From Persuasion to Self-Transformation: Dialogical Genres of Narration in a Tourist Speech Community

Chaim Noy
Independent scholar
Affiliated with the Department of Communication
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

1. Introduction

"There can be no such thing as an absolutely neutral utterance."
(Bakhtin, 1986:84, p.84)

In this article I explore the intersubjective, emergent experience that is bestowed on the audience of tourists' travel narratives. More precisely, I am interested in how the audience is made to engage in the performance of these narratives, which, when conceptualized in terms of a dialogical implication, refers to how identity, and a compelling sense of self-transformation, are tacitly evoked and constituted.

It is illuminating to view the linguistic capacity by which eventful implication is achieved intersubjectively, in light of Mikhail Bakhtin's works, and in particular his occupation with the effect of live language on what is conceived under logo-centric metaphysics as non-lingual or extra-lingual "reality." Bakhtin's notion of language is inherently inter-actional. By this I refer first to the "inter-" or dialogical aspects of live interpersonal communication, which are principal in his thought. Two terms commonly employed by Bakhtin are "addressivity" and "responsivity" (Bakhtin, 1986), which together account for what a dialogue is and create the intermediate space in which it thrives.

According to Bakhtin, utterances—the live and lively uses into which language is put in communicative interactional events—are always addressed to someone. When used by live (inter)actors, language implores, begs and desperately seeks an addressee by which meaning can be made and acknowledged. Unlike the abstract concept of "language," utterances never hover statically. Rather, they are infused with a direction, with an aim, with an embodied target.

The latter half of the hyphenated term "inter-active" relates to the "actionable" quality of the utterance. In this regard, what is uttered constitutes a social act in and of itself, a perspective by which the entire epistemological abyss between "world" or "reality," on the

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one hand, and "language," on the other hand, collapses. The illustration Bakhtin draws on occasionally, that of an order being given in a military context, is not an instance of an exception, but the very core of the rule of utterances. Indeed, akin to an order, utterances are made to move us. They are never-neutral enactors, communicatively managing and stimulating "action," influencing and moving their listener(s) to act, to do, rather than to listen passively or consume. This is what Bakhtin means by "intentionality" and "expressivity" (Bakhtin, 1981). Though the different ways by which different utterances are "akin" to an order vary, a variance which accounts for the heterogeneity and colorfulness of live social interaction, and the construction and enactments of social categories, utterances nonetheless do implore with and impact upon speakers and listeners, performers and audience.

Thus, over a quarter of a century before speech act theory, Bakhtin's notion of utterance engulfed powerful and actionable qualities, suggesting that everyday social life is made of social deeds that are accomplished linguistically, among other things, by verbal deeds.

A second body of theoretical work, which is complementary to Bakhtin's in furthering the exploration of how linguistic interaction constitutes and "frames" the experiential epistemology of the everyday, is that of Erving Goffman. For the present scope, it suffices to note—to remind—that Frame Analysis is subtitled: "An Essay on the Organization of Experience." Phenomenology is centrally at stake in this celebrated volume. Here, as well as in other works, Goffman is interested in how we make sense of what unfolds around us, of what is real ("realness"), and at the same time of the realness of our own sense. In this regard, a "Goffmanesque embarrassment," which the literature commonly (and rightfully) refers to as losing face, is also an "epistemological embarrassment." As Goffman (1974) writes in his introduction, "when individuals attend to any current situation, they face the question: 'What is going on here,'" (p. 8) of which exploration directs us to the "basic frameworks of understanding available in our society for making sense out of events" (p. 10). Indeed, Goffman is concerned with the loss of, the search for and the dialogical negotiation leading to the dominant frame(s) that account for what is and what can be going on around us, and, consequentially, for who we are as actors and protagonists therein, and how our words/acts are interpreted and thus assume specific impact and meaning.

Coupled synergistically, Bakhtin's inter-actional view of utterance and Goffman's attention to the social contexts in which experiential realms are constituted—a process continuously occurring in interaction—together amount to how experience and occurrence—the experience of the occurrence and the experience as occurrence—are webbed to form the social realm in and through live interaction. It is contended here that live, interactional linguistics suggests how social categories are formed and formulated, and how they are—implicatively, dialogically—rendered relevant to those who are to bear them.[1]

This brief discussion could be profitably reiterated in pragmatic—or, in fact, metapragmatic—terms, in relation to events of narration. Following Lucy (1993),

[1] This is very much in line with Emanuel Schegloff's keynote speech opening the SALSA 12 Annual Conference, which addressed social categories ('Who Are These People Anyway: On Making Categories Relevant'), as well as with the keynote presented later, by Stanton Wortham, who addressed processes of socialization.

metapragmatics refers to meta-communication and meta-narration, by which "the appropriate use of language" (p. 17, italics by author), and the negotiation of the relationship between "reality" and "language," are evoked within a certain interactional context (see also Silverstein, 1976; Urban, 1991). Indeed, as adamant a narrativist as I am, I should disclose the fact that most of my research on the travel stories of tourists has not been dedicated to the inspection of the core narratives themselves—the eventful flesh of the stories—but to their framings, i.e. to the meta-narrative and meta-communicative comments and evaluations by which the stories were made to make profound sense and to involve their audience.

Lastly, whether in the same terms used by Bakhtin and Goffman or in metapragmatic terminology, I would like to suggest at present that occasions of narration are viewed as performances, when they allude to or explicitly involve such metapragmatic contestation. Notwithstanding the miscellaneous conceptualizations of verbal performance, promoted by different sub- or sister-disciplines meeting at the wide shores of sociolinguistics, it is taken here that a fervent, ideologically-ridden negotiation of what is "really" real is the quintessence of narrative performance. Mostly in line with the works of Richard Bauman (1986; Bauman & Briggs, 1990), I contend that the management of the social in and through narration (i.e. performance) is achieved via the ability of competent narrators to index two realms of experience simultaneously: on the one hand, the then-and-there of the narrated events, or the "taleworld" (to borrow from Young, 1987), and on the other hand, the here-and-now of the performance and narration, or the "storyrealm."

The intensity with which such performances implicate their audiences, drawing them into the narrative (i.e. protagonize it), is thus related to the twofold scenes they address and evoke, to the "double reference" quality of narrative communication (Silverstein, 1996; Wortham, 2001). Indeed, it is the interrelations between the occasion of narration and the events conjured, or between the storyrealm and the taleworld, that will be discussed. Specifically, this paper explores the interaction between a specific narrative genre, that of the tourist's travel narrative, and the ways by which they involve and implicate their audience. Yet before turning to investigate the implicative dialogics of persuasion and self-transformation, how they complement each other, and how their juxtaposition forms the discourse of evangelist experience of a tourist speech community, I will briefly describe the interview-conversations, which I will address as cultural sites of symbolic tourist performances.

2. **Israeli Backpackers: Tourism, Narrative and Performance**

The extracts presented here are drawn from forty-one open, in-depth narrative interviews conducted with backpackers, between 1998 and 1999, upon their return to Israel from their trip. The interviewees all traveled for at least three months, along a more or less conventional itinerary, visiting sites and destinations located in exotic "third world" countries. Initial contact was made in stores that sell traveling gear, and from there I was referred to friends and acquaintances, and so on ("snow-ball" sampling). The interviews were conducted in Hebrew, and usually lasted between one to three hours. After introducing myself, I elicited a core narrative by addressing their central experiences while traveling. Later, after hearing travel stories full of adventure and risk, I would commonly ask a few pre-formulated questions addressing specific topics, such as their travel motivations, issues concerning gender and intra- and extra-backpacker social interactions.

These narrations amount to instances of tourist performances. By this I mean that, culturally speaking, performing travel narratives made for a *site of tourist activity in and of itself*. While traditionally scholars of tourism perceived "tourism" as taking place at tourist sites and destinations, the current touristification of culture, on the one hand, and the heightened state of commercialization, institutionalization and mediatization of tourism, on the other hand, suggest that the performances of tourists occupy their everyday lives and spaces as well. There (or here), too, tourism emerges symbolically, vis-à-vis performance (see Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). Indeed, the practices and discourses promoted by tourist institutions, with the myriad forms of cultural capital they entail, make for abundant discursive resources through which identity may be validly established, as well as a variety of social categories, interactions, power relationships, etc. This, furthermore, suggests that these interactions have an institutional or semi-institutional dimension, whereby the performing tourists are embodied "off-site" tourist markers (Dann, 1996).

Finally, it is important to note that among Israeli youths, backpacking shortly after their obligatory military service (which lasts approximately two years for women and three years for men) is a widespread, widely echoed, social rite-of-passage (Noy & Cohen, 2005). The "great journey," as it is commonly called among them, probably originated in the mid-seventies, when it was pursued by individualistic alienated drifters seeking cultural alternatives. Later, after the 1982 war in Lebanon, rifts in Israeli society and the concurrent decline of hegemonic Zionist discourse on a local level, coupled with accelerated processes of commercialization and institutionalization on a global level, led to backpacking becoming a collective practice, in which scores of youths participate, largely following time-honored itineraries and visiting similar sites. Though frequent socialization and groupings are characteristic, the travelers nonetheless adhere to the ethos of the lone traveler of the preceding generation (Noy, 2005).

3. **First Impression/Implication: Persuasion**

I deliberated, with regard to both persuasion and self-transformation, whether it is an "impression" or an "implication" that I wish to discuss. While the former suggests the perspective of a reflexive hindsight—more distant and diachronous—upon what had ensued during the interviews, the latter conveys the sense of being compelled and involved implicatively. And since it is live experience that I wish to explore and convey, more on the side of the "magma" than of the "granite" (to borrow Bakhtinian metaphors), I find implication to be the more precise term. Indeed, with ideologically suffused language, which is never "neutral" (Bakhtin, above), there is no experiential middle ground, no gray area of hesitation (as the backpackers would soon teach me). In Young's (1987) words, "I am caught between engagement and skepticism" (p. 4), the first engagement being persuasion.

Implication commenced at the very beginning of our meetings, by the way these were framed as such by the performers (i.e. as performances). In one of my first interviews, the informant, who had me sitting on a couch in her room, a mug of coffee in my hand, looking through a stack of voluminous picture albums from her trip, said emphatically, "I get to tell this story a lot! First, anyone who comes to my home and hasn't seen the pictures yet, bam, I instantly have him sit down, before-the-coffee, before-anything (laughs), and I tell him this [the stories]!" The significance of such friendly and casual remarks concerned the preconceptions we each had of our encounter. I was thinking of an interview; she had a performance in mind; I was thinking in terms of an active agenda of

questioning and interviewing (relying on my background in psychology; she conceived of an audience attending a narrative performance. As Goffman (1974) observed of performance, “the genuineness and spontaneity he (the teller, the speaker) can bring to his telling is generated by his current listeners’ experience of genuine suspense; he borrows spontaneity from them. Effective performance requires first hearings, not first tellings” (p. 508). Indeed, the informant’s meta-discursive commenting on the nature of our encounter exposes not only the asymmetrical relationships within the encounter—that is, that I am hearing her story for the first time, but she has been telling it “a lot”—but, consequentially, that I am in fact attending a performance. Though the informant uses the third rather than the second person, and conjures a seemingly general addressee, it is I who embody “anyone,” it is me who “hasn’t seen the pictures yet,” and it is to me that she would now narrate “this!”

Though this is rather obvious, it was quite some time into the interviewing process that I realized that the narrators were consistently inquiring into whether I, too, had backpacked, or, in other words, whether I “knew,” as they stressed, what they were talking about; whether I “really” or “directly”—again, their words—“knew” what they had undergone and the profound experience of which they were narrating. They did so sometimes subtly and sometimes straightforwardly, yet even in the latter cases the inquiries seemed to dissolve neatly into the flow of the conversation, avoiding salience and boldness. Thus it was during the small talk, at the periphery or the narrations, that the backpackers inquired incidentally, “did you get to backpack?” In other cases, the inquiries were roundabout enough, as the narrators addressed particular practices and episodes typically encountered or pursued by backpackers, and asked whether I had ever “chewed on coca leaves,” “suffered Acute Mountain Disease,” or “had the chance to be at an altitude of eighteen thousand feet,” the answers to which were indicative: a “yes” would have marked me as an insider; a “no” as an outsider.

This was consequential. The travelers had to position me in relation to their traveling-speech community; a move the importance of which I had not anticipated. Whether I had or had not traveled, they insisted—albeit casually—that there was not much point in sharing their travel stories. For if I had indeed traveled, then I must surely “know” what it is they have gone through, and how profound and singular it is; if not, then the verbose adventurous plots they narrated with passion would never reveal what lies therein, what is infolded in narrative, what it means to “know.” Rather, the stories were like “arrows” (to borrow from Basso, 1984) or sign posts, directing or pointing at an extra-discursive reality, which they simultaneously constructed, which is where the unique experience lies, ostensibly awaiting consumption.

The next thing I realized is that they employ persuasive jargon profusely. They often mentioned that I “should” travel or that I “must” travel. They used such verbs as “to persuade,” “to push,” “to enthuse” and “to propel,” in reference to myself and to their peers. It was not only participation in the trip in general that they were zealous about, but they used heavily suggestive vocabulary with regard to participation in certain activities in the trip, in certain ways. Again, sometimes I was the straightforward addressee of these implorations and sometimes they interestingly were related to someone else, but in effect implicated me as well. Before presenting a few illustrations of such compelling persuasive utterances, I will touch in brief on the rhetoric of persuasion.

A discussion of persuasion in western traditions of rhetoric, from Aristotle to contemporary high consumer discourses, is clearly beyond the scope of this paper. The

perspectives on persuasive speech which will be discussed here vacillate between formal-functional definitions and symbolic-constructionist ones. With regard to the former, Lakoff (1982) suggests that persuasion is “the attempt or intention of one participant to change the behavior, feelings, intentions or viewpoint of another by communicative means” (p. 28). However, in light of the paired Bakhtinian-Goffmanesque perspective on language and social interaction/construction, a more pertinent conceptualization of persuasion is provided by Torronen (2000): “Persuasive speech is a process of symbolically constructing social reality in a strong sense: It aims consciously to influence people’s perceptions of the surrounding world and the way they should act in accordance with those perceptions ... It motives the subject, who is outside the text, to take action” (pp. 81-82). As we will see, a close relationship indeed exists between what the remarkable travel stories are about, i.e. between the world they construct, and the interpersonal effects they achieve within the social realm of their telling. In other words, the dialogically constructed realm is saturated with intention and persuasion, and “information” (and travel narrative are abundant with information) is thus more precisely conceptualized as “infosuasion” (Savarese, 2000). It has a direction; it is, again, never “neutral.” Hence rather then working dialectically (in binary fashion), performative narrative communication establishes a shared, intermediate realm—that of the taleworld—into which the audience is drawn. With how the audience, positioned “outside the text,” is made to be part of the text, which then becomes a script to be pursued, we will soon concern ourselves.

The following three illustrations show the dialogical employment of persuasive speech. In the first two cases this is carried out in a roundabout manner, in which the interlocutor is not directly addressed. In the first case, Shula, the narrator, toward the end of the meeting, after over an hour and a half of storytelling, reflects upon what she has narrated. In the second case, which also occurs after the core narrative has been communicated, Ruth refers to two close friends with whom she confided her stories.[2]

(1) Shula:

I think that it’s something that is very mm important that everyone will do. I- EVERY person who is- hesitating, I tell’m GO TRAVEL. Like- You gotta go and travel for you to know what it is ... I really push’em and tell’em as much as possible so they’ll go.

(2) Ruth:

I also gave them the recommendations for the journey, so I kinda’ sent them with a push. They are the only ones I sent a postcard to [saying]
“many people can do without [the trip], and that’s OK. YOU GO TO INDIA!”

In both cases, persuasive language is typically employed emphatically, yet the utterances are not directed at the listener/audience (or as least do not appear to be). In both cases the implication emerges tacitly, circumventing the downright, second-person inference. In addition, these utterances are meta-narrational, in that they relate to a narration that

[2] The following transcriptions convention is used: CAPITALS - noticeably louder speech; °quite° - noticeably softer speech; hyphen- - abrupt breaks or stops (in the middle or in the end of a word); … - a few words left out; [missing words] - square brackets indicate words missing in the original transcription and added later; <faster> - noticeably faster speech; ? – rising intonation; , . - comma and period represent pauses (less than a second long), the first shorter than the second, and clause- and sentence-final falling intonation, correspondingly.

recently preceded them. The point Shula she makes, expressed in general terms in the opening remark, evokes persuasion explicitly. She makes it clear that it is important for her that "everyone"—(recall the first informant above)—"will do." Shula then proceeds to an example, the subject of which is a "hesitator." Incidentally, at this point in the interview the narrator did not yet know whether I had traveled or not, and whether I intended to do so or not. Thus, it might well be that I was perceived by her as a "hesitator," a potential, or yet-to-be, backpacker, one who needed a "push." For it is only by way of going through the motions, Shula assures her audience, that one can ultimately "know what it is."

Indeed, the closing utterance reiterates the general point made earlier, and is a meta-narrative, metapragmatic comment. It touches on what has been said thus far and on how what has been said relates to what should be done. Shula brings together the activities of narration ("tell'em") and travel ("push'em"), by which the narrative assumes a motivational capacity. Indeed, "tell'em" is exactly what we—Shula and myself—have been engaging in, for, as noted above, this utterance is expressed after a good deal of stories have been told and heard. Metapragmatically, Shula makes sure her audience realizes the implication of what "tell'em" means: it means "push'em." The stories I have been hearing are not made for frivolous consumption. Instead, they are "pushing stories," which are meant to be followed and pursued.

Ruth frames her explicitly persuasive communication somewhat differently. Shortly before this segment she made a note of how, unlike most backpackers, she did not share her stories unreservedly with many people. Instead, she confided in, and told her stories of deep and profound experience to, very few friends and close acquaintances. Consequently, it was only to this exclusive group that she warmly extended her suggestion to peruse the path she had narrated. In this manner Ruth establishes an exclusive, elite type of communication, which forcibly impels those who are within the closer social circle. It is against this background that her words should be read. She illustrates her close relationship with her two friends (a couple) by mentioning that not only did she share her stories with them, but that she had actually sent them a postcard from the trip, from which she now quotes. By quoting the postcard the narrator uses a reflexive, double mode of communication: the quotations are themselves akin to a postcard, in that they deliver meaning from one sphere (or "realm") to another. In terms of touristic (i.e. institutional) discourse, the direct quotation amounts to a souvenir, which is brought back in one piece, as it were, from the trip in order to impress the present audience (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; Stewart, 1984).

Like Shula, Ruth does not address me directly, and rather than as a hearer of persuasion, both narrators position me as an overhearer (Goffman, 1981; Ochs, 1997). Through the evocation of voices (both direct and indirect), the narrators position me in symbolic hearing range of the persuasive discourse they produce. The question is, indeed, whom to the direct quotations are directed. Further, Ruth makes a point of suggesting that the stories are not meant only to be heard, but to "push" as well. Yet since I am not a close friend, Ruth employs another exclusive rhetoric. She cunningly suggests that "many people can do without," which is a way of saying that the type of profound experience engulfed in the trip is constitutive. In other words, while people who do not or would not experience it would not necessarily feel deprived or disadvantaged, those who do share the immensity of the experience are utterly touched and changed the transformative rhetoric will be discussed in section 4). Hence, by suggesting that she has confided with me—by agreeing to meet with me and to share her stories, I was granted an entrance to an exclusive group. And in case this was not enough, the narrator made it clear that not

pursuing the stories and not undertaking the trip would amount to something worse than any disappointment or frustration, or, in fact, to anything that could be experienced: to the very limits of consciousness (which the trip broadens).

Both illustrations typically reveal the excessive prosodic work associated with persuasive performance, and the use of an abundance of intensifiers, which are typical of emphatic communication. As a result, the structure of the extracts is nothing short than poetic, thus enhancing their rhetoric efficiency. Furthermore, both narrators commonly employ voices (direct or indirect), by which the intense and frequent social interactions, typical of backpackers, are voicedly evoked, and, more importantly, by which the different levels of narrative "dialogics" address the audience and involve it (Mannheim & van Vleet, 1998).

In other cases, I am the direct addressee of suasive language employed by the narrators. This is exemplified in the following excerpt, which occurs relatively late in our meeting, after over seventy-five minutes, full with of exciting stories, recollections and anecdotes, have elapsed. The extract, then, is of a concluding character, and is uttered after Michel notes how exceptional the trip in South America was.

(3) Michel: I'll always want to return, I'm positive. °It's a magical continent°
Chaim: °Interesting, really°
Michel: You must go there, by the way, after [hearing] all these stories. Really. You're bound to enjoy. Like- very few are those who didn't enjoy it.

Akin to a Labovian (evaluative) coda, the profound and eventful story ends with a note of how "magical" the taleworld is, and the scene, or script, of another story, or of the same story inhabited by another protagonist, is opened. The suggestion performed by Michel is clearly direct, and while it explicitly indexes the situation in which we are participants, it is marked as incidental ("by the way"). More accurately, it refers to what we have been doing, the activity of telling stories and listening to them. Immediately following the point she makes, Michel narrates a short anecdote concerning a (female) backpacker who had not enjoyed the trip and eventually broke off the rite in the middle. This short story, depicting an ostensible oddity among the backpackers (referred to in exclusionary terms as "weird"), conjures a moral: the backpacker "did not know what she was going for," because before the trip "she had not heard stories." This moral establishes the point against which my attendance of her narration is contrasted. Knowledge, the narrator tacitly, but forcibly, promotes, is crucial for the successful participation in and completion of the rite-of-passage.

Note that this exchange sequence suggests that Michel proceeds with direct (second person) and explicit persuasion only after receiving acknowledgment from the audience with regard to how spectacular and moving her narrative has been so far. This is communicated when I confess how sincerely ("really") interesting and moving I have found her story to be. Even more important is the *prosodic attunement or alignment* between interlocutor and narrator, which is illustrated when I lower my voice and thus echo and affirm—both in content and tone—the narrator's evaluation. It is at this point (or *from* this point) of close interpersonal attunement, that Michel feels secure to proceed with blatant persuasion. (Note that the quieter exchanges, which usually take place in evaluative, concluding parts, such as the one above, are of particular salience, due to the fact they contrast markedly with the otherwise loud and fast pace by which the backpackers perform travel narratives.)

Whether they are tacit or covert, direct or roundabout, the narrations implicate their attending audience. The stories, Michel and other narrators contend, are informative in a profound sense. They are not only descriptive, but *pre*scriptive as well; in fact, they are prescriptive by their very descriptive—referential, denotational—nature. Akin to a recipe, they are not meant to be consumed "passively," merely to the enjoyment of the audience. Rather, inasmuch as they portray and evoke existential experiences, they strive to touch and stir existential depths (existential experiences, particularly, but not solely, under the guise of "authenticity," are a desired, commodity in modern tourism, well-documented in its research literature. See for instance, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; Wang, 2000); as they powerfully evoke the listener's "active responsive understanding" (Bakhtin, 1986), they are meant to be pursued. They have a direction, or, more so, *are* directions. When narrated competently, they are made to *move* you literally, in the sense that they are not referential, but performative and ritualistic, texts, and are, we will soon see, a part of the very rite on which they ostensibly reflect.

Indeed, when I felt, on a few occasions, a deep, growing desire—not unlike the feeling of hunger—to travel, and I would reflect upon it and verbalize it *in situ* ("all this makes me so eager to travel"), the backpackers would laugh, clap their hands with satisfaction, and say "then we have succeeded!" They explicitly affirm that their performance is aimed at moving the audience literally. Their performance established a shared, intersubjective experience, in the shape of a taleworld occupied by spaces, protagonists and events, into which the audience is drawn (Torronen, 2000; Young, 1987). Again, akin to a joke, merely expressing an appreciation of the performance has little to do with acknowledging its impact; on the contrary, it is an indication of an unsuccessful performance. Just as laughing is what is meant by embodingly acknowledging and reciprocating a well-told joke, the audience's desire to travel serves the same function with regard to a well-told travel narrative.

The sense of being drawn into the taleworld is shared by linguistic anthropologists who work in highly ideological social and cultural contexts. Susan Harding (1987), reflecting on the stories of born-again evangelists, writes, "[t]here is no such thing as a neutral 'participant-observation' position, no place for an ethnographer who seeks 'information.' Either you are lost or you are saved ... It was inconceivable to them that anyone with an appetite for the gospel as great as mine was simply 'gathering information,' was just there 'to write a book.' No, I was 'searching' (p. 171). And later she conveys a realization, which is strikingly similar to my own, that "on a deep level [the stories are] about the listener: You, too, are a character in these stories; these stories are about you" (p. 173).

Before proceeding to self-transformation, a note should be made regarding how persuasive speech, though employed profusely by the narrators, was unnoticed by the audience and did not seem to be obtrusive at the time. First, it was mentioned that the general manner in which these narrations were conducted was excited and emphatic. The narrators spoke fast, quite loudly, as one should only expect of the delivery of an adventurous eventful travel narrative. In fact, the backpackers explicitly pointed out that they had to "compress" and "condense" the many happenings they witnessed throughout the lengthy trip into a single interview. While this relieved some of the performative pressure, it served, more importantly, as a meta-narrative comment, framing the present interaction in terms of a highly succinct performance, during which the audience was expected to maintain a high state of awareness. Indeed, the manner of ceaseless flowing

narration, with the narrators continuously holding the floor (except for my occasional expressions of awe), had an overwhelming effect on the audience, keeping the latter preoccupied with events, occurrences, dates, sites and sights, and leaving little room for reflection.

Second, the semi-institutional tourist dimension pertaining to these interactions may also account for their unnoticingly persuasive character. In high consumer discourse of tourism, it should not be surprising to hear friends, acquaintances and even strangers share with us their enjoyable tourist vacation, and augment their description with a warm recommendation that we ourselves should try it. (In fact, such a warm recommendation would indicate closeness of relationship, as resources of cultural capital are shared among inner members of a social group.) With regard both to tourists and to the literature disseminated by tourism organizations, communication is replete with suggestive language, in the form of "tips," "recommendations" and "warnings," concerning where we should go, when, with whom, for how long, etc.

4. **Second Impressions/Implications: Self-Transformation**

The second impression, or implication, which constitutes the other half of the very profound experience, and the experience of profoundness that the narrators evoked in the narration, is that of self-transformation. Slightly fewer than three-quarters of the backpackers interviewed had spontaneously indicated that they had undergone significant self-change while traveling. Here, too, it took me some time to move from implication to impression (from engagement to skepticism, Young, 1987), and to realize not only what is being told to me—the narration of a profound self-change—but also what is being told of me—the beginning of my own journey of transformation.

The narrators typically expressed how profoundly they were touched by the trip, and—as should be expected in the case of a rite-of-passage—how they returned a changed person. Evaluative descriptions attesting to this self-transformation were commonly located toward the end of the core narrative, or even toward the end of the interview itself. These depicted a positive and enduring self-change, elaborated in terms of personality traits and typically attesting to greater degrees of tolerance, patience, intercultural openness and a greater sense of responsibility and maturity. Indeed, being touched and transformed are inherent themes in the western ethos of the explorer, whereby the symbolic and cultural capital gained through travel and the successful overcoming of risks and endurance of severe conditions are made into narrative identity resources (Green, 1993; Noy, forthcoming-b). These claims are also an exhibition of the cultural capital that backpackers gained by traveling, and established how they not only crossed geographical distances and borders, but socio-cultural ones as well (pertaining to their home society). Completing the rite successfully vis-à-vis indicating a major self-change, suggested, or, more accurately, established, their inauguration into a prestigious sub-culture of veteran or experienced backpackers, who hold the knowledge, in the form of stories, and the rights to tell them.

Due to the limited scope of this paper, I will supply only one illustration of such a performance, which is taken from the concluding part of my interview with Boaz, after nearly two hours of narration.

(4)

1 And I returned changed, quite changed. ... I left the country ignorant. I left the country ignorant in
2 that I don't know many cultures. I hadn't met with many cultures. Perhaps I read about them, or had
3 seen them on television, but I hadn't run across them really, physically. And after I return, and after
4 all what I see, and after all what I hear, that is- I'll give you an example. I knew New Zealand. That
5 is, I knew it's a beautiful country and all- but I didn't know specific spots. When I arrived to travel
6 there, then suddenly <I know a lot more with regard to general knowledge of the country> on the
7 region, on the, people, that is, if you ask me today about New Zealand ?I'll know much more than I
8 knew before? <Ask me suddenly about the mountains and all the rest and ?I'll know more than I
9 knew before?> You see- like- that is, you leave the country when you don't know much [and] when
10 you return you suddenly know everything.

Boaz is quite straightforward in depicting the depth of the transformation he has experienced. Attesting that he returned from the trip as "simply a changed person" amounts to an explicit, outright claim of self-transformation, whereby the narrator has changed profoundly for the better. The trip, Boaz asserts, has "really, physically" allowed for an encounter with "many cultures," and has generated a sense of transformation by way of an association, one that Boaz presents as only natural and consequential, to the actual practice. It is depicted in dramatic hues: the encounter led "suddenly"—a word reiterated thrice—to a significant enhancement in his supposed knowledge of the destination country/culture, which led, subsequently, to a sense of profound self-knowledge. In turn, the latter eventually led to a sense of self-change.

In addition to the romanticist correlation that Boaz draws between "interior" and "exterior" knowledge (see Gergen, 1991), the dramatic character of the undertakings is established by a powerful invocation of the empty-to-full metaphor. In his experience, Boaz left the homeland "ignorant" and returned "full," in a state in which he now positively possesses answers (rather than questions), in which he now "know[s] everything." In making rhetoric use of this metaphoric structure, the narrative is indeed transformative: Boaz retrospectively reshapes and reconstructs his (past) autobiographical identity in a dramatic, dichotomous fashion, in which his present identity is viewed in highly positive terms.

Moving from narrative to narration, from text to performance, evinces how this deep sense of self-transformation is constructed dialogically (intersubjectively) and is as implicative of the performance's audience as explicit persuasion. It is precisely through the two rhetoric structures discussed above—correlating the interior with the exterior and contrasting the before (empty) with the after (full)—in addition to the position of this extract following the core narration, that the compelling nature of the transformatory claim is accomplished. First, by contrasting the later state, that of the "knower," with the earlier state, that of the "ignorant"—whose knowledge of New Zealand is limited to mediated (thus inauthentic) representations, the narrator is in effect alluding to the audience. For at that point my own knowledge of New Zealand is indeed limited to general, "abstract" knowledge. However, if we consider the linear progression leading from knowledge to self-transformation, which Boaz promotes, then meeting with him and listening to nearly two hours of pouring stories that depict these "particular spots," which he now mentions, certainly amount to and qualify as a considerable enhancement of my own knowledge of the destinations. This, in turn, suggests the beginning of my own search for and knowledge of the self, which eventually generates my own self-transformation.

Consider the three occurrences of the word "suddenly" (serving as a dramatic intensifier). While the first (line 5) and last (line 8) refer to the narrated events (the volcano mountain on which Boaz elaborated previously, in the first, and the feeling

associated with his return to Israel, in the last), the intensifier in line 7 is used with regard to the present conversation. It is the current interaction which is dramatic, Boaz contends. He thus imports, and performatively enacts, the action associated with the trip into the here-and-now of the interaction. Drama, he implies, is not only a matter of the there-and-then and not even merely a matter of the here-and-now; instead, it is one of a few threads that establishes a crucial association between the referentially narrated events and the dialogical occasion of their performance. When the narrator suggests that I inquire with him about certain destinations, which apparently seems as a hypothetical evocation employed in order to make his point, he is in fact referring to what we have just been doing together, over the last two hours. The narrator is astutely evoking the very context of our meeting. The utterances "if you ask me today about New Zealand," and "[a]sk me suddenly about the mountains and all the rest" are reliable descriptions of precisely what I have been doing and serve as the raison d'être for our meeting (I have discussed this in terms of the audience's and the performer's "mutual motivations," see Noy, 2002).

While an in-depth inquiry of this segment is beyond the present scope, it is noteworthy that the New Zealand illustration is precisely that, a strip which is framed as an "example" amidst an otherwise evaluative (non-narrative) assertion of self-transformation. The illustratory reference to the narration mitigates some of the pressure the narrator is under, when he tries to convey the depths and immensity of the transformatory experience and its credible communication before an audience that did not know him prior to the trip or during it. Hence, making a valid transformatory claim is by no means a simple discursive achievement. It is accomplished by the narrator's evocation of the occasion of narration, which typically precedes the evaluative segment, in which we both did participate. In other words, performer and audience have a *common, shared past, on which the validity and authority of the transformatory contention may rest*.

Three experiential-ontological planes or realms are at stake: a) the trip, which is undeniably an "event," an occurrence that "really" happened (in which the narrators' participation was a prerequisite for our meeting); b) the narration, which is the part of our meeting where the travel narrative—one of the epitomes of adventurous, eventful undertakings in the West, is performed; and c) the evaluation, concluding expression of and claim for self-transformation. I would suggest that these realms are not analogous but homologous, at least inasmuch as the narration constitutes a rite in its own right, and is also a part of the going-through-the-motion of backpacking, i.e. of becoming a "backpacker." The language employed by the narrators here is ritualistic, of the type occurring in religious-missionary narratives (Harding, 1987; Stromberg, 1993).

Addressing evangelist narrations of self-transformation, Webb Keane (1997) observes that, "transformation consists of taking a new role as speaker ... [of] being transformed from the listener to the speaker," and that, "the speaker's religious identity is approached ... as an inhabitable speaking role with all the discursive and moral possibilities that may entail" (p. 58). Indeed, the experience that backpackers performatively evoke is the cashing in of their "storytelling rights" (following Hymes & Cazden, 1978), which they have earned by the sweat of their brows. It is important to stress the fact—embryonic in Keane's observation—that storytelling rights originate in *listening rights*. For without initially embodying the position of the listener in the ritual of the conversation, the position of the speaker/performer is later unattainable or otherwise meaningless. This suggests that there is indeed a role of "listener," the position of which is implicated dialogically. This notion is quite striking, for attention is usually drawn to the performer, and the position and social category that she or he embodies, rather than to the audience.

Yet this is not the entire story, as there seems to be an even more preliminary and implicit category involved in this scheme. I will proceed to illustrate, by means of an amusing anecdote, what is meant by an implicit "social category," how it is established, and what it comes to mean.

Ephraim Kishon, a well known Israeli humorist, recounted that he once overheard his granddaughter, then a girl of about ten, confiding with a friend. One was inquiring, "say, are we virgins?" to which the other exclaimed, after some hesitation, "not yet!" It is my contention that what is surprising and amusing about this exchange is not only the incongruence between the biological and social categories of "virgin." More important is the fact that there exists a null category which exists prior to the occupation of the social category of "virgin" (itself taken to be a preliminary category), to which it is a prerequisite. In effect, then, there are three categories that emerge from this anecdote: a pre-virgin state (indexed by the reply "not yet"), the state of being a virgin and the state of full physiological maturity. This triadic structure, and particularly the relationship between the first and second categories, which are both covert and are usually unnoticed, is illuminating with regard to the backpackers' missionary implication of categories, and related to them, identities.

In the backpackers' performance, the three emergent categories are the following (listed from the last to the first). The final category is the ostensibly overt one, which explicitly engenders the full cultural capital associated with travel: that of the "backpacker," i.e. the "experienced," "veteran" traveler, who has transformed and has returned to tell the tale. Just before attainment of that status, that is prior to traveling but once implicated in the relevant missionary discourse, as presented in the illustrations above, is the category of the "potential" or "yet-to-be" backpacker. This category is equivalent to the "virgin" in Kishon's anecdote. The social category indexed by the word "virgin," though not referring to a physiologically mature female body, surely indicates an implication within gender-female discourse. This is the case of the audience in the travelers' performances: the listening audience is being implicated into a listening role, and by and by, into a social category and social identity, which is to be fully revealed when actually embarking on the great "journey." The initial and most covert category concerns those who are not (yet) implicated in the relevant ideological discursive field. It is the "not yet virgin" or the "not-yet yet-to-be" backpacker. This category is, at this point, implication-free (or free of the relevant process of "socialization," to employ the terms used in Wortham's key note, above), which in effect means that it does not amount to a category at all as of yet. It might materialize into a category, depending upon what would later become of it retroactively (to draw on Derrida, 1990:993, it is the "avenir" that would grant it retroactive intelligibility). Yet this is the derivation of much of its persuasive, self-transformatory force. As noted by Lucy (1993), "covert categories can also exert suggestive influence on thought, influences which are potent precisely insofar as it is difficult to bring such categories to conscious attention" (p.25, see also Silverstein, 1992). Lucy's metapragmatic observation of the categories themselves surely holds true with regard to the covert transformatory shifts between them, as listeners and attendants are subtly, yet forcibly, implicated from their role as laymen to their pursuit of the backpacking journey.

5. **Conclusions**

You want to be a missionary/Got that missionary zeal?
Let a stranger change your life/How does it make you feel?
You want to be a writer/Don't know how or when?

Find a quiet place/Use a humble pen.
Paul Simon (dubbing God), Hurricane Eye (*You're The One*, 2000).

Attending to the backpackers' performances, which are dotted with covert and over, direct and indirect, evocations of persuasion, and are concluded with assertions of self-transformation, amounts to more than a strong invitation: it is an implication, a compelling experiential initiation of the audience, which is commencing its own journey of transformation. Simultaneously, through the effects of this dialogical implication, the narrators' own self-transformation is accomplished reiteratively. Just as persuasion emerges from accounts of transformation, so does the sense of transformation emerge in performing persuasion. While the transformational accounts evaluate and validate the profundity of the experience, thus impressing and attracting the audience, persuasion assists in accomplishing the sought-after state of a (veteran, experienced) "backpacker," while positioning the interlocutor in the role of a novice, a yet-to-be backpacker. Along Keane's (1997, above) lines, the performer must first inhabit the role of the listener, in relation to which the experience of transformation—and the identity and social category it engulfs—may be accomplished.

The performance is conceptualized in meta-pragmatic terms, whereby the relations between referentiality and expressivity are configured heatedly, in the capacity of creating an event of the ongoing conversation. Though this event is related to the narrated events, it is anchored in the social interaction, or in the storyrealm, by which the taleworld assumes its meaning and vividness. This is well in line with the contention made by linguistic anthropologists and folklorists that it is the social nature of the interaction that facilitates its implicative, transformational power. As observed by Bauman (1986), performance "carries the potential to rearrange the structure of social relations within the performance event and perhaps beyond it" (p. 4, see also Wortham, 2001; Young, 1987, and others). I will concern myself shortly with what is "beyond" the particular occasion, i.e. with the broader socio-cultural circumstances within which the social efficacy of these performances is to be understood. Yet it should first be pointed out that this is indeed where Bakhtin's and Goffman's contributions meet. While the former stresses the dialogical and active capacities of live linguistic interaction, the latter emphasizes the frames by which we continuously construct and comprehend, via linguistic interaction, where we are at. For both, the underlying views of live speech as utterly social, and intersubjectivity, as emerging within speech communication, is fundamental.

Two converging issues are at stake here. One concerns the types of speech communication available to native Hebrew speakers, which serve as resources in sustaining a persuasive oral performance of the kind examined above. As discussed elsewhere, the activities engulfed in present-day backpacking tourism reverberate some of the core practices by which Zionist "civic religion" and the national identity it promoted were observed in the heyday of Zionist ideology (Noy, 2003). As noted by Katriel (1995), Zerubavel (1995), and others, traveling arduously across the Land of Israel and romantically narrating about it were activities pursued collectively with considerable zeal. Hence, the discourse of travel in Israeli society is rooted in tradition and is imbued with highly ideological-romanticist language. Further, the influential *Dugri* ("direct") style of speech, which emphasizes interpersonal closeness, openness, informality and spontaneity (Katriel, 1986, 1991), helps create and sustain an "authentic" and heightened atmosphere in the conversation. Specifically, disavowing some aspects of politeness (Blum-Kulka, 1997) and "dramatizing sincerity" (Katriel, 1986:24) serve to engage the audience deeply

in a casual, non-obtrusive manner (see an elaborated discussion in Noy, 2005, forthcoming-a).

The other issue concerns the ideological/socio-cultural state of contemporary Israeli society. The considerable growth of the backpacking phenomenon over the last few decades and the collectivized manner in which it is pursued served a role in the heated politics of identity. With the decline of the hegemonic Zionist discourse and the emergence of a deeply fragmented society, rife with hostility, various sub-collectives and sub-cultures engage in attempts to establish identity, which, within a socio-political space perceived as limited, seem to carry a survivalist hue of a zero-sum game. It is to this unpromising, shaky, and intense social reality that Israeli youths enter upon the completion of their education. While some pursue an explicit religious-fundamental transformation (in the form of being "born again" to ultra-orthodox factions), the backpackers' participation in a collective rite-of-passage, while maintaining the national "secular" parlance, forcibly echoes the dynamics of evangelist sociability, with the crucial cultural gain associated with it.

I would like to conclude with the lines quoted above, in which Paul Simon appropriately juxtaposes the zealous dynamics of missionary deliverance with the faculties of language, observing, as this paper has tried to do, the predicament of identity and selfhood in our times.

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Chaim Noy
1/a Shalom Yehuda St.
Jerusalem, 93395
Israel
chaimnoy@yahoo.com