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Chaim Noy

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# 'I was here!': addressivity structures and inscribing practices as indexical resources



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CHAIM NOY

SAPIR COLLEGE, ISRAEL

**ABSTRACT** The article examines how practices of inscription and structures of addressivity (Goffman) at a symbolic site provide implicit indexical means for establishing subjectivities and agencies. By examining a visitor book located in a national commemoration site in Jerusalem, Israel, the article first argues that inscribing practices themselves can function as implicit indexical mechanisms. In ritualized environments, inscribing assumes the function of a non-referential indexical because discourse is materially engraved unto a surround. These environments are also characterized by prescribed addressivity structures. The article goes on to discern between a number of addressivity structures, evinced in visitors' aesthetized entries. These structures serve as contextualizing cues and evince the ways visitors establish subjectivities and participation in national commemoration. Addressivity structures are shown to construct different types of social actors, and the spaces and temporalities within which they operate. Building on previous research on performance, the article shows how addressivity and inscription together supply the prerequisites for situated performances of identities and selves on inscribed and symbolic stages.

**KEY WORDS:** *addressivity, commemoration, identity, ideology, indexicality, inscription*

## Introduction

Pragmatic explorations into the ways discourse assumes meaning have observed that a necessary requirement entails its anchoring in specific settings in which it is produced and received. Without contextualization to particular social, spatial and ritual environments, utterances – situated units of discourse – would carry no meaning or alternatively, could be meaningful in so many ways as to render them useless in terms of social interaction and communication.

During the last two decades the study of how meaning is accomplished discursively has integrated into what in terms of Charles Peirce is a 'symbolic-based'

meaning of utterances, also an 'indexical-based' meaning of utterances (Peirce, 1986, 1991). In Peircean thought, the term 'symbolic' refers to representational relationship that is constructed arbitrarily, that is, via convention. The term 'indexical' concerns representational relationship that conveys some inherent continuity – physical or other – between what is said (sign) and what it stands for or represents. The linguistic and para-linguistic elements that establish this kind of 'pointing-to relationship' (Silverstein, 2004: 626) are indexicals, which can assume the shape of deictics, tense, demonstratives and more. Indexicals concern the 'pervasive context-dependency of natural language utterances', where they are 'crucial to contextual inference, reflexivity and semantic interpretation more generally' (Hanks, 2000a: 124–5); indexicals 'introduce', to employ Levinson's (1988: 163) terms 'an irreducible context-dependence into the nature of meaning'.

With regards to construction and communication of meaning, the differences between the indexical and the symbolic viewpoints echo the 1970s and 1980s turn in studying the relations between language use and socio-cultural functions and meanings. In fact, research into indexicals – mostly deixis – has been among the cornerstones of pragmatics, a point which Levinson has repeatedly demonstrated (Levinson, 1983). As a result of the integration of indexical meaning unto symbolic meaning, and the more or less concurrent rise of pragmatics, different social sites whereat meaning-making processes and related practices of articulation can be studied effectively have emerged (Gumperz, 1982; Hanks, 1992, 2000a; Levinson, 1983; Mühlhäusler and Harré, 1990; Silverstein, 2003).

While the work on indexicals has furthered the understanding of contextualizing mechanisms, it has tended to focus on referential expressions, usually deictics, leaving other aspects and dimensions of indexicality under-researched. This research attends to indexicality that is established *implicitly or non-referentially* via a particular social practice, namely inscribing. It offers a theoretical contribution in the shape of rethinking indexicality in non-referential and material perspectives. Specifically, the article will show how inscription practices and addressivity structures in a symbolic site serve as powerful implicit resources for establishing meaning indexically.

In the capacity of functioning indexically, inscribing and addressivity will be viewed as 'indexicalization cues', which are *implicit mechanisms* that convey knowledge regarding how utterances should be understood (Gumperz, 1982, 1992). Different terms have been suggested for describing the 'implicit' character of such mechanisms, such as Silverstein's (2001) notion of the native's 'limits of awareness', and Hanks's (2000b) notion of 'non-referential indexicals'. Notwithstanding the many differences they hold, these concepts converge in suggesting that indexically established meaning is sometimes achieved through *material conditions and embodied practices* that are oftentimes overlooked. Residing outside the realms of reference (under ideologies of logocentrism or verbocentrism), these conditions and processes are not coded as 'meaningful' but as insignificant or trivial background.

The article also offers an empirical contribution, which concerns an up-close examination of articulation in the highly symbolic and ideological settings of a national memorial site. In this regard, the visitor book supplies a rich case study for examining the linkage between indexicality, addressivity, and national ideology, and for showing how, in a site of national-militaristic heritage, notions of membership and participation are being performed.

### *Commemorative spaces*

The corpus examined below consists solely of inscribed utterances, which assume the form of entries in a commemorative visitor book, located in the Ammunition Hill National Memorial Site (AHNMS) in Jerusalem, Israel. Inaugurated in 1975, the AHNMS is a war commemoration complex dedicated to the memory of the Israeli soldiers who died in the battle of Ammunition Hill during the 1967 War. The site celebrates the victory of the Israeli Army over the Jordanian Legion, the 'liberation' of East Jerusalem and the 'unification' of the city. The site comprises a number of spaces, including an outdoor area where the original trenches are found, and an indoor museum.

The museum presents exhibits and information about the Ammunition Hill Battle and about the campaign over Jerusalem. Most of the exhibits are commemorative devices, such as the Golden Wall of Commemoration (where the names of the 182 soldiers who fell in the battle are engraved in gold), and a short film about the battle, narrated from the perspective of the soldiers who fought in it. There are quite a number of discursive artefacts that are presented in the museum, such as letters from the soldiers to their families, army generals' personal autographs and war journals, and the like.

The AHNMS museum is one of many small-scale museums, established over the last three decades in Israel, dedicated to the documentation and celebration of agricultural and military Zionist achievements. These museums combine educational and ideological agendas, and as such they play a role in a larger nexus of cultural sites and rituals that are devoted to commemoration in and of the Sabra culture (native Jewish Israeli culture; see Handelman and Shamgar-Handelman, 1997). Typically, such museums share a narrative whereby 'a univocal version of the Israeli nation-building mythology is routinely reiterated in an unproblematic way' (Katriel, 1997: 151).

The present exploration into indexical functions in museums and heritage attractions is part of a larger project that concerns explorations into performance theory and practices, and specifically into performances in tourism, a context that is immensely rich with globalized environments, materialities and economies of meaning. Performance in tourism is defined as aesthetic and socially formative expression, which is achieved only through the situated incorporation of material worlds and technical (or technological) aspects (Edensor, 1998; Noy, 2007, 2008a). From this perspective, inquiring into the mechanisms by which discourse ties itself to or anchors itself in the environment – in a word, *indexes it* – is illuminating in terms of understanding how performance is accomplished in various sites.

How discourses index environments ('contexts') is complicated because indexicals operate in two directions: as indexicals tie utterances unto the environments in which they are produced, they simultaneously also supply cues and shape understanding of the latter (see Silverstein's [1976] notion of 'maximally creative' indexicals). In other words, for people in interaction, deciphering 'environment' and 'discourse' is a co-dependent, interrelated and simultaneous process, whereby different sets of semiotic resources serve jointly.

The data presented shortly consist of the entries in the visitor book which was completed between June 2005 and June 2006, and includes approximately 1600 entries. These data were complemented by observations and interviews conducted during the summer and autumn of 2006. These indicated that the majority of visitors were either local Jewish Israelis or Ultra-Orthodox (*Haredi*) Jewish tourists, mostly from North America. As a consequence, most of the entries in the book are written in Hebrew (50% of the entries) and English (45% of the entries; French, Russian, German and Portuguese texts are also found, but infrequently). Note that both major populations of visitors are Jewish, they strongly identify with Israel's Zionist ideology, and are supportive of the militaristic ideology promoted by the AHNMS.

#### PLACING COMMEMORATION

Visitor books are familiar discursive objects, which are commonly found in institutions that present aesthetic or educational attractions (museums, galleries, parks). Visitor books' historical function was formal, and included obtaining information about visitors and visits to particular sites (Woodruff, 1993). Hence, a minimal visitor book entry commonly consisted of three elements: name, date and place of origin.

The case with the commemorative visitor book under examination is rather different, however, as it is made to serve broader and more active social functions. In previous research, I argued that the book actually serves as a social stage whereupon entries assume the state of performances. The transformation from *surface into stage* is crucially achieved by a number of material features that frame the book in a unique way, and by the materiality of the book itself, which suggests specific communicative affordances and restrictions (Noy, 2008a, 2008b). Hence, rather than viewing the book's social function in terms of an a priori category ('visitor book'), observations into what it offers and how it is utilized by visitors suggest that it serves as a semiotic attraction (MacCannell, 1976) that offers unique stages for articulation.

The material features that frame the book include, first, the spatial location of the book inside the museum. While visitor books are objects that are commonly located near the site's exit, where visitors can recap their impressions before they leave, at the Ammunition Hill Museum the book is located in one of the innermost halls, near the Golden Wall of Commemoration (where the flame of eternal light flickers). Second, the book is the main attraction in the hall where it is located. It is positioned inside a large and impressive structure, which is made of black steel, and includes two cylinder pillars that grow out of a circular platform slightly raised from the floor. One cylinder is about four meters high, and on the

other, truncated cylinder, the book is respectively placed. The book is positioned on an impressive wooden pedestal, to which a silver metal plate is attached. On the plate, directions regarding how/what to write in the book specify that visitors are to write their 'impressions' (*hitrashmutxem*) in 'a manner that respects the commemorative site'.

In addition to these framing elements, which suggest that the book is a rather different device than a common visitor book, the material features of the book itself shape the way it is used and the appearances and meanings that the entries in it possess. The book is of an impressive and formidable appearance: it has a dark leather cover, and includes 100 thick pages made of parchment (the pages are quite wide, and measure 26 by 34 cm). On its cover, and on each page, four logos are printed vertically: the symbol of the State of Israel, the symbol of the City of Jerusalem, the symbol of the Israeli Defense Forces and the logo of Ammunition Hill Museum. Importantly, the wide spaces afforded by the book's pages do not have dividing lines or any other directions as to where visitors should inscribe their entries (see Figure 1).

These diverse features suggest that the visitor book is not offered as a bureaucratic document that is meant to register visits, but as a densely symbolic surface that invites active participation in the embodied and ritualistic production (and not only consumption) of national symbolism and commemoration. As a result, the book's entries are not framed as reflections on the visit, but as one of its emotional and ideological highlights; or, from an institutional perspective, they are not texts that represent reflections on the Ammunition Hill site but are an organic part of the institution's discursive ecology.

Further, the lack of dividing lines or directions inside the book means that, in these ritualistic acts of participation-through-inscription, it is up to the visitors to take care of each and every aspect of the entry they wish to produce: from where on the book's pages and in the spaces of the book's openings (the conjoined surface of two adjacent pages) the entry should be inscribed, to what it should include (content, graphics, length, etc.), and even to the writing utensil with which it should be produced (which is not supplied), the possibilities are there for the visitors to materialize.

Consequently, this highly symbolic stage is vividly populated with comments and impressions which are uniquely ornamented by graphic and iconic representations (see Noy, 2008a). Only 20 percent of the entries actually conform to the norm that suggests formal registration, and include all or some of the formal elements (name, date, and place of origin). The majority of the entries include textual and aesthetized expressions, which correspond with other discursive and iconic representations presented in the site. These texts vary in length from a few words ('may they rest in peace') to wordy entries that reach 70 words, with an overall average of 19 words per entry (not counting the entries' signatures; see Stamou and Paraskevolopoulos, 2003, where the average entry length in the visitor book they researched is around 13 words).

Beyond verbal length, entries in this symbolically framed stage vary on a number of additional dimensions, such as size and orthography. Notably, entries vary in the degree they incorporate graphic signs and in the variety of authorships

they exhibit. Entries' graphic signs extend from inflated and emphasized punctuation marks, through dividing, underlying and encircling lines, to colorful drawings. Nearly half of the book's entries (48%) include at least one sort of graphic sign, and nearly half of the book's openings evince one drawing or more. The entries also vary in terms of authorship. Over 80 percent of the entries are not signed by individuals, but by various social groups and groupings, mainly families ('Phadida Family, Ashdod'), military units ('Infantry Officer Course, 05') and other institutional groupings ('Retired Teachers Union, Tiberias').

These qualities do not simply represent dimensions of heterogeneity. Rather, they are an *intended ideological consequence* of the ways this stage is framed. Learning to produce multimodal modes of representation and situated discursive genres (i.e. an entry) involves ideological processes (Blommaert, 2004; Noy, 2008b). This is true also for the collectivized nature of the inscriptions, which corresponds with the cohesive ideology promoted by the national commemorative site. Hence the *book itself* partakes in meaning-making practices, and does not merely mirror or reflect visitor's opinions. As indicated above, it is transformed from a document that encodes entries to a device that offers a special resource where subjectivities and ideologies can be established performatively.

In the terms of historian Hyden White (1981: 10), who compares annals with narratives, the former 'deals in *qualities* rather than *agents*, figuring forth a world in which things *happen* to people rather than one in which people *do* things' (italics in the original). The visitor book then, affords a shift from an annals-type of function to a narrative-type of function.

### **'Open' addressivity: inscribing acts as non-referential indexicals**

The first indexical dimension to be examined concerns the very act of inscribing, which I presently view *as an occasion of indexicalization* (Silverstein, 1996; Silverstein and Urban, 1996; and from a different perspective, Mondada, 2007). Inscribing in this symbolic stage amounts to a non-referential indexical function, where indexicality is accomplished by the very physical nature of the practice. Like accent in spoken utterances, inscription can in itself – prior to and even regardless of *what is expressed* – function effectively as a (non-referential) indexical.

The non-referential indexical function of inscribing emerges predominantly in occasions where activities are performed in symbolic environments, where they carry ritualistic meanings. In these cases, the very acts of inscribing, and oftentimes also the utensils and surfaces that are involved in the production of inscriptions, carry a special symbolic value which is meaning conferring (Danet, 1997; Salomon, 2001). In fact, the very act of producing any type of mark – even a plain non-discursive sign such as a checkmark – carries semiotic value in such settings, and the reasons for this is that its symbolic construction precisely concerns a *prescribed (ritualized) structure of addressivity*. As part of their ritual efficacy, in these settings addressivity structures serve as implicit indexical mechanisms (Hanks, 1987, 2000b), or contextualizing cues (Gumperz, 1982),

which help construct authorial subjectivities and types of memberships and participation in ritual.

This is evinced in the AHNMS visitor book, which is framed as an immobile and unmoving inscription surface (resembling a commemorative monument), and where inscriptions are instantaneously transformed into public exhibits that are accessible to museum visitors in a prescribed (unchanging) setting. The instances examined shortly illustrate how ritualistic entextualization in the form of very short entries that evince minimal addressivity structures, indexes the spatial surround. These telegraphic entries evince unspecified (minimal or 'open') addressivity structures, which is to say that they do not present any explicit addressivity categories, beyond what is implied in the act of their inscription in situ. These open addressivity structures are nonetheless meaningful on this symbolic stage, precisely because they themselves assume a symbolic value. In other words, their briefness and unspecified structure of addressivity bring to the fore the indexical function that is accomplished via inscription, which underlies *all entries* performed on this stage. In the next section, longer entries will be examined, and the examination will then shift from the very acts of inscription to the entries' intricate addressivity structures.

Entries of the type presented in Examples I and II include short texts (usually three words or fewer), which are supplied in addition to the formal elements (as in Example I), or independently (without any formal elements, as in Example II). In terms of verbal length, they account for about a fifth of the book's entries which include text (19%); in terms of their addressivity, open or unspecified structures appear in about a third (31%) of the book entries. The inscriptions' original layout is retained (both inscriptions appear in Figure 1: the first on the right page, and the second on the left page. Both are in Hebrew).

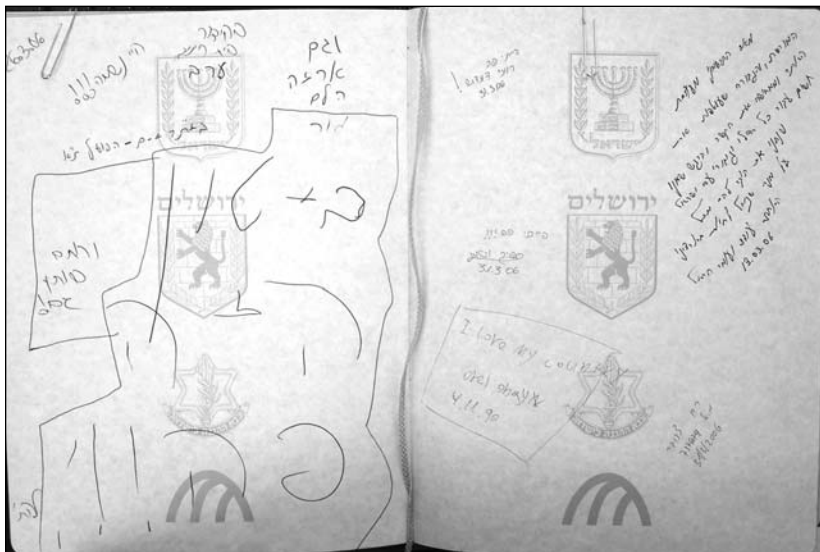


FIGURE 1. *Indexicality through inscribing*

**Example I**

I was here!	/hayiti po!
Roy Dadosh	/Roy Dadosh
31.3.06	/31.3.06

**Example II**

BITTON	/Bitton
WAS	/haya
HERE!!!	/po!!!

The first example illustrates a succinct inscription which nearly meets the criteria of a fully adequate visitor book entry: the Roy Dadosh inscription is both signed and dated. It lacks only the indication of the author's place of origin. Interestingly, however, in addition to this basic information, a short text is added which assumes the verbal core of the inscription: 'I was here!' Since the name and the date are specified in the signature, a question arises as to the function of the short text. If the information has already been supplied, why does the visitor bother to repeat it?

I argue that the short text amounts to a performative utterance by which the inscription's 'principal', or the person who is responsible for the utterance (see Goffman, 1981, elaborated below) is ritualistically presenced at this site. In this and in similar cases subjectivities are being materialized on this stage, and this is accomplished through making use of situated resources, namely prescribed structures of addressivity. Consequentially, this discursive presencing of the principal is accomplished indexically *through the act of inscribing in a symbolic site*.

Specifically, the three word utterance amounts to what Silverstein (1976: 36) called a 'maximally creative' indexical. It is a constitutive expression, which establishes the social entity of the 'principal' through granting it voice. Each of the expression's verbal elements – personal pronoun, inflected verb and deictic adverb – joins in in establishing its indexical efficacy. This function cannot be accomplished by the sheer formal act of recording the inscriber's name and the date of the inscription. At stake is not an administrative record, but a social stage where actors emerge together with their subjectivities and ideologies.

The three word utterance commences with the discursive 'I', which, as Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990: 92) explain, 'indexes the utterance with the person who is to be held morally responsible for its illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effects . . . the speaker' (see also Harré and Gillett, 1994; Harré and Moghaddam, 2003). In this case this is the inscriber, identified as one Roy Dadosh. Indexing the principal with the help of a personal pronoun is of course a clear manifestation of the inscribers' construal of the visitor book as a communicative site with particular possibilities of addressivity.

The pronoun is followed by an inflected verb, which plays a complementary role in shaping the indexical link between inscriber, inscription and the place of inscribing. While the actual date of the inscription is indicated, the point is, again, not the 'calendar time', that which appears in annals, but the social time that is

made of units of participation or visitorship (the book's 'turn-taking' order, as it were). For this reason, the verbs in this and in other entries are inflected so as to address the temporal perspective of the readers and not of the inscribers (for then it should have been 'I am here!'). The tense inflection serves indexically in accord with addressivity, which builds on the temporal structure of the social interaction the visitor book accommodates, an interaction that extends beyond the duration of a particular visit.

Finally, the deictic 'here' is pivotal in establishing the connection between the inscriber, the act of inscribing and the *place* where this act is actually performed. 'Here' deictically indexes a spatial notion of proximity, yet what is precisely the diameter captured by this spatial proximity is unspecified and negotiable. The book's framing as a commemorative device suggests some directions as to where 'here' is. The meaning of inscriptions in the book is an outcome of its *stationary quality*. Unlike most documents (from books to mail to SMS), the visitor book is a stationary site of entextualization, which is not mobile or movable. As indicated earlier, this is true of both the material setting *and also* of the symbolic framing. It is more akin to a monument than to a traveling document, and the inscriptions therein do not enjoy any physical trajectory (Lynch, 1999). Hence inscribing on the book's surfaces gains the semiotic value of engraving durable signs, and whatever the notion of 'here' encompasses, the inscription becomes part of this space at the moment of its articulation.

The indexical consequences of the stationary quality of the book concern its addressivity structure. It suggests for inscribers that the inscriptions they produce will be read on *precisely the same location* as those in which they were produced, and by a more or less predictable category of people: visitors at the AHNMS. The inscriptions thus gain a performative power, whereby they indexically refer not only to the place of their production, but also – by the nature of the surface on which they appear – to the place of their reception.

The second example (Figure 2, on the left) includes an even shorter entry, which is unsigned and undated. Due to its irregular dimensions (the short entry occupies three quarters of the page's large space), the inscription 'BITTON WAS HERE!!!' initially strikes the eye as more akin to graffiti, than to an entry that accords with norms of inscription. More support for this view concerns its content, and specifically the evocation of the surname 'Bitton' in this particular location. Those familiar with the politics of ethnicity in Israeli society will likely acknowledge that Bitton is a recognizably Mizrahi surname (of Jews who immigrated to Israel from Muslim countries). Much like the well-known 'Baruch Gamili' Mizrahi graffiti (which became famous during the 1948 War), the large 'BITTON WAS HERE' inscription can be viewed as a graffiti-like utterance, presencing and proclaiming Mizrahi voice in the heart of the Zionist militaristic establishment (which has been and still is largely under Ashkenazi hegemony, or hegemony of Jews of European descent).

Yet when examined from an indexical perspective, the inflated inscription actually exhibits links to the norms that govern visitor book entries, and that concern their prescribed addressivities. Typically, here too the inscriber makes effective use of the ritualistic context of inscription and of indexical functions.

In fact, the utterance is arguably a 'pure indexical utterance'. While the entry could have been read as an ambiguous exclaim, in the symbolic context discussed above much can be inferred from it through an indexical perspective.

In the case of the Roy Dadosh example, the deictic 'here' indexes a chain of inter-linked sites and spaces. Discussing indexicality, Hanks (2000b: 73–4) notes that in writing practices, 'mention is itself a kind of use, and some stretches of discourse may be ambiguous, or simultaneously mention and direct use, as in: the meaning of *here* is the place where I utter "here"' (italics in the original). The indexical syntax of the utterance 'BITTON WAS HERE!!!' and its sheer physical size may serve, as Hanks suggests, a metapragmatic function. In other words, they may function as a non-referential indexical, or a contextualization cue. They indicate that 'HERE!!!' indexes the *actual pages of the visitor book*, and therefore the combined literacy acts of writing (on) and reading (off) these pages. If this is the case, then the indexical chain does not begin with the museum, but with the very pages of the visitor book, and with acts of inscribing in it. This is why the proximal demonstrative 'here' is frequent on these pages; it in effect indexes the immediacy of the inscribing gesture. Note that this is relevant to graffiti utterances in general, which, by assuming the status of 'graffiti', reflexively frame the very surfaces on which they are produced.

To conclude, the two short entries accomplish something that all other entries in the book pursue. They evince an awareness of the ritual significance of the *very acts of inscribing on the symbolic surfaces of this commemorative stage*, and they do so through making use of the prescribed (implicit) addressivity structure that the site makes available. Employing these resources, the entries establish the presence of their principles at the site, and socially construct authorial subjectivities and perform types of memberships and participation in national commemoration.

### ***'To all the soldiers': the indexical function of addressivity structures***

Now the discussion of implicit indexical mechanisms turns to elaborate entries. These entries, while relying, as do all entries, on the material correspondence between where they were produced and where they are consumed, evince rather intricate structures of addressivity. They thus allow the exploration to shift from examining the very acts of inscribing (with minimal or 'open' addressivity structures), to examining the accomplishment of intricate structures.

In discussing elaborate addressivities Erving Goffman's (1981) famous notion of footing is fruitful, because it allows discerning between different social and communicative functions. Basically, the notion of footing addresses *participation* (a theme Goffman pursued throughout his career). Following Goffman (1981), visitor book utterances can be shown to constitute three different communicative functions, which include author, principal and animator. Briefly, the role of the author concerns the entity which selects the words and sentiments that

are expressed in the utterance. The principal is the individual or the group to the positions of whom the words of the inscription attest. In the visitor book, the principal is conventionally marked in and through the signature at the end of the entry. Through this act of autographic signature, s/he is made to assume the responsibilities entailed in composing an entry. Finally, the animator is the one who physically produces the utterance, the one who holds the pen (the 'writing box', to paraphrase Goffman, 1981: 226).

With the help of Goffman's typology, and ensuing elaborations by Hanks (2000b), Levinson (1988) and Van Leeuwen (2001) – all of which made clear why this typology is important for sociolinguistics, pragmatics and discourse analysis – it is possible to examine intricate utterances with conceptual sensitivity, and see how their addressivity structures serve indexical functions. This typology allows to arrive at a categorization of addressivity (even if schematic) of the book's heterogeneous entries. Four categories will be examined. The first two categories (Examples III–IV) pertain to prevalent structures that together represent nearly two-thirds (63%) of the entries that include texts. Two other structures, which represent a smaller share of the entries, will be examined more briefly later (Examples V–VI). Example III is written solely in Hebrew, while Example IV is mostly in English.

#### Example III

9.8.05	/9.8.05
The visit taught us of the difficult battles	/habikkur limed otanu al hakravot hakashim
and of the high and dear cost we paid in blood	/u'me'xir hadamim hagavo'a sheshilamnu
so that today we would be able to stroll	/kedei shenuxal hayom lehistovev velix'yot
and live in Jerusalem	birushalayim
quietly and freely.	/be'ophen xophshi veshaket.
It was very moving.	/ze haya meragesh me'od.
[The] Shaked Family.	/mishpaxat Shaked.

#### Example IV

*Basa"d* [With God's Help]  
 To all the soldiers  
 who willingly gave  
 their lives for us, I  
 want to express all  
 my gratitude & emotions.  
 Without you, we wouldn't  
 be standing here today.  
 Thank you so much, on my  
 behalf & on all of the *Medinat Yisrael* [The State of Israel]  
 behalf for everything you  
 have done for us.  
 Sincerely,  
 Omry Naftali, PA  
 July 3, 2006  
*Zayin Tamuz, TSHS"V* [Jewish date: 7th day in the 10th month, 5765]

A number of dimensions are involved in intricate addressivity structures, which Hanks (2000b: 116) describes as 'the critical deictic parameters of the communication'. These include the addressers, the addressee, the location of composition, and the inscription itself. These dimensions establish the relation between the inscribing visitors, their inscriptions, their addressees and the place where the utterance is being produced ('here').

In Example III the inscription is directed at the AHNMS. The addressee is implicit, but can be deduced from the utterance's subject, which is *the visit*. The entry commences with the words 'The visit taught us', which frame the ensuing utterance as one which elaborates on the Shaked family's visit. The entry's addressee is also clear from the concluding clause ('It was very moving'), where 'It' refers to the visit. Framed between the opening and the closing statements, a number of intermediate clauses are inscribed. These are viewed as the visitors' *in situ* performances. These words convey how – indeed how well – the visitors have understood the sacrificial national narrative unfolded at the site.

Thus viewed, the core of the entry is a *retelling* of the site's commemorative narrative, *in the words of and from the perspective of the visitors*. In accordance with the site's commemorative mission, the temporal and the personal deictics convey shifts between the (mythic) time of the historic battle, and the moment of the present (see Bakhtin's [1986: 169] notions of 'small time' versus 'great time'); and between the soldiers who fought and fell during the 1967 War, and the visitors who now 'stroll' through the site's premises. This effect is achieved by the extension of the referral function of personal deictics. In the first clause, the plural personal deictic 'us' (*otanu*) refers to the actual visitors, or the principals, and its temporal dimension refers to the recent past (the duration of the visit itself). In the second clause, however, the same personal deictic extends beyond the recent past and beyond the members of the Shaked family, to include a larger collective, which we learn shares similar fate and identity. The principals of this clause are an extended 'we', who include those who fought and fell during the battle. Thus the principal here is located well within the past that is being commemorated. In the third clause, the calibration turns back to the present ('so that today'). Note that in all cases the personal deictic is in plural form.

Through these deictic oscillations a tie is created between the 'then' and the 'now', and between the concrete and immediate 'here' and the more extended notion of 'hereness' (encompassing Jerusalem as a national capital and as a religious symbol). The indexical order evinces a quality which is at the heart of commemorative national ideologies. In its function as a cohesive process, commemoration rests on identification, which allows people who are otherwise strangers to each other to relate and experience a common past.

The Shaked family entry expresses appreciation of an educational experience supplied by the AHNMS. The family had 'learned' a meaningful lesson, and it has done so well enough so as to be able to recite it on the available surfaces of the visitor book. As the Shaked family retells the site's narrative, the latter is transformed into an articulable public text, which is now produced by visitors. The Shaked family emerges as an actor that participates in this scene, and not a passive observer.

In Example IV, the utterance's addressees are stated directly and explicitly in the opening clause. By addressing the imagined audience of the *fallen soldiers* themselves, the entry's subject is also delineated. It is not the 'visit', as was the case with the Shaked entry, but the sacrifice. Unlike Example III, Omry Naftali expresses deep indebtedness to the soldiers who died in the battle some 40 years ago, and *not* to the people who commemorate them. These differences in addressees and topic amount to a significant variation between the entries, which entails a rather different structure of addressivity and with it a different indexical accomplishment of co-performance of subjectivity and participation.

Unlike the telegraphic entries discussed earlier, in elaborate utterances such as these the sense of whereat or wherefrom does the 'utterance speak', and how is it ideologically situated, is established through the *indexical functions of addressivity itself*. In relation to the Shaked entry, the name of the city Jerusalem is mentioned, together with the mention of practices of spatial consumption. To 'stroll' or to walk about are mundane urban practices, which are associated with the aesthetics of sightseeing and tourism (Edensor, 1998). Together with the evocation of the city's name, the addressivity structure positions the Shaked family in a particular time and place, occupying a particular socio-historical position in relation to the national narrative told at the AHNMS.

Contrariwise, in terms of Naftali's principals, no concrete location is mentioned. The place that is mentioned in the entry, through the evocation of '*Medinat Yisrael*' refers to an abstract Jewish myth-scape and not to a concrete location, where actual activities such as strolling may take place (oftentimes the phrases '*Erets Yisrael*' ['The Land of Israel'], 'Zion', or '*Yerushalayim*' ['Jerusalem'] and '*Ir Hakodesh*' ['The City of Holiness'] are also used). This reading is supported by the codeswitch: the Holy Land is uniquely indexed by the Holy Language or Hebrew. The codeswitch stresses the fact that these words index an exceptional space, and that the author, in the capacity of her or his Jewish subjectivity, holds a particular relation to that space. Uttered in Hebrew, the space that is indexed is not a well defined geo-physical place, but an imagined space that combines Jewish holiness, sanctity and nationality (Anderson, 1983). Triangular indexical relations are established between the principal, the code (Hebrew) and the myth-scape of *Medinat Yisrael*. Similar codeswitches are found in 20 percent of the entries in English. They augment the addressivity structure, as they too serve non-referential indexical functions. In such entries, codeswitching serves to tie Jewish spatialities and temporalities, on the one hand, and acts of inscribing in Hebrew (which is considered a sanctified act, and therefore the custom of adding *Bs" d* when writing), on the other.

Through primarily using means of addressivity, Naftali comes to occupy a different space in the identity narrative unfolded at the AHNMS. He communicates from, to, and about different things than do the Shaked (and through a different language). While both partake in the collective narrative, note that Naftali's position is more ridden. The use of a larger number of personal deictics (I, we, us, you), codeswitches, and the apparent tensions between the principal and the author (The State of Israel versus PA, the repetition of the codeswitch in the

signature), indicate a different social position and identity. If for the Shaked's strolling around the city of Jerusalem, or residing in it, are presented as ordinary activities, for Naftali at stake are not activities but primordial (religious) identities; if for the Shaked's writing an entry at the AHNMS is part of what visitors do while sightseeing in Jerusalem, for Naftali it is more akin to religious rite, a pilgrimage, and it is part of what the responsibilities of being a Diaspora Jew means.

Together with minimal addressivity structures depicted in Examples I–II, the addressivity structures illustrated in Examples III–IV cover most of the possibilities of addressivity pursued by visitors on this stage. Yet other structures of addressivity exist, two of which will be briefly examined. While these structures are infrequent (amounting together to less than 4% of the entries), it is worth exploring them because they reflect alternative ideological agendas and possible addressivities. Also, sheer (quantitative) frequency is not the sole factor accounting for saliency on this stage, and graphic dimensions, such as size, color, orthography and iconicity also carry impact on the entries' visibility (as the Bitton inscription clearly evinced).

The first of the two structures examined below illustrates a refuting entry. By this term I designate a category of entries that contain utterances that express critiques, contestations and sometimes straightforward refutations of the national narrative celebrated at the AHNMS. These derive from various ideological perspectives, and amount to some 40 entries of this type in the book. The entry in Example V (Figure 2) is in Hebrew and aims at disrupting the hegemony of the Paratrooper Brigade.



FIGURE 2. *Golani Respect!!*

## Example V

Golani Respect!!	/Golani Kavod!!
[a drawing of a tree]	
Death to all the paratroopers!!	/yamutu kol hatsnefim!!
[a crossed out image of a snake]	
I was here [a drawing of four footsteps]	/hayiti po

Before dealing with its addressivity structure, a few clarifications are needed regarding the entry's iconic language. Golani is the name of an infantry brigade in the Israeli army (as is the Paratrooper Brigade), and there is an ongoing competition and rivalry between the two brigades regarding military status. A tree is the Golani Brigade's icon and a snake in the icon of the Paratrooper Brigade. The term for 'paratroopers' used in the entry is not the common term (*tsanxanim*) but a derogatory military slang term (*tsnephim*).

The entry expresses a straightforward assault on the image of one infantry brigade, from the perspective of another. Rather than partaking in the commemoration of soldiers, which is the site's mandate, the entry wishes them death. Thus, while the inscriber partakes in the production on the visitor book, unlike almost all other entries s/he refutes one or few of the site's basic ideological tenets. The final two pieces that are needed in order to complete this maze are these: first, the many images and representations that are celebrated at AHNMS are those of the paratroopers, who are accredited with the historic achievement of the 'liberation' of Jerusalem. Second, the Paratrooper Brigade is culturally associated with images of Sabra (native born, Ashkenazi Jews) ideal of hegemonic masculinity, while the Golani Brigade is associated with images of Mizrahi Jews. With this information, it is clear that the entry severely contests the hegemony of the type of manhood commemorated at the site (note that in this regard it echoes the Bitton entry discussed earlier, both of which position deprived Mizrahi identity at the AHNMS, albeit in different degrees of reflexivity and aggression).

Because the message is conveyed by the use of specific militaristic jargon and iconicity, it is argued that it has a different set of social positions which it performs through addressivity. Performed in what is, at least formally, a civic site (AHNMS), both the content of this type of entries and their language require 'expert' knowledge of inner military dynamics and symbolism in order to be understood. Such entries are not expressed from or directed to a civic sphere/audience; instead, they establishes military (sub)spheres within the site. In the present case, soldiers (Golani warriors) are the authors, and other soldiers (perhaps of other combat brigades) are its addressees. This is one of many instances which illustrate the thesis that argues for the perfusion of militaristic discourses in Israeli society and culture (Kimmerling, 1993).

The last illustration (Example VI) concerns 'intertextual' entries (there are only seven instances of this category in the book). The entry is located right after two entries of the refuting type, and is written in Hebrew:

**Example VI**

To those who won't grow up anymore, the Israeli society needs to mature.	/lema'an elu shelo yitbagru od, /haxevra hayisraelit tseixa le'hitbager.
Give some more respect to the place that marks the unity of the People and not its division on the grounds of different political opinions.	/tnu yoter kavod lamakom /shemetsa'yen et axdut ha'am /velo et peirudo al reqa /de'ot politiyot shonot.
Without this we wouldn't have existed today.	/lelo ze lo hayinu kayamin hayom.
Impressive museum.	/muse'on marshim.
Yael	/Yael

The addressees of this entry are stated explicitly: they are *other visitors*, and specifically other visitors who inscribe in the book refuting entries. The thematic focus of the entry is a reprimand that is directed at refuting entries (two of which are inscribed on the same page and a few others on earlier pages), which concern fundamental religious critiques and negations of Zionism (the national Jewish-Israeli ideology). In this sense this type of entries are reflexive and can thus be properly designated as 'intertextual' entries.

By performing a reproach, the author of the entry assumes a position that is both moral and authoritative in relation to other authors. It expresses a wish to return those contesting national ideology back into mainstream militaristic Zionism. Its argument is clear, and repeats one of the site's basic tenets, which concerns Jewish-Israeli collectivity: if not for this socio-ideological cohesiveness, 'we wouldn't have existed today'. From the addressees to whom the entry is directed, through its content, its emergent author can be imagined as holding a supervising (policing) position, taking care of the ideological 'traffic' in the book.

Right before the end of the entry, the clause 'Impressive museum' expresses the author's return to or re-assumption of the 'normative' role of a museum visitor, one who expresses her or his gratitude and dignified feelings with relation to the site. In this particular entry, however, the clause 'Impressive museum' assumes two additional functions: first, it is a reaffirmation of the reproach (indicating that if the museum is indeed impressive, then its contents should not be contested); and second, in line with the entry's pedagogical tone the normative expression of appreciation supplies an illustration for those 'who won't grow up', as to what should be included in a proper commemorative entry.

All in all, the addressivity structure that this entry's utterance unfolds illustrates yet additional indexical means that are made available by this stage. These are reflexive means, which, as they assume to role of monitoring the stage itself (a role that is customarily performed by sites' managements, but in this case the management admittedly shows little interest in what goes on in the visitor book), are situated, and could obviously not have been performed but in this stage.

### *Conclusions: from annals to narrative*

This study examined inscriptions that are produced on the symbolic surface of a visitor book, located in a national commemoration site in Jerusalem, Israel.

Theoretically, the study sought the foundations and possibilities of performance, which rest on the effects of implicit indexical mechanisms, or on the ways that expression is implicitly tied to the environment where it is produced. In this capacity, the study first argued that, depending on how inscribing acts are framed, inscribing itself can assume a non-referential indexical function. Putting pen to paper in particular ritualized settings, presently illustrated by a commemorative visitor book, accomplishes more than registering a visit, or even representing visitors' opinions and reflections. Instead, inscribing practices in symbolic sites instantiate the inscribers as 'principals', and establish their actions as formative social performances. More generally, a practice approach to indexical function is promoted, indicating that meaning is constructed through ritualized and embodied practices. As Mondada (2007: 810) straightforwardly put it (in a recent commentary on transcribing practices): '[p]ractices are irremediably indexical (Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970), reflexively tied to the context of their production and to the practical purposes of their accomplishment'.

Yet indexical acts of presencing, which lie at the core of performance, present a combination of the physical practice of inscribing, on the one hand, and the construction of situated structures of addressivity, on the other. Hence the second point that this article argues is that inscribed utterances concern addressivities because utterances are always inscribed somewhere, and that somewhere can be a symbolic site, or a site that possesses ritualized or prescribed audiences and structures of interaction.

With regards to situated structures of addressivity at the AHNMS visitor book, participation is not achieved simply by leaving signs, but by pursuing this practice in a *genred manner* (an 'enregistered form'; see Silverstein, 2003: 226; also Noy, 2008a). Through this aestheticized type of engagement, visitors turn into (ideological) 'principals', and it is these social actors that transform the function of the book from a document into a stage, from annals into narrative.

The research illustrated a number of categories of 'principals', who are performed on this site through different addressivity structures. With the construction of these principals, various places and temporalities are also performed, which supply the ideological universes within which these principals exist and operate. Subjectivities are enmeshed in environments, and thus visitors create not only identities, but also spatial histories and imaginations to which they collectively belong and within which they act. This reminds us that the efficacy of indexicals works both ways: while the principal is made present in what seems to be a given material environment, indexicals also reframe (confirm, interpret, refute) the latter. In a way, performances create their own stages.

Empirically, the structures that visitors generate at the AHNMS visitor book create different configurations of participation in the nationalist-militaristic Zionist narrative. The examples presented supply illustrations of a number of categories of such configurations. For instance, the largest group consists of elaborate addressivity structures, produced by two major populations of visitors: for local (Jewish-Israelis) visitors, entries are instances where they indexically recreate themselves as actors who collectively participate in the Zionist-militaristic ethos; for orthodox Diaspora Jews, inscribing serves to reaffirm the

emotional connection between the Diaspora the primordial 'Land of Israel', and to bridge the dissonance between living in one place and longing for another. These uneasy connections are fueled by feelings of indebtedness and a sense of guilt concerning the sacrifices paid in the past – and indeed in the present as well – by Israeli Jews (Boyarin and Boyarin, 2002). These different functions have the shape of different configurations of participation in, or alignments with the national(ist) narrative.

While additional categories were discerned and discussed, the point is that through affording material interaction and possible addressivities, the book actively partakes in the ideology of national commemoration. This transformation from annals to narrative is consequential, because the book itself becomes a site of multiple agencies, where different ideological narratives – with different principals – unfold, at times contesting the very narrative of nationalist militarism commemorated at the site.

The commemorative visitor book, which serves as a highly ritualistic stage, resembles similar sites and stages of performative articulation, by no means restricted to visitor books (which might or might not call for indexical function, and might or might not serve as formative social stages), or commemoration. These sites and stages range from practices of bodily tattooing and cars' bumper stickers, to note-writing at the Western Wall (the holiest place for Jews, where requests and prayers directed to God are written on notes and shoved into cracks between the stones). More generally, research into implicit indexical functions would enjoy the examination of multiple symbolic sites of articulation and performance, which, under the forces of globalization, might be interrelated. In these sites, subjectivities are established (and excluded) via local material practices of inscription and local possible structures of addressivity, demonstrating dimensions of localization in globalized environments.

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CHAIM NOY received his PhD from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel, in narrative psychology. His research interests are multidisciplinary and include performance studies, discourse and semiotics, mobility, masculinity and qualitative research methods. His recent book is *Narrative Community: Voices of Israeli Backpackers* (Wayne State University Press, 2007). ADDRESS: 1/a Shalom Yehuda St, Jerusalem 93395, Israel. [email: chaimnoy@gmail.com]