Linquistics and history: Oral history as discourse[1]

Deborah Schiffrin
Georgetown University

In sharp contrast to the long and fruitful collaborations that have developed between linguists and anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists, there has been surprisingly little reciprocity between linguists and historians. Yet just as the study of language intersects with the synchronic study of culture, society, and human beings, so too does it intersect with the diachronic study—the history—of these domains.

The general site of possible convergence between linguists and historians that I explore in this essay is *text*. Discourse analyses of one type of text—*oral histories*—offer an excellent opportunity to bring together a joint concern of historians and linguists: how individuals, societies, and cultures use texts to represent the past. My general goals are to apply linguistics to the concerns of people who are interested in oral history and to demonstrate the usefulness of oral histories as "data" for discourse analysts. I address these goals by drawing from a research project analyzing life stories of Holocaust survivors within and across oral histories (Schiffrin 2000a, 2000b, 2002)—which, in turn, is part of my more general research on Holocaust discourse (Schiffrin 2001a, 2001b). The specific data that I use are two different versions of one episode from a Holocaust survivor's oral history—one transcribed from an oral history interview, another excerpted on a website.

After describing some functions and features of oral histories, I present the two texts and discuss some key parameters of their contexts. I then summarize a more extensive analysis (which I am in the process of developing) to show how features of the texts are related to the contexts that underlie their production and influence their interpretation. My conclusion suggests the mutual benefits for linguists and historians of analyzing the language of oral histories.

Oral Histories: More (and Less?) than History

Oral histories are audio or video recordings of personal and communal memories that are collected during face-to-face interviews with people who were witnesses to events that are likely to have lasting legacies. Despite a dearth of linguistic analysis of oral histories, numerous scholars have offered important insights about the language of oral histories that can motivate and inform linguistic analysis. In this section, I draw on this scholarship to review the functions and central features of oral histories.

Holocaust oral histories are concerned with history in three different senses: They recount personal and collective "history" (the past), they provide data for historical research, and they contribute to History.[2] They also have commemorative and autobiographical functions, however, and thus aim to accomplish a variety of goals for a variety of audiences (Schiffrin 2002).

Let us begin with history/History. Along with diaries, personal letters, and memoirs, Holocaust oral histories provide insights into how macro-level social, cultural, economic, and political changes were experienced by everyday people. They complement scholarship on who helped set those changes into motion by adding personal details about the lives of those who suffered the consequences of those changes. In this sense, analysis of oral histories is comparable to the Italian microhistory perspective developed in the 1970s (Iggers 1997: chapter 9) and Bartaux's (1981) use of personal biography as a means by which to study society.

Although many Holocaust scholars quote freely and extensively from oral histories, others treat oral histories with caution and skepticism. The stories within them are about events experienced at least forty years prior to their telling. Many of the stories have been told many times, in many settings, to many people. Some scholars worry that they no longer represent an authentic and unmediated voice.

To assuage these worries, sets of guidelines have developed that propose solutions for a range of questions concerning the use of oral histories as factual documents. The *Oral History Interview Guidelines* (Ringelheim, Donahue, and Rubin 1998) published by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, for example, includes general guidelines (Chapter III) for learning about the basic historical facts of the Holocaust prior to an interview, as well as specific guidelines (appendix 9) for authenticating information (i.e., identifying places, names, dates, and so on) after an interview. Tec (1993) advocates checking basic dates and events, comparing different sources, and conducting multiple interviews with the same person, asking "the same questions again and again" (Tec 1993: 273; see also Greenspan 1998). Gurewitsch (1998: xx) supplements her collection of oral histories with extensive footnotes that reveal the extent to which she was "able to verify and corroborate the information in the interviews." She suggests that "although not all material is verifiable, an interview that is generally factual and consistent with other accounts should be read as reliable testimony" (Gurewitsch 1998: xx).

In addition to the effects of time and memory on the representation of "what happened in the past," the processes of transcribing and then publishing material from oral histories introduces additional levels of mediation—this time, between a spoken voice and graphic representations of that voice (Edwards 2001). Portelli

(1997: 15) observes, for example, that "there is no all-purpose transcript" and that "the same applies to editing: Is it intended to reproduce as carefully as possible the actual sounds of the spoken word or to make the spoken word accessible to readers through the written medium?"

When oral histories are integrated into the product of research—publications—they are mediated yet again. Although some are published in full form on their own, others appear as excerpts combined with excerpts from other oral histories or with different types of data that address a common analytical theme or problem. Publication usually is accompanied by grammatical and textual changes that shift the material to more conventional written styles; for example, editors remove nonfluencies and repetitions and often restore temporal order. As necessary as these changes may be to increase the readability of an oral transcript, editorial modification can make it difficult to uncover the nuances of an original voice. Likewise, as revealed by comparisons of multiple interviews with the same speaker, excision (or rearrangement) of segments from their original texts can lead to incomplete or misleading understandings of what happened (Schiffrin 2000a).

In addition to providing data for historians, oral histories serve commemorative purposes. Edited segments from oral histories of the Holocaust, for example, are replayed in museums, on television, and in movies; they are condensed, edited, and reproduced in printed media (e.g., books and magazines), on interactive media (e.g., computerized learning centers), and on websites. Holocaust oral histories have complemented the many other material and symbolic resources (e.g., museums, monuments, memoirs, films, paintings, sculptures, fiction, poetry, drama) commemorating the Holocaust and added the voices of survivors to the multitude of others (e.g., historians, theologians, journalists, fiction writers, literary theorists) who also have spoken of the Holocaust.

The role of oral histories in public commemoration reflects—and adds to—the important symbolic role that the Holocaust has come to play in American life (Flanzbaum 1999; Linenthal 1995; Novick 1999) and its firm niche within American collective memory. Learning about the wide range of persecution and extermination provides an important testament to the enormity of the Holocaust. Similarly, public memorials often embody the sheer vastness of the Holocaust by collecting and displaying six million items to help people grasp the fact that six million Jews were murdered by Nazis. A recent example is the efforts by students and teachers in a small midwestern school in the United States to collect six million paper clips; according to a radio report on the effort, their worldwide effort had resulted in two million in three years. Yet a variety of people also believe that subjective involvement in the details of individual lives (e.g., Hammer 1998; Miller 1990; Strassfeld 1985) offers a more accessible route toward understanding the devastating effects of the Holocaust on individual, family, communal, and cultural life by personalizing the otherwise numbing horror of the Holocaust.

The two relatively public roles of oral histories discussed thus far—historical inquiry and public commemoration—are supplemented by a third, more private, role: Oral histories provide survivors with a venue in which to tell their life stories. Little public attention was given to the Holocaust in the decade following World War II. Although Holocaust survivors themselves sometimes were vocal about their experiences within their own communities, they maintained a relative silence in relation to the outside world. Silence characterized institutional, as well as personal, realms of discourse. Publishers, for example, saw almost no market potential for books about the Holocaust. Although *The Diary of Anne Frank* has now been read by millions of people worldwide, its publication initially was turned down. The few stories that were told publicly were reconfigured into culturally acceptable American themes (e.g., "people move on from their past") or concluded with happy endings (e.g., "lovers/family members are reunited") (e.g., Shandler 1999: chapter 2).

When oral histories entered American memory culture, they not only helped to shift attention from the voices of Holocaust perpetrators whose actions already had been indelibly recorded through their consequences.[3] Oral histories also validated survivors' experiences by providing a site for co-construction of a life story: autobiographical discourse comprising stories, descriptions, explanations, and chronicles that recapitulate critical points about the speaker and reportable events in his or her life (Linde 1993). This is not to say, of course, that all Holocaust life stories are coherent (Hartman 1996; LaCapra 2001; Langer 1991). As Wieviorka (1994: 25) notes, however, "Victims are certainly beyond words, and yet, dispossessed of everything, words are all they have left. Words which will be the sole trace of an existence."

Despite limited attention to oral histories from linguists, other scholars have provided important reflections on the language of oral histories. Portelli (1997: 6), for example, comments that oral history as a genre "depends to a large extent on the shifting balance between the personal and the social, between biography and history." Efforts to strike such a balance can result in the appearance of recurrent narrative themes. Portelli (1997: 7) observes, for example, that stories with very different topics (e.g., war stories from men, hospital stories from women) similarly reenact personal confrontations with representatives of a public "other."

The shifting balance between individual and collective also creates an inherent multivocality of oral histories at concrete and abstract levels (Portelli 1997: chapter 2). At a concrete level, multiple voices emerge in oral histories simply because interviewers ask questions and make comments; likewise, interviewees typically respond to what interviewers say. Multiple voices also appear more abstractly through the confluence of different narrative modes and the influx of different sources of information over time. The combination of different narrative modes—personal, institutional, communal—into recurrent and meaningful patterns within a single oral history (Portelli 1997: 27), for example, can arise from the incorporation of *ex post facto* voices that reflect survivor myths in addition to historical facts (Wieviorka 1994) or are based in others' experiences rather than one's own experience (Allen and Montell 1981; Schiff, Noy, and Cohler 2000).

My observations to this point suggest that Holocaust oral histories are mediated by their functions and their multivocality: Efforts to serve historical, commemorative, and autobiographical functions produce a variety of blended voices directed toward multiple audiences and goals. Added to these mediating pressures is the inherent fluidity between past and present. In his seminal analysis of how survivors recount the Holocaust, Langer (1991: 40) finds that the language used in what he calls *testimonies* embeds memories and reflects experiences in ways that are "concerned less with a past than with a sense of that past in the present." On a psychological level, survivors may be unable to convey the details of the past because of the enduring trauma of the Holocaust (LaCapra 2001). The physical and symbolic "present" is introduced on an interactional level by the interview setting and situation—a condition shared with all oral history interviews (McMahan 1989). On more macro levels of social, cultural, and political meanings, "the world in which we live . . . changes the meaning [of the Holocaust] as time passes before our eyes" (Hilberg 1991: 19).

In sum, the telling of an oral history faces fundamental (and unavoidable) pressures imposed by language, context, and the simple passage of time. The use of oral history in History and in memory culture requires further transformations through processes of transcription and publication. These characteristics suggest that linguistic analyses of oral histories—perhaps even more than analyses of other discourse—must attend to a multiplicity of functions, voices, and text/context relationships.

In the following section, I turn to a sample from my more extensive project on life stories in Holocaust oral histories to focus on excerpts from two texts from one survivor, Susan Beer. In both excerpts, Beer tells about meeting Hannah Szenes in a Gestapo prison in Budapest in 1944.[4] Szenes was a parachutist on a rescue mission who had been captured, was executed, and fairly quickly became an important public symbol of Jewish idealism, courage, heroism, and resistance. The lives of Susan Beer and Hannah Szenes offer a contrast between private person and public figure that casts their own individual life stories into different functional realms. Thus, texts that report their encounter are an ideal site in which to illustrate how we can use discourse analysis to examine discourse that is mediated by time and situation, oriented to multiple functions (history, commemoration, autobiography), and blends individual and collective meanings.

Text and Context

In this section, I present two versions of Susan Beer's story about Hannah Szenes and discuss the contexts that underlie the production—and influence the interpretation—of these two texts. The first text (the interview text) is from a 1984 oral history interview. The second text (the web text) is an adaptation from a 1982 interview that appeared on a website in 2000.[5] Notice that the web text is not excerpted from the 1984 interview. When I began to work on this essay, I had not yet been able to access the 1982 interview from which the web text was excerpted. Thus, I cannot use the interview and web texts as evidence of discursive change over time (from 1984 to 2000) or interpret the differences as an adaptation of the same information to different modalities. Therefore, my focus here is how the contexts of the two texts—broadly construed as their means of production, intended functions, audiences, and mode of access—have an impact on, and are reflected in, their form and content.

Before reading the two versions of Beer's story about her encounter with Szenes, it will be helpful to have an overview of Beer's and Szenes' lives. The former is briefly reconstructed through Beer's oral histories and written memoir, the latter through Szenes' diary and later reconstructions of her life.

Beer was the only child in an observant Jewish family; she grew up in Topolcany, a small town in what was then Slovakia. Her father was a doctor in the town. When the Germans seized control of Slovakia, discrimination against Jews in Topolcany escalated: Families had to give up their material possessions and their civil liberties; Beer's father was forbidden to practice medicine. As word of deportations began to spread—and when Beer herself received an order to report for a transport to a labor camp—Beer's parents arranged for her to go illegally to Hungary, a country that was then safer for Jews. Beer's parents eventually escaped to Hungary as well, and they all lived clandestinely with false identities. As anti-Semitic measures in Hungary increased, however, the family decided to take a chance on what they thought was a mission of rescue organized by a small contingent of disenchanted German *Wehrmacht* who wanted to return Jews (for a fee) to a small part of Slovakia that had supposedly been liberated by partisans. The mission was really a trap: The family was captured and spent three and a half weeks in a Budapest prison. They were then sent to Auschwitz. Despite the many hardships of Auschwitz, death marches, near starvation, and disease, Beer and her parents all survived. Beer married a young man who had spent most of the war years hiding with his family in the mountains. Beer and her husband immigrated to the United States; Beer's parents (because of restrictive immigration laws) immigrated to Canada.

Szenes was born in Budapest in 1921 to a relatively assimilated Jewish family. Her father (a well-known playwright) died when she was young; Hannah and her brother were raised by her mother. When Szenes became interested in emigrating to Palestine in 1937, she began to study Hebrew and immerse herself in Zionist literature. She left for Palestine in 1939, just as World War II was beginning. There she enrolled in a girls' agricultural school and then joined a kibbutz. In May 1942 she was chosen as a member of the *Haganah*, the underground military organization whose goal was to rescue prisoners of war and organize Jewish resistance in Europe to assist British forces. After special British training (to help British intelligence in occupied Europe) and Zionist instruction (to organize Jewish resistance and escape), Szenes was recruited as one of several parachutists for a mission. When the mission failed, Szenes was imprisoned in Budapest; she was executed several months later. In the years following World War II, Szenes became an important international symbol of Jewish idealism and courage (Baumel 1996, 1998). Her symbolic role in Israeli collective memory quickly eclipsed that of two men with whom she had shared the mission, as well as several other parachutists from Palestine who also had died in occupied Europe. Szenes has been memorialized through plays, films, statues, songs, names of kibbutzim, and books.

Interview Text

All texts are simultaneous products—and realizations—of the context in which they are created. Because the excerpt in (1) is from a videotaped interview, I begin by commenting on the speech acts and participation structure of the interview.

Interviews are speech events designed to elicit information: One person typically takes a questioning role; the other provides information through his/her answers. Despite this seeming asymmetry, the questions asked by Holocaust oral history interviewers end up co-constructing a life story. They do so by building two overarching, but interlocking, frameworks: the linear passage of time (personal life stages and historical phases) and the nonlinear distribution and recurrence of themes (e.g., discrimination, contact with family, emotional reaction). These frameworks help to co-construct a life story because they encourage not only temporally structured recountings of experiences (stories, chronicles) but also recurring themes that facilitate intertextual connections among nonadjacent parts of discourse (Schiffrin 2000b).

In the 1984 interview with Beer, the interviewer (who introduces himself as Dr. Donald Freidheim) uses a variety of question types (Schiffrin 2000a) that help to co-construct Beer's life story. In the initial portion of the interview, the interviewer asks basic demographic questions that orient Beer toward specific times and topics. As the interview progresses, his role becomes more reactive: He intermittently repeats or reformulates questions that probe particular facets of an experience that Beer did not mention or did not elaborate. Beer thus becomes—and remains—the main speaker throughout the interview: She exerts more topic control; provides extended descriptions, narratives, and chronicles of her experiences; and consistently returns to her own topics and themes after attending to the interviewer's questions. The interviewer becomes quiet during much of Beer's oral history. Other than posing follow-up questions, his main contribution is the use of backchannels (*yeh*, *umhmm*) or recognitionals (see (1) *Right*, *Hannah Szenes*) that support Beer's active speaking role. The verbal dominance of Beer is matched by her centrality in the video: Except for a view of both the interviewer and Beer in the introduction, the camera provides a frontal view of Beer throughout the interview.

The segment in (1) is the portion of the oral history interview that immediately precedes and follows Beer's recounting of her encounter with Szenes. Beer had been talking about the escalating measures against Jews in Budapest (the place in which she initially found sanctuary from anti-Semitism and persecution in her hometown in Slovakia). After being discovered in various hiding places and disguises, she and her family decide to follow her father's lead and put their trust in what is supposed to be a rescue mission. As noted above, however, the mission is a trap: The family is captured and spends three and a half weeks in a Budapest prison. The story recounted in (1) begins just before the family and those who accompanied them (i.e., the *we* in (1)) is captured.

On the left of each line, I note the function(s) of each clause. Event-clauses (akin to complicating action clauses) within the imprisonment scene ((e)–(s)) and the transition section ((q)–(aa)) are numbered to indicate temporal juncture. Other narrative functions are labeled: I use ORN for orientation and EVAL for evaluation. The encounter with Szenes is italicized in (t), (u), (w), (x), and (aa)–(qq). Szenes' experience itself (the Szenes story) is in lines (cc)–(ll). The use of ➔ indicates that a clause has a dual function in both the imprisonment chronicle and the Szenes story.

(1) SUSAN BEER'S 1984 STORY

(a) And uh we were supposed to meet, at sundown, in a little park,

(b) and, we will be going back to Slovakia.

(c) And the rabbi gave us . . . his blessing,

(d) and uh we were coming to that park,

(e) EVENT-1 and as soon as we approached that truck flashlights were lit into our eyes,

(f) EVENT-2 and we were kicked into the truck,

(g) EVENT-3 and we knew right away that we were . . . .

(h) Y'know it was uh- a scheme, to get us, to get the money,

IVER: Right

(i) EVENT-4 and they took us straight to the Gestapo headquarters.

(j) EVENT-5 And uh the men were taken to the . . . uh third floor,

(k) EVENT-6 and we to the fifth floor,

(l) EVENT-7 and we were beaten, terribly,

(m) EVAL my nose was bleeding all night,

(n) ORN/EVAL uh the pregnant women, the children, we were all in one room, about eleven people,

(o) EVAL and we were in a real prison.

(p) EVAL I mean like Sing Sing.

(q) ORN/EVAL In the morning, they would open just a crack, the, door,

(r) EVAL and . . . give us our food, or our wash basin,

(s) EVAL There was one toilet for all of us.

(t) ORN And uh . . . as I was looking, across the hall,

(u) EVENT-8 ➔ *EVENT-1*
I saw a young woman . . . showing things,

(v) ORN ➔ *ORN* y'know when they opened the door,

(w) ORN➔ *ORN she was uh gesticulating with her hands.*

(x) ORN ➔ *ORN And everyday they would let us walk in the courtyard,*

(y) EVAL like real prisoners,

(z) EVAL for half an hour around and around.

(aa) EVENT-9 ➔ *EVENT-2 and this woman joined me.*

(bb) EVENT-10➔ *EVENT-3 And she told me her story,*

(cc) EVENT-3a that she was a parachutist,

(dd) ORN who came from . . . Israel, Palestine,

(ee) ORN in Yugoslavia.

(ff) EVENT-3b And she was caught,

(gg) EVENT-3c and they- they probably will hang her.

(hh) EVAL She always made this- this hanging sign.

(ii) EVAL And she was using-

(jj) ORN/EVAL they used to take her on a truck, for interrogation,

(kk) *EVAL* *and she found some coal, or little pieces of coal on the truck,*

(ll) *EVAL* *and she would make marks under her eyes, to e-evoke some pity.*

(mm) EVENT-11➔ *CODA*
And it turned out to-

(nn) *she became very well known she was Hannah Szenes.*

(oo) IVER: Hannah
Sze[nes].

(pp) BEER: [Yes.

(qq) *CODA*
And eh of course, y'know what happened to her.

(rr) Uh we were in this prison for three and a half, weeks.

(ss) And after that time, they told us to take, whatever we had,

(tt) and they took us downstairs,

(uu) they- we stood in line,

(vv) and, then we are going to the railroad station.

(ww) Uh I saw my father.

(xx) After three and a half weeks,

(yy) and his hands were handcuffed, one hand to another man's hand.

Because the text in (1) was excerpted and transcribed from a videotaped interview, it is important to note some ways that I have transformed it from a spoken speech event to a written transcript. Exclusions and inclusions help construct "the data" and frame the direction of its analysis.

Present in the transcript are various graphic conventions that help create a representation of events. Although space prevents detailed analysis of how these conventions enter into analysis of (1), the following points are suggestive. Separation into lines, use of letters to identify lines, and punctuation (commas, periods), along with attention to syntactic boundaries, all work together to segment events and cluster events into larger situations. Pauses within intonation units, restarts, and repetitions suggest further segmentation; they also reveal an interplay among different discursive demands on word choice, semantic formulation, and the organization of information within text. The labels of events and functions serve a more overt analytical function: They facilitate discussion of different parts of the text, but they also reify the categories through which my analysis views the language of the text.

Although not included in the transcript, the excerpt contains traces of the longer life story that precedes and follows it. Background knowledge of the life story suggests that the text in (1) is thematically framed by—and reflects—a blend of personal and collective, of autobiography and history. The relevance of two specific themes—Beer's relationship with her father and the trajectory of persecution over time—is indexed by Beer through the people she mentions and the way she describes her experience. Because these themes intertextually link (1) to different surface topics across nonadjacent segments, I consider them here as part of the context that mediates the meanings of the interview text.

Consider, first, Beer's relationship with her father. In early parts of her life story, Beer recounts numerous pivotal interactions with her father, showing how deep an influence his personality and character had on her own intellectual and personal development. Later in Beer's life story, the generous actions and altruistic behavior of her father toward his patients develops a subtheme of reciprocity that provides some concrete help for Beer during the war. Beer's separation from her father frames the episode in (1). Not only does Beer mention that the men are separated from the women in the prison ((j), (k)); she also notes that she sees her father again on the train platform (ww) en route to Auschwitz after *three and a half weeks* (xx) have elapsed since their previous contact. The detail that her father's *hands were handcuffed, one hand to another man's hand* (yy) also provides an intertextual link to early times when she had witnessed—and been disturbed by—his subjugation in their hometown.

A second theme in Beer's life story is the Nazi persecution of Jews. Elsewhere in her life story, Beer develops this theme in several ways. In addition to dramatizing the Nazi regime by revoicing orders in German, Beer uses list-like recitations as an iconic reflection of the coldness and impersonal nature with which increasing restrictions are put on her and her family. Beer also uses details and metaphors to capture horrific scenes (e.g., in the camps, on death marches) and tells stories of close calls and escapes, small victories and failures, survival and death. Several stories recount incidents during which she (either alone or with her parents) just barely manages to escape from capture; narrowly avoids disclosure of her/their true identities as Jews from Slovakia; or, by sheer luck, survives disease, starvation, or placement in the wrong line during selection for a transport or within Auschwitz.

Whereas Beer's separation from her father in (1) connects with an intertextual theme that is personally salient, the family's capture and imprisonment connects with an intertextual theme that also is historically salient. In 1941 Hungary enacted laws comparable to the restrictive 1935 Nuremburg Laws in Germany (e.g., prohibiting intermarriage, depriving Jews of citizenship). Also in 1941, thousands of Jews were deported to German-occupied Ukraine; most were massacred. Yet not until 1944, under the leadership of Adolph Eichmann (head of the Gestapo section dealing with Jewish affairs), was fulfillment of the Final Solution for Jews in Hungary fully under way. Ghettoization was extended throughout the country by April 1944, and deportations proceeded geographically. By July 1944, almost 450,000 Jews from Hungary (220,000 Jews from Budapest alone—one-third of the population) had been sent to Auschwitz (Cesarani 1999; Rothkirchen 1986; Yahil 1990). Beer's imprisonment and subsequent deportation to Auschwitz in June 1944 was part of that general wave of persecution.

These historical details are important to the interview text: Imprisonment in the Gestapo jail is the first time that Beer and her family no longer are able to find an alternative that affords them any freedom. Thus, their capture, imprisonment, and subsequent train ride to Auschwitz in June 1944 combine to form a pivotal transition in the personal and historical trajectories of Beer's life story: The family will have no existence outside of the Nazi system of persecution and extermination until the end of the war.

In this section, I have presented the interview text and commented on two very different aspects of context—transcription conventions and intertextual themes—that provide frameworks of meaning that contextualize the text. In the following section, we see that the web text is embedded in a very different context.

Web Text

Beer's encounter with Szenes was rewritten by Bonnie Gurewitsch, an archivist and Holocaust scholar who had interviewed Beer at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York in 1982. Beer's story about Szenes reappeared in 2000 on the website *Women and the Holocaust*, under a topic titled *Women of Valor: Partisans and Resistance Fighters*, on a page titled *Susan Beer*. In reading and analyzing the web text, it is important to remember that this text is excerpted not from the 1984 interview but from an earlier 1982 interview to which I did not yet have access at the time of this research. Thus, what we are comparing represents neither a change over time (e.g., from 1984 to 2000) nor a transformation between an original source and an alteration of that source.

In (2), I replicate the layout of the Susan Beer page, alphabetizing the lines (as in (1)) for ease of reference and labeling of functions. Also appearing on the page is a list of links on the right. These links (added to the website by Judy Cohen, who originated and manages the site) initially were titles of other entries in the original journal publication in which Beer's excerpt first appeared. The entries to which the links point are more complete (auto)biographical summaries of the women's overall World War II experiences; they also are longer (as many as eight pages, compared to Beer's one page) and include footnotes.

(2) SUSAN BEER'S WEB TEXT

"Women of Valor: Partisans and Resistance Fighters"

Susan Beer

Susan Eisdorfer grew up in Topolcany, Czechoslovakia, in a traditionally Jewish home.

Her father was a physician, forbidden to practice medicine under Nazi law. In an effort to escape an order to report to a labour camp in 1942, she succeeded in crossing the border to Hungary, considered safer because it was not yet under German occupation. In Hungary, however, she lived illegally, in constant fear of detection and imprisonment. After the Germans occupied Hungary she was more vulnerable than ever, and tried to return to Slovakia, but was arrested and taken to Gestapo headquarters in Budapest. There she encountered Hannah Szenes, a fellow prisoner.

Historical Background
Aida Brybord
Zenia Malecki
Evelyn Kahn
Partisans: A Personal Memoir
Katherine Szenes
Susan Beer
Anna Heilman
Rose Meth
Biographical Sketches
Letters from the Holocaust
Halakha and the Holocaust
Glossary
Author: Dr. Yaffa Eliach

Someone special.

(a) In the morning, when they opened up the grills in our cell doors, (b) I saw that in a cell across the way there was one solitary woman. (c) She had dark circles under her eyes. (d) She smiled. (e) We saw her exercising, (f) standing on her head, (g) doing all sorts of vigorous exercises. (h) Her front

> teeth were missing. (i) I asked her, "Did they beat your teeth out of you?" (j) She was such a gentle person.
>
> (k) She would pass little slips of paper through the grill of her cell, (l) hoping that someone would pick them up. (m) She was always cheerful, (n) even though she knew they were going to kill her.
>
> (o) In the yard she would walk behind me (p) and carefully get closer to me when the guards didn't see. (q) Her mother walked in the same group, but far away. (r) The guards watched that the mother shouldn't get too close to the daughter.
>
> (s) She told me that she was a parachutist. (t) That she really came to save her mother and maybe some other Jews. (u) She parachuted down on the Yugoslav border with two other men. (v) Someone betrayed her. (w) She was caught and brought to the prison. (x) She constantly showed me, with a smile, (y) that she knew she's going to be hung. (z) She did not really hope to live.
>
> (aa) I saw her about ten times, in June 1944. (bb) I heard from others that she made gifts. (cc) When someone had a birthday she would put the gift up to a window and show it.
>
> (dd) She was 23 years old at the time. (ee) I felt she was someone special. (ff) I didn't know exactly what she was, (gg) but I never forgot her. (hh) There was something special about her. (ii) She didn't behave like the others. (jj) She wasn't scared, thinking of herself. (kk) She was beyond that. (ll) She had an aura about her. (mm) To me she was very exotic; (nn) she was close to my age, (oo) and she came from Palestine. (pp) In that prison it was good to hear something like this, something beyond our misery.
>
> ***Excerpts of the interview by Bonnie Gurewitsch, 5/25/82***

The web text is mediated by very different contextual parameters than the interview text. First, the web text has a more direct presence in public discourse. Whereas the interview text is housed in the research archives of a museum and available primarily to scholars and students only through a reference librarian, the inclusion of the later version on the web makes it easily accessible to a wide variety of people.

Second, the web text provides very little connection to Beer's life story.[6] The only link to Beer's own life prior to her encounter with Szenes is through what I call "the synopsis," the summary of Beer's life in a single paragraph. In the synopsis, Beer's father, so thematically central to Beer's life story, is largely absent: He is mentioned only once, in the context of his professional status and Nazi restrictions. In sharp contrast to the experiences recounted in Beer's 1984 life story (and in other versions of her life story), Beer is presented as an individual who acts completely on her own. For example, although the synopsis states that Beer made *an effort to escape an order to report to a labour camp*, we know from Beer's interviews that her father arranged for this escape. Thus, the condensed and modified versions of events prior to Beer's imprisonment provide a sense of neither the collective nature of Beer's experiences nor the impact of imprisonment on her life. The synopsis ends once Beer is taken to Gestapo headquarters, where she encountered the only person, other than her father, mentioned in the synopsis: *Hannah Szenes, a fellow prisoner.*

Although there are minimal connections between the web text and Beer's life story, the Susan Beer page itself has numerous intertextual links. The title of the section in which the page was included—*Women of Valor: Partisans and Resistance Fighters*—resounds with Judaic significance. The phrase *women of valor* is used not only in the Bible (Proverbs 31) but also in a weekly Jewish Sabbath blessing for the women in the family; in the latter case, the phrase praises the heroism of women's ordinary domestic tasks. In addition to the intertextual connection with religious themes, other connections are within the website itself: We find connections to Holocaust scholarship through three links (*Scholarly Essays, Reviews, Bibliography*), as well as connections to Holocaust commemoration (*Poetry, Personal Reflections*).

Still another contextual parameter arises from the fact that the web text is *Excerpts of the interview by Bonnie Gurewitsch, 5/25/82*. Not only was material reduced and possibly rearranged (as implied by the term *excerpted*); because the source of the material was an interview, the modality changed from spoken to written.[7] Published versions of oral histories never appear in the transcription format to which linguists are accustomed. Instead, they look more like written discourse: They follow conventions of punctuation (e.g., periods, commas, quotation marks), grammar (no sentence fragments), and paragraph structure; they have no false starts and few indications of pauses. Beer's web text is consistent with these conventions.

Visual and graphic conventions associated with written modalities (e.g., color, size, font, page layout, titles, headings) also appear on the Susan Beer web page. The page opens with the section title *Women of Valor: Partisans and Resistance Fighters* and the name *Susan Beer* under the title. Color provides a functional contrast: Whereas the heading (title and name) is brown, black letters are used on the rest of the page. Page layout and format separate sections of the text. The brief synopsis of Beer's life is separated from Beer's encounter with Szenes not only grammatically (the former is in the third person, the latter in the first person) but spatially by a title (**Someone special**), a different format (paragraphs), and a shift in layout (instead of being in two columns, the text goes from margin to margin).

Summary: Texts in Context

In this section, I have presented two different versions of Susan Beer's encounter with Hannah Szenes. First was a transcript of a section of an interview. I observed that details of spoken language were conveyed in ways that made the transcript readable as a text that is useful for discourse analysis. I also noted that two intertextual themes connected the interview text to broader domains of meanings from Beer's life story, thus indexing the autobiographical function of her oral history. Next was a page from a website. The web text was excerpted from a different oral history interview and appeared on a publicly accessible Internet site. The conventions of written discourse that it follows make it familiar to purveyors of the web and comprehensible as a written text: A topic is identified, sentences are grammatical, sentences are grouped into paragraphs. The text itself is linked to themes that likewise bridge the personal and collective, biographical and historical. The difference is that these themes do not appear in relation to Beer's own life. Instead, they appear through links to the biographies of other people and to histories written by scholars that are posted on other parts of the website.

Comparing Interview and Web Texts

The interview and web texts ostensibly are about the same experience: Susan Beer's 1944 encounter with Hannah Szenes in a Gestapo prison in Budapest. Although the basic facts about Szenes are very similar, the distribution and type of information presented about each character are quite different. In this section, I discuss referring terms, event types, style, and use of boundary/bridging devices in the two texts as a way to highlight their different styles, emphases, and characterizations. I then turn to their similarities.

References to Beer and Szenes provide an initial glimpse of their different portrayals in the texts. Table 5.1 compares singular to plural referring terms in subject position. The former includes *I*, proper name, and definite/indefinite singular nouns; the latter includes *we* (inclusive, exclusive), *they*, and definite/indefinite plural nouns.

Beer's first-person references in the interview text are primarily collective: "We" are planning to return to Slovakia, and "we" are in prison. The inclusion of self in a collectivity changes dramatically in the web text. The only first-person plural reference that includes Beer is during her view of Szenes: *We saw her exercising, standing on her head, doing all sorts of vigorous exercises* ((e)–(g)). In sharp contrast, references to Szenes in the interview and web texts are overwhelmingly individual—prefigured, in the latter text, by the initial mention of her as *one solitary woman* (b).[8]

It is important to note that the individual/collective dichotomy is not necessarily dictated by "the facts." Studies of the use of second-person plural pronouns (e.g., deFina 1999: chapter 3) show that speakers use the collective *we* even when other information establishes that they acted independently. Similarly, in my

Table 5.1. Personal References

	Interview	Web	Total
Beer alone	6	8	14
Beer with other	25	1	26
Szenes alone	13	31	44
Szenes with other	1	0	1
Total	45	40	85

study of family and friendship discourse in the oral history of another Holocaust survivor (Schiffrin 2002), the use of plural references was related not only to "what happened" in the real world but also to how characters (at interpersonal, archetypal, and historical levels) fit into overall themes of solidarity and distance. Thus, Beer could have displayed her autonomy from a group: She could have said *I was beaten* or *I was in a room with ten other people*. Likewise, because Szenes was one of three parachutists on the Haganah mission—all of whom were captured and briefly held in the same prison (Baumel 1996: 523)—Beer could have displayed Szenes as a member of a group.

The referential patterns in Table 5.1 also index Beer and Szenes to strikingly different functions of oral histories. The collective focus of Beer's experience is consistent with intertextual themes of group solidarity and reciprocity in her own life story. Whereas collectivity in Beer's story thus indexes the more personal, autobiographical functions of Beer's oral history, individuality in the representation of Szenes indexes the more commemorative functions of Szenes' life within memory culture. Although Hannah Szenes was one of six Jewish parachutists who perished in Europe (including two other women), she had "become the standard against which her fellow parachutists were being measured" as early as 1945 (Baumel 1996: 527). Thus, Szenes' role as *one solitary woman* (web text (b)) who represented Jewish idealism, courage, resistance, and heroism during the Holocaust soon eclipsed that of the other parachutists who also died in occupied Europe. Later commemorations and public memorials (e.g., renaming locales, dramatizations, statues, educational programs, films, poetry, songs), intensified the position of Hannah Szenes *herself* within Jewish (especially Israeli) history (Baumel 1996, 1998).

A comparison of event-types shows a slightly different perspective on the textual characterization of the two women. The verbs used to convey "events" in the texts can be categorized in one of three ways: as internal (mental) states (e.g., "know," "realize"), physical attributes (e.g., "be gentle"), or physical actions (e.g., "smile," "ask").[9] Table 5.2 compares the types of events that Beer portrays for herself and Szenes in the interview and web texts.

In both versions, the single largest category of Beer-events and Szenes-events is physical actions. The decrease in physical actions for both Beer and Szenes in the web text is related to the addition of other event types: an increase in Beer's internal states (from 8 percent to 38 percent), Szenes' internal states (from zero to 18 percent), and Szenes' physical attributes (from 22 percent to 35 percent).

Clauses that report physical attributes and internal states have different roles in narrative than physical action clauses: They are descriptive (nonnarrative) clauses that contribute primarily to evaluation.[10] Thus, the increase in physical attributes and internal states is a crucial part of a shift away from the referential style of reporting "what happened" (with evaluative devices embedded within narrative clauses) in the interview text to an evaluative style that depends more on descriptive clauses distributed among action clauses in the web text.

A subtle contrast within the physical attributes themselves shows the same shift toward descriptive evaluation. In the interview text, the verbs implicate activity (*she was a parachutist* (cc)) or presuppose change over time (*she became very well known* (nn)). In the web text, the verbs *have* and *be* predicate qualities (e.g., *had dark circles under her eyes* (c), *was such a gentle person* (j)) that may endure indefinitely. Thus, the frequency of internal states and physical attributes, and the qualities of these verbs themselves, indicate the shift to a descriptive means of evaluation.

We can get a clearer picture of how this stylistic shift works in the characterization of Beer if we turn from what unites physical attributes and internal states—their descriptive roles in narrative—to what differentiates them. Physical attributes and internal states reflect different modes of evidence and

Table 5.2. Who Does What?

	Interview (%)	**Web (%)**	**Total**
Susan Beer			
Internal states	1 (8)	3 (38)	4
Physical attributes	1 (8)	0 (0)	1
Physical actions	10 (83)	5 (62)	15
Subtotal	12	8	20
Hannah Szenes			
Internal states	0 (0)	6 (18)	6
Physical attributes	2 (22)	12 (35)	14
Physical actions	7 (77)	16 (44)	23
Subtotal	9	34	43
TOTAL	21	42	63

Table 5.3. Beer's Source of Information about Szenes

	Interview (%)	**Web (%)**	**Total**
Observation	9 (100)	28 (82)	37
Inference	0	6	6
Total	9	34	43

knowing about another. Like physical actions, physical attributes can be observed. Another's internal state (e.g., thoughts, feelings), however, can only be inferred. Notice, then, that Beer's statements about Szenes' internal state are what Labov and Fanshel (1977: 10, 227) call B-events: They are statements about events about which the "other" (B)—but not the "self" (A)—has knowledge. In other words, they require Beer to make inferences about the mind (knowledge, perceptions) and the emotions (feelings) of Szenes.

Table 5.3 groups physical activities and attributes as "observations" and internal states as "inferences."

As Table 5.3 shows, the only means by which Beer obtains information about Szenes in the interview text is by observation. In the web text, however, Beer also reports internal states that depend on inference.

As suggested above, the addition of inferential modes of knowing is a shift in style and characterization. Along with a shift from referential/evaluative to descriptive/evaluative, then, comes a repositioning of Beer into a role that adds reflection and inference to a minimized level of agency. This new stance is reflected even more strikingly if we reexamine the clauses from the web text that report Beer's physical actions (from Table 5.2):

(3) BEER'S PHYSICAL ACTION CLAUSES (WEB TEXT)

"see"	*I saw . . . there was one solitary woman* (b)
	we saw her exercising (e)
	I saw her about ten times (aa)
"ask"	*I asked her, "Did they beat your teeth out of you?"* (i)
"hear"	*I heard from others that she made gifts* (bb)

Physical action clauses are exactly those clauses that typically serve to move the narrative forward. As we see in (3), however, Beer's physical actions actually link Beer to Szenes through her own senses ("see," "hear") and speech acts ("ask"). In this sense, they are similar to the three internal states from Beer (also from Table 5.2) that also link Beer to Szenes: *I* ***felt*** *she was someone special* (ee), *I didn't* ***know*** *exactly what she was,* (ff) *but I never* ***forgot*** *her* (gg). Thus, virtually all of the clauses in the web text in which Beer is engaged in physical action position her only as someone reacting (through sight, hearing, feeling) to Szenes or eliciting information from Szenes. Thus, Beer's inferences and actions are both immersed within and subordinated to her encounter with Szenes.

Structuring devices in the interview and web texts also show that Beer's experience in the web text is centered less around her own experience and more around her reaction to, and encounter with, Szenes. In (4), I reproduce the clauses from the interview text that facilitate a transition from Beer's own imprisonment to her encounter with Szenes. We see that evaluation of imprisonment (grammatical voice, details, and descriptive clauses, (e)–(p) in the interview text) continues in the transition, where it combines with time/space/activity to facilitate a transition from imprisonment per se to an encounter with Szenes. I use different fonts to indicate **time**, *activity*, and ***space*** in (4); evaluative material is underlined.

(4) TRANSITION TO SZENES STORY

(q) **In the morning,** *they would open* just ***a crack, the, door***,

(r) and . . . give us our food, or our wash basin,

(s) There was one toilet for all of us.

(t) And uh . . . **as** *I was looking*, ***across the hall***,

(u) *I saw* a young woman . . . showing things,

(v) y'know **when they** ***opened the door***,

(w) she was uh gesticulating with her hands.

(x) And **everyday** *they would let us walk* ***in the courtyard***,

(y) like real prisoners,

(z) for half an hour around and around,

(aa) and this woman joined me.

Although space does not permit extensive discussion of this sequence, it is important to note that the confluence of information in (4) weaves Beer's encounter with Szenes into her imprisonment without overtly marking a change in topic. For example, each sequence is opened with a preposed temporal expression: a phrase (*in the morning* (q)), clause (*as I was looking* (t)), or word (*everyday* (x)). Consistent with research on the informational and textual functions of preposing (Ward and Birner 2001), these temporal markers form a referential bridge that reaches back to prior text and extends into subsequent text.

Turning to the evaluative clauses, we see that the habitual activities ((q), (x)) transform a restrictive space (*the door*, *the courtyard*) into a portal to a previously denied locale. This spatial configuration has a dual function. In addition to facilitating evaluation of imprisonment (((r), (s), (y), (z)), it alters Beer's visual/physical confinement and thus allows the transition to the story about Szenes: It is *as* [she] *was looking, across the hall* (o)) that Beer *saw a young woman* (p). Likewise, confinement to place and activity within the courtyard evaluates a more public arena that also makes Beer available for interaction with other prisoners. Thus, it is during Beer's walk that Szenes *joined* her ((aa)) and, in the very next clause, that Szenes proceeds *to tell her story* (bb).

The multiple functions of clauses in (4), then, embed the Szenes-story so deeply within the imprisonment episode that the incremental contact between Beer and Szenes—seeing (u), joining (aa), telling (bb)—is seamlessly textualized as event clauses within both the imprisonment episode and the embedded Szenes story:

EVENT- 8 ➔ *EVENT - 1* *I saw a young woman . . . showing things,* (u)

EVENT- 9 ➔ *EVENT- 2* *and this woman joined me.* (aa)

EVENT- 10➔ *EVENT-3* *And she told me her story,* (bb)

Thus, the actions in lines (u), (aa), and (bb) serve a dual role in the event structure of the text: They are part of Beer's imprisonment and Beer's telling of Szenes' story.

Like the interview text, the web text also establishes a connection between Beer's encounter with Szenes in prison and prior events in Beer's life. Yet in keeping with the different context, structure, format, and themes of the text, a slightly different set of textual devices, as well as a different distribution of information, intensify the importance of Szenes in the web text.

For example, at the end of the one-paragraph synopsis of Beer's life on the web page, we learn that Beer is taken to Gestapo headquarters, and *There she encountered Hannah Szenes, a fellow prisoner*. This clause functions as both coda to the synopsis and abstract for the Szenes story. The coda role is enabled through spatial anaphora: *There* locates the encounter in the previously mentioned location—Gestapo headquarters in Budapest (e). Both coda and abstract are created by the preposed position of *there* (like temporal preposing, spatial preposing has a bridging function) and by the introduction of a new character, *Hannah Szenes,* who will be the focus of the next segment. The use of the verb *encounter* and the description of Szenes as *a fellow prisoner* also contribute to the role of (6) as an abstract by connecting Beer and Szenes: *Encountered* is a symmetric predicate requiring the joint mention of Beer and Szenes; *a fellow prisoner* implicates a shared identity.

Once the web text switches to a first-person narration from Beer, headed by the ***Someone special*** title, we see some of the same phrases used to convey Beer's first view of Szenes and to mark a transition to the place where Beer and Szenes have direct contact: the preposed temporal *in the morning*, the vague *they*, the spatial preposition *across* (*the hall/the way*), and Szenes as a *woman (a young woman/one solitary woman*). The interview and web texts both place Szenes at the very end of the sentence—the position designed for new focal information. In *I saw that in a cell across the way there was one solitary woman* ((b)), however, Szenes is doubly positioned (through "see" and "there") as new and important information. Furthermore, whereas the interview text immerses Beer's view of Szenes within her more general activity of *looking* (t) at a general view *across the hall* (t), what Beer is represented as having seen in the web text—*one solitary woman*—encompasses her entire visual field.

The distribution of information about Szenes in the interview and web texts also shows the centrality of Szenes to the web text. Whereas the interview text follows the introduction of Szenes with Beer's recounting of Szenes' story itself, the web text provides a great deal more information about Szenes even before her story is told. After her introduction as *one solitary woman* (b), Szenes remains a focus of attention for twelve clauses that describe (largely from Beer's point of view) Szenes' demeanor, physical state, and activity, all of which indicate cheerfulness (d) and strength ((e), (f), (g)) despite fatigue (c) and abuse (h). We also find inferences about Szenes' personality ((j), (m)) and internal state ((l), (n)). Also present are direct contact between Beer and Szenes (i) and observations of behavior ((k)) that is assumed to be communicatively driven (l). This early dispersion of information is in sharp contrast to Beer's withholding of information about Szenes until she hears Szenes' story in the prison yard.

The most comparable section of the interview and web texts is Szenes' story itself. In both texts, Szenes' story is presented (indirectly) in Szenes' voice. Both stories follow a referential style: a sequence of events with minimal background. (5) compares TYPES of information (noted in CAPS on the left) in the two versions and details of information; similar information from the two versions is underlined.

(5) WHAT HAPPENED TO HANNAH SZENES?

	INTERVIEW TEXT	WEB TEXT
	She told me her story that	She told me that
ROLE	She was a parachutist	She was a parachutist
GOAL		She really came to save her mother
		and maybe some other Jews.

ORIGIN	who came from . . . Israel, Palestine	
DESTINATION	in Yugoslavia	She parachuted down on the Yugoslav border
PARTICIPANTS		with two other men.
OUTCOME		Someone betrayed her.
	And she was caught	She was caught
		And brought to the prison.
FORECAST		She constantly showed me, with a smile,
	and they- they probably	that she knew
	will hang her.	she's going to be hung.
	She always made this-	She did not really hope to live.
	this hanging sign.	
STANCE	they used to take her on a truck,	
	for interrogation	
	she found some coal	
	she would make marks under her eyes	
	to evoke some pity	

Four types of information appear in both versions: ROLE, DESTINATION, OUTCOME, and FORECAST. The only information presented in exactly the same words is Szenes' ROLE (*she was a parachutist*) and (in part) the OUTCOME of the mission (*she was caught*). Differences concern the amount of detail in DESTINATION and OUTCOME, as well as the quality of evidence in Szenes' FORECAST of her future. Each version of Szenes' experience also contains information that the other does not. Appearing only in the interview text are Szenes' ORIGIN, presented parenthetically as a relative clause (*who came from . . . Israel, Palestine*), and STANCE. Appearing only in the web text are GOAL and PARTICIPANTS.

These divergences across the two stories are related to the larger texts in which the story about Szenes is embedded. In the interview text, Beer presents virtually everything that she says about Szenes when they are together in the prison yard. The web text, however, already has presented similar information in Beer's report of their initial contact ((a) to (n)), and it continues to do so after the reported encounter ((aa) to (pp)). For example, Beer's development of Szenes' STANCE in the interview text portrays Szenes not only as victimized but also as agentive, as resisting subjugation. A comparable characterization appears in the web text, but earlier: When Beer first sees Szenes *in a cell across the way* (b), she notices that *she had dark circles under her eyes* (c) and that *her front teeth were missing* (h). Beer herself implies an interrogation, when she asks, *"Did they beat your teeth out of you?"* (i). An agentive and resistant characterization also is embellished later in the web text when Beer supports her evaluation (*I felt)* that *she was someone special* (ff) with *She wasn't scared* (kk), *she had an aura about her* (mm). Also included in Beer's evaluative coda is Szenes' ORIGIN (*she came from Palestine* (pp)): When conjoined to her age (*she was close to my age* (oo)), it is part of what makes Szenes seem *very exotic* (nn) to Beer. Thus, comparable evaluative themes appear in both the interview and web texts. They are woven into the two texts differently, however, so that they appear in locations that are consistent with the overall development and organization of each text.

The patterns described for the beginnings and middles of the interview and web texts continue as they end. The interview text blends Beer's voice with the experiences of the people with whom she was captured and imprisoned. Beer's encounter with Szenes was one aspect of that experience. Thus, after ending the Szenes story and securing recognition of the identity of her fellow prisoner ((mm)–(qq)), Beer returns to the chronicle of imprisonment ((rr)–(ss)):

Beer: And it turned out to-
she became very well known she was Hannah
Szenes.

Interviewer: Hannah=

Beer: =[Yes.] And eh-

Interviewer: =Sze[nes.]

Beer: of course, y'know what happened to her.=

Beer: =Uh we were in this prison for three and a half, weeks.

And after that time, they told us to take, whatever we
had, [continues]

Beer's oral history then tells us—in approximately another 10,000 words—what happened *after that time*.

When we turn to the end of the web text, however, we learn no more about Beer's own fate. Instead, we find a repetition of the title *someone special* within an evaluative coda—first individual, and then collective (*our misery*)—that highlights the positive effect of Szenes on Beer's feelings:

> She was twenty-three years old at the time. I felt she was someone special. I didn't know exactly what she was, but I never forgot her. There was something special about her. She didn't behave like the others. She wasn't scared, thinking of herself. She was beyond that. She had an aura about her. To me she was very exotic; she was close to my age, and she came from Palestine. In that prison it was good to hear something like this, something beyond our misery.

In sum, the interview and web texts ostensibly are about the same experience: an encounter between Susan Beer and Hannah Szenes in 1944 in a Gestapo prison in Budapest. Although the "facts" of the two texts are basically the same, the "stories" differ in style, emphasis, and characterization. In the concluding section of this essay, I turn to the sometimes troubling relationship between facts and story to embed my analysis in some recent concerns of historians—thus suggesting the value of discourse analysis not only for the study of oral history but also for the study of History.

Conclusion

One of the first scholars to undertake the collection of Holocaust oral histories, Geoffrey Hartman, has argued that "the conviction has grown that local knowledge, which speaks from inside a situation rather than from the outside in an objectifying manner, can provide a texture of truth that eludes those who adopt a prematurely unified voice" (Hartman 1996: 135). Both versions of Susan Beer's story about Hannah Szenes are representations about the past that speak from "inside a situation." Yet the "texture of truth" they offer differs, in part, because of the different contexts in which they appear. The two texts also speak in different voices—certainly not a "prematurely unified voice"—that adopt observational or inferential stances, dwell in different domains (autobiography, commemoration), and are directed to different audiences.

A discourse perspective on oral history has shown how these differences occur and, in so doing, has raised issues of interest to linguists: the impact of transcription and other modes of presenting texts, the intertextual relevance of personal and historical themes, the display of identity through referring terms and event-types, referential and evaluative styles in narrative, transitions between episodes. The question of how this perspective and these issues can be of interest to historians is not one that I can fully answer here. Instead, I try to clarify the question by embedding it in recent concerns of historians that bear on the intermingling of story and facts in History.

Historians have observed that the same multiple voices and mediation that are endemic to oral history also appear in other textual data and in History itself.

Evans (1999: 90), for example, observes that "the language of historical documents is never transparent." Because History itself is permeated with ambiguities and mediated through various factors, it involves listening to a "chorus of different voices sounding through the text" (Evans 1999: 92).

Certainly one voice that emerges in the textual chorus is that of the Historian. Is there one unified Historian's voice, however? In his discussion of two starkly different styles of historical writing, Lang (1999) suggests that Historians' representations of the past may converge stylistically with fictional renditions of the past.[11] Likewise, Young's (1988: 4) analysis of "writing and rewriting the Holocaust" ponders whether historical tracts on the Holocaust are "less mediated by imagination, less troped and figured, or ultimately less interpretive than the fictions of the Holocaust."

A more complex view of multiple voices has been suggested by White, who separates a factual voice from a literary voice but then argues for the primacy of the literary voice in History. In White's (1992: 49) view, the goal of writing History requires one to "prefigure as a possible object of knowledge the whole set of events reported in the documents." The actual act of writing History itself is a poetic act, however, best understood in terms of metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony and their corresponding modes of emplotment. Because these choices are not completely dictated by empirical evidence, History can be "put together in a number of different and equally plausible narrative accounts of 'what happened in the past'" (White 1992: 50). The consequence of this *modus operandi* is that "one must face the fact that, when it comes to the historical record, there are no grounds to be found in the record itself for preferring one way of construing its meaning rather than another" (White 1973, quoted in Evans 1999: 86).

An even more radical separation of History from "what happened" has been brought about by what has been called the "linguistic turn" in history (Rorty 1967). The linguistic turn basically is the adoption of a postmodernist perspective on language. Stemming from de Saussure's separation of signifier from signified (and apparently ignoring the crucial role of convention in reconnecting these two aspects of the sign), the postmodern perspective was developed through Derrida's claim that language was an "infinite play of significations" (quoted in Evans 1999: 82) and Barthes' claim that History was "a parade of signifiers masquerading as a collection of facts" (quoted in Evans 1999: 81). Thus, postmodernism shifts a well-known and accepted assumption—that meaning can be relative to context—to a level of hyper-relativity: Meaning is indeterminate and ever-changing. The consequence is that language can never tell us what happened in the past.

I have come far from the initial observation of a textual connection between Linguists and Historians. After reviewing the functions and features of oral histories and comparing two versions of one woman's story about an encounter in a Gestapo prison in 1944, I have ended with more theoretical questions about the language of History. I hope that the path I have followed in this essay has suggested the potential of the linguistic turn for History. What I envision, however, is not the postmodern turn adopted by narrative theorists, literary critics/theorists, and philosophers but a turn that is based more on the strong empirical tradition of socially constituted linguistic perspectives (to borrow Hymes' (1974) term) such as sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and pragmatics.

Socially constituted linguistic perspectives have had much to say about the same aspects of language that postmodernists have addressed. In contrast to the theoretical hyperrelativism of postmodern approaches, however, socially constituted linguistic perspectives offer a situated relativism that not only imbues methodology and theory but also motivates analysis of crucial interfaces between language and "reality." This enables them to address questions that arise within that interface: How are representations of events (the "facts") and people immersed within texts (the "story")? How are texts immersed within their contexts of use? How do contexts both inform and restrict the vast (but not infinite) web of potential interpretations and meanings? How does the coherence of text emerge from linguistic, social, and cultural factors? Answers to all of these questions can help address the controversies incumbent in oral histories—and in History itself—that seek to represent the past but are produced and interpreted in the present.

NOTES

1. I am grateful for discussion of the ideas in this paper to Deborah Tannen, Teun van Dijk, Gayle Weiss, and the students in my fall 2001 Georgetown University class on "Life Stories": Daniel Beckett, Linda Isaacs, Andrew Jocuns, Philip LeVine, Kristen Mulrooney, Meghan Nelson, and Aida Premilovac. The Center for Advanced Holocaust Study (at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum) and a Senior Faculty Research Fellowship (at Georgetown University) provided material and symbolic support for research leading to this work. I thank the Cleveland Alliance for Jewish Women and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum for permission to cite excerpts from the 1984 interview with Susan Beer. I also am grateful to Bonnie Gurewitsch (Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York) for permission to reproduce the excerpt on Susan Beer (what I call the web text). It is important to note that this excerpt initially appeared in the *Newsletter for Holocaust Studies, Documentation and Research*, volume 4, no. 6 (spring 1990). The topic of this issue was "Women of Valor: Partisans and Resistance Fighters." The excerpt on Susan Beer was on page 34.
2. See Veit-Brause (1996) on the polysemy of the word *history*. In keeping with Ankersmit (who applies formal linguistic philosophy to the writing of History; Ankersmit 1983: 8), I separate historical research from the writing of History, using uppercase "H" to denote the social and cultural status of the latter as received knowledge and an academic discipline. I also follow Ankersmit's observation that although it is impossible to draw an exact line between history and History, this blurring of boundaries does not mean that we should abandon the distinction.
3. I follow Shandler's (1999: xiv) definition of memory culture as the range of practices a community uses to recall its past. These practices include broadcast media, written media, verbal practices, public memorials, formal education, family legends/stories, and so on.

4. The spelling "Szenes" alternates with "Senesh."
5. Susan Beer's excerpt appeared on the website "Women and the Holocaust" as part of an (unauthorized) reproduction of the spring 1990 newsletter cited in note 1. Its first known appearance on this website was in 1998. Despite its original source, and without intending to disregard its initial site of public appearance, I refer to Susan Beer's excerpt as the "web text." I do so for several reasons: Its location on the web is what accounts for its current presence in public discourse; it is this public appearance in which I am interested; the web is where I found it in 2000; and it is where other members of a general public are also likely to find it.
6. As Bonnie Gurewitsch explained (personal communication), the relatively shorter text about Susan Beer reflects the fact that although Beer had spoken for more than two hours during their interview, at that point Beer felt too tired to continue, even though she had not completed her life story.
7. How to extract a short text from a longer text is an issue that faces virtually all reproductions of oral histories (and, indeed, all segments of discourse); it is impossible to include the most complete record available—audio/video recordings—every time one wants to display, discuss, or analyze a segment. Even websites whose inclusion of brief audio and video clips of selected segments give a very vibrant sense of "being there" with the survivor (e.g., the Yale University Library Fortunoff Archives of Holocaust Testimonies) cannot possibly manage to do so for entire interviews. Thus, as potentially disruptive as extracting excerpts can be, it is necessary: One cannot reproduce an entire life story/oral history every time one quotes or analyzes it.
8. The one collective reference to Szenes in 1984 includes Beer: *And everyday they would let us walk in the courtyard* (x). The major exception is the individuated view of Beer presented in the synopsis: As we saw, Beer is presented as acting alone, despite evidence through other oral history interviews that the actions recounted were group actions. This information does not appear in Table 5.1 because the synopsis was written by someone other than Beer.
9. As Deborah Tannen points out, "be gentle" can be differently categorized—as a physical action (it can be a way of doing something). It also can convey a more enduring quality or demeanor, however (reflected through its encoding as a stative predicate), and thus be categorized as a physical attribute. Although I count it here as a physical attribute, we should keep in mind that "be gentle" may differ from other attributes (e.g., "have dark circles under her eyes") because of its emergence through action. The quantitative comparisons here do not include actions or references from the synopsis of Beer's life. Not only does the synopsis not deal with a comparable topic (i.e., imprisonment), but (as indicated through the use of third person) it was not Beer's own "voice."
10. Stative descriptive clauses can have a role in the complicating action of a narrative when they are inferred by readers/hearers as inceptive (e.g., a character's discovery, realization, view of what had been an ongoing state).
11. Here are Lang's (1999: 24) two examples. First is from Hilberg (1985: 411); it is a description of the fare system for deportees to concentration camps: "The basic charge was the third-class fare: 4 pfennig per track kilometer. Children under 10 were transported for half this amount; those under four went free . . . . For the deportees one-way fare was payable; for the guards a round trip ticket had to be purchased." The second example is from Daniel Goldhagen's (1996) description of Germans in his book *Hitler's Willing Executioners*: "The Germans made love in barracks next to enormous privation and incessant cruelty. What did they talk about when their heads rested quietly on their pillows, when they were smoking their cigarettes in those relaxing moments after their physical needs had been met? Did one relate to another accounts of a particularly amusing beating that she or he had administered or observed . . . ?"

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