notably, newer works on culture and memory post-Shoah (see e.g., Aarons and Lassner 2020; Hofmann and Reuter 2020) include contributions discussing poetry, however, none that deal directly with third-generation poetry.

[2] Translates to "Under the moon." All translations are my own. All poems will be cited in Swedish with direct translations provided as necessary. *Under månen* was published under the author's former surname Rajs Lara, which has since changed to Rajs. Text references are to page and line of this edition.

here specifically, its diversity but also its particularity framed via third-generation poetics, is therefore combined with the so termed "memory boom" (Fulbrook 2014, 65ff).[3]

To begin framing third-generation poetry and its testimonial potential, one must first contend with the complexities of "Holocaust Literature" as a category. The problems of "portraying" the Shoah cannot be evaded and the premises of this kind of writing has, to this day, resulted in much discussion as well as scrutiny (cf. Adorno 1983, 34; Levi 1989, 83–84; Wiesel 1990, 7).[4] While this article does not deal with prose, the concept of misrepresenting or watering down true accounts of the Shoah is transposed to all literature written on the topic by others than survivors and is pertinent also in relation to second- and third-generation writing. How to be accurate when writing "after such knowledge" (cf. Hoffman 2004)? In broad terms, the third generation is characterized by the search of and reconnection to memories of and from a, to them, fragmented past, trying to find and situate themselves amid the same through acts of self-positioning. This can be compared with the second generation which often deals with the impossibility of handling the weight of "belatedness," trauma, and memory, or its absence, received directly from the first generation (cf. Hirsch 2008, 106ff.).

What is the place of third-generation authors within post-Shoah writing? As per David G. Roskies and Naomi Diamant, "Holocaust literature comprises all forms of writing, both documentary and discursive, and in any language, that have shaped the public memory of the Holocaust and been shaped by it" (Roskies and Diamant 2012, 2). This definition is generationally inclusive and underlines how this kind of literature operates temporally—"backward and forward" (Roskies and Diamant 2012, 3). Third-generation testimonial writing differs from initial conceptualizations of Shoah writing, and yet it shapes memory of the same in the present but also going forward. It is another avenue into remembrance, which emphasizes the gaps and silences surrounding remembrance and relays contemporary experiences through an often markedly Jewish lens. Poetry—a genre able to simultaneously encompass the lyrical subject's spatio-temporal movements between past, present, and future, while engaging and challenging readers in the process—lends itself particularly well to this kind of experiential writing, reaching backward and forward but also outward, which, I will argue, is another staple of third-generation poetics.

Having outlined the frame, I now turn to the chosen primary material. Hanna Rajs' poetry collection *Under månen* is a particularly interesting example of Jewish

[3] See also: Blight 2009, 238–51; Winter 2009, 252–68.

[4] See also e.g.: Patterson, Berger and Cargas 2002; Bigsby 2006; Bloom 2004; Rosenfeld 2004, 21–47; Stuber 2016.

third-generation lyric poetry coming from the Scandinavian, specifically Swedish, context, highlighting questions of Jewish identity in diaspora, innate transcultural and multilingual expressions, and entanglements with collective memory, also in connection to other identity markers, e.g., belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community and "third culture kid" experiences. Looking briefly to the reception of *Under månen*, spanning a variety of significant motifs, reviewers have focused on the work's three central themes: "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 summarizes (Eklund 2020).[5] Certainly, a large portion of the poetry collection is dedicated to love, not least for the subject's wife, but also youth and loss. Still, most reviewers emphasize *Under månen*'s reflections on Jewish identity, the topic of inherited collective memory and trauma, as well as the connection to an ever-present and rising antisemitism.

Considering its reception, thematic framing, and temporal situatedness, Hanna Rajs' poetry serves as an ideal point of departure into an exploration of third-generation poetics. As my analysis will show, the poetry collection is in many ways representative of broader tendencies, while offering a glimpse into the relationship of one Jewish lyrical subject to family, collective memory, identity, and the ways in which this is transposed to the reader by means such as language use, tone, rhythm, and lyric address. Close-reading *Under månen* allows me, as such, to open an in-depth discussion on Jewish third-generation poetry and its various expressions and trajectories.

2. Jewish Identity, Particularity, and Lyric Address

Discussing *Under månen*, I will follow the pathway highlighted by Dieter Burdorf, utilizing "devices that apply in everyday communication" (Burdorf 2017, 24). I will, above all, focus on the use of pronouns and personal deictic markers "I" and "we" as well as "you" (singular and plural)[6] in order to discuss the established and performed relations between lyrical subject, addressee, and reader (Burdorf 2017, 24). Subsequently, this focus will reveal the various levels and groups of addresses present in the poems and the proximity or distance established to readers, who must situate themselves either on the inside of the subject's community of experience or on the outside, to various degrees. This, in turn, will emphasize the importance of power relations encoded in

[5] All secondary sources in Swedish will be translated to English in-text.

[6] While in English "you" is plural and singular, in Swedish the second person singular "du" (trans. "you") and the second person plural "ni" (trans. "you") are differentiated.

experiential poetry and the particular power dynamics explored in Rajs' poetry mediated through a Jewish third-generation subject.

Under månen is imbued with a sense of multidimensionality of address. While the subject is a markedly Jewish voice, the "I," as much as the "you," is constantly being negotiated. So too, is the plural position of "we," playing with exclusion and inclusion due to being, as Bonnie Costello notes, both "interrogative" and "collaborative" (Costello 2017, 1). "Poetry," the scholar concludes, "thrives on the gaps and imprecisions of natural language and intensifies them even as it seeks clarity" (Costello 2017, 5). In *Under månen* there are several collective "we" evoked, constructed, and related to by the lyrical subject: family being an example of a smaller unit, discussed in detail later in the article, and the Swedish Jewish community an example of a larger general collective of experience. In reality, of course, the Jewish community in Sweden is notably heterogenous as a result of several waves of migration from numerous geographical areas since its establishment in 1774 (Meyerson 2016, 38ff.). Moreover, the ambivalence of "we" does not only impact those included, but also those excluded. "Poetry, more than any other genre, when it wrestles with political and ethical concerns, does so within the arena of language" Costello notes (Costello 2017, 4). As such, even when the focus is the subject's self-positioning and identity construction, each use of "we" has a direct effect of division between those on the inside of the subject's community of experience and those on the outside. This, in turn, demarcates the significance of the subject's marginalized position, and what the genre of poetry affords these kinds of lyrical subjects, e.g., the ability to speak explicitly from within, highlighting the inherent interweavement of the aesthetic and political attributes of experiential poetics.

Moreover, investigating the function of the subject's "I," this analysis requires a clarification in terms of the relationship between subject and poet, which are undeniably close, keeping in mind the life-writing qualities of *Under månen*. Importantly, I will defer from any biographical analyses or conclusions and keep the poet and subject separate (cf. Burdorf 2017, 23). This, decidedly, does not mean that the context and heritage of the poet becomes unimportant—rather it frames the work, questions of reader positions in relation to it, and perceptions of authenticity in connection to the collection.

Stylistically, Rajs' poetry is written uniformly in lower case letters (all titles, however, in capital letters) in, as reviewers have underlined, an every-day, spoken, and slang-filled language,[7] sometimes akin to spoken-word and slam poetry (cf. Hellgren

[7] E.g., by writing the grammatically incorrect spelling "ja" instead of "jag" (trans. "I"). When translating "ja," (also trans. "yes"), I will use lowercase "i," using "I" only for the grammatically correct "jag."

2020), while also being carefully curated and edited, thus blending an every-day jargon with attentive sharpness (cf. Berg 2021). Even when expressing clichéd statements, for example when looking to various lines in the collection's love poems such as "baby du gör mig galen," ("baby you drive me crazy") (60–61. 35) or "himlen såg till att ja hitta dig" ("heaven made sure i found you") (36–37. 11), these kinds of otherwise banal declarations take on a poetic consciousness (cf. Berg 2021), seeing to composition, context, tone (between playful and serious), word choices, and utilizations of rhythm and rhyme schemes, often slant, as well as typography, emphasizing and expanding the content.

Consequently, the poetry strikes a balance between writing for the "restless generation" (Hansen 2018) or using the language of the "internet generation" and being part of a long-standing Jewish liturgical tradition without dichotomizing the same (cf. Roberg 2021, 177). As such, the lyrical subject is in contact with collective performances and traditions on various levels. The lyrical "I" is always trying to grasp its own social identity and anchoring within various intersecting collectives and communities, while also part-taking in informing and producing the same, mirroring the mechanisms behind collective memory practices as per Maurice Halbwachs, whose work laid the foundation for much of contemporary memory studies discourse (cf. Halbwachs 1992, 50).

A pertinent example of balancing the intertwinement of individual situatedness and collective memory can be found in the collection's second poem, "ARV" (trans. "inheritance" or "heritage"). The poem sets out by introducing the subject's identity construction, on the one hand expressing a palpable fear—being afraid of speaking of the past and present, of jokes, "irl," in real life, and online (10. 1–5)—and on the other hand, a negotiation of perspectives regarding perceptions of self. While in the first stanza, the subject requests to be perceived as a Swede ("kolla mig se en svensk") (10. 11) in order to go by unseen, in the following stanza this inclination toward hiding shifts completely:

> inget klär mig
> mitt face avslöjar inte arvet som bär mig
> 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 min 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 (10. 13–25)

("nothing suits me
my face doesn't reveal the heritage which carries me
the history which nourishes me
i can't show it with the way i dress
for me
when i tell people they interrogate me
talk about things that don't concern me
or don't believe me
because i don't look like my grandma my grandpa[8]
  my mum and brother no
i look like me
look like myself
but what should i do with all that i've inherited")

Here, the subject is frustrated at the inability to be seen in totality as it pertains both to the subject's present and its familial history. The spoken and at times grammatically incorrect or seemingly incomplete sentences reflect the subject's tone in symbiosis with the content, grasping at the difficulty of reconciling the many contradicting emotions and perspectives at once, especially as the subject, when trying to do so, is faced with judgment and interrogation, rather than listening and understanding. The poem becomes the space to share the difficulty and frustration but also the weight of everything compiled, and an outlet to engage others in the experience without interferences. The unfinished nature of certain lines only emphasizes the speed at which these processes occur.

Continuing, between the first and second stanza, the poem moves from situating the subject in isolation to being among people, family members and unknown others. As the poem goes on wider Jewish collective experiences also become increasingly important. Not least in relation to Sweden—where ca. 15–20,000 Jewish persons reside of which approximately 4,500 are members of the Jewish community in Stockholm (cf.

[8] In Swedish the terms for grandparents are assigned to specific sides of the family. The translation of "mormor" and "morfar" is thus "mother's mother" and "mother's father."

JFS 2023), where the subject is often situated. The poetry showcases the way proximity is established between the subject's individual experience of fear, the Jewish community's need for security in Sweden (e.g., guards, police, metal detectors, protective gear), and the collective experience of discrimination and violence in diaspora generally, referencing, for example, the Copenhagen synagogue guard who was shot in 2015 by first name (12. 61–63) but also the 2018 *Tree of Life* Synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh (13–14. 31).

In "ARV" the complexity of the subject's negotiations of self is also illustrated using repetition: the final line in the first stanza reads "va ska ja göra me rädslan ja ärvt" ("what should i do with the fear i've inherited") (10. 12). This inquiry, notably without a question mark, transforms into "va ska ja göra me allt som ja ärvt" ("what should i do with *all* that i've inherited" [emphasis added]) (10–11. 25, 38, 51). In the very last line of the poem, the inquiry appears once more, but now it is a matter of what "we" should do, as such a collective exclamation, specifically also on behalf of the subject's particular generational position.

> 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 (12. 68–75)
>
> ("we are scared after all that has happened
> some that has happened to us
> some that we've inherited
> some that will happen but hasn't happened yet
> that which happens to our kids
> that scares us the most
> so what should we do we with all that we've inherited")

Collective experiences of antisemitism in and from the past, inherited by the subject's generation, here intermingle with the subject's own experiences—all culminating in the fearful anticipation of what is to come. For the third-generation subject, the question of the future of the Jewish people, and specifically the experiences of coming generations, lives side-by-side with the matter of dealing with the present and past. Additionally, while "ARV" ends with the future in mind, in the poem "MOT SKOGEN" (trans. "toward

the forest"), the subject continues to interact with the overt ways the future exists in the present, particularly in relation to Jewish children who experience, for example, being forced to take their school breaks on the roof for safety, social media bans, and crisis drills (44. 23, 15, 16): "vart ska vi springa / mot skogen, mot vattnet, mot vägen / ta så många barn du kan och bara spring" ("where do we run / toward the forest, toward the water, toward the road / grab as many children as you can and just run") (44. 16–18).

"MOT SKOGEN" demonstrates how the future is impacted by the present but also impacts the present in reverse, evoking recurring thoughts and plans of migration, "flytta fly, göra aliyah" ("move flee, make aliyah") (46. 62). It should be noted, however, that whilst both "ARV" and "MOT SKOGEN" express a concern, the future is at once also bound up with positive connotations of continuity of collective tradition, gatherings, and joy in other poems, and imbued with an excitement to create new traditions, also by intermingling Jewish practises and celebrations with culinary influences from the Balkans, Sweden, and the subject's wife's Cuban background—"men ja vill skapa egna traditioner" ("but i want to create my own traditions") (14. 28). It would, thus, be false and misleading to deem the subject disillusioned or hopeless, rather there is always an on-going juggling with a multitude of emotions and reactions.

Across the poetry collection it becomes clear that the style, like the subject itself, attempts to shake its readers into an understanding of the subject's complex position in the present as a Jewish person, Jewishness also intersecting with other kinds of identities.[9] The lyric address underlines a distance between those who understand and relate to the subject's life experiences and those who do not or cannot, as framed by the subject itself. This kind of rift between invitation and resistance stresses the importance and role of the markedly Jewish subject, its particularity, and its impact on the function of the reader. Especially, as the lyrical subject and its "'empty deixis' gains its relevance through the reception process only, in which the reader fills in the gaps" (Benthien, Lau and Marxsen 2019, 120). Having "abolished the poet," in favor of a "fictive speaker," readers, Jonathan Culler argues, "want to believe that our subjectivity is free and independent of contexts to which we might belong, and imagining the language of a poem as coming from a fictive, nearly contextless speaker" (Culler 2015, 116). This, in turn, "reflects back to us an image of the subject we imagine ourselves to be" (Culler 2015, 116). On the one hand, the poetry plays with the possibility of filling-in, inviting readers to understand the subject's perspective and stand in its place. On the other hand, when encountering a lyrical subject with such a strong voice and particular point of view as

[9] While certain aspects will be discussed further in the article, recurring themes relating to, for example, sexuality or addiction will not be discussed due to the article's limited scope. See, e.g., poems "JAG KAN SE OSS" in Rajs Lara 2020, 22–23 and "NÄRA MÖTENA" in Rajs Lara 2020, 59.

well as a specific context of marginalization, who also takes knowledge for granted and explains very little—e.g., not translating Hebrew and Yiddish, abbreviated slang such as "gogan" ("synagogan," or trans. "the synagogue") or words and expressions in any other languages for that matter—the impossibility of this feat and the subject's position in control of the poetry is highlighted. The stakes of this exchange of positions and power are anchored in the tension between speaking from within, yet experiencing a lack of control of narrative and voice as a member of a minority community which is often spoken for. Because of this socio-cultural context, readers must face their own social position in the real world as much as in relation to the lyrical subject within the poetry.

This tension only becomes more apparent in *Under månen* in the instances where the subject "talks back," for example, in "ARV": "kanske e de svårt att fatta / eller känns överdrivet, löjligt, så skratta" ("maybe it's hard to understand / or feels overexaggerated, ridiculous, so laugh") (12. 58–59) and "inget e överdrivet / de underdrivet / inget e överdrivet" ("nothing is overexaggerated / it's underexaggerated / nothing is overexaggerated") (12. 64–66). While, here, the subject-speaker's proclamations begin with a "maybe," the statements encapsulate a push-and-pull between aggression and defensiveness, pre-empting and responding to a supposed addressee who can be expected to consistently ignore or deny the seriousness of the subject's collective experiences, filtered through an individual lens. The various possible addressees, and by extension reader positions, available in the poetry, can be divided into two very general categories: those who supposedly understand and experience the same things as the subject and can more easily merge with the "I," and those framed as unable or failing to recognize the effect of the subject's reality and its specificity (or can only attempt to do so from a distance).

This particular dynamic between the subject and addressee is also prominent in the poem "BERÖRD OCH FÖRVÅNAD" (trans. "touched and surprised"). The short single-stanza poem encircles a kind of antagonistic and ironic tone as a tool of resistance against ignorance, playing with affect and, again, dividing the addressees and readers into those who know and those who do not. However, in this poem, the subject draws a much more distinct line between the former and the latter, as it is repeatedly written: "bara en goy e förvånad" ("only a goy is surprised") (47. 1, 6, 12). The single-stanza poem lists a myriad of surprised individuals and ubiquitous positions ("minister," "teacher," "police," "your mother," "a father," "journalist") (47) whilst repeatedly stating "ja e inte förvånad / e du förvånad?" ("i'm not surprised / are you surprised?") (47. 4–5, 10–11). It is never revealed precisely what event or situation the poem talks about; yet the refrain marks the chasm between the experiences of the "goy" majority of the Swedish society who perceive this event as surprising, and the Jewish minority

for whom it has long been part of an every-day reality. It should be noted that "BERÖRD OCH FÖRVÅNAD" directly follows the poem "MOT SKOGEN" in the collection, which commences with the lines: "jag har tänkt på varför jag inte varit förvånad / som mina vänner när dom förstått / att nazister går runt på våra gator" ("I have thought about why I haven't been surprised / like my friends when they have understood / that nazis are walking around on our streets") (44–45. 1–3) underlining the difference in perception and experience of threat, hinting at the central topic, or "surprise," in "BERÖRD OCH FÖRVÅNAD." For the lyrical subject, neo-Nazi demonstrations, marches, symbols, threats, and defacements of schools and synagogues as well as constant considerations of the consequences of being visibly Jewish are ever-present, and therefore not only unsurprising, but tiring.[10]

The subject in *Under månen* showcases movement between affect, anger, and apathy. While an emotionally evocative manner of speech is common throughout *Under månen*, in "BERÖRD OCH FÖRVÅNAD" the table is turned, as those who were previously ignorant now come to be surprised. The subject shifts the power dynamic between majority and minority, the former ridiculed and the latter in the know, collectively monotonous and laconic in their response rather than expressive. At the same time, the demarcation of the roles inhabited by the surprised showcases the minority experience of being disregarded—only when the majority realizes something, does it become important. As such, the power dynamic flips back again. The poem ends on an ironic note, making fun of the common exclamation "kan du tänka dig?" ("can you imagine?") (47. 15) to which the subject responds: "ja kan tänka mig / eller nej / ja behöver inte tänka mig" ("yes i can imagine / or no / i don't need to imagine") (47. 16–18). Notably, this kind of antagonistic tone is taken even further in *Under månen*, in "(((HANNA RAJS)))" (24–26), a satirical poem which uses ironic admission and subversion to question pervasive antisemitic conspiracy theories and the conditionals, accusations, and expectations put on Jewish persons today and historically. The poem addresses a wider experience of antisemitism and stereotyping, the Jewish subject speaking on behalf of itself and a general communal "we" facing accusations of e.g., blood libel, world domination, dual affiliations, but also Holocaust distortion and denial. In both "(((HANNA RAJS)))" and "BERÖRD OCH FÖRVÅNAD" non-Jewish readers must, thus, contend with the stakes of their silence and ignorance in the face of antisemitism today. As part of this, they are confronted with the patterns, conscious or subconscious, of ignoring or not seeing, if not perpetuating, antisemitic biases by those around them as well.

[10] See also: Rajs Lundström 2018, "CHAI," 92–96; Rajs Lara 2021, "försök på dikt om den ökade antisemitismen" ("attempt at poem about the rising antisemitism").

3. Between Individual and Communal: Functions of Family Memory

Pivoting away from the dynamic between individual subject and extra-communal addressees (individuals and collectives), this final part will focus on the essential role of family, a focal social unit for constructing identity and memory in *Under månen*.

"Families serve as a kind of switchboard between the individual memory and larger frames of active remembrance," Astrid Erll notes, building on Halbwachs' theorization (Erll 2011b, 315). Family is, as Erll contends in reference to Jay Winter, the communicative key to continuous remembrance, without which memory ceases to exist over time (cf. Winter 2008, 72, cited in Erll 2011b, 310–11). As underlined, however, the intergenerational handing over of memory for the third generation is all but straightforward. The third generation, "forced to fill in the gaps in the lost recollection of first-hand narratives" according to Victoria Aarons and Alan L. Berger, frame their remembrance of the Shoah by combining fragments of the past (Aarons and Berger 2017, 69). As it is written in "ARV," "allt de som hände / så långt innan ja föddes / bär ja på huden som om ja va märkt" ("all that happened / so long before i was born / i carry on my skin as if i was branded") (11. 33–35). It is the "every-day" character of memory transmission and intergenerational retelling that frames the subject's self-positioning, echoing the importance of what Jan Assmann has termed "communicative memory," contrasting the notion of "cultural memory" (Assmann 1995).

In the poem "VILKEN DAG" (trans. "which day," but also "what a day") the subject dwells on how the past lives side-by-side with the present. The poem oscillates between the lyrical subject's daily activities and fragments from the subject's relatives' present between 1941 and 1945 (31–33). Somewhere in-between renovating the kitchen, eating pastrami sandwiches, playing video games, listening to podcasts, and, most importantly, reading, the lyrical subject travels back in time, revealing another aspect of third-generation writing and its testimonial potential.

läste gamla brev idag
skrivna av mina släktingar
vissa skrev dom på sin sista dag
nu finns bara breven kvar (31. 10–13)

("read old letters today
written by my relatives
some wrote them on their last day
now only the letters remain")

The third generation do not claim to express any authentic witness narrative, and yet it is the urge to reconnect and *piece together* which allows Rajs and other third-generation authors to echo authentic witness accounts and testimonies, also without "displacing actual survivors" (Aarons and Berger 2017, 62), in order to understand themselves. While the poem's third and fourth stanzas, concerning the subject's grandmother and grandfather, are relayed through the subject's retelling, the subsequent stanzas represent the fragments of writing by the lost family members, shadowing the subject, appearing as if cited. In effect, the poem allows them to speak on their own behalf, in acts of prosopopoeia (cf. Brewster 2009, 40). Particularly important for this process is Djurica, the subject's grandfather's brother who was murdered as a child (11. 29–32) and recurs in the poetry collection. "VILKEN DAG" ends on a citation of Djurica: "denna bok skriver jag när jag bara är elva år / låt oss alltså börja nu" ("this book I write only eleven years old / let us thus begin now") (33. 55–56). The readers, like the subject, already recognize Djurica's fate, and the beginning of writing, like life, is therefore also the end. The emptiness felt after Djurica is further emphasized by the poem's formal aspects. Despite an irregular syllabic count, the, at time almost prayer-like, use of repetition and formulaic introduction to each stanza lulls the reader in to then swiftly interrupt the flow of reading by means of abrupt final lines. The effect of emptiness is also visually represented in the poem's formatting; the final four-line stanza is the only one on its page, followed by empty space. Having been let into experience the emotional toll of suspension in silence, and lack, the readers must, like the subject, unsuccessfully contend with the same.

Furthermore, the particular character of the subject's relationship to Jewry is also shaped by the family's intersecting backgrounds and cultural influences, forming a map of experiential interconnections.

> du får aldrig höra dom kalla sig serber
> 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 av familjen
> men all burek å kajmak å sremska i världen
> eller de att belgrad känns som ett andra hem
> ändrar inte nånsin på hur de känns
> aldrig bekväm me att kalla mig serb (11. 41–50)

("you'll never hear them call themselves serbs
and had they been the history would
have been another and more would
be here to tell it
no matter what we're going there soon again
visit the ones that remain from the family
but all burek and kajmak and sremska in the world
or that belgrade feels like a second home
doesn't change how it feels
never comfortable calling myself serb")

Even though the Swedish language as well as themes of Swedish socio-cultural and geographical anchoring are dominating in the poetry collection, the Serbian and Balkan influences are crucial to the subject's self-positioning. That being said, and as the citation above reflects, the collection also underlines the inherited ambivalence in relation to Serbia, balancing the dark past with the positive attachments. Food, Balkan culture, the Serbian language,[11] all connect the subject to a particular family lineage and history, yet none of it can make the subject forget about the crimes committed. Highlighting this complex interweavement of belonging, it is clear that it is not a matter of reconciling the two, but rather showcasing their simultaneity and the way the Jewish experience informs all kinds of belonging, in past, present, and future. The poetry also underlines the innately and necessarily transcultural, multilingual, and intersectional nature of Jewish existence (cf. Harshav 2007, 23). The intermingling of influences in mind, across borders and cultures, shapes the third generation's relationship to themselves and their families, underlining the importance "to grasp the particularity of experience" in writing (Aarons and Berger 2017, 75), explicitly calling themselves Jews (cf. Braese 2008, 26). The emphasis on the individual's perspective is not only, as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari denote, "necessary, indispensable, magnified" but also, in its connection to familial "every-day" influences, inherently political (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 17), and one, which resists universalization and forgetting. The third-generation always lives with the presence of their family's past—travelling back temporally, through memory, to the past while bringing its impact on the present and the future to the surface. Channeling how this operates through the lyrical subject, poetry itself becomes a way to travel, poet and subject both becoming

[11] Cf. Rajs Lara 2020, "MINNE AV ATT VA LITEN," 15. 4–8: "jag säger kom igen / jag säger skynda / men mormor och morfar kommer inte / förrän jag skriker / ajde idemo!" ("I say come one / I say hurry up / but grandma and grandpa don't come / until I scream / ajde idemo!").

iterations of what Erll terms "carriers of memory," meaning "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" (Erll 2011a, 12). The third-generation write themselves as Jews into poetry, combining acts of communal and communicative memory—keeping memory alive by communicating their experience outwards and channeling it into a poetic work to be revisited. As such, they hinder memory from becoming remembrance reserved only for some or relegating it to projects of "increasingly academic" (Aarons and Berger 2017, 75), institutional, or national kind (cf. Nora 1989). The key is to travel through the personal and particular:

> mina morföräldrar kommer sitta där med mig
> äta kalkon, läsa brachot, skåla för 5779
> ska jag se på 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 till passagerarutrymmet lät
> männen i familjen gräva sina egna gravar och sköt sen
> ner dom i groparna (45. 42–50)

> ("my grandparents will sit there with me
> eat turkey, read brachot, toast to 5779
> should I look at them and smile and not think about
> that people with the same conviction
> as the ones who are now parliament candidates
> put my grandfather's mother and brother in busses
> connected the exhaust pipe to the passenger compartment let
> the men in the family dig their own graves and then shot
> them down into the pits")

This passage from "MOT SKOGEN" operates on several levels of collective consciousness and memory, dwelling on the parallels between the future and the past, involving the Swedish society as a whole, the Jewish communal experience in particular, and the subject's family memory more specifically. The poem demands a certain kind of specific multi-layered knowledge in order to decode it. An example is the reference to "5779," and, as such, the Jewish calendar and one specific year which in turn reveals the subject's situatedness in time, imagining what it both would be and will be like to experience Rosh Hashanah at the same time as the Swedish election in 2014. Rajs, once

more, refuses to explain any terms; the reader who is aware and can understand does so, others simply have to contend with not knowing. Moreover, the poem points out the importance of antitheses and duality throughout *Under månen*. Here, celebrations exist alongside memory of the tragedies from the past, which all come to shape the subject's view and perspective in and on the present. Keeping in mind that "MOT SKOGEN" is followed by "BERÖRD OCH FÖRVÅNAD," the experienced threat, which brings the subject *back*, also becomes a way of trying to evoke reactions from those on the outside to see what those with a familial and communal experience notice, even when the rest of society remains unsurprised. Joy, celebration, and perseverance are always tailed by grief and frustration, and vice-versa.

Lastly, this, at times bittersweet, antithesis driven reality of the subject returns at several points throughout the poetry collection, but is especially evocative in the very final poem of *Under månen*: "I ISTRIEN" (trans. "in Istria") (70–71). As the subject vacations by the Adriatic Sea, memories of the grandparents' first meeting are paralleled with experiences during the Shoah; for instance, the recollection of how the grandparents met while queuing to the Jewish youth club, a joyful occasion, is paralleled with standing in line in Auschwitz (70. 15–16). The reminiscing is also always one of overcoming and intergenerational *handing over*: a broch which the subject's grandmother wears when meeting the subject's grandfather for the first time is gifted to the subject at twelve years old (a significant age within Jewish tradition, marking the transition into adulthood) and worn on the subject's wedding day (70–71. 23–25; 29–30). The poem, along with the entire poetry collection, ends with the subject leaving the readers to contend with the dynamic of duality and constantly moving across, mediated through family, personal stories, and fragments of memory, all carried onwards.

första fotot på dom två
är från nyår på
judiska ungdomsklubben i belgrad
1957 och dom där leendena
i dom där leendena
syns inte kriget alls (71. 34–39).

("the first photo of the two
is from new year at
the jewish youth club in belgrade
1957 and those smiles
in those smiles
the war isn't visible at all")

4. On Looking Ahead: A Short Summary

Third-generation testimonial writing as a category might at first glance seem paradoxical, if not impossible. However, in not attempting to reconstruct the Shoah, but rather situate themselves amid the legacy of it, the third generation, as "custodians of memory" (Aarons 2016, xi), usher in a new kind of post-Shoah writing. Existing across borders of national, linguistic, and cultural but also temporal kind, encompassing spatio-temporal travel between past, present, and future, Hanna Rajs' *Under månen* showcases how the "booms" of identity and memory come together through the poetic form in order to not only showcase one subject's explicitly Jewish experience but also, through the "I," to engage readers who are not framed as on the inside of the subject's community and/or intergenerational memory transfer, to grapple with memory and its impact at a most crucial time.

Under månen is an illustrative example of the ways in which poetry, in its concise form, mirrors memory's fragmented nature and processes of self-articulation. Through interaction with escalations and de-escalations of tone and play with affect, in combination with a language use echoing social media and text messages, the power of engagement between lyrical subject, addressees, and readers is made clear. This, furthermore, underlines experiential poetry's underlying political nature, being written by marginalized persons and in this case particularly by a third-generation Jewish poet, mediating an explicitly Jewish subject. This also highlights the stakes of this kind of writing, mnemonically and in terms of visibility, reverberating Adrienne Rich's instruction to "write as if your life depended on it," keeping in mind the risks it entails; the audience "could expel you. [...] Or they could ignore you" (Rich 1993, 32).

Third-generation authors like Rajs deal with the complexity of representation of contemporary Jewry and self-conceptualizations in diaspora in Europe, wanting to be viewed in totality, rather than through stereotypes or expectations from the outside, while also carrying the responsibility of continuous Shoah memory and the complexity of this specific combination. For memory of the Shoah to resist universalisation, platitudes of forgetting/remembering, and "de-territorialization" (Levy and Sznaider 2006, 132–33) it must remain personal and particular. Third-generation poetics become an antidote to silence and forgetting by highlighting the importance of present-day experience, collaging memory and centering Jewish voices, pride, and reconnection. At the same time, the third generation resists ignorance regarding contemporary Jewish life and increasing antisemitism by pushing readers to see Jewish subjects beyond solely the trauma of the Shoah, whilst continuously reminding of its memory and importance, forcing them to mingle with the subject's Jewish identity, culture, and memory beyond clichés or simplifications. Whether difficult to inhabit or not, the "I" cannot solely be perceived but demands to be interacted with.

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