Narrating Trauma

Chil Rajchman's *The Last Jew of Treblinka,* Sonia Nazario's *Enrique's Journey* and Atia Abawi's *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* as Trauma Texts

Abbie Aspland | s1614568

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Leiden University | Faculty of Humanities

First reader: Dr. S.A. Polak

Second reader: Dr. D.E.A. Schellens

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no one leaves home unless

home is the mouth of a shark

you only run for the border

when you see the whole city running as well

- Warsan Shire *Home*

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Introduction. Narrating Trauma

One of the most influential international wars of the last two centuries was the Second World War and, with it, the Holocaust. After the trauma which concentration camp inmates endured many studies were conducted on prolonged stress and trauma (Ringel and Brandell 3) and these studies contributed to the development of formalized trauma theory, together with studies such as those on US veterans returning from Vietnam. Trauma theory was first developed as a serious academic field in the 1990s. The initial model of trauma studies was founded in Freudian theory and the idea that traumatic experiences have a degree of linguistic irrepresentability. The idea that traumatic experiences limit expression through language is predominantly key to the model of trauma theory posited by Cathy Caruth in the 1990s. Trauma theory focuses on the representability of trauma and within this field the Holocaust is seen as the "ultimate trauma narrative" (Hunter 1). Caruth posited that trauma was linguistically irrepresentable and that the one exception to this was the autobiography, a form uniquely suited to represent trauma through literature. The autobiography functions as a testimonial work which records the victim's memory of a traumatic event – it is recorded by the victim themselves and is therefore uniquely able to represent a traumatic experience. Thus, the 'ideal trauma texts' are considered to be autobiographies or testimonial memoirs; a key genre of Holocaust literature, ranging from *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1947) to *This Way to the Gas Ladies and Gentlemen* (Tadeusz Borowski, 1946).

The consequence of both the time and geographical context in which trauma theory and memory studies were developed leads to two key issues. Firstly, trauma theory and memory studies tend to take a European or American perspective and, secondly, these fields of study take the Holocaust as a 'blueprint' through which other mass traumas and their literature are studied. However, as Irene Visser notes, other traumas, especially those happening outside of a European or US context to people who might be described as 'subaltern', may necessitate

different approaches. The UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) estimated that at the start of the 21st century "levels of displacement were higher than at any time since World War II" (Hron 28). Madelaine Hron refers to immigration and refugee crises as "trauma(s) of displacement" (including the Holocaust), and fear of deportation looms large in all the traumas this thesis considers. The 'blueprint' that is used to study the literature of collective traumas should be adaptable to study other 'traumas of displacement' outside of the Holocaust, all key to a modern political climate. This thesis will take one work of literature each, from three major collective traumas of the 20th and 21st century: the Holocaust, the American immigration crisis, and the Syrian refugee crisis. Starting with an autobiographical Holocaust memory text and moving to non-European and non-autobiographical texts, this thesis asks how we view all of these texts as trauma texts. Additionally, I question how this influences the interdisciplinary space between literature and trauma theory.

The Caruthian model was based on the idea that traumatic experience enters the psyche in a different way to non-traumatic experiences and therefore "creates an abnormal memory that resists narrative representation" (Mambrol). This insinuates an impossibility to represent traumatic experiences effectively through literature. However, critics of the Caruthian model such as Michael Rothberg consider a narrative mode to trauma theory, the ideal of multifaceted trauma referred to as a 'pluralism':

> the pluralistic model of trauma challenges the unspeakable trope in seeking to understand … the diversity of narrative expression…the pluralistic model suggests that traumatic experience uncovers new relationships between experience, language, and knowledge that detail the social significance of trauma. (Mambrol)

This pluralism, which goes against the linguistic inexpressibility of trauma which Caruth believes in and especially against the idea that autobiography is uniquely able to express trauma, opens up the possibility to include other genres of literature as trauma texts. Mambrol concludes his section on trauma studies in *Literary Theory and Criticism* by claiming that trauma theory is adapted by postcolonialism, feminist theory, ethnic studies, and ecocriticism, which exemplifies the versatility of trauma studies and theory, and its commonality with literary theory. What this move away from the Caruthian model to a pluralistic model demonstrates is that trauma theory and its ideas about linguistic irrepresentability can be revised, thereby allowing us to understand and examine works of literature which focus on major traumas. This thesis aims to look at this plurality and adaptability through the idea that trauma can be narrated not only from the victim's perspective, but by an outsider such as a journalist.

After defining key terms and concepts relevant to my literary analysis, I will take one case study from each specific trauma of displacement in chronological order, to investigate the evolution of trauma narratives. As Ringel and Brandell discuss, the study of concentration camp survivors was key to the development of trauma theory and the European, autobiographical texts written by these survivors form the 'blueprint' for trauma texts. Therefore, the first text I will be looking at is Chil Rajchman's *The Last Jew of Treblinka.* This narrative was originally published in 1946 in Yiddish and details Rajchman's time in and escape from Treblinka concentration camp, a camp which only approximately 90 people survived, and where approximately 800,000 people were murdered. This case study allows me to identify literary tropes of trauma literature and first-hand trauma narratives, as well as their interpretations.

Subsequently I will look at Sonia Nazario's *Enrique's Journey,* which details the journey of the Dominican Enrique to America and his life after arriving and settling there.

Originally published in 2002 as a serialized piece in the *Los Angeles Times,* it won a Pulitzer prize in 2003. It is a harrowing narrative of a family's journey to America in search of economic stability, highlighting the pitfalls of the American immigration system and the American immigration crisis in a pre-DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) era. *Enrique's Journey* is written by a journalist with a personal focus on Enrique, which is a new literary form dealing with trauma. Rather than a first-hand testimony, Nazario takes a macro focus on the larger issue of American immigration, using Enrique to humanize the issue on the micro level, thereby narrating the collective trauma of Latin-American immigrants in a new way.

The most recent trauma this thesis focuses on is the Syrian war and ensuing refugee crisis. Atia Abawi's *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* focuses on the Syrian refugee crisis from the perspective of a (fictional) individual family fleeing to Germany through Turkey and Greece. Abawi is a CNN and NBC foreign-correspondent, and her novel combines the singular perspective with the broadness of journalistic research. Both Nazario and Abawi utilize an omniscient third person narrator in different capacities, which sets them apart from Rajchman's narrative which is testimonial and autobiographical. However, Rajchman and Nazario use a single character to act as an emblem of a larger issue, whilst Abawi amalgamates several people she met in the course of her research into one fictional family. These differences and similarities help to analyse why we would consider these to be trauma texts and exemplifies one of the options that 21st century authors have in approaching the narrativization of trauma, compared to authors such as Rajchman. The samples taken from literature on the Holocaust, American Immigration and the Syrian Refugee crisis are a small sample of available literature. These texts are intended to act as case studies which allow us to consider an alternative medium by which trauma texts can be produced; (non-)fiction written by journalists.

In the introduction to *Acts of Memory* Mieke Bal discusses the process of moving from re-enactment of trauma to narrative memory. Whilst "traumatic re-enactment is tragically

solitary" (x) Mieke Bal writes that "narrative memory fundamentally serves a social function" (x). To move from traumatic re-enactment to narrative memory there is a "need for a second person to act as [a] confirming witness" and "the acts of memory thus become an exchange between first and second person that sets in motion the emergence of narrative" (x). Mieke Bal continues that this process of bearing witness can "become a model for critical reading" (x) and that as a whole "the act is potentially healing because it generates narratives that 'make sense'. To enter memory, the traumatic event of the past needs to be narratable" (x). However, Mieke Bal also reflects that "repression interrupts the flow of narratives that shapes memory [and] dissociation splits off materials" (ix). Due to these interruptions the reader has to investigate the gaps left by the process of transforming re-enactment to narrative memory, either interpreting information or adding it as they read. In the narratives of Nazario and Abawi (which are constructed by those who are not themselves experiencing traumatic re-enactment) this is done for the reader; the reader does not need to act as researcher and journalist because the authors themselves are exactly that. This is beneficial to the narration of traumas outside of a European or US context where information may not be as available to the reader and therefore interpretation can be difficult. The product of both types of reading are the same; the reader has all the facts and interpretations they need to fully understand the trauma they have read about. However, the methodology of how the author approaches their writing is different, and this is something that this thesis aims to reflect on in the conclusion. Overall this is a very specific focus, and this thesis aims to exemplify the possibility to broaden the definition of a trauma text in studying other traumas of displacement. A larger corpus is needed to create an extensive study of all the ways in which we can reinterpret trauma texts.

These historical events and resulting traumas are broad in nature, as are the differences and similarities as represented in the chosen primary literature. To limit the scope of this thesis the narratives will be analysed according to the parameters set out by Mieke Bal in *Narratology*,

predominantly focusing on narration, focalization, and time. In addition, I will look at the narrative's point of view(s) and how this influences the narrative, as well as looking at the sources and types of information the authors/narratives use, using these as key points of comparison in the conclusion. Additionally, I will be using Alexander Jeffreys' idea of trauma as a social theory which binds communities to make the analysis of the representation of trauma in each primary source evenly across the board, as all three case studies deal with traumas of entire communities. By taking such narrow parameters this thesis will be able to develop an analysis of trauma narratives that takes the novels as its starting points rather than the Holocaust, also allowing me to move beyond a European context in my analysis.

This thesis aims to fill the gap in trauma theory which exists due to a primarily European and US focus, and a format of trauma texts whereby autobiographies are seen as the ideal trauma narrative. This thesis will do so by considering three overarching case studies of trauma narratives, how they are constructed, and how narration, focalisation, and time work to complement the existing framework for analysing trauma in literature which is focussed predominantly on the autobiographical style. Furthermore, demonstrating how trauma theory can mould and adapt to contemporary literature, politics, and traumas and how alternative literary genres outside of the autobiography can work effectively as trauma texts. By studying these novels within their own right, using the parameters laid out by Mieke Bal, I aim to demonstrate that the basis of trauma studies can be moulded and adapted to better comprehend collective traumas of displacement. Whilst Rajchman's text is an autobiographic testimony of his time in Treblinka, Sonia Nazario and Atia Abawi are journalists who narrate and represent the traumas of others. This can broaden what we define as a representative trauma text in a move away from a European or US perspective and the autobiographical norm.

Chapter 1. Cultural Memory Studies, Trauma Theory and Narratology: Why and How?

Cultural Memory Studies and Trauma Theory

Memory is a complicated concept; it is distinct from history in that "history is concerned with events in the past and their meaning *for* the present, memory involves the impact of the events of the past and their meaning *in* the present" (Baruch Stier 2). Therefore "memory is about the presentation and representation of past events, not the events themselves" (Baruch Stier 2). There is a focus on interdisciplinary research between culture and memory, which leads to the idea of 'cultural memory' (Erll et al 1) which is essentially "the constructed understanding of the past" (National Geographic "Cultural memory"). Cultural memory studies "examines the social, cultural, cognitive, political and technological shifts affecting how, what and why individuals, groups and societies remember, and forget" ("Memory Studies").

As Birgit Neumann writes, "memory and processes of remembering have always been an important, indeed a dominant, topic in literature. Numerous texts portray how individuals and groups remember their past and how they construct identities on the basis of recollected memories" (334). Therefore, memory and literature have a deep-rooted connection; often the literature of memory involves the act of bearing witness to trauma – either individual, collective, personal, or private. Often trauma "can be overcome only in an interaction with others… whoever functions as the 'second person' before or to whom the traumatized subject can bear witness… in other words, a second person is needed for the first-person to come into his or herself in the present, able to bear the past" (Bal "Introduction" xi). Susan Brison adds that one can bear witness to trauma at different temporal stages, either soon after the event or generations after (46). The novels and memoires that authors of trauma literature write work towards processing this trauma, and through the literature the authors can bear witness.

Traumatic memory and its representation are key to the literature that this thesis focuses on. The American Psychological Association broadly defines trauma as "involv[ing] events

that pose significant threat (physical, emotional, or psychological) to the safety of the victim or loved ones/friends and are overwhelming and shocking" (Courtois et al. qtd. in Krupnik 256). Trauma studies focus on:

> Psychological trauma, its representation in language, and the role of memory in shaping individual and cultural identity are the central concerns that define the field of trauma studies. …Trauma studies explore the impact of trauma in literature and society by analysing its psychological, rhetorical, and cultural significance. (Mambrol)

Trauma theory was first developed as an academic discipline in the late 19th century and was based largely on Freud's theory of trauma and its representation. The Second World War was key to its development and the field has developed from studying victims to studying their memoirs and Holocaust literature:

> The impact of trauma theory on literary studies was felt from the publication of essays by various critics in Trauma… Since then, a number of specialized critical writings have applied trauma theory to the memoirs of Holocaust survivors. ("Trauma Theory")

A lot of trauma theory and the interdisciplinary space with literary theory focuses on the Holocaust and the trauma experienced by its survivors. Furthermore, trauma can be considered from a social or cultural standpoint and theoretical framework:

> Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness,

> marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways. (Jeffrey 6)

This theory of cultural or social trauma is most relevant to this thesis and the collective trauma it deals with. The analysis and development of trauma studies and theory (within the literary field) is heavily focussed on the Holocaust and its available literature. Taking the above definition of trauma and cultural trauma and the tools developed in trauma studies, this thesis aims to study "the impact of trauma in literature and society" (Mambrol) in a non-European and non-US context.

Narratology

It is not only important to understand how memory and trauma theory work but also how we can analyse trauma texts effectively. You can study literature as a memory or trauma text without using a formalized narratological approach. However, to ensure that the study of this thesis' corpus is as even-handed as possible I will be focusing on three narratological parameters. Broadly, narratology is a field of study which focuses on:

> The ensemble of theories of narratives, narrative texts, images, spectacles, events – of cultural artefacts that tell a story. Such theory helps us understand, analyse, and evaluate narratives… If characteristics of narrative texts can be defined, these can serve as the point of departure for the next phase… a description of a *narrative system.* (Bal *Narratology* 3)

To narrow this down, this thesis will focus on three parameters from Mieke Bal's *Narratology*: narration, focalization, and time.

Narration pertains to the identity of the narrator and what this implies within the narrative: “the identity of the narrator… and the manner in which that identity is indicated in the text…lend the text its specific character” (12). Narration and focalization are closely linked: “narration implies focalization…language shapes vision and world view” (12). Focalization is made up of the focalizer and the focalized object. Important to focalization is the principle that “whenever events are presented, it is from within a certain vision. A point of view is chosen” (132), thus “storytelling is inevitably slanted or subjective in nature” (132). The focalizer is the character through whose eyes the reader observes the story, it is “the relationship between the vision, the agent and that which is seen” (135). Important to the focalizer is the focalized object: “the image a focalizer presents of an object says something about the focalizer itself” (137). Point of view is linked to narration and focalization; it is the sum of both these parts.

Time and duration are important to the study of literature, as is the sequential order of time and how an author, narrator or focalizer uses it. Duration in literature refers primarily to the “time span” (178) of the narrative. Chronology and sequencing are intrinsically linked and refer to the chronological or achronological build-up of events. Furthermore, sequencing can refer to narration interruptions or anecdotes outside the primary narrative which an author chooses to include as part of the sequence of the narrative.

Memory and trauma are the crux of the literature which this thesis discusses. The parameters laid out by Mieke Bal in *Narratology* together with the theoretical frameworks of cultural memory studies and trauma theory can help to look at different representations of trauma texts with an even-handed approach.

Chapter 2. Autobiographical Trauma Texts: Chil Rajchman's Testimonial Autobiography *The Last Jew of Treblinka: a Survivor's Memory 1942-1943*

The Holocaust and Treblinka

Historian Doris Bergen refers to four key phases in the progression of the Holocaust: 1933-1939 "the German phase" (1:05-2:22), September 1939-1941 "the expansion of violence" (2:23-3:40), 1941-44 "an absolute dedication to mass killing" (3:41-4:31) and the last five months of the war, "the emergence of another form of mass killing…death marches" (4:32-6:45). The most important phase in the context of Rajchman's *The Last Jew of Treblinka* is what the Nazi's referred to as "the final solution", Bergen's third phase, the mass extermination of the Jewish population, largely perpetrated in concentration, work, or extermination camps. The European continent housed 44,000 incarceration sites, of which 980 were concentration camps. Approximately 450 camp complexes were in Poland, including Treblinka.

Treblinka concentration camp consisted of two parts: Treblinka I (built in 1941) was a work camp and Treblinka II (built in 1942) was an extermination or death camp. The number of dead at Treblinka is debated and the entrance to the camp's museum states 800,000 "but this should be taken as a base" ("Number of Victims"). With Auschwitz-Birkenau measuring 1.1 million dead, Treblinka II is known as the second most deadly Nazi camp. In 1943 Treblinka's inmates organized an uprising, and few people made it out alive. Of the roughly 90 people who survived the camp many did not survive the last two years of the war, in 1945 there was a Treblinka reunion which was attended by approximately 20 people. The camp was liquidated following the uprising due to extreme damage, starting on November 17th, 1943 ("liquidation of the camp"). The last transport arrived on August 23rd of that year. The history of Treblinka is but one thread in the tapestry of Nazi aggression, but its history is key to the analysis of Rajchman's *The Last Jew of Treblinka.*

***The Last Jew of Treblinka* by Chil Rajchman**

Chil Rajchman (1914-2004) was a Polish Jew, deported to the Warsaw Ghetto in 1941, and in 1942 he was put on a transport to Treblinka extermination camp. Rajchman wrote his memoir, *The Last Jew of Treblinka,* in Yiddish between 1944 and 1945: the novel was translated to English posthumously in 2011. As Samuel Moyn writes in the preface to the memoir, a "picture of evil was set" regarding Nazi atrocities in the years directly after the war, however "Treblinka was absent from this picture" (xi). Treblinka was a relatively unknown Polish concentration camp compared to others such as Auschwitz- Birkenau. This has two primary reasons; it was not freed by allies and therefore was not part of that narrative and it has few survivors, many of whom feared coming forward. Rajchman's testimonial memoir, together with only a handful of others, changes that, and the era of Nazi aggression can be fully understood due to texts such as Rajchman's (xiii). Rajchman's memoir is an emotive, first-hand testimony which works to brings to light an under-studied aspect of the Holocaust atrocities. *The Last Jew of Treblinka* is the only first-hand testimonial memoir in this thesis's corpus and helps to highlight key differences between Holocaust memoirs and those of other trauma texts. Additionally, it is the only trauma narrative from a European-based trauma which this thesis considers. This autobiography is juxtaposed with the works of Nazario and Abawi in that Rajchman avoids literariness (that which distinguishes literary texts from normal texts such as stylistic devices and linguistic differences with colloquial or non-literary speech) in order to produce an authoritative Holocaust autobiography.

Treblinka is an autobiographical memoir which is narrated in the first person. The narrative starts with the railway cars which take Rajchman to the camp: "the grim railway cars carry me there" (3) and ignores that which comes before. Bal notes that "the image a focalizer presents of an object says something about the focalizer itself" (137). *Treblinka* is an autobiography and therefore focalizes Rajchman's life and journey from the Warsaw Ghetto to

the camp and his escape. In the opening to the narrative Rajchman characterizes the railway car as ‘grim’ not because any specific physical characteristic of the railway car is grim, but rather because that is his experience. This characterization speaks to Rajchman’s experience of the railway cars both when he was in them and how he reflects on them after his destination is revealed to him. Ultimately the use of ‘grim railway cars’ says more about Rajchman’s emotions and experiences than it does about the railway car itself. Despite such characterizations, due to the autobiographical nature of *Treblinka* the narrative presents the reader with one view, and the author has limitations in terms of his point of view and sources of information. This is a common theme within Holocaust literature, both autobiographical and not.

Art Spiegelman approaches the issue of limitation in *Maus*; Artie says to his father “I just read about the camp orchestra that plays as you march out of the gate”, to which his father (Vladek) replies “An orchestra? No I remember only marching, not any orchestras” (214). The frame below this conversation shows Vladek too far from the orchestra to hear or see them despite them being there. Vladek is the author of his own narrative in his retellings, and he struggles with the limited scope discussed above, whilst the second person (Art) is able to move away from these limitations. Joe Sacco deals with similar issues in his graphic novel *Palestine*; "what I show in the book is … one element of Palestinian history ... and that people are confused” (Sacco qtd. in Brogden). This authorial limitation can be made clear in comparing some details in Rajchman’s testimony with that of other Treblinka authors and historians. Rajchman notes the capacity of Treblinka’s new gas chambers at 400 people, with dimensions of 7mx7m. Comparatively Jankiel Wiernik, author of *A Year in Treblinka,* puts the capacity at 1000-1200 people and the dimensions at 50 sq.m (chapter 7). Historian Yitzhak Arad puts the capacity at 4000 and the dimensions at 320 sq.m (chapter 11). Clearly, the authors are limited in what they know and remember. However, these details are less significant to the reception

of Rajchman's work as a memory and trauma text than the information and image he provides of the suffering of inmates in Treblinka. Rajchman's authorial limitation in the specific details about the camp is a recurring issue in trauma narratives due to slightly varying perspectives of different survivors (refer again to *Maus*). This authorial limitation does not invalidate any of Rajchman's work or the autobiography as a whole. The feelings it evokes and the image of suffering it portrays are more important than the specific details readers can also get from memorial sites and the diagrams which the editors have chosen to include. It is the case that, due to a paucity of other Treblinka camp narratives, Rajchman's is taken as an authority on the subject, changing the implications of his narrative for analysis.

Rajchman started writing his memoir immediately following his escape from the camp (1943) and its Yiddish publication occurred in 1945. Additionally, Rajchman's novel was edited and proofread in 1946 by poet Nachum Bomze, a friend of Rajchman's. Rajchman may have edited aspects of his memoir or added details around 1946, however the original manuscript does not exist anymore. Yad Vashem (the official Holocaust remembrance centre for all Jewish victims, located in Israel) only has the 1946 manuscript. It is made clear in the transcript of the John Demjanjuk trial that there is an interest in both manuscripts,

> [1987/03/10, Tue.; T002134, Vol. 4; Rajchman]
>
> T002168f - Got to Warsaw, took part in Polish uprising on Aug 1, 1944 which failed on Aug 3, 1944; made a bunker and waited until entry of Russians on Jan. 17, 1945…
>
> T002184 - The original 1944 Rajchman document does NOT EXIST. Yad Vashem only has the 1946 revised/edited version of Bomza[e].
>
> Levin: The 1944 document. Does it exist or not?
>
> Blatman: As I explained to the court, the original does not. (*Demjanjuk Trial Proceedings*)

The first bold section of the trial transcripts quotes the last page of Rajchman's manuscript. It was edited out of the note form seen above to be a move cohesive narrative, seen below:

> Yes, I have lived for a year under the worst conditions in Treblinka. After the revolt in the camp I wandered aimlessly for two months, after which I reached Piastów and lived for two years as a Pole. After the Warsaw Uprising I spent three and a half months in a bunker in the capital [i.e. Warsaw], where I was liberated on January 17, 1945. (138)

It is most likely that the poet Nachum Bomze edited the manuscript for the purpose of moving it out of a 'notes' style version into a testimonial narrative ready for further publication. This indicates that Rajchman edited his autobiography and that there is an interest in both the 1944 and 1946 manuscripts. The use of Rajchman's testimony in such a high-profile trial demonstrates that his narrative is taken as an authority on the subject. Overall Rajchman is seen as an authority in in this trial, more so than any eyewitness account, and this is partially due to him being one of the only survivors. Additionally, he recorded his experiences so soon after they happened that his narrative is very precise and therefore he has a greater authoritative claim than some other witnesses and for these reasons he is viewed as a reliable witness, a fact which can affect how we see the novel.

Throughout the narrative Rajchman clearly addresses the reader:

> It is worth mentioning that at the time when I began working in the death camp, there were two gassing structures in operation. The larger one had ten chambers, into each of which as many as four hundred people could enter. Each chamber was 7 metres long by 7 metres wide…Small transports were brought to the smaller structure, which had three gas chambers, each of which could hold 450 to 500 persons. In that structure the

> gassing would last about twenty minutes, while in the more recent structure it would last about three quarters of an hour. (65)
>
> It is worth mentioning that in winter the extraction of teeth became much more difficult. Whether it was because the corpses froze when the doors were opened or the result of the freezing of the victims on the way to the gas chambers, the opening of their clenched mouths was fiendishly difficult for us. (76)

The information that Rajchman gives the reader here is written with a clear structure and tone, clarifying the everyday working of the camps. The use of the phrase 'it is worth mentioning' is key to understanding Rajchman's writing process. As he was writing his testimony from memory he appears to have come across information he believes is key for the reader to understand the experience and he includes the mental phrase 'it is worth mentioning'. The use of this phrase demonstrates that this narrative is not only meant for the reader but is a way for Rajchman to work through his experience and choose what is important to remember and represent in language. He is bearing witness whilst also experiencing traumatic recall, as well as explicitly selecting what information is 'worth mentioning'. This information makes clear an intent to publish and inform readers of the horror of Treblinka. Rajchman reflects on this at the narrative's end: "I remained alive…I often ask myself why. Is it so that I might tell the world about the millions of innocent murdered victims, to be a witness" (138).

Rajchman also reflects on his grief, guilt, and anger at what happened in the camp. One poignant example of this is when he reflects on the treatment of his sister, who died at the camp:

> My sister tells me she is hungry. But we have little in the way of food…I explain to my sister that we still have a long way to go, and we must restrict our eating as much as possible…she agrees, assuring me that she really isn't so hungry after all. (5)

> We fall to the ground from fatigue and cannot get up. I lie there and remind myself that I wronged my poor sister…she was driven hungry to her death. Did she forgive me? (37)

This display of emotion and reflection is the crux of *Treblinka* as a human piece but as Moyn writes "it is a bleak and discomfiting testament, not a redemptive and uplifting one" (xix). He reflects on this event from the end of 1942 throughout his writing process in 1944-1945. Here Rajchman is bearing witness to his own trauma, and working through traumatic memories which shape the narrative, also contributing to the memoir as a memory text. This representation of his trauma and reflection on his emotions already works against the Caruthian theory of the linguistic irrepresentability of trauma, Rajchman can work through his trauma thanks to language not despite it. The later publication of Rajchman's work outside of Yiddish may show how we are able to develop trauma theory as new information comes to light. The lack of knowledge of Treblinka simulated the idea that its horrors could not be represented in language, rather narratives such as Rajchman's were just published and recognized later. Rajchman adds information for different purposes, either personal or public and his text revolves around a collective trauma as it is used to represent an entire community of survivors and used to get justice for those who suffered (such as through the trial mentioned above). When Rajchman was writing his original manuscript and during its original publication and circulation, his narrative and personal reflections would have been shockingly revelational. Also in part due to the lack of media coverage regarding the Holocaust: in 1942 the Telegraph

attempted to publish a story on the Holocaust, however it was unpopular and "the plight of the Jews was largely overlooked at the time" (Greenslade):

> The Daily Telegraph … story published on 25 June 1942, headlined 'Germans murder 700,000 Jews in Poland'… also lists the death toll from massacres in seven towns and cities…. Yet the article, which referred to 'the greatest massacre in the world's history', was published on the fifth page of a six-page issue. And it got no traction elsewhere. (Greenslade)

This lack of public knowledge will have contributed to how shocking an experience such as Rajchman's was when originally published in Yiddish. However, in other cultures the shocking effect will have dissipated in the post-war decades as many testimonies came to light. The ultimate effect of this is, that when translated in 2011, the reader knew more about the Holocaust than Rajchman did when he was writing. The narrative sickens due to its content but does not offer a revelation about Treblinka. Rather Rajchman's *Treblinka* works to complete a narrative of Holocaust death camps, and serves as a reminder of what happened, as Mary Penn writes in her review of Rajchman's work.

> His descriptions of the beatings, gassings and what passed as humour to German guards will have most readers in tears. It would be easy to say, 'I don't like those kinds of books,' and therefore not read it, but like many books about the Holocaust, it should be read as a reminder of what happened. (Penn)

This 'reminder' due to the late publication of *Treblinka,* emboldened by the knowledge contemporary audiences have of Holocaust atrocities, allows Rajchman's narrative to work

towards completing an image of Polish death camps. Additionally, this late publication ensures that the events of Treblinka remain alive in public memory.

Although not included in Rajchman's original manuscript, the Pegasus Books edition of *Treblinka* includes a sixteen-page insert of photographs, diagrams, and schematics. The photos are of Rajchman's family, the transport, of Treblinka and of its leaders. There are diagrams and schematics of Treblinka including a map and a map key. The insert ends with photos of the Treblinka uprising, the trial of SS officers in charge of Treblinka and of an adult Chil Rajchman, pictured in 1986 with his three sons. The novel uses a schematic drawn by Vasily Grossman, another survivor who published his memoir in September 1944, and maps drawn up in the 1980s by researchers of the camp and the Treblinka camp foundation. They provide evidence to the narrative with photos of the monstrosities committed in Treblinka to accompany the memoir, as well as a lay out of the camp to help readers understand. These photos are significant as they add a journalistic or informative aspect to a personal testimony and they help the narrative to transform into the style of a newspaper article, and so are used for emphasis. These photographs work to fill in the gaps left open by the narration. They were edited in later and indicate an interest not just in the autobiography but in other sources of information, as well as a way to make readers understand the narrative more clearly. Additionally, the photos have an editorial purpose: they offer a message of hope. The narrative ends in 1945 and does not cover the trials or Rajchman's adult life. The photographs show the reader that those in charge were punished and that Rajchman lived a long life, and thus they give a message of endurance and hope. Their inclusion is clearly an editorial choice, but nevertheless it fits in with the tone of Rajchman's work. It is unclear whether Rajchman made the choice to include schematics and photos as the English translation was published seven years posthumously. However, they contribute to the edition as a memory text and prolong his

goal “to bear witness against the great slaughterhouse of Treblinka” (138), which remained a goal of the text and the Rajchman family after Chil’s death in 2004.

Within the text Rajchman’s information comes from one key source, other inmates:

> People stand by the stack sorting the contents. I see that they are all Jews and, running past, try to ask them-Brother tell me what is this? Unfortunately I receive no reply. Each of them tries to turn his head away so as not to answer. I ask them again.- Tell me what is going on here? One of them replies. (12-13)

> Dr. Zimmerman, an acquaintance of mine, to raise the number of dentists to twenty…I stepped out and declared I was a dentist…Dr. Zimmerman chose me and got me into his group…The ‘dentists’ used to sit at their work under the direction of Dr. Zimmermann, who was a very decent human being. (63-64)

Rajchman is kept alive by his constantly switching professions, a dentist being one of the posts he held for a longer period of time under the care of Dr. Zimmerman. Rajchman gives the readers information, acknowledging its source as other inmates, sometimes named and sometimes unnamed. He is taught skills by a variety of people and translates this experience to the reader. The effect of passages such as these is twofold; firstly the reader learns about the camp in the same way Rajchman did so there is a sense of kinship created between reader and author. Secondly, these sections contribute to a sense of comradery, contributing to the sense of hope that the picture inserts from the post 1945 edition also try to accomplish. There is the idea that those who were in the camp stuck together as much as possible; humanity in an inhumane environment.

The 138 pages of Rajchman's memoir cover the years 1942 and 1943, and the final chapter mentions the liberation in 1945. The sequencing of the novel is chronological. Rajchman uses dates to sequence the narrative: "that was around 3 November [1942" (63), "Until 15 December [1942]" (73), "I was liberated on 17 January 1945" (138). Many of the dates however are estimations and approximations, whilst the liberation date is stated definitively at the novel's end. The dehumanising effect of not knowing date or place is important in many collective traumas and has a similar effect here, highlighting the dehumanization of the Jewish population, torn away from the rest of the world. This dehumanization is reversed in the definitive statement of the liberation date: "I was liberated on 17 January 1945" (138), the moment Rajchman and many others with him regained their humanity. Rajchman's use of time is linked to the genre of autobiography; he is writing as things happened to him, in a chronological order, rather than using flashbacks to help contextualize.

Rajchman's narrative is constructed predominantly from memory and was edited one or two years after the war to include recollections and details that had returned or developed over time. His employment of a variety of lieux de mémoires is emblematic of this. One such example is the clothing to which Rajchman refers consistently throughout the narrative; this is clothing taken from the Jewish people upon arrival in Treblinka, a symbol of their humanity being stripped away. In one instance Rajchman writes: "I tear off a piece of the dress and hide it in my pocket, (I had that piece of dress with me for ten months, the whole time I was in Treblinka)" (32). This dress carries with it a sense of memorial heritage for Rajchman, it encapsulates the person from whom it originated, whilst being symbolic for their "fate [that] is so wretched" (32).

Furthermore, the fragmentation of trauma and traumatic memory is key for Rajchman throughout his testimony, and Rajchman writes in short staccato sentences.

> I bend over. With one hand I hold the wet rag to my head, with the other I sort the clothes. It is a long time before I stop bleeding. My face is bloody…I try to wash and return to work…Fast. Get moving!...This is what our work is like. (21)

This way of writing is reminiscent of how Rajchman speaks during the trial of Demjanjuk, short and fragmented. Trauma itself is often fragmented and therefore (Holocaust) testimony can also be incomplete or fragmented. Hirsch claims that "trauma returns in disjoined fragments" (25) and this is clearly seen in the style of Rajchman's writing. This idea of the fragmented and disjointed trauma also adheres to Caruth's idea of trauma being unrepresentable. What is evident is that trauma is not unrepresentable, but it is slow in its linguistic formation. Rajchman's writing style highlights the fragmented trauma recollection which he experiences, and this forms the fragmentated and staccato style of the narrative.

Trauma and cultural memory studies are integral to understanding and analysing *Treblinka*, both intrinsically and externally. Trauma studies were largely developed in the decades during and after the Holocaust:

> Contemporary trauma theory in civilian contexts developed following the 1942 Cocoanut Grove fire in Boston. During that fire, 493 people perished in a nightclub, many of them trampled to death. Following the tragedy Dr. Lindemann, who treated a number of the survivors, observed that they displayed common responses. He began to theorize about normal grief reactions. (Ringel and Brandell 4)

This initial theory led to the categorization of symptoms "based on the author's observations of veterans as well as … the literature on Holocaust survivors" (Ringel and Brandell 4). The

Holocaust is what Madelaine Hron refers to as a 'trauma of displacement', and Chil Rajchman is a Holocaust refugee. Rajchman can be considered as both a holocaust survivor and as a refugee – he was forcibly taken from his home and after escape from Treblinka travelled across Europe to return home from Treblinka. This is similar to the narratives of Nazario and Abawi which are the focus of chapters 3 and 4. As Madelaine Hron notes: "psychologists have also come to realize that it is not the migration process itself but, rather, harrowing events before, during, or after dislocation that can lead to suffering of clinical proportions" (289). Rajchman suffered throughout the migration process to and from Treblinka, as well as from the ghettoization of his home and from his displacement after his escape. In his narrative Rajchman makes no reference to his life before Treblinka, except for the people he travels with in the opening chapter.

Rajchman's narrative was written in the years directly after the war and thus the author expresses his trauma similarly to other Holocaust writers. As Hron notes (in concurrence with Ringel and Brandell): "the trauma model is largely modelled on the experience of Holocaust refugees" (289), whilst "refugees from other cultures…may express their trauma differently" (289). Therefore, it is key that Rajchman is writing about the event which kickstarted the study into trauma, and he is writing from a European perspective and thus falls into the first category which Hron discusses. The refugees from other cultures to which Hron refers are most likely from outside these spheres and therefore express themselves differently, key to both the narratives of Nazario and Abawi.

Because it was later translated into German, French, English and eventually many other languages, *Treblinka* had the unique opportunity to be received in a different political light, one in which refugees from other international conflicts, for example Vietnam and Syria were taking part in the narrative. Whilst in narrative style *Treblinka* is like many Holocaust memoirs which came before it, *Treblinka* shed new light on the trauma of the Holocaust. In his article

"Beyond Eichmann: Rethinking Emergence of Holocaust Memory" Michael Rothberg considers the emergence of new narratives on the Holocaust and how they can help to change the dominant narrative. This also works towards supporting Rothberg's claim of pluralism by providing a plurality of representations and ideas and highlights the importance of memory as distinct from history in the construction of these narratives. This does not make the narratives set down before or during the Eichmann trials obsolete, but rather it offers a more complete picture:

> The genre of Holocaust testimony, and the public nature of Holocaust remembrance all turn on the … staging of a trial meant to instruct the world … about the uniqueness of the Nazi genocide of Jews … But what if accounts that turn on the centrality of the Eichmann trial tell only part of the story? … New work has begun to offer a more differentiated narrative that not only continues to pay close attention to national differences in the vicissitudes of Holocaust memory, but also looks with new eyes at the first decades after the liberation of the camps and the end of the war… Such work has implications both for historical understanding and for conceptualizing the work of memory and the politics of the past in contemporary sciences. (Rothberg 75)

Rothberg specifically considers another Treblinka narrative, namely Steiner's 1960s documentary novel. However, the point Rothberg makes remains relevant for a narrative such as Rajchman's. Rajchman's narrative was written in the years directly after the war and therefore follows a lot of the conventions on which trauma theory and the Caruthian ideas about trauma and literariness were founded. Conversely, its delayed (translated) publication allows it to be reviewed and absorbed in a new light, a post-Eichmann trial world whereby *Treblinka* helps to shed light on Holocaust atrocities and reform some of the ideas formed in the decades

directly following the war. Furthermore, *Treblinka* can help to bridge the gap between trauma theory and literary theory by helping us to understand how the two interact in what is referred to as 'the ultimate trauma narrative'.

Rajchman's narrative is key to the canon of Holocaust testimonial literature, helping to clarify an image of Nazi atrocities in previously understudied areas such as Treblinka I and II. Rajchman's *Treblinka* is an emotive first-person narrative in which narrator, author and focalizer are one and the same, following similar styles to many other Holocaust testimonials. Rajchman's use of dates, his fragmented writing style, and his employment of lieux de memoires such as clothes, highlight how key memory and trauma studies are to understanding a narrative such as this one. Mieke Bal, in studying narratology, refers to narration, focalization, and point of view as key factors and are therefore these are key to studying trauma texts and narratives and the differences between them. In Rajchman's autobiography all three of these elements are Rajchman himself. He is the narrator and focalizer and it is through his point of view that we experience Treblinka. The form which Rajchman's narrative takes is typical of an autobiography and exemplifies the ideas that Caruth has about the irrepresentability of trauma. In this instance autobiography is the process of working through trauma, and Rajchman's struggle to make his experiences narratable are clear, for example when he writes 'it is worth mentioning'. The narrative which Rajchman produces avoids literariness in order to be able to write an autobiography with such intrinsic value that it is used in a major Holocaust trial. *The Last Jew of Treblinka* can work to highlight the conventions of holocaust memoirs, and their reception by cultural memory and trauma theorists. *The Last Jew of Treblinka* is the only first-hand testimonial memoir in this thesis's corpus and helps to highlight key differences between Holocaust memoirs and those of other traumas. Whilst, as Hron notes, other traumas of displacement may require different expressions to Rajchman's, *Treblinka's* delayed publication creates a parallel with the works of Abawi and Nazario.

Chapter 3. Narratives of American Immigration: Collective Trauma as depicted in Sonia Nazario's *Enrique's Journey: The Story of a Boy's Dangerous Odyssey to Reunite with his Mother*

The American Immigration Crisis

Immigration (both legal and illegal) is one of the foremost points of political contention in the United States of America (US). The US has dealt with immigration for centuries, and as Graham notes, it has always been associated with costs and benefits (3). This section focuses on American immigration as relevant to the analysis of Nazario's *Enrique's Journey.*

This chapter focuses on the American Immigration Crisis from the specific viewpoint of immigrants who travel to the US as illegal immigrants or refugees, and the difficulties they face both in their journeys and following their arrival in the US. These immigrants or refugees are impacted by an atmosphere constructed around immigration and immigrants in the US. This atmosphere follows from political policies focused on the war against communism, the war on drugs and economic factors. Nazario's work focuses on the impact of the American immigration crisis on children, later addressed by policies such as Barack Obama's DACA programme (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), which started taking applications in 2012. Furthermore, Nazario focuses on the children left behind by parents who emigrate to the US for predominantly economic reasons and the children who choose to follow them and travel alone.

In the United States immigration increased from 2,515,479 people in 1951-1960 to 9,095,417 in 1991-2000 (Graham 144). Within these figures Latin American immigrants have increased from 22.5% of the immigrant population to 47.2% in the same timespan (94). Immigrants continue to travel to the US in search of opportunity, an 'American dream' mindset; "the promise that all Americans have a reasonable chance to achieve success as they define it"

(Hochschild qtd in. Samuel 5). Whilst the journey to the United States is often torturous, the life of (illegal) immigrants is as much so after arrival.

The September 11 attacks scared a generation of Americans and, politically "harshly illuminated a defect that had not formerly been high on the list … that our porous borders … allowed terrorists to move at will into and out of the country" (Graham 145). Steven Camarota, a researcher at the Centre for Immigration Studies, writes that "they came as students, tourists and business visitors" (Camarota qtd in. Graham 145). This post 9/11 world highlighted a deep distrust of immigration in the US. Additionally, the war on drugs in combination with this immigrant distrust, often develops into a war on immigration:

> The drug war has increasingly become a war against immigrant communities. Much as the drug war drives mass incarceration, it is also a major driver of mass deportation. Since 2007, over a quarter of a million people have been deported from the U.S. after convictions for drug offenses. ("Immigration and The War on Drugs")

The war waged on immigrant communities is emblematic of a distrust of migrants which stems back to Cold War immigration policy: "the broad outlines of US immigration policy date back to the early Cold War. One piece of this system is a screening process initially designed to prevent infiltration by communist agents" (Verovšek 1). There is an engrained system of distrust of immigrants which reigns supreme in the United States. This, in combination with the influx of illegal immigrants desperate for a better life causes a combative situation in the United States. This is exemplified by deportation statistics; "even though about 57% of immigrants are Hispanic, consistently well over 90% of those deported are Latino" (Kamasaki).

This combative attitude and the broken immigration system form the background of Nazario's narrative.

Enrique's Journey **by Sonia Nazario**

Sonia Nazario's *Enrique's Journey* was first published in 2002 as a six-part chronicle in the *Los Angeles Times*. In this chronicle the narrative ends with Enrique waiting on the edge of the water to cross into the United States. In 2006 Nazario published a revised and updated non-fiction book of the same title: *Enrique's Journey: The Story of a Boy's Dangerous Odyssey to Reunite with his Mother*, which extends beyond the scope of the 2002 piece and follows Enrique to America. Nazario's work is not just based on Enrique's story, but is constructed from interviews with other immigrants and, most notably, Nazario's own journey. Nazario retraced Enrique's steps, recreating the journey many migrants take to reach The United States from Central or South America. The centrefold of the publication features photographs taken by award winning photographer Don Barletti of a variety of migrants that Nazario met on her way, including the family Enrique left behind and those he re-joined in the US. *Enrique's Journey* is narrated by an omniscient narrator who is later revealed to be Nazario herself. This narrative is a report, an expose, a memoir, a diary, and a coming-of-age story all rolled into one comprehensive work of non-fiction. Nazario exposes the reality of being a Central or South American immigrant with painful accuracy. It is a work of cultural and personal memory, exploring a mass trauma of displacement which is different to the Holocaust (also a trauma of displacement) and is therefore narrativized differently . Nazario's *Enrique's Journey* (hereafter *EJ)* allows us to re-evaluate trauma literature and the application of cultural memory studies in a modern age, with its creative use of perspective, narration, point of view, focalization, and time.

The narration of *EJ* is an integral part of its tone and reception. The narrator is an omniscient third person narrator and almost until the narrative's completion is unidentified; on page 243 the narrator writes "Enrique, Lourdes and I arrive". The "I" here is Nazario who is appearing together with Enrique and his mother for a television interview. This is one of the few times the narrator explicitly reveals themselves and although it is Nazario, the narrator is still an outsider to the main narrative. Enrique's story and journey to the US is framed by the overarching narrative of Central or South American immigration, which Nazario introduces:

> Virtually unnoticed he will become one of an estimated 48,000 children who enter the United States from Central American and Mexico each year, illegally and without either of their parents. Roughly two-thirds of them will make it past the U.S. Immigration and naturalization service. (5)

Within the broad focus of the 48,000 children Nazario mentions, she focuses on the story of Enrique and his family, with occasional narrative detours regarding other migrants:

> About two hundred street gangsters in Chiapas share the rolling criminal enterprise. Father Flor María Rigioni, the priest at the Albergue Belén migrant shelter, counts nineteen groups. Each controls a specific part of the train route and certain stations. (83)

> A fifteen-year-old girl, Mery Gabriele Posas Izaguirre, or Gabi as she prefers, tells Enrique her story. (143)

This shift in information and focus, which is controlled by Nazario's focalization from the smaller to the broader issues, both complicates the narration and broadens its scope. The

focalized object is essentially Enrique and his journey, both physical and psychological. This is framed by the larger immigration question, and focalization is used throughout to switch focus from Enrique to the frame narrative and vice versa, as seen above. This makes Enrique's narrative and experience emblematic for many other migrants from Central or South America, a key concept and focus throughout the narrative.

EJ is a complex narrative, as is its point of view. Mieke Bal in *Narratology* writes that point of view is the sum of the narration and focalization, as well as the focalized object. Nazario has woven a tapestry of information in an attempt to capture the complexity of the issue at hand. The point of view comes from Nazario but also from those she interviews, and from Enrique. This goes together with varied sources of information presented and used throughout *EJ*:

> Now Enrique's anger boils over…three times, he is suspended. Twice he repeats a grade…he spends more time on the streets of Carrizal, which is controlled by the poison gang…his grandmother waits up all night crying. (24-25)

This information comes from Nazario interviewing Enrique's grandmother, writing from the perspective of an omniscient narrator. Nazario also interviews other people who have come in contact with Enrique throughout his journey:

> A field hand, Sirenio Gómez Fuentes, sees a startling sight: a battered and bleeding boy, naked except for his undershorts. It is Enrique. (45)

> Jesús and Magdalena race outside, where their mother is hobbling already past the wooden front gate…[they] edge close to the tracks, dig in their heels and brace…A

> teenager [Enrique] in a green-and-white shirt edged down the ladder on the hopper. He holds on with his right hand and reaches down with his left…Magdalena pushed up a bottle of lemonade. (110)

These pieces of information come from interviews Nazario conducted during her own journey. Enrique is framed by those who know of or have encountered him. Nazario recreated Enrique's journey for herself, she interviewed his family, other migrants, and locals she met along the way, she researched intensively and took a photographer with her, and this is evident in the three quotes above which exemplify the range of information sources. *EJ* is a thoroughly researched work of non-fiction which combines genres into a narrative which on the surface seems like a personal migrant memoir, but it is far more politicized than that. The original 2002 *LA Times* piece was intended as an emotive and factual piece on Central or South American immigrants trying to get to the US, requiring extensive research. Due to the origin and purpose of this work of non-fiction it is also an important piece of journalism and in some parts reads as such; "a world bank study in 2000 found that 42.5 percent of Mexico's 100 million people live on $2 or less a day. Here, in rural areas 30 percent of children five years old and younger eat so little that their growth is stunted" (105). This piece of writing has a journalistic tone and methodology both to its research and writing processes.

As a journalist Nazario knew her sources and decided who is going to be studied. She writes in the prologue:

> As a journalist I love to get inside the action, watch it unfold, take people inside worlds they might never otherwise see… I knew I would have to travel with child migrants through Mexico on top of freight trains. (xiv)

This makes the author's selection bias clear, as an author she chose who and what to study. Furthermore, it is important to discuss what influences Nazario's selection bias and her motivation behind her topic, and how this influences the narrative. Many things may impact selection bias including political opinion or personal experience; in an interview Nazario reminisces about her childhood:

> My family came to Kansas in 1965 as immigrants from Argentina. It was our second trip to the U.S.; in 1960, my family came to Madison Wisconsin where my father did post-doctoral work at the University of Wisconsin - Madison in biochemistry. I was born in Wisconsin that year. Of four children in my family, I'm the only one born in the U.S. ("Meet Sonia Nazario")

This creates a personal connection between herself and the child immigrants she writes about. Therefore, her selection bias originates from a desire to tell a story that she feels part of, about those who were not as lucky as she herself was. This selection bias can be considered similarly to Rajchman's author limitation; whilst Rajchman is limited by what he knows, Nazario is limited by what she wants to report on. The narrative is a selection of facts which Nazario pieces together to portray one side of a larger issue, that of the South and Central American Migrants. Nazario's narrative is backed up by facts about migration; "many migrants trying to enter are caught by the INS: 108,973 near Laredo in 2000" (164). In addition, Nazario uses interviews, first-hand accounts (albeit her own sometimes) and photographs. Similarly, in Rajchman's publication these photographs, facts and schematics heighten the realism of the narrative.

At heart both Rajchman and Nazario tell emotive and personal narratives. Nazario spent a decade researching and writing the stories of other people, she has empathy and compassion

but less connection to the narrative than Rajchman to his. Nazario is not unreliable as a narrator, and neither is she an innocent and unopinionated bystander. Nazario embraces her position as a journalist, which she herself reflects on:

> Lourdes looks for help. In January 2012 she calls me. Enrique is locked up, she says, and she must find a lawyer. Journalists usually don't get involved personally with people they write about, because we must convey reality to our readers, not write about a reality we have altered. Our credibility depends on playing it straight with readers, on not taking sides. (261)

Here Nazario is clear on her position as a journalist, however, she continues;

> There is a clear exception to the no-involvement rule: if someone is in imminent danger, we should help them, if we can, and then we must disclose what we have done to readers. (261)

Nazario recognizes a human (and moral) obligation to help, and a journalistic obligation to disclose her actions, and therefore she is not unreliable as a narrator as she discloses everything to her reader. Nazario's work of non-fiction is a complex mix; it is a journalistic piece and also an emotional narrative, embedded in fact and experience. Nazario's relation to the characters and her own past make her an emotionally involved narrator, and her position as a journalist interested in the truth allows her a sense of distance from her subject.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that Nazario's *EJ* exists on two levels, the micro, and the macro. The comparison in how these levels are used and handled can be seen below:

> Most of the Central Americans go to reunite with a parent, say counsellors at a detention center in Texas where the INS houses the largest number of unaccompanied children it catches. Of those, the counsellors say, 75 percent are looking for their mothers. (5)

Whilst this quote exemplifies the overarching macro narrative of the immigration issue. The quote below exemplifies how Nazario zooms in on the micro narrative (of Enrique and others):

> Tránsito Encarnación Martínes Hernández lost both feet. Olga has promised to get the young man prostheses, which cost $1,800. (95)

Sometimes the micro and macro levels work symbiotically:

> Enrique has enormous luck. His story moved two tenacious Miami attorneys to represent him pro bono and tirelessly fight his case. Every day, hundreds of families are not as lucky. They are being torn apart. (271)

Nazario uses the contrast between the micro and macro levels of narration to emphasize that Enrique, despite his enormous struggle, is considered one of the lucky ones. The macro level is the broader perspective discussed above, informed by analytics, data, and research. The micro level aims to break down the macro level, so that people don't disappear into the statistics about the 9 million migrants between 1991-2000. Enrique's story and a handful of other migrants are the micro level narrative which gives a face to the numbers, and this is where the narrative and emotive techniques come in. In the use of these two levels there is a sense of selection and intent bias; Nazario does not interview the other side of the immigration narrative, that being anti-immigration policy makers or border guards. Therefore, *EJ* is a pro-immigration

piece of literature, and whilst this is a very valuable goal, it must be recognized in order to appropriately analyse how Nazario uses facts at the micro and macro levels, and how this influences the purpose and reception of her narrative.

The 247 pages of Nazario's work covers the duration from 1989 when Enrique's mother left until early 2006. Within these 247 pages there are detours about characters Nazario met in her own journey intertwined with Enrique's narrative and other information. Nazario had been researching since roughly 1997 (xi), its first six parts were published in 2002, and it was revised and updated until its publication in 2006, and for this revision Nazario made the journey a second time. The most recent epilogue reflects on immigration policy and Enrique's continuing story up until 2013 and the story is consistently updated until today, for example "in 2011 Lourdes devises another plan to set her son right for good" (256). The scope extends beyond the 2006 revised publication; Nazario, Enrique and Lourdes (Enrique's mother) have made countless television appearances such as the 2006 Don Franciso interview which ends Nazario's main narrative. *EJ* was republished in 2007 and 2014, and the most recent epilogue informs the reader of the developments in Enrique's life since the 2006 publication, including a collection of family photographs. Nazario's afterword has also been updated with every publication to reflect modern developments in immigration policy, making the afterword the most overtly political piece of writing. Nazario's website (http://enriquesjourney.com) keeps readers updated about not only Enrique but other immigration matters. Nazario appeared on the John Stewart show in 2014, and in 2019 appeared on 'Democracy Now' to talk about the 'Narco State'. The duration of the narratives covers a period until 2006 in its 247 pages, but the narrative it discusses, the points it raises and the consistent updates and edits, as well as continued interest by the media, makes the span of *EJ* difficult to define and its story timeless.

Both *EJ* and *Treblinka* have narratives that follow them beyond their publication in that new information is added as it comes to light. However, when referring to first generation

Holocaust trauma, the Holocaust is time limited, we can learn more about it but what happened is not going to change or add to, whilst migration trauma is constantly changing and developing. Therefore, whilst we continuously study the Holocaust as a historical trauma and cultural memory narrative, we study immigration-based traumas as an ongoing and changing cultural memory narrative. Therefore, its literature and records also change and develop. This difference is clear in how both narratives end: Rajchman is definitive; "I was liberated on 17 January 1945" (138). Whilst *EJ* ends with "then she boards an airplane back to Honduras. Back to her son" (247). Enrique's girlfriend is going to Honduras to bring her son back to the US. The narrative will continue from here (and does in the epilogue), referring to the 2012 arrest of Enrique mentioned above. A narrative such as Enrique's, which is consistently added to and updated as the situation changes, allows for a more natural connection between topic and reader. This is enabled by the third person writer and journalist who is able to both narrate trauma and contextualize it. Conversely, Rajchman's memory narrative is also studied as a historical text rather than as a manifestation of a culturally ongoing trauma.

Enrique's story as narrated by Nazario is emblematic of the situation faced by many other migrant children and families. Nazario's narrative exists within what Jeffrey refers to as 'social trauma' or 'cultural trauma' which focuses on "group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (6). This group consciousness is clear in how Nazario researches and writes this work of non-fiction which does not just focus on Enrique but interweaves narratives and information which frame Enrique and highlight his story as part of a bigger picture. In much the same ways Rajchman is emblematic of the small group of Treblinka Camp survivors, his story is representative of a cultural trauma in light of the holocaust. However, more specifically his narrative contributes to a group consciousness; those who died, worked, or survived Treblinka. Enrique as the titular protagonist has a similar function in *EJ*.

The cultural and collective trauma of Central or South American migrants is part of a collective and cultural memory. As discussed in chapter 1 memory studies is not concerned with the events themselves but rather with the presentation and representation of this memory, and this is what Nazario focuses on. The history is presented in the prologue:

> The United States has experienced the largest wave of immigration in its history. Between 1900 and 2008 nearly 11 million immigrants arrived illegally. Since 2011, each year, on average a million additional immigrants arrive legally or become legal residents. (Prologue xiii)

The body of the text deals with the memory of Central and South American migration:

> It was midnight. Enrique ached with fatigue. He gathered some boards scattered beneath the house, stood them on their sides so no one could see him. (135)

This is part of Enrique's memory of his journey reported to Nazario when she met him in Nuevo Laredo when he was trying to cross the border. The body of the non-fiction narrative focuses on the presentation and representation of Enrique's struggle and those of other migrants. Highlighting not only what happens but the impact on families and communities as well as on individuals. Nazario, and by extension her work, is bearing witness to the traumas of an entire community. Nazario's relationship to the narrative and her position as a journalist, particularly leading up to the 2002 publication, changes the form and reception of the narrative. *EJ* is a well-researched piece of journalism which, although emotive, attempts to offer an omniscient perspective which includes the stories of other migrants. In *2006 New York Times* reviewer Sarah Wildman wrote:

> This painstakingly researched book is not just the story of Enrique…It is also an anthropology of the peripatetic youth bent on braving the obstacles that stand between their home villages and the North American cities where their mothers moved in search of jobs, money, and the chance to better their family's lives back home. "Enrique's Journey" explores the unintended, and largely underreported, consequences of those choices. (“Coming to America”)

This anthropology to which Wildman refers is another way to tell a story of social trauma and to bring forward a cultural memory shared by an under-voiced community. We can therefore consider Nazario’s *EJ* as a work of political anthropology as well as a trauma text. Political anthropology is the “comparative, fieldwork-based examination of politics in … historical, social, and cultural settings” (Baltes and Smelser). This is the essence of Nazario’s narrative; she studied a community from an anthropological angle, taking a political perspective or approach. For example Nazario describes in vivid detail the rape of a woman named Wendy by bandits at the border:

> [They] order Wendy to remove her pants. She refused. He throws her to the ground and places the tip of his machete on her stomach…One by one, during an hour and a half, each of the five bandits goes into the cornfields and rapes Wendy. Her husband fills with rage. The bandits bring her back crying. She cannot speak…As they flee, her husband and others carry Wendy to the checkpoint. She says trembling ‘I want to die’. (97)

Nazario reports on this event, and though it is unclear if she herself witnesses this or if it comes from an interview, she is bearing witness to Wendy's trauma by writing about it. Furthermore, Wendy's rape is connected to a larger observation; "the rapes are part of the general denigration and humiliation of Central Americans in Mexico, where the migrants are seen as inferior because they come from less developed countries" (98). The source of this information is "Olivia Ruiz, a cultural anthropologist at El Colgeio de la Frontera Norte in Tijuana" (98). As Irene Visser notes trauma in non-European and non-US contexts is increasingly studied, and this allows for this kind of anthropological study.

However, these non-western contexts require different approaches and different ways of storytelling. One possibility is evident from Nazario's work: developing a journalistic expose into a work of non-fiction. Allowing an in-depth, researched study of a social trauma, using one emblematic narrative which is supported by those of others to highlight a (political) issue and trauma in an accessible way, through accessible literature. As Joshua Pederson writes, "thinking or writing about one trauma might allow – indeed, might welcome victims of (other) calamities to speak out about their own experiences" (106). Therefore, a narrative such as Nazario's might either encourage other migrants (and refugees), to speak out about their experiences or make them more likely to work with journalists, thus encouraging deeper conversations. All of the migrants with whom Nazario speaks on her two journeys are willing to open up to her because others do. Nazario has spent thirty years working with migrants, and *EJ* is one product of that. Nazario's approach to the issue of American Immigration is new; it uses facts and figures as well as interviews and first-hand experience (anthropological study) to construct a well-rounded view of a social trauma and a cultural memory unit. As a journalist Nazario uses literariness and pluralism to construct an evocative and poignant memory text about Central and South American immigration to the US. Using Enrique as a protagonist and hero on the micro level to represent others like him on the macro level makes the narrative

lively without it being overwhelming. Journalists have a strong position in the representation of trauma and memory in a changing political climate and Nazario represents this effectively and respectfully.

Enrique's Journey is a complex piece of writing. Whilst Rajchman's narrator, focalizer and point of view are consistently personal, Nazario's varies and changes constantly. This work of non-fiction forces the reader to absorb multiple stories, focalized objects, narratives, and pieces of information, mediating between a macro and micro level narrative. This immigrant memoir is heavily influenced by its original 2002 publication in the *LA Times* and the amount of research necessary to publish such a piece. Whilst Nazario is an 'outsider' to the key narrative, her writing is emotive and captivating whilst still truthful and reserved. Nazario is writing a narrative and leaving judgment to the reader. This way of narrativizing trauma is dynamic and allows for the narrative to constantly adapt and be 'revised and updated' when new data comes along, or the protagonist's life develops further. *Enrique's Journey* is not a stagnant piece of trauma literature which is stuck at its publication date, but rather it is a living and breathing narrative which has become emblematic of the struggles of many other Central or South American migrants. The work of non-fiction discusses a social and cultural trauma and the formation of a unit of cultural memory, adapting and changing as memory itself does. Nazario's *Enrique's Journey* allows us to re-evaluate trauma literature in a modern age, with its creative use of perspective, narration, point of view, focalization, and time.

Chapter 4. Narrating the Trauma of Syrian Refugees: Collective Trauma as depicted in Atia Abawi's *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes*

The Syrian Refugee Crisis: Historical Background

The Syrian Civil War and following Syrian Refugee Crisis is a complicated political and humanitarian disaster, and this thesis by no means aims to give a comprehensive overview. However, I hope to make clear the facts as necessary to understand subsequent analysis of Abawi's *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes*.

UNICEF pinpoints March 2011 as the start of unrest in Syria following the 'Arab spring' conflict (UNICEF, "A timeline of the Syrian Civil War"). In May 2011 the first refugees from Syria arrived in Turkey seeking safety. In 2012 the first official refugee camp opened in Jordan (UNICEF, "A timeline of the Syrian Civil War"). Syria's descent into civil war started in the July of 2011 with the announcement of the formation of the "Free Syrian Army", a rebel group intent on overthrowing the government and the Syrian President, Bashar-Al-Assad. The city of Aleppo escaped the initial torment that other Syrian cities suffered until July 2012, when rebel forces "launched an offensive to kick out government forces and gain control over northern Syria" (BBC, "What's Happening in Aleppo"). This attack was indecisive:

> Aleppo ended up divided roughly in half – the opposition in control of the east, and the government in the west. Over the next four years, the battle for Aleppo became a microcosm of the wider conflict in Syria. (BBC, "What's Happening in Aleppo")

In 2014 the emergence of 'ISIS' or 'Daesh' escalated the Syrian conflict. ISIS is the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, known also by its Arabic acronym (Daesh), a militant group and

unrecognized proto state. ISIS/Daesh established Raqqa in Syria as a "de facto capital" (Abawi 31).

From January 2014 to March 2015 Aleppo was further devastated by 'barrel bomb' attacks, killing approximately 3,124 civilians (BBC "Syria Crisis"). Additionally, in 2015 "the world [was] in shock after images [were] released of a 2-year-old Syrian toddler, Alan Kurdi, who washed up on a Turkish beach after his family attempted to reach Greece" (UNICEF "A timeline of the Syrian civil war"). Many Syrian refugees have taken the journey from Syria to Turkey, braving the Aegean Sea to get to Greece, and 3,030 people died between January and August 2015 (BBC "Hundreds of migrants still dying") whilst taking this trip. Between January and August 2020 554 migrants died making the same trip (BBC "Hundreds of migrants still dying").

This is a brief history of the Syrian Civil war which led to the Syrian refugee crisis, as pertains to Abawi's narrative. The narrative of *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* commences with the bombing of Aleppo in 2015.

A Land of Permanent Goodbyes **by Atia Abawi**

Atia Abawi is a German/American author and journalist, working for CNN and NBC as a foreign correspondent. She is established primarily in the Middle East. In 2014 she published her first work about Afghanistan, *The Secret Sky*. This was followed in 2018 by *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* which centres around the lives of Syrian refugees fleeing to Europe. Like Nazario's work, *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* is a bildungsroman within its trauma narrative, and as readers we watch the protagonist grow up throughout the novel. It is based on Syrian refugees and helpers Abawi has met and their experiences as told to her, as well as based on Abawi's own experiences whilst visiting refugee camps. Throughout the work a personification of Destiny takes on the role of an omniscient third person narrator and herself

becomes a character in the novel, following protagonist Tareq from the 2015 bombing of Aleppo to the end of his journey in Germany. The narrative of Tareq and his family becomes emblematic of the situation of many other Syrian refugees. Tareq, Alexia and their families and friends are not 'real people' and Abawi constructed these fictional characters as amalgamations of the refugees and helpers that she met in Syria and Greece during her research period. Abawi creates a connection between the characters and the reader by speaking directly to them through the character of Destiny. She focuses on a mass trauma but moves away from the statistics, focussing on one (fictional) family as representative of Syrian Refugees as a community, as well as focussing on the 'helpers' who surround traumatic events. Abawi combines the singular perspective protagonist which we have seen in *The Last Jew of Treblinka* with the journalistic form which controls *Enrique's Journey*. Therefore, Abawi's *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* is a culmination of a variety of trauma narratives, exemplifying the narration of trauma in a modern setting.

A Land of Permanent Goodbyes (hereafter *Permanent Goodbyes)* commences with a prologue which introduces the narrator, a personification of Destiny. The narrator claims: "you are born to die. In that I have no say. It's up to humanity and - all too often - the lack of it" (1), which introduces the novel's leading motifs of humanity and death. The first chapter introduces the protagonist Tareq through the eyes of the narrator and destiny is the focalizer in this chapter: "I like Tareq. I always have" (1). The initial chapter works as though it was a second prologue to introduce the primary characters and set the time frame of Abawi's work: "I had to meet them again, on a hot summer evening in 2015, not in happiness but in sorrow. This is their story" (9). The remainder of the narrative is narrated by the third person omniscient narrator, Destiny, although the focalizer changes throughout the three sections which comprise the narrative.

Part 1 is focalized by Tareq, and it is his reality which forms the narrative and controls what information the reader is given. The focus is his family and their initial journey out of Aleppo following the bombing of their apartment building. In *Trauma in Non-Western Contexts* Irene Visser notes that: "studies of trauma in non-Western texts illuminate underlying, implicit, often figuratively expressed representations of familial and collective modes of dealing with traumatization" (130). Therefore, the familial roles which are important throughout part one of the novel are a key example of how trauma is dealt with in a (non-European) Syrian context. Part one is heavily focused on family, primarily telling the story of the bombing in which Tareq loses his mother and brothers (one dies, and one is lost in the wreckage). Tareq, his father and his sister travel to Raqqa to join other family members and then move onto Turkey with Tareq's cousin. Tareq's father leaves the children behind to return for Tareq's missing brother, investing his money in the children's future in Europe.

Part 2 switches focalization to Alexia, a rich American who came to Greece as a tourist and stayed to help refugees arriving on the beaches, despite her parents' disagreement. This short intermission is connected to the epigraph: "'look for the helpers' – Fred Rogers". Alexia is a helper who "was someone that Tareq has yet to meet. She'd been waiting for him" (109). By focalizing the second section through Alexia, the reader is given a perspective on the situation in Greece and why people find themselves as helpers. Destiny is present not only as the narrator but as an ethereal concept which encapsulates the implication that Alexia is waiting for Tareq, that it is destined for her to help him, and that despite their different lives they are intrinsically linked. The third (and last) section is focalized again through Tareq and includes encounters with Alexia and other volunteers. This section focuses on Tareq's crossing to Greece and the events on the boat, as well as travelling from Greece to Germany with the help of the volunteers. The novel ends when he says goodbye to Alexia when heading for Germany. The focus in part one is fleeing from Syria, the focus in part two is the helpers who wait for

refugees, including Tareq, on the beach, and the focus of the final section is what happens when the refugees arrive alive and meet these helpers. Each chapter is focalized through the most applicable 'authority' on each situation: Tareq, Alexia and then Tareq again.

The characters epitomize the situation in Syria and in Europe regarding refugees, and Abawi uses her journalistic background in a very different way to Nazario. In the author's note at the end of *Permanent Goodbyes* Abawi writes that her goal was to "humanize the refugee crisis" (281). She researched her book thoroughly:

> Speaking with refugees, witnessing what was happening in the Middle East and Europe, standing in Greece in Lesbos's life jacket graveyard…I picked up a small girl's shoe that was left abandoned...I brought it back home with me and it continues to sit in my office. I often stare at it, especially as I write. (283-284)

Like Nazario, Abawi chose to research by travelling to the same places her characters did. However, whilst Nazario chose one subject and constructed a narrative around him, Abawi amalgamated her experiences of refugees and helpers into two key protagonists, Tareq and Alexia. What is striking is that both Nazario and Abawi did not only speak to immigrants and refugees, but they also both chose to talk to the 'helpers'. Nazario interviewed church elders and people who feed the immigrants, whilst Abawi dedicated an entire section to those that help in Greece. This is particularly important in *Permanent Goodbyes* as the epilogue ends with what we can assume is the didactic purpose of the narrative:

> There are millions of Tareqs, Susans, Fayeds, all in search of safety and kindness. I hope you will provide that warmth, be that helper, do what you can to make that world

> a better place. Because when I [Destiny] meet you – and I will - there will be a reckoning. There always is. (272)

The focus on the helpers is key, although the use of 'reckoning' carries with it a threatening tone through Destiny's narration. In part three where the helpers and refugees interact this focus is key. Abawi wants to encourage the reader to become the helper and humanize the refugees by representing them as people in need and worthy of help. *Permanent Goodbyes* does not just want the reader to learn about the Syrian refugee crisis, it wants the reader to actively become the helpers that Fred Rogers speaks of in the epigraph. Thus, the narrative, focalization and focus throughout *Permanent Goodbyes* works towards the didactic purpose of the narrative, and the amalgamation of Abawi's research into her characters creates a narrative which aims to be emblematic of the human side of the Syrian refugee crisis, moving away from the statistics.

The text is framed by its didactic purpose, evident most clearly in the epigraph, prologue, and epilogue. The epigraph is a quote from Fred Rogers, American TV personality 'Mr Rogers':

> When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.' To this day, especially in times of 'disaster,' I remember my mother's words and I am always comforted by realizing that there are still so many helpers - so many caring people in the world. (Rogers qtd in. Gardiner 167)

This epigraph already lays out the primary message of Abawi's novel: be the helper, not the hunter. This relates to what Madelaine Hron discusses in *Trauma of Displacement,* where she notes that:

> It is the receiving country that largely determines the nature and extent of sufferings that migrants may experience after their arrival – be they forms of discrimination, difficulties finding employment, or therapy for their traumatic sequelae. The host environment, especially its legal, medical, and social institutions, is responsible for doubting or recognizing migrant suffering and effectively treating it. (297-298)

Therefore, in considering traumas of displacement, it is not just individuals who must take on the position of helpers. It is also 'host countries', and in Tareq's case that is Turkey, Greece and Germany. Therefore, the helper aspect of Abawi's narrative is key to studying refugee trauma and can be important to studying trauma as a whole.

Like *Enrique's Journey, Permanent Goodbyes* exists on two levels: the micro and the macro. The micro level features two protagonists as emblematic of their individual situations, Tareq as the Syrian child refugee and Alexia as the helper. On the macro level Abawi aims to discuss the situation of many Syrian refugees: Tareq's family travels from Aleppo to Raqqa (Syria) to Turkey and eventually along the small stretch of water to Greece, ending their journey in Germany. Along these travels Tareq meets many other refugees and encounters many situations which are commonplace for refugees. On the journey from Turkey to Greece there are descriptions of fellow refugees, not all of whom make it. Tareq's journey becomes representative of the journey thousands of Syrian refugees took before him and are still taking today. The death of the young boy on the journey to Greece is reminiscent for all readers of the image of Alan Kurdi laying on a Greek beach, something which Tareq himself reflects on:

> The fear that continued to build inside him made him dream up horrible scenarios, all ending with his sister lying dead on the beach like the little Syrian-Kurdish boy he saw

> a picture of not too long ago. Three-year-old Alan Kurdi was taking this same route with his parents and five-year-old brother when their boat capsized. (145)

This mention of Alan Kurdi connects the fictitious narrative to its real-world origins; Alan Kurdi was found in 2015, the same year that Tareq's apartment was bombed. The evocation of Alan Kurdi's death encapsulates the fears of many Syrian refugees and their parents, of dying during their crossing. Simultaneously, Abawi relates what is happening to Tareq and the terror he feels to an example which is recognizable for European and US audiences, where Kurdi's death was a major news story.

Part two focuses on Alexia on the micro level, and on the macro level this works to discuss how many people find themselves as helpers in tragedies like this. Throughout part two the reader meets many other helpers, both new and experienced. The reader is given insight into Alexia's psychological journey to come to terms with what she sees, something many helpers in similar situations must deal with. The narrator reflects on the importance of helpers: "some of the most beautiful parts of humanity are seen in strangers-as are some of the most vile. The helpers and the hunters. Helpers come in many forms. As do the hunters" (180). Nazario and Abawi both use micro and macro levels of representation but they use them slightly differently. Nazario uses Enrique on the micro level to humanize the immigrants, and the other immigrants and her own journey on the macro level to reflect on the larger issue. Abawi in *Permanent Goodbyes* uses Tareq and Alexia on the micro level to represent the refugees and the helpers. On the macro level Abawi discusses the overarching issue of the Syrian refugee crisis using an omniscient narrator, Destiny.

The narrative of *Permanent Goodbyes* covers roughly one and a half years in the lives of Tareq's family, with the epilogue progressing slightly further to reflect on their lives in Germany. The novel was published in 2018, and as Abawi writes "although some of the

pictures on the news have changed, so much of the situation still remains the same" (284). On April 23rd 2021 roughly 120 people travelling together attempted a journey with the same rubber dingy style boat that Tareq used to reach Greece, which capsized. Many of these refugees faced the same journey as Tareq and his family out of Syria. Much the same as the immigration crisis which Nazario focuses on, the Syrian refugee crisis is an ongoing conflict. The narrative of Tareq remains relevant to the situation of many refugees who "face countless hardships [but they] have not been deterred from looking for a better existence" (284). UNICEF estimated that in 2021 roughly 5.9 million Syrian children are in need. The political and ethical issues with such a large-scale trauma are approached in the didactic aspect of the novel. The epilogue claims "there will be a reckoning" (272) which could be understood by the reader to be either a biblical reckoning or a moral one, and either way the reader feels compelled to stand on the right side of it. This novel does not just aim to inform, it aims to rally readers and appeal to the positive sides of human nature to which Destiny refers. Abawi reflects that: "although this book is a work of fiction, it is very much real. It is a compilation of stories I heard from those who live the terrible consequences of war. I travelled to both Greece and Turkey to speak to the refugees first-hand…to talk with several people still in Syria" (283). As a whole Abawi's narrative is caught between fiction and non-fiction and becomes its own genre in the narration of trauma; it is what Irene Visser refers to as trauma fiction.

Abawi is a journalist and a foreign correspondent for CNN and NBC, an occupation which motivated the writing of both her novels. In the author's note Abawi reflects on her personal motivation for writing *Permanent Goodbyes*:

> I was first motivated to write this story in 2015. That summer, I was in California visiting my parents when my father opened up a folder…among the documents were our refugee papers, alien identity cards and old-passports…A few weeks later, my eyes,

> along with those of many others around the world were glued to the television screen as we witnessed hundreds of thousands of people escaping the Syrian war…So whilst watching the Syrian crisis unfold, as a former refugee myself I saw a familiarity I couldn't shake…I felt a pained connection to the Syrian refugees.. I saw all that was happening, and I knew I had to write about it. (281-283)

Clearly, Abawi has very personal aims in writing this narrative, like Nazario (and Rajchman). She reflects not only on her personal motivation, but on how she approached her writing: "I wanted to do more than just write about current events. I wanted to dive deep to show the human side of this massive geopolitical struggle" (283). Abawi focuses on a mass trauma but moves away from the statistics, focussing on one (fictional) family as representative of Syrian Refugees as a community, as well as focussing on the 'helpers' which surround traumatic events. Abawi combines the singular perspective which we have seen in *The Last Jew of Treblinka* with the journalistic form which governs *Enrique's Journey*.

This is the only fictional work which this thesis deals with, but Abawi's narrative is not fictional in the sense that the events which it is based upon did not happen. It is fictional in that the characters did not exist precisely under these names and exact circumstances. However, they are representations of reality. Abawi's text is a production of memory in that it takes the memories of many refugees and creates representative characters. Abawi takes elements of a collective and communicative memory and extrapolates characters from them. Furthermore, the origin of her motivation to write this novel was her own traumatic memory, meaning that through writing about somebody else's trauma the author is working through her family's refugee trauma. Moreover, Irene Visser discusses the benefits of studying trauma fiction as a genre, especially that which originates in non-European contexts:

> It is well placed to explore literary trauma fiction and analyse its cultural metaphors, area-specific use of language, and indigenous rituals, symbols, and archetypes, throwing fresh light on the literary representation of human experiences of trauma… In addition to the inclusion of more culturally and historically specific narratives, what is needed in literary trauma studies is an ongoing, careful delineation of the parameters and categories that guide theorization, while developing a multidirectional and relational approach in which the entrenched binary oppositions between the West and the non-West may be collapsed and cultural differences may be celebrated as enriching and illuminating the expanding field of literary trauma theory. (139)

Irene Visser discusses the benefits of trauma fiction, and these are clearly exemplified by Abawi's narrative which develops a multidirectional approach throughout the three parts the novel is split into. *Permanent Goodbyes* communicates a social and collective trauma of (Syrian) refugees through collections of memories, making it a production of memory and a representation of collective and social trauma. Abawi focusses on different uses of language and cultural aspects important to Tareq, in addition to reflecting on how, by leaving his home, he must leave some of his culture behind. The relational approach which Visser discusses is important in Abawi's work as Tareq is focused on assimilating in his new European life. By exploring both sides of his experience, both inside and outside of Europe, we can illuminate that field of literary trauma to which Visser refers in non-European trauma fiction. This non-European focus on a cultural/communal trauma allows for development and expansion in the field of trauma theory and how we can define trauma texts and the involvement of literariness in this process.

Abawi approaches an ongoing conflict with a didactic purpose and the literary style of a fictional narrative. The key aim of her novel is to illustrate that "the people living through

this violence and strife are more than just characters in a book. They are real people, with real lives, real hopes and real dreams" (285). *Permanent Goodbyes* is representative of a community of people who share a collective memory and trauma, a cultural trauma which brings together a community:

> Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways. (Jeffrey 6)

Abawi's novel represents this cultural trauma through the micro level focus on Tareq and through the macro level didactic focus and focus on the overarching issue of the treatment and conditions of Syrian refugees, both in Syria and after their journeys to Europe.

Furthermore, Abawi connects this novel to a broader picture of worldwide trauma: "the story of displacement and loss is woven into the fabric of human history. One day it's them, the next day it's you" (111). This connects the Syrian refugee crisis and Abawi's narrative to the traumas which have gone before it, including the Holocaust and the journeys of American immigrants. Therefore, *Permanent Goodbyes* does not only focus on communicative memory or community trauma within its own boundaries. Through the overarching narration by the personification of Destiny it is able to connect this trauma to those that have gone before and are still to come – connecting the Syrian refugees to victims of traumas worldwide. This is a new way of looking at trauma literature, an advantage of trauma fiction. In a world where many communities face strife and displacement it helps to open the world of trauma studies as the study of the trauma of communities and peoples, not just singular events. This makes trauma a connective point throughout human history, creating a parallel between the author, narrator,

reader, and protagonists. Additionally, Destiny comments that "as generations pass, most forget that their people too, have suffered. Some, though, still hold empathy in their souls" (111). Abawi is reminding us that many different communities have suffered, and that we must remember that as we respond to those who are suffering. The idea of a commonality of experienced trauma contributes to *Permanent Goodbyes* as a memory and trauma text. It is not just about the memories of Syrian refugees but about a worldwide memory that all people have suffered and, in that knowledge, people are intrinsically linked and ideally have empathy for those suffering because of it.

The message regarding the importance of being the helper in this context is emboldened by the prologue, dictated by Destiny, who speaks directly to the reader:

> The human heart is the most complicated creation I've ever encountered. The formation of the cosmos was easier to understand… Your greatest achievements came from your brain. Your heart is a whole different system. An intensely more complicated one. It's a place that can hold an incredible amount of love or an incredible amount of hate - sometimes at the same time. (1)

Here the narrator muses on the human condition and how complicated human nature is. Destiny continues by discussing the idea that "I am the one often blamed for your actions" (2). However, the narrator says, this is incorrect. Destiny is not what controls you but what you "meet at the end of the paths you walk on" (2). Reflecting lastly on the finality of human life:

> When and where we meet. That is not up to me...I just show up when it is time – and that moment will always arrive. So yes, you *were* born to die. But in between you are

> meant to live. If we run into each other prematurely, it's not because of my negligence. And often not because of yours. Your world controls me; I do not control you. (3)

The novel as a whole focuses on the idea that you will die but it should be on your own terms, something that is impossible if you are hit by a barrel bomb or shot by ISIS. This reflection by Destiny implies that all conflict is taking control away from the individual in that it leaves you no say in how you live and how you die, and that to take this control away is an abasement of a basic human right. This prologue and the introduction of Destiny as the omniscient narrator further connects all human life to the crisis which is encapsulated in the novel's thirty-three chapters. There is a connection between the reader, their community and their position and the characters in the novel. This is an important motif throughout *Permanent Goodbyes*, one which culminates in the epilogue. The epilogue rounds off Tareq's narrative, the reader learns that he reached Germany but struggles to be included in his new community: "smiles were replaced with suspicion after various traumatizing incidents in Europe – including the coordinated attacks in Paris" (269). Here one community's trauma makes them unable to accept that of another – an unseen human connection going back to the idea that "loss is woven into the fabric of human history" (111). The reader is told that "he [Tareq] stayed quiet" (270) about the abuse he suffered in Germany, something Abawi is not doing. She is bearing witness to trauma and speaking for those who cannot; those who are represented by her characters. Destiny then says "I don't understand how the human eye works. It seems so impaired at times. So, for a moment, let me lend you mine" (271). Abawi attempts to take the reader outside their own biased mind to see the world from an omniscient perspective. Through the narrator's eyes, 'Destiny' claims that:

> These people - the refugees or migrants or whatever you choose to call them – are fragile vessels…when kindness, love and understanding are poured into them, a solid foundation is created, building sturdy citizens who can do wonders for those around them. But when they are filled with hate, hostility, mercilessness - something different happens…they become hard, filled with shadows and despair. (271-272)

This brings the epilogue round to Alexia and Tareq who help each other to become better people. This is opposite to the attempted kidnapping of Tareq's sister in Greece (240-253), which can cause the refugees to become hostile and weary in their host countries rather than 'sturdy citizens, which is the negative impact that Madelaine Hron refers to. The last thought of the epilogue brings the novel full circle to its epigraph: "be that helper, do what you can to make that world a better place" (272). Thus, the frame narrative of this novel is the didactic principles it stands on; a common humanity which all readers must adopt. Creating a collective rather than an us-versus-them trauma narrative. Abawi considers a new way of looking at world-wide trauma and memory; as a way to connect, rather than viewing trauma and traumatic experiences as boats drifting far apart with nothing in common.

A Land of Permanent Goodbyes is overall a complicated construction with changing focalization and focus with a frame narrative which is didactic in nature and a narrator who is a personification of Destiny. Atia Abawi has constructed a fictional narrative focused around two key protagonists which is based on first-hand experience and extensive research, whereby the fictitious characters represent composites of both Syrian refugees and volunteers. This has the effect of splitting the novel into the micro level, represented by Tareq and Alexia, and the macro level which exists both in the larger issue these characters represent, and the themes and motifs brought forward by this frame narrative. Readers of *Permanent Goodbyes* are encouraged to remember the human connection through trauma and traumatic memory and

themselves become the helpers in these situations. To remember the connectivity and finality of the human condition whilst considering this novel as a case study to such incidents. *Permanent Goodbyes* is both the most recent work and the only work of fiction that this thesis considers, and Abawi combines the singular perspective which we have seen in *The Last Jew of Treblinka* with the journalistic form which controls *Enrique's Journey*. Abawi's *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* is a culmination of a variety of styles of trauma narratives which aims to connect her narrative to the broader picture of human suffering. Atia Abawi uses trauma-fiction and literariness to construct a didactic trauma text which is able to paint a picture of Syrian suffering. In turn she is bearing witness to the trauma of those encapsulated by her characters. Abawi's approach to trauma and memory and the composite nature of *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* exemplifies the narration of trauma in a modern setting, allowing us to reflect on the application of trauma studies and memory in a modern trauma text.

Conclusion. Chil Rajchman's *The Last Jew of Treblinka,* Sonia Nazario's *Enrique's Journey* and Atia Abawi's *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* as Trauma Texts

Between 1933 and 1945 roughly 17 million people were murdered by the Nazi regime, and many victims faced forced mass migration before their deaths in Nazi camps. Between 1998 and 2012, 7,216 people were killed trying to cross the Mexico/US border and in 2019 the ICE's (United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement's) detained population was estimated at 52,000. Since the start of the Syrian war in 2011 approximately 131,750 people have died, in 2018 roughly six people died every day whilst making the crossing to Greece, and 6.6 million refugees live outside of Syria today. In 2020 the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) estimated that worldwide there were 80 million 'forcibly displaced people', 26.3 million of whom were war refugees. These statistics may seem random or unrelated in the context of those who survived these traumas. However, those that survived are consistently haunted by the memory of those who did not; relatives and friends whose memory contributed to the ongoing suffering of trauma victims. The Holocaust, American immigration and the Syrian refugee crisis are all 'traumas of displacement', and the forced displacement of peoples is an ongoing issue on a global scale. The problem with statistics such as these however is that we tend to get lost in the numbers, disregarding the individuals hidden behind them and the traumatic narratives they have to tell. Chil Rajchman, Sonia Nazario and Atia Abawi fight against this anonymity in their respective narratives. All three authors take the overarching trauma and focus on the individual, either autobiographically or as journalists, to humanize conflict and to educate their readers.

Chil Rajchman's testimonial autobiography, *The Last Jew of Treblinka*, is a first-person narration of life in Treblinka concentration camp and details the uprising and Rajchman's escape. Rajchman's narrative is highly personal and is based solely on the author's memory of

events (with some editing in 1946 for stylistics), which sets it apart from the broadly researched narratives of Nazario and Abawi. *The Last Jew of Treblinka* is a narrative of the Holocaust, an event which was key in the development of trauma theory and memory studies. It is clear in *Treblinka* how memory and history are distinct, exemplified by the varying statistics along different narratives. Furthermore, this autobiography adheres to Caruthian ideas about expressing trauma and how autobiography is a process of trauma and the one way to represent it to others. Rajchman's short, staccato sentences and factual details indicate an inability to fully narrativize his own trauma, rather sticking to facts and factual representation, with his goal being to educate the reader. However in some ways, simply by writing in any form, Rajchman is already moving towards a pluralisation of trauma theory to which Rothberg refers, and Rajchman's occasional emotional reflections, such as those regarding his sister, show him bearing witness to and working through his trauma. *Treblinka* is an 'in-between' case study: it follows many conventions of other (Holocaust) autobiographies and avoids literariness, it takes as a topic the historical trauma which is central to the development of trauma theory. However, the narrative was translated to English posthumously in 2011 and therefore allows us to analyse it in a modern context, one wherein events such as the Eichmann trial or Rothberg's ideas of pluralisation allow us to look at the narrative in a different light. *The Last Jew of Treblinka* is an autobiographical Holocaust testimony which sits between the Caruthian model of trauma theory and Rothberg's pluralisation, which as a narrative highlights 'traditional' elements of traumatic memory and trauma theory, whilst its delayed publication creates a parallel with how we study the works of Nazario and Abawi.

Sonia Nazario's *Enrique's Journey* is an anthropological study of Central and South American immigrants and their journey to the United States. Whilst Nazario focuses primarily on the narrative of the titular protagonist Enrique, thereby simulating the singular focus we have seen from Rajchman, her narrative is thoroughly researched and exists on two levels, the

micro, and the macro. On the macro level Nazario looks at the 7,216 people who died crossing the Mexico/US border between 1998 and 2012, and the 52,000 people detained by ICE, mentioned above. On a micro level Nazario focuses on Enrique, his journey, his story, and the family he left behind in the Dominican Republic. Nazario focuses on a non-European perspective and her work goes against ideas about the irrepresentability of trauma outside of autobiography. Whilst Rajchman's narrator and focalizer are one and the same, the focalizer in Nazario's narrative shifts due to the anthropological nature of her work. Nazario leaves judgement to the reader, which exemplifies the journalistic background of the piece with its original 2002 publication in the *LA times*. Nazario's narrative can be updated and revised when the protagonist's life changes. Enrique is a living, breathing protagonist and is emblematic of the struggles of other Central or South American immigrants. Nazario's work allows for a re-evaluation of narrating non-European and non-US trauma from a journalist's perspective and how this can influence the acts of bearing witness and humanizing mass-traumas.

Atia Abawi combines the singular protagonist that both Rajchman and Nazario make central, with Nazario's journalistic approach to narrativizing trauma. Abawi also moves away from the statistics (mentioned above) and amalgamates her research into the protagonists Tareq and Alexia on a micro level. On the macro level Abawi looks at the conflict as a whole and the journey many migrants take, for example with references to events that have had mass media attention such as the death of Alan Kurdi. On the micro level Tareq, his family, and Alexia become representative of the refugees, those who died or were left behind and the helpers (respectively) who are the core of the Syrian refugee crisis. The key difference between the narratives of Rajchman, Nazario and Abawi is that Abawi's narrative is a work of 'fiction', the characters did not exist under these specific names and are an amalgamation of different people Abawi spoke to and experiences she had as a foreign correspondent for CNN and NBC. However, what Abawi writes about is not fictive in nature and therefore the line between fiction

and non-fiction is blurred in Abawi's *Permanent Goodbyes*. Abawi writes what Irene Visser refers to as 'trauma fiction' a genre which can be considered effective in studying traumas of displacement outside a European perspective.

These three case studies highlight the narration of three major traumas, and there are both similarities and differences between how the authors approach their subject material, in addition to differences in how they relate to ideas about trauma and trauma texts. All three authors suffered traumas themselves; Rajchman was a concentration camp inmate, Nazario a Central American immigrant, and Abawi an Afghani refugee. However, whilst Rajchman is narrating his own trauma, the other two authors chose to write about non-personal situations, with personal motivation and experience to help them. In this way it is possible that all three authors are working through their own traumas. Despite similarities in background, all three authors chose a different manner to narrate the respective traumatic events. Whilst Rajchman wrote an autobiographical testimonial memoir which is completely personal in nature and based completely on his own experience, Nazario and Abawi wrote non-fiction and fiction narratives respectively, which represent a new way of writing about trauma through journalism. All three authors narrate what Jeffrey refers to as social or cultural trauma which "occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness" (6). However, as Irene Visser notes, each trauma requires its own representation, particularly when those traumas are different in many ways, including their geography and time frame.

These differences are important to help us consider the evolution of narrating trauma and how trauma theory can evolve to study traumas represented in literature in new ways. Memory studies focuses on memory as distinct from history and is an important topic in literature: "numerous texts portray how individuals and groups remember their past and how they construct identities on the basis of recollected memories" (Neuman 334). All three

narratives focus on both memory and history. Whilst Rajchman relates his personal memories of what happened he also includes statistics, dates, and historical facts. Nazario also uses dates and definitions, as well as the memories of those she interviewed to construct her narrative. Abawi relies the least on history, partially due to her 'fiction' style narrative. She offers one date, the bombing of Tareq's house in 2015, and mentions one important historical event, the death of Alan Kurdi. History is key to Abawi's prologue and epilogue. Other than this, she focuses predominantly on constructing her characters and events from interviews and people she met whilst researching, focusing on the refugee experience and memories.

Trauma theory was developed as a formal field in the 1990s and studies into the psychological trauma of WW2 and Holocaust survivors as well as their narratives was key to this development. Caruth, who was instrumental in the development of the field, believed in the linguistic irrepresentability of trauma which influenced the interdisciplinary space between literary and trauma theories. Caruth posited that autobiography was an exception to this irrepresentability and therefore became the ideal and accepted form of trauma text. It is only in recent decades that scholars such as Michael Rothberg have considered the plurality of trauma theory and how it can be linguistically represented in different forms. Trauma theory is a developing field of study where there is one key issue; the lack of non-European and US perspectives and traumas which are studied. Nazario and Abawi both focus on traumas occurring outside of a European or US perspective (except for Abawi's 15 pages on the American Alexia in Greece) and therefore these narratives are set apart from Rajchman's narrative. A key difference between the writing of Nazario and Abawi versus Rajchman is the influence of journalism on their respective writing. Journalism surrounding the Holocaust was poor, exemplified by the 1942 Telegraph article on the Holocaust which went largely unnoticed. Generally, journalism on the Holocaust was 'unpopular' and avoided, as Greenslade concludes in his article, "the plight of the Jews was largely overlooked at the time. The British

public averted its gaze, and the Telegraph does well to remind us of that fact". Survivors such as Rajchman relied on telling their own narratives to get their story to the public in search of retribution, and narratives such as his became important in the trials of Nazi criminals such as Demjanjuk. Conversely, in the later twentieth and particularly in the twenty-first century, media is fast paced and key to reporting on traumas and world events, which is a dual edged sword. Whilst this availability of information makes the world more informed of traumas and world events, it further reduces mass casualties down to statistics like the ones which started this conclusion. Nazario and Abawi, both journalists by trade, took the advantage that journalism and journalistic research gives us and zoomed in on a micro level to humanize the conflict and move away from statistics.

Another key difference between the narratives is that Nazario and Abawi's narrative has a sense of pluralisation and literariness, aided by the journalistic style which they both utilize. Rajchman however focuses on a personal narrative and uses an autobiography to work through his trauma, and he avoids literariness in his autobiography. Nazario and Abawi embrace literariness as a tool to construct their narratives and move away from the staccato and 'clean' autobiographic style of Rajchman. Although literariness is a possibility that Caruth attends to, and some literariness does appear in Rajchman's narrative for example in his descriptions and emotional reflections. The chronological order in which this thesis considered the narratives of Rajchman, Nazario and Abawi allows us to examine the changes over time in how personal and community or social traumas and collective memories are narrated and how ideas about trauma texts can change. Journalism allows for a distance from the subject material, whilst also allowing the author to make one character emblematic of a larger issue by using a frame narrative, even amalgamating people and research into 'fictional' representatives such as Tareq and Alexia in Abawi's narrative.

Trauma theory is a developing area of study, and there is a broadening of the interdisciplinary space with literature. This can start to broaden both the geographical horizons of trauma theory into non-European and non-US perspectives, and the representability of trauma through the possibilities of journalism and the inclusion of literariness, as exemplified by Nazario and Abawi. In *Acts of Memory* Mieke Bal discusses the process of moving from re-enactment of trauma to narrative memory. In trauma literature the reader traditionally has to investigate the gaps left by this process, either interpreting information or adding it as they read. In the narratives of Nazario and Abawi this is done for the reader; the authors are the journalists. Rajchman's autobiography makes use of both methodologies. The reader has to fill in some information, but Rajchman does fill in some pieces himself, for example through use of "it is worth mentioning" followed by key information. Nazario and Abawi, who are both journalists, fill in the majority of gaps and information for the reader. Nazario for example connects the incident of Wendy's rape to broader statistics, giving the reader the necessary information. Abawi bears witness to the trauma of Syrian refugees through the amalgamation of her research into her characters and uses Destiny's 'eye' to provide a broad scope of information to the reader. This approach by Abawi and Nazario helps to educate the reader on non-European or US traumas, where information is less available to them. The result of these approaches by all three authors has ultimately the same result, and all three narratives are able to move effectively from re-enactment to narrative memory. The reader has all the facts and interpretations they need to fully understand the trauma they have read about, and all the narratives are effective and informative trauma texts.

This thesis takes a small sample from these traumas, as well as a small sample from the traumas that have occurred worldwide since 1939. Therefore it only broaches the possibilities of what trauma theory can expand to include within literary theory and how we can broaden the definition of a trauma text. Future research needs to focus on the representability of trauma

and how that can vary, from memoirs to autobiographies to the values of non-fiction and fiction-based narratives. As well as focussing on journalism and trauma fiction as ways of representing trauma and moving trauma away from an amalgamation of statistics.

This thesis set out to identify a gap in trauma theory by considering three trauma narratives, and to demonstrate how we can mould and adapt the commonly accepted ideas about what a trauma text is. The goal of this was to accommodate contemporary literature, politics, and the perspective of those often considered subaltern. It is clear from Chil Rajchman's *The Last Jew of Treblinka*, Sonia Nazario's *Enrique's Journey* and Atia Abawi's *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* that the definition of a trauma text and how trauma is narrated can be moulded and adapted to better comprehend collective traumas of displacement and how we can make then representable. Ultimately this allows scholarship of trauma to expand its ideas of representation in a new century and value other genres and styles as trauma texts, thus creating a broader scope for future study. Whilst Rajchman's text is an autobiographic testimony of his time in Treblinka, Sonia Nazario and Atia Abawi are journalists who narrate and represent the traumas of others. This can broaden what we define as a representative trauma text in a move away from a European or US perspective and the autobiographical norm.

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