CHAPTER
5 ARTICULATING COMMEMORATION

I now turn to semiotically richer and more elaborate entries that present intricate communicative structures, making them more complex and symbolically interesting. These entries also embody acts of instantiation, yet they do so in an implicit way; therefore, their writers need not explicitly indicate "I was here" or "we were here." And while the telegraphic entries I discussed in chapter 4 build on an addressivity structure that is "open" in that it is nonspecific over and above the known location of the book, these articulate entries are elaborate in specifically shaping the commemorative performance that they accomplish on this stage. In making sense of what these entries achieve and how they realize it, I examine communicative and stylistic elements and focus on the entries' addressivity, genre, and narrative. Through a performance-sensitive reading I ask about their *situated character* and how they become sensible in situ. I address the notions of genre and narrative also because I view these concepts as inseparable from addressivity. Interactionally, genre, the "orienting framework for the production and reception of discourse" (Briggs and Bauman 1992, pp. 142–43), and narrative, the episodic and meaning-conferring relay of events (as shown by Labov 1972), offer complementary perspectives on the entries. While these concepts admittedly also hold merit with regard to the telegraphic texts discussed earlier, more elaborate entries are interesting to read because they are communicatively ambitious and can present an articulate mastery of the genre(s) associated with visitor books. They are discursive "drive-by shootings" and condensed "political haiku," as Bonnie Morris (2011) playfully puts it. Figure 5.1 depicts one of the book's pages with three entries, which seem to have been written by different inscribers and
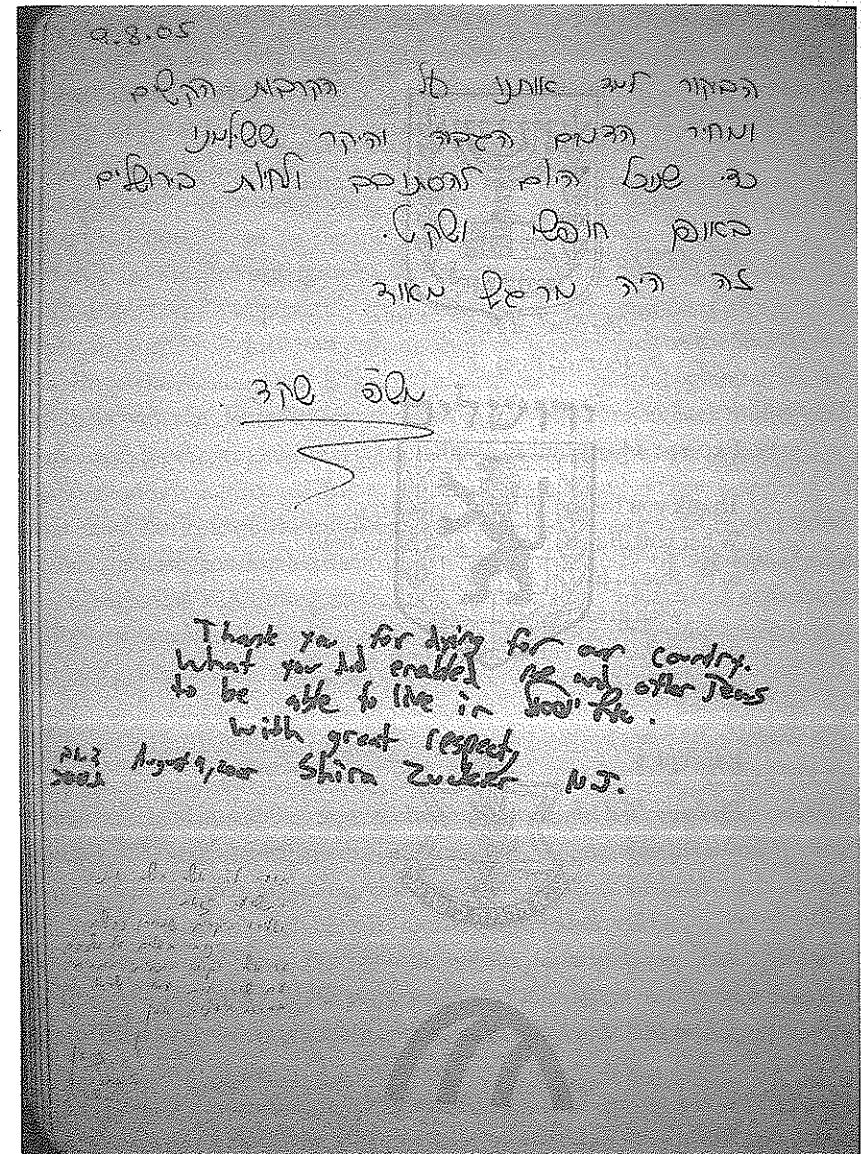

FIGURE 5.1 "Thank you for dying for our country."

arranged vertically and spaciously in August 2005. The entries' vertical arrangement on the page corresponds with the book's chronology, displaying the older entry at the top and the latest at the bottom. It also correlates with the physical size of the entries, because the space they occupy decreases as they advance down the page.

Excerpt 2[1]

9.8.05

The visit taught us of the difficult battles
and of the high and dear cost we paid in blood
so that today we would be able to stroll and live in Jerusalem
in a quiet and free manner.
It was very moving.

The Shaked Fam'.
[curved line]

Excerpt 3 [original in English]

Thank you for dying for our country.
What you did enabled me and other Jews
to be able to live in *Eretz Yisrael.*
 with great respect,
August 9, 2005 Shira Zucker N.J.
d'Av, [h].t.sh.s.h.[2]

Excerpt 4[3]

Praise to God who has performed
this redemption,
and [to] his cherished messengers who gave their lives.
 they shall rest in peace
until they shall rise at the resurrection
together with the rest of the Dead of the Jewish People
[which will occur] soon in our days, Amen
  A. COHEN
  Kaf be'Av
   [h].t.sh.s.h.

 I begin reading these entries comparatively by noting that they all possess signatory elements: the second entry includes all three signatory elements, while the other two entries include only names and dates. These signatory elements imbue the entries with the distinct quality associated with the genre(s) of visitor book entries; and unlike the telegraphic and graffiti-resembling entries presented in chapter 4, they are made to be textually recognizable as "valid" visitor book entries. With regard to addressivity structures, these entries establish the utterances' addresser(s)

and addressee(s), the location of the communicative act, and the relations between these dimensions. Addressivity structures function as the "critical deictic parameters of communication" (Hanks 2000b, p. 116), and as such they are related to indexical function and supply a path toward understanding situated utterances. In the first entry, by the Shaked's family, the utterance is addressed to the site's management, and more generally to those undertaking the work of preserving the past and commemorating the historic battle. Yet the entry's addressee(s) are *implicit*; there is no explicit dedication to the site's management. The addressees can be deduced from the utterance's subject, which importantly is *the visit*. The entry commences with the words "The visit taught us," which frame the ensuing text as elaborating on the Shaked family's visit to the Ammunition Hill site. To complete the entry's beginning, the text continues with the clause "It was very moving," where "it" refers back to the "visit." In this case, the text's topicality suggests its addressivity, which has the agents of commemoration as its addressees. This might sound trivial now, but there is nothing obvious about this kind of addressivity, and this type of topicality, as will soon be clear.

 Also, the relationship between addressivity and topicality is not coincidental, as the beginning and closing clauses refer to the visitors' *educational* experiences ("The visit *taught* us"): the Shaked family's entry is not expressing general sentiments of gratitude but, rather, its indebtedness to the commemorators for an experience that included information of relevant events. The visitors acknowledge that this site—as do all heritage museums—holds an ideological mission, which is accomplished educationally. With regard to the Ammunition Hill site, these visitors correctly recognize, respond to, and correspond with the site's explicit educational pretense. The learning experience is essential for commemoration and national identity, and as a result, many commemoration sites hold libraries, archives, and various other databases that are part of their stake in knowledge and memory and their self-framing as educational establishments that help us remember that past.[4]

 In Paul Connerton's (1989) contemplation of societal memory, he describes three different classes of memory: personal, cognitive, and habit. The last is important for this discussion because it concerns the practical ability to perform action. Habit-memory has not been studied as extensively as the other types because it does not present itself in the form of manifest content that is remembered; it is not representational. Rather, in Connerton's view, habit-memory is a social type of memory that is embodied, and includes such knowledge as learning to read and write, or even to ride a bicycle. Here are *skills* that are essentially social in that they have to do with the social environments where people live, learn, and interact (although Connerton does not mention Bourdieu, the discussion echoes the latter's idea of habitus). Furthermore, these skills should not be addressed in merely functional terms, but also as highly moral and ideological practices. As Connerton (1989) notes, "The meaning of a social habit rests

upon others' conventional expectations such that it must be interpretable as a socially legitimate (or illegitimate) performance. Social habits are essentially legitimating performances. And if habit-memory is inherently performative, then social habit-memory must be distinctively social-performative" (p. 35). Museum goers and commemoration doers are engaged in acquiring and performing sets of skills that are social and that pertain to commemoration and the doing of national identity. The authors of the Shaked family entry are acknowledging—and reflexively also performing—the site's effective educational agenda. The writers publicly present their skills regarding commemorative literacy in the shape of an appropriately elaborate commemorative entry. In Connerton's terms, these performances are legitimate, but they are also legitimizing in that these visitors know what the site is ideologically narrating and they also have (or have acquired) the skills needed to manifest this narrative knowledge.

Between its opening and its conclusion, the Shaked family's utterance consists of a number of intermediate clauses, which amount to its discursive heart. The essential question is this: What is the Shaked family performing in and through the entry? I suggest that their words convey how—indeed, how well—they have understood the national narrative told at the site, and that in light of this the core of the entry is a *performative retelling* of the site's national commemorative narrative. The family acknowledges the narrative, which is now told *in the words of the visitors and from their perspective.* The Shaked family indicates that (1) they have visited the site—again, here is an implicit indexical "I was here" act; (2) they have learned and understood its narrative; and (3) by reiterating it and viewing the visit positively they are expressing sympathy for and agreement with it. Hence, the short text actually references a larger narrative structure, which it echoes in a concise and iconic way.

Looking closely at the structure of this condensed commemoration entry, it is interesting to note the crucial roles of temporal and personal *deictics,* which shift and coalesce times, places, and identities—so essential for narrative performance. First, the extension of the referral function of personal deictics (pronouns)[5]: In the entry's first clause, the plural pronoun "us" (*otanu*) refers to the actual visitors, or the entry's principals; and its temporal dimension refers to the recent past (the duration of the visit itself). "Us" indexes the Shaked family in the capacity of being the site's audience or the receivers of the site's educational message. In the second clause, a similar pronoun appears, which also refers to the first-person plural, yet it interestingly extends *beyond* the recent past and beyond the members of the Shaked family to include a larger—imagined and induced—collective, which we learn shares a similar fate and identity ("high and dear cost *we* paid in blood," my emphasis). The subjects in this clause are an extended "we" group, which includes persons who have fought and died during the battles.

Thus, the subjects are located in the past, a somewhat mythic and out-of-reach "land" that is being commemorated by the Ammunition Hill site and now also by the Shaked family.

There is, of course, a possibility that members of the Shaked family have actually paid a personal price in the 1967 War; and for this reason, the deictic "we" does not index an imagined and mediated collective. I did not talk with the Shaked family members; therefore, I cannot contest this possibility. However, many entries are similarly framed, suggesting not a kinship relation to those who died but, rather, ideologically induced ties constructed by national institutions and mobilized media that revolve around national symbols and narratives, effectively shown by Anderson (1983). Having said this, it is still worth noting that many of the Israeli visitors, or their close relatives, have served in the military, and this fact suggests a closer link and stronger sentiment of identification (one that is not purely symbolic) than might be the case elsewhere.

In the third clause of the entry, a deictic in the first-person plural form appears yet again. Here, the calibration turns back to the present ("so that today"), and the deictic "we" ("we would be able") conjures up still a different collective. At stake now are all those people who presently live in Jerusalem, and also those who engage in leisure and the touristic activities of visiting the city and "strolling about" it with enjoyment. This group entails the first "us," which designated the actual visitors, yet it is now extended to include not only *these* visitors in *this* site but also all other visitors to Jerusalem, as well as the city's (Jewish) residents.

Through these deictic oscillations an association is sustained between the "then" and "now," and between the concrete and immediate place ("here") and the more extended notion of "hereness" that encompasses Jerusalem as an eth-nonational capital and religious symbol. This is done in a highly succinct and stylized manner. The Shaked family's entry expresses appreciation of an educational experience supplied by the site. In fact, the family learned a meaningful lesson in history well enough to be able to recite it on the available surface of the visitor book. The condensed narrative that emerges from the entry rests on the identities of the protagonists (the Shakeds), and also importantly on the type of link they establish between events of the past and those of the present ("so that"). This is necessarily a *causal connection,* which is essential for both narrative structure and narrative moral, and it must supply a rationale that justifies the deaths of many. This is a crucial element in commemoration ceremonies and discourses as such. The accounting for the "high and dear cost we paid in blood" does not concern the past alone. The reasons accounting for and justifying soldiers' (and others') deaths in the past are precisely those that supply justifications for the deaths of soldiers in the present and the future. The causal link between the events of the past, on the one hand, and the present state of affairs, on the

other hand, suggests a reiteration and a perpetuation of deaths in the foreseeable future of Zionism: in every epoch—which in Israel translates to every couple of years or so—sacrifices are made for the nation, and these have been, are, and will likely be justified in the future by the fact that they allow (ethnonational Jewish) life to proceed routinely.

The entry's performance, then, amounts to a *retelling* of the site's commemorative national narrative, whereby it transforms into an articulable public text now produced by the visitors themselves. The visitors, indexed by the signing convention, emerge as actors partaking in this scene; the Shakeds fulfill the role of an active audience (rather than of passive observers or receivers) who narratively re-perform ethnonational commemoration. This is a rather typical type of medium-related message commonly associated with visitor books, where the entries "include highly appreciative notes by both adults and children, who express their gratitude to the museum makers or to individual guides for a moving and edifying experience" (Katriel 1997, p. 71).

The entry inscribed immediately below the Shaked family's entry is different on a number of grounds. To begin, in terms of its addressivity, Zucker's text commences with a *direct* and *explicit* address, which is *not* directed to those partaking in the enterprise of commemoration but, rather, to those who are *commemorated by it*, namely the dead soldiers. Addressivity here is not implicit, and the author directly communicates with people who are (apparently) unable to read the message or reply to it. This is a different rhetorical structure altogether, which does not concern addressivity alone but also relates to topicality: the entry's author does not address the educational experience gained by the visit at the Ammunition Hill site, nor does she express indebtedness to it, but she addresses the sacrificial deeds that were done in the past ("dying for our country"). In a sense, it is as if the author is directly corresponding with the dead soldiers over and above the heads of the site and its curators and commemorators.

In a philosophical thesis that rejects the notion of the immediacy of dialogue and uninterrupted communication altogether, John Peters (1999) intriguingly argues that "communication with the dead is the paradigm case of hermeneutics," and that it amounts to "the art of interpretation where no return message can be received" (p. 149). He argues this is the baseline case, and not a seemingly unproblematized and unmediated form of face-to-face interaction. For Peters, communication is less about dialogue and reciprocity, and more about unidirectional acts of dissemination, which amount to a continuous broadcast of messages that might or might not be received, understood, or given a reply. The visitor book's communicative affordances and the endurance of utterances within it suggest that they, too, are continuously being "broadcast," and regardless of their authors' imagined addressees and readers, there is both a temporal

and a phenomenological abyss between acts of writing and acts of reading. With the addressivity structure of Zucker's entry, this abyss is dramatically brought to the fore: if it is a matter of time before later visitors read earlier visitors' entries, it is more than a matter of time that separates inscribers (present) from commemorated dead soldiers (past). Different scenes are at stake. Peters (1999) writes that "when the distance between speaker and listener is great, the audience bears the interpretive burden," at which point "it becomes the hearer's responsibility to close the loop without the aid of the speaker" (p. 52). With the exception that we are dealing mainly with reading, and hearing (a channel issue), there is a "burden" put on the shoulders of the book's readers: the message perhaps cannot get to those who have sacrificed their lives, but it certainly reaches other visitors, positioned in this communicative event as overhearers. Paraphrasing the title of Peters's book, *Speaking Into the Air*, I note that the commemorating visitors are "inscribing into the pages" as part and parcel of what it means to do commemoration publicly and meaningfully.

If the Shaked entry is purposeful in acknowledging the importance of the themes at the Ammunition Hill site, and the efficiency with which they have been communicated, Zucker's type of entry suggests both, more and less: a direct expression of gratitude to the commemoration agents and institution is either not enough or not the right thing to do. As at other heritage sites, authenticity lies with the events of the past and not with their preservation and presentation, and for these visitors, the former overrides the latter. We are also reminded that in public settings, addressivity structures are associated not only with audiences but also with *publics*, and this holds true particularly in the context of commemoration and collective memorialization (as Christine Allison 2013 shows in her work on monuments' addressivities).

Additional differences between these entries concern language and notions of place. Zucker's entry is written in English (in line with the author's self-indication of residing in New Jersey), but it includes a language shift, which is important in establishing the highly symbolic character of the entry's text and how its performance is attained. The language shift is from English to Hebrew, and it occurs in reference to a place, *the* place ("*Eretz Yisrael*," or Land of Israel), and time (reference to the Jewish calendar "*d'Av, [h].t.sh.s.h.*"). This is meaningful because what Zucker establishes is an *elevated chronotope*, or an aesthetic "inseparability of space and time" (Bakhtin 1981, p. 84). Zucker is not concerned with leisurely activities or the city of Jerusalem per se (as were the Shakeds), but is referring to "our country," which is defined in religious terms as The [Holy] Land of Israel. Codeswitching functions aesthetically and in various socio-political contexts, and is helpful in accomplishing actions that have to do with marking identities.[6] Zucker's codeswitching, moreover, instantiates the unique chronotopic grids

within which she, the inscriber, locates herself. She is retelling a story, and part of the intensity of this mini-narrative, which enmeshes identity, a sacred Jewish *chronotope,* and ethnonationality, is achieved via codeswitching.

The entries written by the Shaked family and Shira Zucker also differ significantly in terms of how inscribers' identities are placed in the spaces indexed by Jewish and Israeli discourse(s) of commemoration. More accurately, it is how their identities are placed within different geo-symbolic chronotopic grids, which they creatively index. For the local Israeli Shaked family, spaces are concrete and actual, and the activities of inhabiting them (strolling, living) have an everyday sense to them. These characteristics are typical of entries that were produced by secular and traditional Israeli visitors, which present a mundane appreciation of the places and activities commemorated. In such entries there is usually reference to concrete places and locations, sometimes even to the Ammunition Hill site itself. Further, in all cases where entries express *complaints* with regard to the site's poor maintenance (*"There needs to be better ventilation here," "It would be better if there was a guide that could give us a tour of the site,"* and *"Why isn't there a cooler or soft drinks machine in here?"*), they are, with no exception, signed by Israeli visitors. This was also the case with my interactions with visitors, as only Israelis expressed having noticed (and criticized) the museum's and the artifact's poor physical condition.

For Zucker, whose entry is characteristic of those produced by Orthodox Anglophone Jews, the spaces that are indexed are not of a concrete nature, nor are the activities that take place within them (no strolling about in mythic Jewishscapes). These chronotopic variations illustrate how "space is the envelop of time," as Henri Lefebvre (1991, p. 339) so nicely put it, and moreover, that there are substantially different time-spaces involved. Katriel (1994) aptly observes that such discourses represent an "approach to the events of the past [that] echoes a familiar strategy in traditional Jewish thought," which is "more concerned with the timeless meaning rather than with the fleeting shape of historical events" (p. 12). Here the visitor book provides a communicative site where the functions of bridging and binding the eternal and the historical, and the abstract and the embodied, can be pursued effectively. With regard to the politics of space in Israeli/Jewish ethnonationalism, these are the discrepancies between the local "small place" of life's hustle and bustle and the mythic "large space" of Orthodox, sometimes messianic Judaism (Gurevitch 2007; Gurevitch and Aran 1991). It is no coincidence that these differences surface at the Ammunition Hill site, for the site celebrates Israel's 1967 victory, which has been interpreted as a national-military accomplishment and/or an occasion of powerful and pivotal divine intervention.

As a consequence, an interesting difference between these entries emerges concerning the consistency of their narratives. I refer here to the ambivalences

(or dissonances) that appear in Zucker's discourse: while her gratitude is an expression of indebtedness for being able to live in Israel, her signature tells us that she is actually residing in New Jersey. The incongruence here is in the spatial trajectories indexed by the entry, between the utterance and the entry. More than that, the expression "me and other Jews" is interesting, as it raises a question regarding the differences among Jews, namely between the author and "other Jews" (perhaps those who actually do reside in Israel).

Aside from the differences between the entries, both entry types present *positive performances* of participation in ethnonational Jewish commemoration: they share an expressive understanding of the tenets of hegemonic Zionist commemoration and of the narrative performed by the Ammunition Hill site, which they performatively support. These narratives' re-performances entail the crucial causal link between past sacrifices and present existence, which lies at the heart of commemoration ("so that," in the Shaked entry, and "enabled" in the Zucker entry). The latter type of entry, which directly addresses the dead, is the *most* popular type among the book's discursive entries; it amounts to almost 65 percent of them. Yet both entries re-exhibit the connection between commemoration (heritage) and nationhood, amounting to what Homi Bhabha (2004, p. 37) calls the constitutive "enunciatory present" of national identity. Nationhood, like commemoration and heritage (and interwoven with them), is an abstract sentiment that demands materialization and embodiment: it is sustained by and symbolically accessed via specific discursive actions, which presently take the form of visitor-inscribed commemorative entries. These actions are performative in the sense that they attain and sustain ethnonational order; and if "a nation is a language act," as Julia Kristeva (1993, p. 44) argues, these utterances are a "written act" performed on stages devised precisely for that.

Finally, the third entry on this page presents an entirely different structure of addressivity, which is "open" (no explicit addressee). In terms of its topicality, the entry is quite clear: it commences with an utterance that squarely locates the responsibility and agency of the victorious battles of the 1967 War with divine intervention. This visitor acknowledges the triumphant nature of the events at stake, as well as the need to recognize those who are associated with them, and yet the due indebtedness is directed not at either of the two agents mentioned in the earlier entries—the commemorated and the commemorators—but at God. The deictic "this" at the beginning of the entry's second line ("this redemption") is pivotal because it is the only indexical anchor that ties the Cohen entry to a particular place and set of commemorated events.

In the entry, the war events are accounted by an unmistakably messianic discourse. The third line supplies account of this connection—between the powerful spiritual deity, on the one hand, and the acts of war and warriors (*who gave*

their lives), on the other—suggesting that those who were killed in combat were in fact *shlichav* (stemming from the root *Shin, Lamed, Het*, meaning "sent"), or his couriers or messengers. For this inscriber, it is clear why gratitude should be expressed to God and no one else: agency does not lie with messengers, whose role is merely that of animators, but with the agent who animates them. The entry's utterance progresses and unfolds a temporality that extends beyond the traditional Jewish and national-Zionist cyclic calendar. It evokes the future, as do other narratives at the site, yet it does so in an ultimate fashion: the soldiers "shall rest in peace until they shall rise at the resurrection," and the temporal horizon stretches to the end of conceivable social time. Then, the resurrection will be all-encompassing and, importantly, the dead soldiers will not enjoy a particular privileged status; rather, they will rise "together with the rest of the Dead of the Jewish People."

This third entry shares similarities and differences with the previous two types of entries. Akin to Zucker's entry, we find reference (though not direct) to an agent whose presence as a direct addressee is not physically sensible or knowable to all those involved. Yet unlike Zucker's entry, Cohen does not address dead people, for a reason that is stated in the entry itself: they are dead! Indeed, the soldiers' state of being deceased, expressed in the phrase "they shall rest in peace" (taken from the Jewish funeral prayer *El male rachamim*) is precisely what does not allow them—indeed, what disqualifies them—to be proper addressees for expressions of indebtedness. Like the Shaked family's entry, the Cohen entry is internally consistent in terms of the narrative it supplies and the accounts it gives for the battles and deaths; there is no dissonance involved in its commemorative performance.

The entry's discourse lies quite beyond the discourse of ethnonational commemoration or, at the very least, stretches it considerably. As mentioned, the temporal dimension is not cyclic and the events are not repetitive. This is to say that the question of justifying and accounting for sacrifices of lives given to the nation-state, which is at the heart of national commemoration, is not a central matter for this entry. Additionally, in light of the fact that the longing for those who have died is shifted from nationalist or religious-nationalist nostalgia, which produces remembrance, to the prophetic expectation for the coming of the Messiah, and with it the apocalyptic resurrection of all the Jewish People, this entry's discourse is arguably not commemorative. If the soldiers (together with "the rest of the Dead of the Jewish People") will be resurrected, there is little sense in modern or national remembrance and commemoration rituals. The entry's utterance ends with a confirming "Amen," inscribed before the signature, which frames it as a wishful expression or even as prayer. As a whole, the entry performs not only an expression of gratitude directed at the Almighty but also a

re-appropriation of the discourse of ethnonational Israeli commemoration, and its radical transformation from modern-secular nation-state origins to its positioning within fundamental and messianic Jewish discourse.

The last question I raise concerns the medium's layout and communicative structure, and the possible interrelatedness of the entries: Do the latter entries, namely Zucker's and Cohen's entries, correspond with the first entry? Despite the fact that all inscribing visitors who I observed initially read or leafed through the book before writing in it, my observations and short conversations indicated that there was little intent to specifically relate to the contents of earlier entries (but see later in this chapter). In choosing a space to inscribe, visitors did not seem to be carefully reading what had already been written on the page, nor did they indicate this when talking with me about their considerations and decisions. Still, the entries are short texts that are written in basic Hebrew and English, and they are accessible to most inscribers. It is not inconceivable that the authors of the second and third entries are "replying" not only to the site's ideological discourse but also to the first entry located at the top of the page (which, of the three, is of the genre that is closest to the site's formal commemoration narrative). If this is the case, then the three entries should not be read as co-texts offering individual utterances but as chains of responses and of responses to responses, where commemoration performances are being negotiated continuously.

Mediating Commemoration

Excerpts 2, 3, and 4 above show a variety of genres found in the book's discursive entries. I now supply two more excerpts that shed further light on entries' addressivity structures, themes, and condensed narrative performances. These examples invite discussion about entries' heterogeneity and richness, and the "messiness" of the performances produced on this stage. The entries evince different genres that differ structurally and communicatively, but also in terms of the literacy resources they exhibit and the publics they engage. Excerpt 5 appears in figure 3.2, where it is located at the top of the left-hand page.

Excerpt 5[7]

20/7/05 / The museum is very important in order to note for the young / generations who did not experience the war [and] to learn / and to understand how [many] lives we have sacrificed for our / right to live in relative calmness and peace with our neighbors / families / Avitan / Avitan / Avitan / and Bitan

As with the Shaked entry, this multiple-signed, multi-family entry stresses the site's educational mission and simultaneously attests that it has been accomplished effectively. As consumers and connoisseurs of commemoration, the four undersigned families confirm before the commemorating agents and visitors that the institutional narrative has been well received and, hence, also well delivered. Indeed, these visiting families are positioned uniquely to assume the role that can supply such an affirmation, as they are physically and discursively partaking in the commemoration project in their capacity as an active heritage audience. In his analysis of the "theater of memory," Michal Bodemann (1996) argues that acts of collective remembrance take place first and foremost in theatrical settings, or in other words, performatively. These settings implicate the visitors, because in the memorial ritual, "the visitors are actors and spectators at the same time" (p. 181). The entry's authors are explicit about the positive, even vital role education plays in this context. They stress that education is about the endowing of particular experiences, and that the site allows such an experience for those who could not have obtained it directly. To put it another way, the role of the commemoration project is understood as *centrally involving mediation*, and as such, as one that allows those who did not live ("who did not experience") during the commemorated epoch to experience, and then to "understand" it. Commemoration itself then emerges as mediation.

As part of this appreciative evaluation, the Avitan and Bitan families reiterate the sacrificial narrative and, central to it, the *causal connection* between deaths of the past and lives of the present: the sacrificial deaths of others versus the life of "us/now" (i.e., the lives that have been *sacrificed for*). In their formative study of Israeli civic religion, Don-Yihya and Liebman (1981) observe that the "most central political myths are stories of defeat and death" (p. 131). Yet, moreover:

> The living generation through identification with the heroes of the myth turns death and defeat into life and victory. . . . Since death purifies, it is the ultimate form of atonement and legitimates the acts of those who died. Death need not be final defeat for it becomes a source of legitimation to those who identify with the fallen. The living, thereby, become the successors of the dead, and their death legitimates the enterprise of the living. (Don-Yihya and Liebman 1981, p. 131)

The standard performances of national affiliation that are pursued on this commemorative platform retell this drama, and by doing so time and again, they *reenact it* discursively. The performative dimension of touristic and museum environments brings about "the enactment of intense, dramatic stories which bind the hostess and the tourist in an imaginative world" (Fine and Speer 1985, cited

in Katriel 1997, p. 147). This is true of the type of addressivity structures that establish communication with agents of commemoration. But it is not true for all entries. In other types of entries, such as those directed at dead soldiers or at divine intervention, the enactment of dramatic narrative is produced over and above the heads of local agents of commemoration.

Another example of an entry that mainly addresses the site and the importance of its educational-cum-moral mission was inscribed during the fourth day of the 2006 (Second) Lebanon War. During the war, which Israel initiated in the summer of 2006, the northern parts of Israel were heavily shelled, and many residents fled southward to stay with relatives and acquaintances in the central and southern areas, including Jerusalem.

Excerpt 6[8]

Sunday 16.7.06 / The North of Israel [lit. the country] is being bombarded with missiles / and we are visiting Ammunition Hill / in order to understand how difficult it was then / and how difficult [it is] now but thanks to / our army this time too we shall overcome / our enemies who surround our country! / the Cohen Family / Jerusalem / (Giv'at Ze'ev) / the Yair Family / Kiryat Shmona

The entry begins with a "news report" type of reference, which addresses present affairs, including the date and the events of the war in the northern parts of Israel. Yet unlike common journalistic reports, this report is sent from a different time, not place (the place being the location of the audience). The report then turns, reflexively, to describe the activities of the visitors themselves ("and we are visiting the Ammunition Hill"), and their rationale, or raison d'être ("in order to understand"). The entry's crescendo is not the visitors' realization of past difficulties in and of themselves, but the moral, which is that the military will repeatedly and reliably save "us." I note the connective "and," which appears in the beginning of the third line ("and we are visiting"). Besides making the obvious connection between the first clause and the second clause, which are separated by a line break and hence in need of a connective, the word is further charged because it connects events that are mediated with events that are immediate, and events that are publicly known (and occur at a distance) with events that are personal (and occur "here"). The authors are not merely connecting these spheres but also are making an implication, as though the connective means, "and [as a consequence] we are visiting the Ammunition Hill" or "and [despite this] we are visiting the Ammunition Hill."

The signatory elements that conclude the entry are employed creatively, which adds to the utterance as a whole. The signatures do not simply demonstrate that a number of families authored this entry, but that their juxtaposed appearance importantly indicates that these families, who usually live in different locations, are now united due to unfortunate circumstances. For these visiting families, this fact bears relevance to the commemoration in which they take part *at the moment of their participation*. Together, the Cohen and the Yair families are fleshing out interrelations in the shape of similarities and recurrences between the present and the past, the war that is over and the war that is not (that which is eternally ongoing), as they negotiate the framing of these events. Hence, the repetition of the adjective "difficult" (*kashe*) in reference to how things were back then and how they are at the present. While the site offers a clear narrative framing of the past, the present and the future are ultimately left for visitors to narrate by drawing the appropriate connections, which the Cohen and the Yair families accomplish in this entry.

In his work on the role of memory in commemoration, John Gillis (1994a) argued that commemorative activities establish communities by the fact that they "involve the coordination of individual and group memories" (p. 5). This familial utterance suggests that things are presently "difficult," and that this difficulty is deemed to end, as did the difficulty of the 1967 War. In both epochs, the utterance continues, the hardship was—and will be—terminated by the *supra-agency* of the Israeli Army. The authors typically foreground the role of the army in protecting the ethno-nation state then and now (and in the yet to be), thanking the military both retrospectively and prospectively, and in this way aligning the entry with the normative stance of appreciation. Because the past's projections do not stop short at the present, the future is indicated explicitly. Many entries make the point that, because the State of Israel was attacked repeatedly, war is a continuous state. Therefore, the 1967 War was not a historical occasion but, rather, an illustration of an ongoing (existential) condition. Avner Ben-Amos and Ilana Bet-El (2005) observe and explain, with regard to Israeli commemoration practices, that "the 'future' is also present at the commemorative event, because it embodies a promise that only the national community can fulfill" (p. 170). According to this promise, immortality is assured to those heroes who have sacrificed their lives for the nation. "The citizen," they conclude, "can be consoled by the possibility that even after his death he will continue to exist in the nation's collective memory as a glorious figure" (p. 170). This is very much in line with the sociocultural work heritage museums and memorials accomplish. Joan McAlister (2013) points out that they "provide a public forum for representing both collective memories and civic aspirations and the tense relations between them" (p. 6). In this sense, heritage institutions attempt to

narrow and homogenize possible fantasies of (both) pasts *and* futures, and of the connections between them—of the collective story lines where identities and sense of belonging are articulated.

Future projections and fantasies play an essential role in commemoration performances in a particular way within the Israeli national context. In her study of heritage museums, titled appropriately *Our Future Is Where Our Past Is*, Katriel (1993) notes that in Israeli heritage museums an implicit evocation is made as to the connection between the collective past and the collective future: spatially, the future will transpire in the very place where the Jewish past transpired, namely in the Land of Israel, to which the Jews have "returned." Temporally, the botanical metaphor of "roots" is commonly drawn in commemoration imagery, suggesting the rooted nature of the Israeli presence in the land and evoking a modern and natural (organic) future of growth and development. Indeed, the Cohen and Yair entry is tied to a larger, collective time frame, which it also conjures up. In this case it is the 2006 (Second) Lebanon War. Other cases that are indexed in the visitor book and in earlier visitor books include Israel's Disengagement Plan from the Gaza Strip (August 2005), Prime Minister Rabin's assassination day (and remembrance days), the Annual Independence Day, and the Jewish holidays. These are collective events and times that sustain the nation's temporal grid. In still other cases, more personal occasions are indexed in entries, such as bar mitzvahs. Here, relations are drawn between visitors' biographical time and the national/collective timeline, as inscribing in the visitor book supplies an occasion to bring these temporalities together, aligning individual and national biographies.

Finally, an additional element supporting the entry's normative character is the repeated mention of the first-person plural form, and its enmeshing of identity categories: if in the first time it appears, "we" refers to the visitors themselves—they are reflexively reporting "live" on their activity amid the larger context ("The North of Israel is being bombed [. . .] / and we are visiting the Ammunition Hill"), the *four* following instances all index a larger imagined national public. Here again, the uses of the first-person plural form attest to and constitute the annexation of the identity of the family with and as part of the Jewish ethnonational collective. In my previous book on tourists' interactions and storytelling, where I extensively explored how backpackers' narratives of travel and identity make use of this pronoun, I concluded that by default the voice of the stories that they narrate was a collective "we" voice. Following Deborah Tannen (1989), I then termed this voice the *chorus voice*, and showed how agency and narrative eventfulness were intimately associated with the social actor indexed by the pronoun "we." It was uncommon for the narrators to refer to themselves (or to others) individually to such a degree that deemed these cases

dramatic by definition. With the visitor book entries, I find that the power and prevalence of pronouns indexing first-person plural is similar, though the groupings are not of friends and peers, as was the case in backpackers' stories, but more traditional and formal social institutions, such as families, schools, military units, and places of residence (cf. illuminating discussion of various "we's" in Israeli public sphere in Dori-Hacohen, 2014).

Contesting Performances

Most of the examples presented earlier in this chapter are normative entries in that they show adherence with the ethnonational ideology narrated at the Ammunition Hill, performing affiliation and participation through a succinct retelling of that narrative. These entries also provide proof that the authors visited the site, understood its ideology, and are sympathetic to what it presents: themes of heroism and sacrifice, which present a strong causal (narrative) connection between past, present, and future, and the inclusion of the audience in the commemoration scene. Indeed, the large majority of entries produced on this symbolic stage include such conforming and confirming utterances. But there are other performance genres that do not express adherence but, rather, contestation and resistance with regard to the hegemonic narrative and that position their authors outside the hegemonic narration. Although these entries amount to less than 8 percent of the overall number of entries (and 11 percent of all the discursive entries), they are interesting to examine, for a number of reasons. First, the visibility of these performances extends well beyond the low percentage of their occurrence in the corpus, partly because they are obtrusive against the background of normative entries. Different, and perhaps even unexpected on this national stage, these contesting entries are more conspicuous.

Second, examining how hegemonic narratives are never fully stable or monologic is of interest in itself, because dialogues that offer contesting interpretations are continuously emerging, if only peripherally. In this sense it is an ethical issue to observe if and how counter-performances populate and circulate in a given ideological field, medium, or stage. In *The Role of the Reader*, Umberto Eco (1979) famously proposes the notions of "open texts" versus "closed texts" (or works of art). Eco defines closed texts as those texts that are "aimed at pulling the reader along a predetermined path, carefully displaying their effects so as to arouse pity or fear, excitement or depression at the due place and at the right moment. Every step of the 'story' elicits just the expectation that its further course will satisfy . . . structured according to an inflexible project" (p. 8). This is the kind of linear-progressive narrative that the site offers and the museum performs. At the Ammunition Hill site, Eco's words are quite literal, as the "closed

text" is embodied in the structure's narrative design. Yet, Eco immediately continues, with cynicism, "Unfortunately, the only one not to have been 'inflexibly' planned is the reader" (p. 8).

So the following question is, then, what amounts to a contesting performance and how are contesting performances to be defined on this stage? Different stages and different performative norms require different appreciations of what amounts to contesting performances. In other words, in different social sites, what those involved might address as acts of contestation differs. Presently, I address contesting performances as a *reversal* of the definition of confirmative or adhering performances, which I discussed earlier. And so, if the latter constitute a retelling of the national commemorative narrative, then contrariwise, contesting performances show that their inscribers visited the site and have understood its ideological message, yet they express *disagreement* with one or more of the site's tenets. Entries of this genre offer critique of an element or a few elements of the site's hegemonic narration. They differ among themselves in the degree to which they explicitly articulate contesting arguments, their addressivity structures, and what kinds of counter-hegemonic claims they make.

Recall in chapter 2 that I mentioned a number of occasions when non-discursive marks were made in the space of the museum (mini-graffiti), which were ways for visitors to express protest. This was the case with the X sign marked on the image of the bodies of General Narkiss and General Goren embracing (in the Narkiss Exhibition), and in other places, such as on the flags hanging in the visitor book hall. This was also the case with Arabic graffiti written near the site's premises and virtual graffiti written in Arabic that was posted by a hacker on the site's webpage. More recently (April 2012), large and elaborate Hebrew graffiti was inscribed on the site's premises during the night by local activists. The inscriptions were anti-Zionist, and they expressed a radical critique of Israel's conduct: *"Miserable Zionists, who are you / lording it over, the poor Arabs?! / Zionism is the mother of all sins!"*[9] The point I am making is that there are many public and visible surfaces on which the performance of contesting and resisting voices can be (and are) produced, and the visitor book should be appreciated within this rich communicative ecology.

The contesting voices I immediately address differ along thematic lines, and I present them accordingly: non-Zionist ultra-Orthodox utterances are followed by contestation within contemporary hyper-ethnonational Zionism.

Theological Non-Zionist Challenges

The next two entries voice a critique of underlying religious themes, by which I mean that much like the Cohen entry earlier, the actors who are responsible for

animating the commemorated scene (i.e., the heroic battles and the triumphant 1967 War) are positioned not at the triangular nexus of the nation-state, secularism, and militarism but as consequences of divine intervention. In and through these entries, the reasons behind the crucial narrative of the "liberation and unification" of Jerusalem are criticized, recast, and re-narrated.

Excerpt 7[10]

With God's Help / May their memory be blessed! / Why isn't there any religious tone / and no mention of the <u>God</u> of the Armies / of Israel? / From the Torat Hayim Community / Los Angeles, California

Excerpt 8[11]

<u>To all the soldiers!!!</u> / who fought for this place mightily / and proudly, they should know that their triumph / is solely due to the merit of the Holy One Blessed Be He / and to the merit of those who study Torah / and pray for their success / Thank you very much / Ezra Binyamini / [h].t.sh.s.g.

These two entries express an understanding of the site's commemoration narrative, but they voice a critique that is explicit, articulate, and concerns the *agency* responsible for the military successes of the 1967 War. While the inscribers of both entries express respect for the site and/or the soldiers who died in the battles, they nonetheless question the *main protagonist* to whom *sentiments of appreciation and gratitude* should be directed. In the case of theological disputes of this type, contesting utterances state that the main or even sole addressee of such sentiments is not the dead soldiers (or living generals) who participated in the war, nor those engaged in commemoration projects, but God.

The first of the two entries presents a straightforward addressivity structure: after a formulaic opening of "With God's Help," followed by "May their memory be blessed!," the text points directly at the museum's display, criticizing it, and by proxy criticizing also those who are responsible for curating it, for its lack of acknowledgment of the appropriate agency. Unlike the Cohen entry, the inscriber of this entry does not state the fact (perhaps trivial from the visitor's perspective) that God is indeed the supra-actor navigating the soldiers to victory. Rather, the entry expresses almost a sense of amazement at the lack of mention of such seemingly prominent aspects of the historical outcome.

The second entry's addressivity structure is explicit as well, yet it addresses not curatorial issues but those who are commemorated (i.e., the soldiers). The text proposes that the heroic soldiers who fought "mightily and proudly" actually constitute only one of a number of agencies that were required for the triumphant

outcome in 1967. Other actors who should be acknowledged and celebrated as well are, first, God and, second, those men whose lives are dedicated to prayer and the study of the Torah. The entry articulates a familiar position with regard to ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israeli society, whereby prayer and devoted study of the holy scripts are effective and should be counted as part of the legitimate "labor of nationhood" performed by different publics. Jewish study and prayer, it is argued, are valid expressions of involvement and contribution to the Zionist militaristic ethos, and they serve in accounting for the lack of participation by many ultra-Orthodox Israeli communities in active military service. In recent decades, when service in the Israeli military has gradually become the main—even sole—social and cultural practice that sustains Jewish ethnonational identity, there's growing public pressure with regard to enlisting ultra-Orthodox publics (Stadler and Ben-Ari 2003). Most recently (in July 2013), two related legal bills were put forth to be approved by the Israeli government, both addressing military and civic duties of ultra-Orthodox Israeli youths, who have staged protests as a result.

Both of these entries criticize the ethnonational narrative, suggesting that the 1967 victory may be accounted for by a very different set of practices, beliefs, and agents constructed within a different worldview that is not modern/national, but is similarly highly patriarchal. In that view, Israeli soldiers' successes are a matter of divine intervention in the shape of reward and merit (the Jewish notion of *zchut*), which the soldiers have received owing to the devotions of yeshiva students' holy studies and prayer.

The following two entries shed further light on these contesting performances. The first is very large, taking up the space of an entire page in the visitor book. The second (see figure 5.2) comprises a sequence of three separate entries that are close to and relate to each other intra-textually.

Excerpt 9[12]

<u>With god's help</u> / BOO SHARON / who made life bitter / for the ultra-Orthodox Jews ~~and need~~ / and there's a need to blow his / belly up with a needle / from Ben Egzra

Excerpt 10 (sequence)[13]

[i]
YOU'RE / WRONG! / [Those are] not the soldiers / who protect / but the Holy / Torah / protects and saves / period!
[ii]
But by means of / the soldiers

[iii]

[curled line] P.S. [arrow pointing leftward] / *During all the periods [in history] there were / those who went to the army and those who studied Torah / every side saves the other side*

Excerpt 9 evinces an open addressivity structure, which together with its inflated size and critical content makes it seem like graffiti. It overtly expresses a wish to harm the then prime minister Ariel Sharon, and the reasons for this intent are explicitly mentioned: Sharon has "made life bitter for the *Haredim* [ultra-Orthodox Jews]." The expression *mirer et hachayim* is familiar in Hebrew and has biblical origins (Exodus 1:17), where it refers to the notorious Egyptian pharaoh who brutally enslaved the Israelites. The analogy is clear, and it recasts Prime Minister Sharon in the role of the pharaoh, suggesting that the former is as evil to Jews at the time of inscribing the entry as the latter was in biblical days.[14] Although Sharon is not specifically celebrated at the Ammunition Hill site, he is occasionally mentioned in the visitor book in both roles-as acting prime minister at the time, and as one of the main figures embodying the Israeli militaristic ethos.

Before I proceed to discuss its oppositional content, I note that the entry supplies a springboard for discussing *erasures* and *corrections* in visitors' utterances, as it manifests four separate instances of such. We are reminded that inscribing in general, and performing on this public surface specifically, involves literacy skills and writing proficiency. Overall, there are about 65 entries in the book with apparent corrections, which attest to the fact that their inscribers, and sometimes those who help them compose and write, were not satisfied with the discourse they initially produced. These are mainly self-corrections of spelling, reformulations of content, and in two cases, simply repositionings of the entry on the page or in the book. I also observe that, despite the self-corrections, the Ben Ezra entry still manifests two basic spelling mistakes in the plain words *lo* ("him") and *im* ("with"). The orthography suggests that the inscriber is young, and this might account for the misspellings, or perhaps Hebrew might not be her or his native tongue. Only a few of the misspelled words were, however, corrected.

The second important point is that the page on which the entry appears was very crumpled, and there were signs that it had been ripped from the book. As I looked over a dozen visitor books at the archives of the Ammunition Hill site, I could not find a similar case where a page had been torn out of a volume, and so the questions that occurred to me were: Who tore it out? And, if it was torn, why is the page still in the book (who placed it back in)? My inquiry directed me not to the curator but to the person responsible for the site's mechanical maintenance. When I asked him about the page and if he recalled anything having
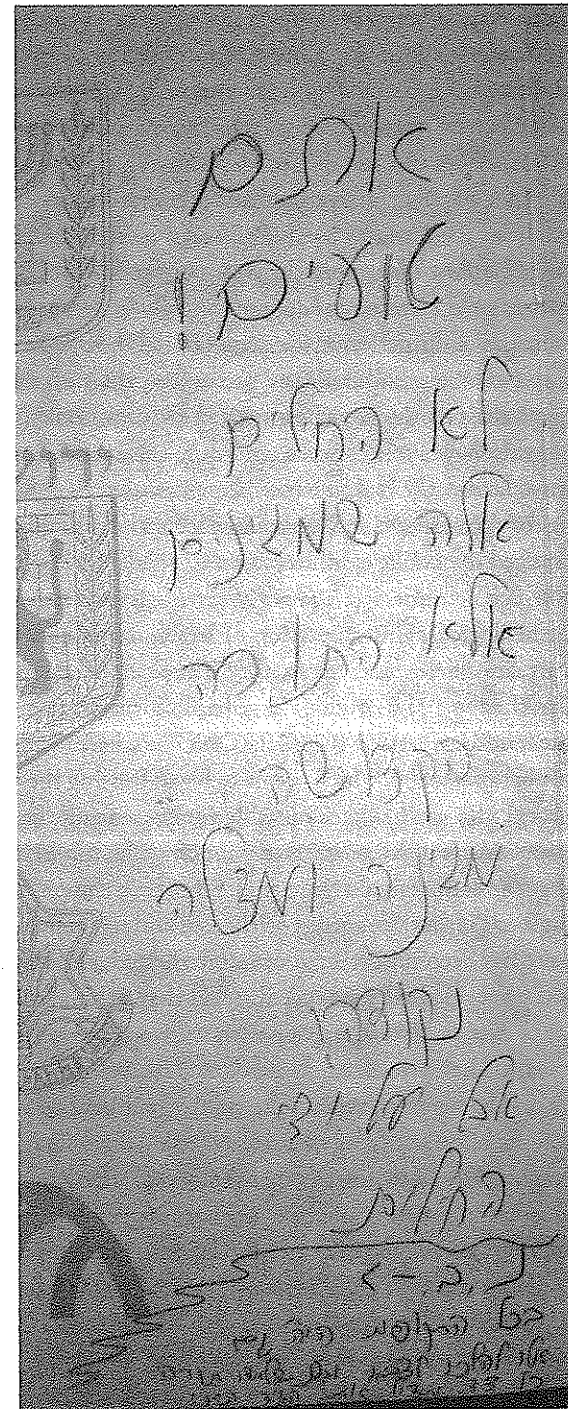

FIGURE 5.2 "YOU'RE WRONG!" (sequence)

to do with it, he said that there are "hooligans that write in the book" and that they "messed around" with it. As a response, he continued, he tore that page out. When the curator found out what had happened, he instructed the handyman to put the page back into the book, which is what was eventually done. This rare episode is telling in a number of ways. First, although visitors' acts of protest and resistance defy normative genres and hegemonic tenets, the visitors have never vandalized the medium itself. This was a prerogative of an employee at the site. Yet the employee who tore the page out was the one occupying low status in the institutional hierarchy and—semiotically—the one who otherwise deals with broken and malfunctioning devices! Unlike the handyman's position on what ought to be done with hooligans' utterances, the site's curator and director see any and all activities engaging with the visitor book as positive and educational, and they have little concern regarding the entries' actual contents. By taking action as he did, the maintenance person crossed over into a curatorial role, attempting to "do maintenance" on an artifact at the site and in this way, he materially rearranged the public exhibit.

Excerpt 10, which comprises a *sequence of entries,* is interesting because, besides offering a theological reinterpretation of Israel's ethnonational narrative, it illustrates a rare case of clear intra-textuality. The first of the three telegraphic entries, located at the top and written in large handwriting, commences surprisingly with a direct address "YOU'RE / WRONG!" (where "you" is addressed plurally to a number of people), which seems to be addressing the site's management and curators, who are held accountable for presenting the book, or the site's audience—members of its normative publics—who are held accountable for leaving supportive commemorative entries. Similar to the entries I examined earlier, the point made is that the agency celebrated and remembered at the Ammunition Hill site has been misdirected or misattributed, and the account that the entry offers is performed via theological rather than ethnonational registers.

The first part of excerpt 10 is completed with the word "period" together with an exclamation mark. These two elements are offered rhetorically, so as to enhance the entry's claim and to suggest a type of preemptive ending statement (as saying "end of discussion" or "there's nothing more to say"). Despite its illocutionary force, visitors cannot regulate the activities of other visitors to come, and the sequential organization of communication acts in this medium suggests that, as long as the book is available, any entry *may* be responded to by latter entries. Bakhtin (1986a) repeatedly stressed that the "first and foremost criterion for the finalization of the utterance is the possibility of responding to it" (p. 76), which is to say that an utterer cannot completely determine the utterance's finalizability. And so, the dialogical quality is essential to the rendering of a given utterance as such. Yet what is amusing with these entries is that such a sequence of explicitly interrelated entries is

rare, and that it commenced precisely when the initial entry concluded with a statement attempting to refute the possibility of ensuing dialogue.

Immediately below the entry, a second short entry was added, written in red pen and in a smaller size: "But by means of / the soldiers" (or "But in the hands of the soldiers"). The word "but" functions here as a contrastive term, and importantly also as a *connective,* suggesting an immediate relation to the earlier utterance. It proposes not a refutation of the argument made by the first entry (that it is the Holy Scripture that "protects and saves") but, rather, an adjustment or a compromise that establishes Israeli soldiers as the bearers of divine powers. A third entry is added at the bottom, beneath a separating line, in still smaller handwriting. It possesses a concluding tone, as it elaborates both sides of the coin: there exists symmetry of collaboration in the two approaches—the national-militaristic, on the one hand, and the theological, on the other—whereby a modus vivendi of survival (rescue, deliverance) has been repeatedly attained in Jewish history. Whether it is due to the entry's inclusive and compromising argument (the "this and that" type) or because it is *physically* located at the bottom of the page and so there is no room to fit further text beneath it, the entry supplies, in effect, the conclusion of the sequence. This successful concluding effect might have also been attained communicatively because the entry commences with the "postscript" abbreviation (the Hebrew letters *Nun* and *Bet*). Thus, "P.S.," like "but," functions as a connective, and inscribing it at the *beginning* of the line suggests again that the inscriber frames the utterance not as a separate or autonomous expression but as one that is added to a prior utterance and that creates a multiple-authored sequence. This resembles a talkback (or *tokbek,* as pronounced in Hebrew, meaning online commenting) sequence, in which each entry replies to former ones and in which all the entries reply to the same text, which in this case is the exhibit.

In all these cases, the manifest contents of the intra-textual entries in excerpt 10 express a negotiation, and to some degree also, a critique of the site's ideological agenda. On a few occasions, however, the contesting quality cannot be discerned from the entries' text, and appreciating their contesting quality requires attending to their *actual entextualization.* I had one opportunity to witness such an entry in the actual moment it was composed. On that occasion, three ultra-Orthodox visitors walked into the hall: the woman, in her early twenties, was pushing a baby carriage, and her younger brother, in his teens, was near her. The two paused near the installation and leafed through the book's pages, with the woman initiating these activities. First, they read together and then she took a thin black pen from her purse and started writing at the top right-hand space of a blank page (to the right of the topmost printed symbol). After completing the entry, she handed the pen to her brother, at which point he started writing an

entry as well, which he positioned right beneath hers. They both wrote short and minimal entries, and both observed each other intently while the other wrote. Also, they spoke Yiddish yet wrote in Hebrew, and were chatting quietly and amusedly while writing. Mainly, while writing, the brother had amused his sister with something having to do with the entry's content.

The first entry begins with the Hebrew date, a smoothly curved and decorative horizontal line beneath it, and then below the line, the full names of the woman's nuclear family, including herself, her husband, and their two children. Because she wrote the full names, their family name is repeated four times in the entry, foregrounding in this way the linkage between the family members. Her brother's entry, positioned right beneath hers, assumed a very similar form: it, too, begins with the Jewish date and beneath it a curved line, though not as smooth and tidy as the one his sister drew. Yet the second entry shows a *variation* in signatory elements. Underneath the curved line, the teenage brother wrote: "*The genius / the important / the Yeshiva Head Rabbi / Yehezkel Shlomo / VEBFTER Sh.L.T.A.*"[15] His young age and amusement with writing hinted to me that the inscriber was not the undersigned or the entry's principal, and when we talked shortly afterward, he said he "wrote humorously" (*katavti betschok*), and that there was no famous rabbi by that name. His playfulness had the shape of a private joke between himself and his sister, indexing a supposedly famous Yeshiva figure who visited the site and signed the book. The brother was paraphrasing his sister's entry in terms of its visual design (an effect that was augmented by the fact they used the same dark blue, inky pen), yet his was a "fake" entry (Laurier and Whyte 2001) in that its alleged principal did not correspond with its animator. Its writing was performed in the context of the visitors' enjoyable familial interaction, and it is somewhat mocking when considered from the perspective of serious commemorative participation and the illocutionary norms of signing (visitors are expected—and directed—to express sincerity when they write).

The point is that it is difficult to infer the relationship between the entry's discourse and the site's ideological agenda from the text itself, which is not overtly critical. Rather, the text passes as a normative entry, but the context of entextualization, or the semiotics of its production, are telling in this regard.

Another rather explicit means by which oppositional gestures and utterances are discursively performed and recorded on the book's pages is by crossing out the entries of others. Though deletions (rather than self-corrections) are rare, it's compelling to examine an instance that sheds light on when and how visitors "overrun" utterances from others they disagree with. This instance begins with a Hebrew written and graphically decorated entry from a female visitor with a blue ballpoint pen, who encircled her entry with a curved line. The entry idealizes the

Israeli Army and, through interdiscursivity, rejoins military might with religious Jewish discourse of moral merit and courage. Its main verbal and graphic elements are the three letters that make up the acronym IDF, which stands for the Israeli Defense Forces. These letters, which in Hebrew are *Tsadi, He,* and *Lamed,* are inscribed in a large and inflated typeface, and yet arranged vertically, so that each is made to be the first letter of an *additional* short text (written horizontally leftward, in the direction of Hebrew writing). In this way, the vertical arrangement allows use of the letters of the IDF acronym as starters for the second text. That is, the first letter, *Tsadi,* starts the text *Tsadikim bemaaseyhem* ("Righteous in their deeds"), the second letter, *He,* starts the text *Hamedina kayemet bizchutam* ("the State exists in their merit"), and the third letter, *Lamed,* starts the text *Letamid nizkor et maasei gvuroteyhem* ("Forever we shall remember their courageous deeds"). The visitor interdiscursively juxtaposes, and to some degree replaces, the hegemonic discourse of secular nationalism with a religious discourse and with religious language. Yet the point is that the words "exists in their merit" have been crossed out. Encircled beneath them, another visitor wrote: "*Nonsense. The state / exists due to the merit of the students / of the Holy Torah.*"[16]

Here is an instance where a visitor has taken liberty in commenting directly on (literarily) an earlier entry. This is not a talkback or "write-back" type of exchange but, rather, a write-over in which the latter participant does not merely add a comment to reply but deleted parts of the former text. The latter entry consists, then, of *two* discursive gestures constituting (1) crossing out earlier text, and (2) producing a new utterance. The deleting gesture is public and is made to be visibly associated with the critique, and in this sense it is also accountable: there is a reason the text was deleted, and this reason is alluded to in the utterance. Although this is not a successive dialogue, it is worth noting that the deletion leaves the earlier text visible and readable, allowing readers to understand what the latter utterer finds disagreeable and hence, what it is being critiqued.

Because only a part of the first entry was deleted, it is interesting to wonder why *this* part in *this* entry was deleted, rather than so many other entries that praise Israel's army and its soldiers. One possible answer has to do with the interdiscursive nature of the initial entry. I mentioned how that entry pursues idealizing Israeli soldiers via a register that is deeply religious. It retells national heroism and commemoration, and in this way reflects a wider shift in contemporary appreciation of the Israeli army within different quarters of Jewish Israeli society/societies. The entry does so by juxtaposing the literal meaning that is normatively attributed to the acronym IDF, an attribution embedded in Zionist national discourse, with a rather different meaning embedded in religious language register. In the eyes of the disagreeing visitor, the critique that

this entry received might have been due precisely because it uses distinctive tra-
ditional Jewish discourse in the aim of glorifying the soldiers'—and by and large
the military's—actions. It is as if the critique is commenting: 'If you are already
drawing a connection with divine providence, then these should be accurately
attributed—not to the soldiers but to the Yeshiva students—hence, the quite
blunt "nonsense" with which it commences. The criticizing utterance does not
directly oppose militaristic Zionism and national commemoration as such, but it
performs a reprimand with regard to what is perceived as wrongful attributions
of god's powers—when these are made in the book.

Hyper-Zionist Ethnonational Challenges

The criticizing entries present alternative narrativization that is essentially theo-
logical and disputes national/modern agency and the hegemonic commemora-
tive telling of the 1967 War. Another group of oppositional voices, which offers
contesting and disruptive utterances and arguments, are part of a larger political
shift that is enacted and reflected on the pages of the visitor book. This shift, too,
is theological, but it is well ingrained within Israel's political and governmen-
tal structures, where state and religion are already formally, institutionally, and
symbolically enmeshed.

Excerpt 11[17]

*To the museum Shalom! / I was here on the date of the 8.11.05 / it was very
pretty [and] especially moving / the pictures are pretty[.] It's heartbreaking
[to see] that so / many soldiers were killed. / [I] hope that [they] won't give
this back to the Arabs as [was done] with Gush Katif. / Very respectfully /
Shoshana A.*

Excerpt 11 opens with a direct and explicit evocation (which is atypical) that
addresses agents of commemoration, followed by a dated presencing utterance
("I was here on the . . ."). The succeeding lines begin normatively: Shoshana relays
her understanding of the site's narrative and the "pretty" pictures on display. Yet
at this point the entry takes a surprising turn as Shoshana makes an explicit nega-
tive reference to the recent events concerning the Disengagement Plan (Tokhnit
Hahitnatkut). The plan was executed by the Sharon administration in August
2005, and mainly included the unilateral evacuation of Jewish settlements from
the Occupied Gaza Strip.

The Disengagement Plan is a highly charged political matter in Israel, which
received extensive local and international media coverage, and was taking place

when this entry was written. Shoshana's mention of the plan in her commemora-
tive entry serves in *voicing a critique* that addresses present events, but projects
onto both the past and the future. The compliments she paid the Ammunition
Hill museum in the beginning of the entry, and her sympathetic emotional reso-
nance ("heartbreaking"), then turn to the ethnonational narrative, raising doubt
concerning the future of (East) Jerusalem. The visitor is asking critically about
the fate of the unified capital in light of the recent past of Jewish settlements
and the population in Gush Katif.[18] Shoshana A. wants to know what prevents
the fate of the latter from becoming the fate of the former: if Gush Katif was
"given back to the Arabs," why would the fate of (East) Jerusalem be different?
The argument she makes through a rhetorical question raises further questions
with regard to ethnonational commemoration and the validity of the sacrificial
narrative that establishes a much-needed causal connection between the nation's
past, present, and future and its possibility to effectively mobilize its citizens. It
decenters and injects a doubt into the supposedly solid ideological unfolding of
events.

Yet some of the underlying logics conveyed in Shoshana A's entry, resonate
with that expressed also by the Shaked family (excerpt 2), as it generally suggests
an economic metaphor. According to this metaphor, the "price" or "cost" that
has been paid (in casualties or blood) for East Jerusalem and other Occupied
Territories resembles an investment: the higher the price, the more valuable the
asset.

Over and above, the commemorative book serves here as a sounding board
that resonates concerns of different publics, echoes national events, and is used
as a collective national journal where public events are indexed and commented
on vis-à-vis the ideological context of ethnonational commemoration. The next
entry is similar, though sharper.

Excerpt 12[19]

*With the completion of the deportation of the Jews from Gush Katif / a
museum needs to be erected / a memorial / in memory of a region / that was
torn[,] destroyed and annihilated / at the hands of evil cursed people / with
no heart no compassion*

This unsigned entry offers a contestational performance that addresses the
same public events and concerns as does Shoshana's entry, but it does so in a dif-
ferent way. It runs bluntly against the ethnonational narrative told at the site, as
well as against the narrative that visitors normatively perform in and through
the book. What I find significant about its oppositional voice is that it is *reflexive*

because it is directed at commemoration itself. The entry's condemning utterance focuses not on Sharon's Disengagement Plan itself but on the *apparatuses* through which narratives of national commemoration and sanctity are performed. Through these apparatuses, both state and publics can and do exhibit their priorities in terms of collective memory and symbolic respect, namely heritage museums, memorial ceremonies and rituals, and commemorative sites. The argument here is that alternative sites and rituals ought to be constructed to commemorate and tell other narratives, which the entry itself offers in the shape of the "deportation of Jews from Gush Katif." By arguing this, the inscriber is not only challenging the sanctity associated with traditional (statist) Zionist sites of commemoration but also protesting and advocating that contemporary national commemoration has taken a wrong path. This ideological discourse appears both inside the book and in many public instances outside it, including settlers' ideological graffiti, bumper stickers, road signs posted near highways, and more.[20]

Complementing this, the register that is used evokes Jewish trauma and a sense of victimhood. Those evacuated are not presented as Israeli citizens but as "Jews," and the Hebrew expression used for the term "memorial" (*yad vashem*) is pregnant with implications because it is also the name of the official National Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance site (the paradox is that the site's name was a Zionist invention, promoting and manipulating the memory of the Holocaust. See Segev 2000, p. 104). This knowledge is shared by many visitors, and so is the semantic field created by the Hebrew terms used for the words "torn," "destroyed," "annihilated," "evil-cursed people," and more. The discourse that mobilizes these terms, and includes the political juxtaposition of settlers' fate and the fate of Jews under Nazi persecution, has been presented profusely through public stages and mass media. Mainly around the time of the evacuation, many settlers wore a yellow/orange patch in the shape of the Star of David, reminiscent of the patches Jews were forced to wear by the Nazis. As Keren Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2008) observes in her study of both Israeli settlers' and Israeli mass-media's coverage of the Disengagement Plan, "a central strategy in the cultural construction of trauma involves the invocation of prior collective traumas as a way to make sense of the events and to mobilize populations toward certain actions" (p. 498). The evocation of earlier trauma brings with it further temporalities and interdiscursivities to the visitor book, and suggests that while contesting performances build on semantic fields that are different from normative ones, a commemoration site is an ideal place for the evocation of past traumas—for, after all, the Ammunition Hill site does exactly that. This entry turns national commemoration unto itself, as it finds the site to be fitting to advocate that, if trauma is revoked in and by commemoration sites and memorializing

rituals, then these should be dedicated to the "annihilated" Jewish communities of Gush Katif.

I point out that the little research that has appeared on visitor books has yet to recognize how this medium is ideologically mobilized, and how it occasionally serves as a platform for resisting the ideological tenets that it is mobilized to sustain. In Katriel's (1997) ethnographic study of Zionist settlement museums and visitor books, she notes that audience responses are pursued "in the highly constraining frame of a tradition of self-selected, appreciative responses . . . affirming that the museum has accomplished its rhetorical mission" (p. 71). Katriel further discerns that the comments were *similar and repetitive*, and that entries pointing out a need to improve one or another aspect of the display were truly rare. While in her research data there seem to have been no comments that actually challenged the dominant ideology at these institutions, Macdonald's (2005) data from visitor books at the Nuremberg Documentation Centre evinces a negotiation of Germany's past and contemporary politics; similarly Laderman's (2009) data from a visitor book at the War Remnants Museum in Saigon, Vietnam, shows "a multitude of discourses" (p. 167) that critically address U.S. actions in Vietnam during the war. How often and in what ways media are mobilized by institutions and subverted by their users are comparative empirical questions that have less to do with the media themselves and more to do with contextual variables such as levels of surveillance, on the one hand, and audience accessibility to the media, on the other hand. Unlike the settlement museums (Katriel 1997) or the Greek ecotourism center (Stamou and Paraskevolpoulos 2004), the Ammunition Hill site is located in a rather heterogeneous urban environment, and it is accessible to different publics. Locations that are more remote, and otherwise require visitors use special modes of (tourism) transportation to arrive, have a more enclavic and homogeneous character that is reflected in their visitor books' pages.

From the perspective of heritage tourism, studies conducted by Poria, Butler, and Airey (2003), and Poria and Ashworth (2009), focus on tourists' actions and perceptions and allow discerning—within the rather heterogeneous group of heritage tourists—between those who are emotionally connected and ideologically committed to the heritage they are visiting and those who are not. The authors argue that these groups can be distinguished on behavioral grounds, and that heritage attractions have broader visitorship and draw larger audiences than the specific publics that they target or that see themselves as subscribing to the relevant heritage narrative. Yet, what the oppositional entries in the Ammunition Hill visitor book reveal is that there is more at stake than tourists who subscribe to their heritage, or those who visit others' heritages, yet do not consider the site they visit as their own. Oppositional and critical entries tell of categories

of *counter-heritage* and *hyper-heritage tourists*. These are audiences emotionally and/or ideologically committed to oppositional narratives, which both recognize the heritage narrative that the site publicly presents and publicly resist it.

Resisting entries tell of political opposition but also of the politics of resisting. The two performance categories that I outlined above—the theological and the hyper- or neo-Zionist—attest to the political differences (conceived broadly) between non-Zionist ultra-Orthodox visitors' perceptions and those of Orthodox settlers. These were the two main publics that produce resisting performances on the stage that the commemorative visitor book offers. A third group, which is smaller and usually less articulate, encompasses Mizrahi Jews. The book mediates a number of entries that present the politics of identity in Israeli ethnicity (mainly the dominance of Ashkenazi, or white, narratives), which I will turn to in the next chapter. Of the entries discussed in this chapter, the last one is telling because, in understanding the relation between media and mediation, on the one hand, and the significance of national commemoration (museums, memorials, and so on), on the other hand, it actually reveals the *similarities* rather than the *disparities* between right-wing ultra-nationalist settlers and the hegemonic national ideology celebrated at the Ammunition Hill. As Joyce Dalsheim (2011) observes in her ethnographic study of the Disengagement Plan, the differences between religious settlers and secular liberals is located "less in their differences than in a desire to differentiate" (p. 5). In this respect there is a marked difference between the types of oppositional entries: the theologically explicit counter-accounts proposed by ultra-Orthodox visitors are resistive, subversive, and reject national narratives as such. Yet the intense participation of settlers in the Zionist and military projects position their contesting performances as more selective rejections of *traditional* Zionism (promoted by the Ammunition Hill site), and in favor of a more hyper-ethnonationalism of the neo-Zionist style.[21]

The heated ideological debate that takes place in and on the visitor book's pages corresponds with the serious demeanor that characterizes the commemoration as a whole, and the severe manner by which it is pursued at Ammunition Hill. Yet commemoration performances do not always assume a severe tone, and their authors are not necessarily well-rehearsed individuals. The joint production of utterances, and what happens when they are of a lighter tone or more pictorial presentation, is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER

6

"WRITE '*I WAS IMPRESSED*' AND NOT '*I ENJOYED*'"

CO-WRITING COMMEMORATION

Discursive entries, unlike autographs and telegraphic utterances of the "I was here" type, are succinct yet complex texts, and their production requires appropriate competency in commemorative literacy. Many visitors do not possess these necessary skills, and so they rely on others to assist them in their composition, which amounts to a joint effort in producing inscribed performances. It is not merely a narrow and technical sense of competence at stake here but, rather, the more essential occasion when the inscription of an ideological public utterance creates an opportunity for involvement and cooperation by participating visitors. Therefore, the performances recorded on and "broadcast" from this stage are a projection or derivative (to use geometrical language) of the social situation from which they are produced.

As we have seen, most occasions of signing the visitor book are joint, meaning there is more than one member who attends to the writing and is oriented to the activities of producing an entry. On many occasions, there are combined efforts aimed at writing a proficient entry in accord with the norms of acceptable commemorative performance. As most of the book's discursive entries take the politics of commemoration seriously, inscribers align themselves not only with the contents and structures of the hegemonic commemoration narrative but also—and as part of the genre of commemorative utterances—with its tone. Inscribers take a serious and respectful demeanor, abiding by the message posted near the book, which instructs to write in a "respectful manner . . . appropriate to the Ammunition Hill Site."

Visitors try to "tune in" to commemoration discourse if their competence allows them to do so, while less competent visitors are guided into it. On one occasion, a father was overseeing his son's writing. The