Critical Discourse Analysis of Holocaust Survivors’ Testimonies

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# Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................................

1 Introduction .........................................................................................................................1
   1.1 Aim .............................................................................................................................. 1

2 Background .........................................................................................................................2
   2.1 Political and Historical Background of Auschwitz ...................................................... 2
   2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis ......................................................................................... 4
   2.3 Trauma Studies ............................................................................................................ 5
   2.4 Previous Works ............................................................................................................. 7

3 Design of Study .................................................................................................................. 8

4 Results and Discussion ...................................................................................................... 9
   4.1 Arrival at Auschwitz ................................................................................................... 9
       4.1.1 Testimony of Speaker A ...................................................................................... 9
       4.1.2 Testimony of Speaker B .................................................................................... 11
   4.2 During: Camp Illness and Disease ............................................................................ 13
       4.2.1 Testimony of Speaker C .................................................................................... 13
       4.2.2 Testimony of Speaker D .................................................................................... 15
   4.3 Liberation of Auschwitz ............................................................................................ 16
       4.3.1 Testimony of Speaker E .................................................................................... 16
       4.3.2 Testimony of Speaker F .................................................................................... 17

5 Concluding Remarks ........................................................................................................ 18

References .......................................................................................................................... 22

Appendix I .......................................................................................................................... 23

Appendix II ........................................................................................................................... 24

Appendix III .......................................................................................................................... 26

Appendix IV .......................................................................................................................... 27

Appendix V .......................................................................................................................... 28

Appendix VI .......................................................................................................................... 29
Abstract

The extreme nature of the Holocaust forced those who survived to cope with the long-lasting effects of their experience – even after the liberation. For the Holocaust survivors, the extreme reality they endured separated them from a normal reality. After the liberation, the survivors were forced to live among those who had not experienced the camps and whose efforts to understand the survivors’ experiences were unsuccessful. Because of this divide, the “other” identity the victims were assigned to in the Holocaust perpetuated itself into the present.

Further, this thesis study examines six audio-visual testimonies of Jewish Holocaust survivors to identify patterns in trauma discourse and reveal how the “other” identity is reflected in such discourse. A Faircloughian approach to critical discourse analysis will be the chosen methodology for this study. Through this appraisal framework, my study will explore the commonalities found in trauma discourse; it will identify the linguistic devices that are used in trauma discourse and recognize what functions they serve. The analyses of the testimonies uncovered that fragmentation in discourse can be associated with the degree of trauma the victim experienced. That is, depending on the how chronologically sound or disjointed a speaker’s discourse is, it can be telling in how traumatic the event was to the individual. This study also revealed that some events that would ordinarily be traumatic to the “normal” individual, seemingly undisturbed the Holocaust survivors’ discourse; this too evidenced the divide between the Holocaust survivor to the “normal” world, thus perpetuating their “other” identity. In a similar vein, by examining the use of comparative devices – although serving multiple functions in discourse – they produce the same identity representation of being the “other”.

1 Introduction

When the Nazi regime assumed power in March of 1933, they built a series of concentration camps to eradicate the “enemies of the state”. This propaganda put forth the notion that certain groups of people were dangerous and a potential threat to German purity and their community. When the incarceration sites were established, the interned peoples consisted of Gypsies, Jehovah’s Witnesses, homosexuals, German communists – but the most targeted group of people were the Jews (BBC, n.d, p.4). This study will therefore be analyzing testimonies of Jewish Holocaust survivors to unveil how their identity of being the subordinate “other” is still present in their Holocaust testimonies (these testimonies are recorded post-war).

On the 31st of July 1941, one of the leading Nazi figures Hermann Goering authorized SS General Reinhard Heydrich to put the “final solution” (or the “final solution of the Jewish question”) into effect. “The final solution” called for the mass murder of all Jews within reach; that included Jews that resided outside of Europe. The incarceration sites not only functioned as a means to exterminate the Jews, it was also used to torture and humiliate their prisoners.

In spring of 1945, World War II ended, and the remaining prisoners were liberated. It is estimated that a total of six million Jews had perished in the Holocaust. Europe had previously had a vibrant Jewish culture, but the devastating loss of Jews after the genocide resulted in demographic losses. That is, many of the survivors were determined to leave Europe and start new lives elsewhere; hundreds of thousands emigrated to Israel, the United States, Canada, Australia, South America, South Africa, and Great Britain (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.).

It has now been over seven decades since the Holocaust, yet its impact still permeates Europe and the rest of the world. Media has successfully transmitted over 100,000 recorded interviews of Holocaust survivors. These interviews address the extreme realities that went on during the Holocaust and provide researchers with material to progress studies in many academic fields, including the field of linguistics.

1.1 Aim

This thesis aims to delve into individual oral histories of Jewish Holocaust Survivors by using theories of critical discourse analysis (CDA). Analyses will be conducted of the survivors’ memories and stories articulated in the testimonies chosen for this study. CDA will be the
analysis method as it will uncover the micro-level instances of language that are imperative in identifying macro-level meanings. Thus, this thesis aims to locate and combine micro-level instances of trauma language to form macro-level meanings to reveal the “other” identity assigned to Holocaust survivors.

CDA is a methodological approach that centers around discourse in social practices (Strauss and Feiz, p.473). Meaning, we use discourse and language both as users and consumers, and discourse is ultimately shaped by society. The way we structure our discourse uncovers the processes used by the speaker as it aids our understanding of the world and the events that take place. Succinctly: we as humans use discourse to comprehend what is happening around us.

This study will consider six testimonies of the 55,000 audio-visual histories that the USC Shoah foundation has recorded. Through the CDA methodology I attempt to demonstrate the ways traumatic experience is presented in discourse. The testimonies chosen for analyses will be post-war as memories can only be scrutinized through the point of articulation — that is, after the event had happened. The research questions that will direct my study are designed as such; the first two questions will help lead my study in answering the third (main) research question:

- What micro-level linguistic features are employed in discourse when articulating a traumatic experience?
- What functions do the linguistic features employed in trauma discourse serve?
- With the micro-level instances of language identified in trauma discourse, what macro-level conclusions can be derived regarding identity and other ideological processes?

2 Background

2.1 Political and Historical background of Auschwitz

At the beginning of WWII, Adolf Hitler implemented the “Final Solution”. This policy called for the extermination of all Jews within reach. This policy for the predetermined and systematic genocide was organized by Nazi leadership in January 1942 at the Wannsee Conference held near Berlin, Germany. The preliminary plans called for Jewish victims to be transported by trains to extermination camps. The largest of these extermination camps, and arguably the most infamous, was Auschwitz (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.).
Established in 1939, Auschwitz was one of Germany’s largest, most complex concentration camps and extermination sites. The camp was initially conceived as an internment camp for Polish citizens; the interned people were predominantly those affiliated with the political community. However, the camp soon developed into a network of incarceration sites interning Jewish people and other targeted groups. The reason for this was because of the camp’s location. It resided in close proximity to a network of railways, which were used for transporting the internees to Auschwitz and its subdivisions (History.com Editors, 2009).

Auschwitz had a network of forty camps and subcamps that were built and operated by Nazi Germany. The concentration camps included Auschwitz I; Auschwitz II-Birkenau; Auschwitz III-Monowitz; and several other subcamps. Birkenau was the largest of Auschwitz subdivisions, holding roughly 90,000 prisoners – it was also the predominant killing grounds of Auschwitz. Birkenau’s facilities included several gas chambers disguised as bath houses along with crematoriums where the bodies were subsequently burned.

By 1942, Jewish transports were the majority group being sent to Auschwitz. Upon arrival, the internees were examined by Nazi physicians who essentially acted as the main determinant as to whether someone would live or die in that moment. Those that were in sufficient health (which was wholly dependent on what the physicians deemed as being healthy) were employable as slaves (History.com Editors, 2009). Those that were deemed unfit to work, were immediately sent to the gas chambers where they were killed; this usually consisted of pregnant women, children, and the elderly. The detainees that were employed as slaves were subject to forced labor, where many died due to the rigorous workload and harsh living conditions.

Some of the prisoners were also subject to dangerous pseudoscientific medical experiments. SS physicians forced medical experiments on a large number of prisoners; these experiments, more often than not, resulted in the death of the patient. Those that survived the medical experiments were typically executed afterwards or left severely disfigured and/or with other permanent handicaps (“Medical Experiments”, n.d.).

In mid-January 1945, the Germans became aware of the Soviet forces approaching the Auschwitz camp. In reaction to this, the SS ordered that Auschwitz be abandoned, which included the evacuation of an estimated 60,000 prisoners that were being held at the camp. The prisoners were forced on a “death march” and were accompanied my Nazi guards, where they marched to the city of Wodzislaw, which resides in southern Poland. When the Soviet army entered Auschwitz on January 27, 1945, they liberated 7,000 prisoners. Out of the 1.3
million prisoners that were sent to Auschwitz, approximately 1.1 million men, women, and children were murdered at the camp, with 90% of them being Jewish.

Those that were fortunate to make it out of the Holocaust alive, still retain the images of the ghettos and concentration camps and are burdened with psychological trauma to this day. The degree at which the survivors could articulate their experience has contributed significantly to the academic world. In the next section, I will be discussing some of these studies that are relevant to mine.

2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

The field of “discourse analysis” is theoretically and methodologically diverse. The concept is widely used in the academic community, and several scholars have developed their own approaches regarding how it should be defined and applied. Norman Fairclough is one of most significant contributors to CDA. He expounds on the sophisticated CDA framework by analyzing discourse and its relationship with societal structures.

Fairclough’s work amalgamates linguistic and social theories by identifying that language is a part of society. His approach is characterized by a “realist social ontology”. This entails that social practices; i.e. social relations, objects, time and place, knowledge, values, etc. which, when articulated together, form social fields (Fairclough, 2001). Analyzing such elements begins at the perception of language and discourse, which subsequently derives questions related to social practice. Further, CDA recognizes that micro-level instances of language (which are inclusive to words, phrases, metaphors, etc.) when combined, uncover the ideological process of “power abuse, control, hegemony, dominance, exclusion, injustice, and inequity… [and identifies how they] are created, re-created, and perpetuated in social life—processes which are often “naturalized” and taken for granted as common-sense notions.” (Strauss and Feiz, 2014, p.473). In the latter paragraphs, I will be delineating the devices and concepts in CDA that are most relevant to this study.

Identity representation is an abstract aspect of CDA, that can be examined in terms of linguistic choice. Identity can be derived from the language selected by users – whether that be consciously selected or not – and/or based on their tones or rates of speech. This is significant because examining how the speaker chooses to interact, speak, and represent their views, can potentially reveal the speaker’s self and social belonging – or even their lack of social belonging – through register. Register is linked to the ways in which a person engages in social interaction; that could be in speech, writing or other mediums (Agha, 2004).
However, in order to derive macro-level meanings like identity representation, one must consider and combine the micro-level instances of language.

Metaphors and figurative language are common devices used in language and discourse, and when analyzed they give insight into macro-level ideologies. Fairclough asserts that metaphors are a “means of representing one aspect of experience in terms of another… and it is the relationship between alternative metaphors that is of interest [as]… different metaphors have different ideological attachments.” (Fairclough, 1989) Fairclough adds that metaphors, when used liberally, become naturalized, thus losing their ideological significance. Similarly, metaphors and other figurative language devices can be overlooked as they do not establish an overt presence as their processes are hidden through abstract articulations (Feiz and Strauss, 2014, p.423). The use of metaphor by the actor can therefore be analyzed in terms of their perceived reality. In this sense, metaphors can create realities for us.

Cohesion is another significant feature of CDA that deals with how events are introduced, developed, and maintained in discourse (Strauss and Feiz, 2014, p.236). Cohesion is expounded on in four categories: reference, ellipsis and substitution, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. I will be delineating lexical cohesion as it is most relevant to this study. Lexical cohesion is “the multiple ways of saying the same thing”. Further, the most direct instance of lexical cohesion is repetition; however, lexical cohesion can also be achieved through associative means (Halliday, 1994).

I will also take into consideration the type of sentences that are being used. That is, whether they are declaratives, imperatives, interrogatives or exclamatory sentences. And furthermore, I will be determining which speech acts those fall under: commissives, expressives, declarations, directives, or representatives. Identifying these linguistics features will help explain why some of the testimonies are able to achieve cohesion, while others are not.

### 2.3 Trauma Studies

The field of trauma studies has offered insight into the functions of linguistic features present in trauma discourse. Sigmund Freud’s theory of seduction and Jean Leplanché’s extension of the theory will be referenced in regard to its notion of trauma having two moments. This information is derived from an interview done by Cathy Caruth in Leplanché’s home in Paris; the interview has been transcribed by Caruth herself.
Freud’s seduction theory traces the adult neuroses that are linked back to early childhood molestation. This subject of analysis is used to understand how traumatic outside events are linked to the psychic life. In reference to Freud’s theory, Leplanche explains that there are at least two events that constitute a traumatic experience. Leplanche explains:

The trauma… to be psychic trauma, does not occur in just one moment. First, there is the implantation of something coming from outside. And this experience, or the memory of it, must be reinvested in a second moment, and then it becomes traumatic. It is not the first act which is traumatic, it is the internal reviviscence of this memory that becomes traumatic. (2001)

Thus, it is the second moment – the registering of the event that makes a traumatic experience.

In a similar vein, I will be integrating studies by Cathy Caruth (1995) who has provided research on the relationship between memory, language, and trauma. She delves into the phenomenon of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which she defines as “the overwhelming events of the past repeatedly possess, in intrusive images and thoughts, the one who has lived through them.” She goes on to say that the flashback can elucidate that traumatic experience, essentially reliving it:

The flashback provides a form of recall that survives at the cost of willed memory or of the very continuity of conscious thought. While the traumatized are called upon to see and to relive the insistent reality of the past, they recover a past that encounters consciousness only through the very denial of active recollection.

(1995, p.152)

Caruth suggests a more profound notion as to why trauma survivors forget their experience. She suggests that it is dangerous to integrate speech into the narration of memory, because (1) it is painful for the individual as it relives their experience and (2) the only ones able to understand the event itself is those that are survivors themselves, hence the survivors’ reluctance to translate their experience into speech.

Insights of Arnold H. Modell (2005) will be integrated in this study. Modell examines the memorial sources from which meaning is derived, claiming that “meaning is altered through defense mechanisms that disrupt the memory of the traumatic event by means of repression or the displacement of feelings.” (2005, p.560) Thus, metaphors and figurative language used in trauma discourse can be interpreted as a means to transform meaning, serving as a defense mechanism to make sense of an extreme reality like the Holocaust. As aforementioned in the section regarding metaphors and figurative language in CDA,
metaphors – or other figurative language devices – can serve as a means to create realities for us.

Furthermore, there will also be consideration in terms of the events being described in the testimonies; that is, whether these memories are emotional memories or semantic memories. Modell delineates emotional memory or “episodic memory” as ”autobiographical memory… and would correspond to what we are considering here as emotional memory. Whereas semantic memory, in contrast to emotional memory, is the memory of information, the memory of impersonal knowledge.” (2005, pg. 564-565) Depending on the memories articulated, whether that be emotional or semantic, some memories can be easier to retrieve and articulated based on their personability or impersonality.

2.4 Previous Works
In a similar vein as Modell’s study, Andreas Musolff (2012) discusses the role of metaphor and figurative language within a CDA methodology. This study expounds on the discursive significance of metaphors and delves into the historical context of metaphor and figurative speech. He exemplifies how metaphor analysis can uncover ideological processes associated with racism; this study is relevant to mine as it examines the metaphoric functions in discourse. However, my study is different as it analyzes speakers that have experienced inequity and subordination, while Musolff studies discourse of those that treated others with inequity and have denigrated others.

Michael Pickering and Emily Keightley’s (2009) study deals with the patterned discursive features found in trauma discourse. The study delves into two life-narratives of traumatic experiences in the form of interviews. This study employs discourse analysis, and recognizes the fragmentation of discourse; that is, the silences and sudden narrative shifts. Similarly, I seek to analyze the fragmentation in trauma discourse through a CDA lens in order to understand why such fragmentations occur. Although similar in that sense, my subject of analysis will be of those with a shared identity to uncover patterns specifically in discourse of Jewish Holocaust survivors. This differs to the aforementioned study, as it only considers two narratives, and the trauma they experience is also different. The first narrative is of one woman’s experience with being in a relationship with a man suffering with severe mental illness, and the second narrative is a woman accounting the death of her first-born child. The results delineate the traumatic experiences as being antithetical in terms of cohesiveness. Further, my study mainly seeks to identify the similarities in trauma discourse, rather than the differences.
Rainer Hülsee’s (1999) work focuses on identity construction of the “other” in narrative. This study will add insight on how marginalized and oppressed others maintain a collective memory and identity in the aftermath of a conflict. This study also uses the methodology of CDA to understand identity construction of minorities and how it is influenced by social structures. It recognizes the significance of narratives as mediums to articulate the truth. Hülsee looks at the discourses of the “other”, in order to identify how identities can be formed through shared experiences. I will consider this study in regard to the discursive practices that are patterned in narratives of the “other”; however, my study will add value in the sense that it is linked with linguistic features pertaining to trauma.

3. Design of Study
Faireclough’s methodological approach to CDA is an ideal interpretive method that will provide my study with an analytical framework to derive the micro-macro instances of language that create macro-level meaning. By means of discourse, we can gain an understanding of the processes in the world around us. CDA recognizes “that our social practice in general and our use of language in particular are bound up with causes and effects which we may not be at all aware of under normal conditions (Bourdieu, 1977). In this sense, I believe that applying CDA as an analytical tool for the chosen data will provide my study with a lens to uncover the semiotic relationship between the social structures of the Holocaust and the language and trauma discourse of Holocaust victims.

My research will use six testimonies conducted by the USC Shoah Foundation. The USC Shoah Foundation, established by American filmmaker Steven Spielberg in 1994, is a non-profit organization that focuses on making audio-visual recordings of people who have survived and/or witnessed genocide. Thus far, the foundation has conducted an estimated 55,000 testimonies, the vast majority pertaining to the Holocaust. However, the foundation’s Visual History Archive is continuously increasing with testimonies expounding on other genocides; those include the Armenian genocide, the Rwanda genocide, the Guatemalan genocide and the Nanjing massacre.

The Shoah foundation plays a large role in the access of my data. The testimonials are derived from the playlist titled “70 Auschwitz Testimonies”. As the data is too large for my study and given the amount of time and length of my thesis, I will be focusing on videos of Jewish Holocaust survivors. Furthermore, of those videos, I will be selecting those that delineate the arrival to Auschwitz, during the Holocaust, and the liberation of Auschwitz. As there are several videos that delineate what it was like during their stay at Auschwitz, I have
chosen two videos that address similar events: what it was like dealing with illness or disease in the camp. Further, I will select the first two videos that deal with the arrival in Auschwitz, the first two videos that address what it was like during the Holocaust (in this case what it was like dealing with illness and disease in camp), and the first two videos that deal with the liberation of Auschwitz. Thus, the data will be separated into three categories: Arrival, During, Liberation.

I will be labeling the speakers by letter to assure that there is clarity when comparing the analyses. For example, the speaker of the first testimony will be referred to as “Speaker A” and the speaker of the second testimony will be referred to as “Speaker B” and so on. Also, I will be referring to the speakers as they/them as a singular pronoun throughout the analyses. Further, I will be shortening the excerpts to the most relevant parts and will be providing those before I delve into the analyses of each testimony. The full excerpts will be in the appendix section.

Although the audio-visual testimonies automatically generate captions, they are generated by machine learning algorithms, therefore the reliability of the captions may vary. Therefore, to make sure there aren’t any errors in the transcriptions and to be as meticulous with my analysis as possible, I have done the transcriptions myself. It is also important to note that the videos selected for my research are extracts - not full testimonies - and those extracts range from 1-5 minutes each. Therefore, there are limitations on the scope of this study as it is not possible to make extensive coverage. Furthermore, in regard to the selections done for this study, it derives from one source which becomes rather exclusionary to other sources. Though, I still believe that the data selected will provide constructive findings in regard to the connection between trauma, memory, and discourse.

Another possible limitation can be that the testimonies made by the interviewees could have been articulated previously. This means that the narrative is essentially memorized, resulting in limited access and selectiveness of information, thus desensitizing the speaker to the experience.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Arrival at Auschwitz

4.1.1 Testimony of Speaker A

SPEAKER A: *You couldn’t… describe it in any way if you want to do it in a horror movie or a novel… The minute they opened the wagons, it was just total complete misery; beating and screamings beating and barking of dogs and growling of dogs and whistles of trains and*
screaming and beatings and screamings, commands given... you find yourself in this inferno in this unimaginable horror that you... would see nightmares.

I will begin by discussing the comparative devices used in the testimony and the functions they serve. Speaker A’s account of their arrival describes the camps as being incomparable to even fictitious horror films and novels. In the same vein, the speaker also describes that the camps as being like an “inferno in this unimaginable horror that you as an adult or a child would see nightmares.” This suggests a form of lexical cohesion as it is referring to the same thing through associative means. The speaker uses these descriptions of the Holocaust being incomparable to any form of representation as a means of making sense of an extreme reality. This sounds counter-intuitive, but the notion of something being impossible to articulate or reproduce in any medium in turn conveys the severity of the situation, thus making sense of it. Modell explains that “a traumatic event [can be] so intensely charged that its meaning could not be maintained in its holistic entirety. The memory of the actual event was disrupted by means of a variety of possible defenses including repression and symbolic, or metaphoric, displacement.” (2005, pg.560) This can explain why the speaker uses fictitious representations to articulate their experience, as they themselves cannot maintain the memory in its entirety.

In this part of the analysis, I will be talking about the process of cohesion. The speaker uses the expressive “it was total complete misery” to express their emotional state when they saw the camp. In the next sentence, the discourse becomes somewhat convoluted when describing the sounds that the speaker heard when they arrived at the camp. Speaker A describes the camp in terms of what they heard: “beating and screamings beating and barking of dogs and growling of dogs and whistles of trains and screaming and beatings and screamings, commands given. The discourse becomes fragmented, thus evidencing a chronologically disjointed discourse. There also is a form of lexical cohesion with “beating and screamings” as it is repeated in speaker’s discourse. This is used to emphasize the awful treatment the Holocaust victims were subject to.

Further, the fragmented and convoluted discourse mirrors the figurative comparison of the camp being like an inferno. This is an interesting comparison, as the term’s etymology links to the concept of hell, e.g. in Dante’s inferno as a despondently bleak place. This comparison perpetuates the notion of the camp being incomprehensible and impossible to recreate in fictitious mediums. This is because the term “inferno” is only known as an abstract concept.
4.1.2 Testimony of Speaker B

SPEAKER B: So, one girl was looking outside, and she said I think we are in Poland... she said. “I think we made a mistake that we are going, where they are taking us, we should have jumped somewhere and killed ourself because we are not going for life, we are going to die.”

INTERVIEWER: What did you see when you got there?

SPEAKER B: That’s a terrible picture. They were... checking men, naked men, and... hitting the men before we entered Auschwitz. And before the gate was hanging two flags. One was “Arbeit macht frei” and the other one was a Hakenkreuz. There were ten blocks in Auschwitz... and we were taken to block ten.

INTERVIEWER: Is that all women?

SPEAKER B: All women. At the other side there were all men... They were beating and shooting mens every Sunday... That is what we saw through the small things of the window.

INTERVIEWER: And when you got to block ten, what did they do to you?

SPEAKER B: First they took us to the sauna, the customer our packet passes everything away from us, cut our hair completely off from us, then they put us in a sauna in a water with a heavy smell. And after that, everyone was checked. From a doctor I guess, from a man. You know, in the private part. I don’t know why. Maybe the wanted to know if we were virgins or we wanted to do, wanted to know if we have some Jewelry hidden there. And then they gave us old army, from the Russian army crew, a pair of pants full of steel and black, and a shirt, and a little jacket, and a pair... I don’t know, I think that was the wooden shoes from Holland, wooden shoes, I think. Everything was taken away from us, our stuff.

In the first part of this analysis, I will be discussing the process of cohesion. Speaker B’s discourse generally retains a chronological structure. This is demonstrated through the speaker’s ability to recall the events and maintain them in detail. I will explain why the speaker is able to retain chronology in their discourse through Modell’s explanation of the categories of memory. Modell distinguishes two categories of memory: emotional memory and semantic memory. Despite the speaker accounting an emotional memory, I proffer that there is a spectrum in terms of how difficult or easy it is to access emotional memories. The speaker is able to retain a chronological structure of discourse as the memories being delineated are of those that are less traumatic. We must also keep in mind the subjectivity of such events to the individual and the context in which they occur.
The first event being introduced is the journey to the camp. The speaker describes what they were able to see with the limited vision they had in the vehicles transporting them. In this event, however, I would conclude that it is in the category of semantic memory; this is because the speaker receives this information from someone else that was too being transported to the camp, thus it is not a personal memory. As the information is coming from someone else, the speaker is simply relaying what someone else saw. In this sense, it is easier to retain a chronological structure of discourse because the memory is not personal. In the category of personal memory, the speaker documents what they saw when the doors of the vehicle were opened. They describe it as being “a terrible picture”. Speaker B recounts the first time they saw S.S. men and how they were checking the male prisoners and beating them. The speaker also described the procedures that the prisoners had to go through when they arrived at their block; they took us to the sauna... cut our hair completely off... after that, everyone was checked. From a doctor I guess... then they gave us old army, from the Russian army crew, a pair of pants full of steel and black, and a shirt, and a little jacket, and a pair... wooden shoes from Holland... Everything was taken away from us.” The speaker also details the camp’s structure in regard to the buildings that were there and the fences and how the females’ barracks were separated from the males’; this, like the discourse accounting the procedural process, is articulated chronologically with no disruptions. The speaker seems to be able to retrieve these memories easier. Therefore, it can be assumed these events are less traumatic, evidenced by the speaker’s discourse being chronologically sound.

In terms of linguistic choices, the speaker seems to maintain this chronology because the sentences that are used by the speaker are declarative sentences. It is simply relaying information about their experience. It is also interesting that the speaker does not seem to have any statements that express their emotional state, other than “it was a terrible picture.” In linguistics, this is referred to as “expressives”; this term is defined as the expression of the speaker’s psychological or emotional state (Strauss and Feiz, 2015, pg. 369). Therefore, the speaker’s linguistic choice of using declarative sentences that are not expressives can explain why the speaker is able to achieve chronology in their discourse.

Another memory being described that does not seem to have any disruptions in the speaker’s discourse, is of the men being shot every Saturday or Sunday. Speaking in the context of those who have experienced extreme realities like the Holocaust, it seems that abnormality (like our speaker’s memory of witnessing the weekly killings) becomes normality in a sense. The speaker’s witnessing of the men being killed weekly became a normal reality, thus desensitizing the speaker to these sorts of memories. This can also be
explained by the speaker’s use of declarative sentence: “They were beating and shooting mens every Sunday. Saturday usually most of them was Saturday or Sunday.” Further, their lack of expressives reveal the casual nature of the event that the survivor witnessed in the Holocaust. In turn, this also perpetuates the “other” identity of the speaker, as it separates them from a normal reality. A normal reality meaning, those that have not experience concentration camps would probably be traumatized and would not be able to retain a chronologically structured discourse as our speaker is able to do.

4.2 During: Camp Illness and Disease
4.2.1 Testimony of Speaker C

SPEAKER C: I developed scabies... Well, virtually everybody was covered with sores ... I also developed some sort of a mensch... it’s called parch and as a result for it, another was a lice breed for it and the puss so on my left cheek there was practically no skin I had terrible sores and on my neck there was like a coat of armor and the itching was so indescribable it was so excruciating so I couldn’t scratch because the thing the scab would fall off so I used to turn my head which also cased the sores, the scabs to fall off. Ultimately, I had typhus ... I was like a leper, people were afraid to look at me; my hair was shaved, I don’t remember when it was shaved, I don’t remember when it was shaved, nor do I want to remember. Sometimes I’m tempted to ask my sister when it was shaved. This was not the worst thing that happened to me, obviously. But for some reason I want to keep this secret for myself, sometimes it’s better not to remember everything, contrary to modern psychology, catharsis, remember... remember but for us it’s not catharsis, it’s relived anguish.

I will begin this analysis by discussing the process of cohesion in Speaker C’s testimony. In this testimony two events are being described; we have the speaker’s experience with disease at the camp and the event of the head shaving. Speaker C’s account of developing scabies and having their hair shaven utilizes a number of discursive practices in the extract revealing a fragmented recollection. The testimony is chronologically disjointed, with the speaker jumping from different events without a logical sequence. To begin, however, I will be discussing the first event and how the speaker retains some chronological sequence when articulating their experience. They begin their account by describing how they had developed scabies. The speaker goes into detail about how the barracks were infested with lice and that most of the women in their bunk had too developed the disease. Further, Speaker C goes into
meticulous detail when illustrating how the scabies looked and felt. They effectively memorize the details of the disease and the detriment it had to their face and body.

The chronological discourse takes an erratic shift when describing how the disease left the speaker looking like a leper; they attempt to delineate their physical traits during this time: “I was like a leper, people were afraid to look at me; my hair was shaved, I don’t remember when it was shaved”. The fragmentation in their discourse becomes evident when the speaker is unable to recall when their head was shaven. Speaker C also utilizes lexical cohesion when reiterating their lack of desire to remember: “I don’t remember when it was shaved, I don’t remember when it was shaved, nor do I want to remember.” The repetition of “I don’t remember” emphasizes how they do not want to remember the traumatic experience. Despite the speaker not remembering – or not wanting to remember the event - they do however acknowledge their reasoning behind not wanting to remember the event of having their head being shaven.

Speaker C explains that it is relived pain and relived anguish if they were to remember the details of when they had their head shaven. There is an evident discrepancy between the two events; the disease that is described in the extract can be illustrated in detail while the event of the head shaving is completely forgotten. Freud explains that as much as patients that suffer from traumatic neuroses are fixated with the memories of their trauma, maybe they are more focused on not thinking about it (Freud, 1920, 13). This is evidenced by the speaker’s utterance of “I don’t want to remember.”

In the interview with Caruth and Leplanche, Leplanche expounds on Freud’s seduction theory and suggests that there are two moments that make up a traumatic experience; Leplanche states that “trauma is never locatable in either scene alone… the first moment must be internalized, then afterwards relived… in order to become internal trauma (2001). This explains why Speaker C refrains – or rather has completely forgotten – when their head was shaven. The event of their head being shaven is not necessarily the traumatic first moment, it lies in the second moment: the process of reinvesting or revivifying the event. Therefore, the “relived” experience would have been the second moment which becomes traumatic; hence they choose not to “relive” it.

Another feature in Speaker C’s discourse is their use of metaphoric language to delineate how the disease made the speaker look; they are described in the testimony as looking like a leper. I think this comparison can be interpreted in a couple different ways. The most straightforward interpretation of this figurative comparison is that Speaker A is simply highlighting the severity of the disease through a metaphoric comparison. However, I think
there is a more interesting notion as to why “leper” was selected in Speaker A’s discourse. Historically, “leper” has been used to describe someone who has leprosy; however, it has also developed another meaning as being “an outcast” or “someone who is shunned by society”. In regard to social context, the Nazi’s already viewed the Jews as being “lepers” as they were targeted and shunned by society. Thus, the metaphor can also serve as an illustration of the collective identity of being the “other” and also emphasize the subordination Jews were subject to during the Holocaust. As Hülsee recognizes, “collective identities result from an ongoing process of construction and reproduction of shared understandings about a group’s self. Moreover, this strand of identity-theory acknowledges the crucial importance of the ‘other’ for constructing the identity of the ‘self’” (1999, p.2).

4.2.2 Testimony of Speaker D

SPEAKER D: Everybody has typhus, typhoid. I got sick later and my sister... and one day we couldn’t stand it anymore... we went in a line-up for the hospital and we left the work and that cousin, Malah, she came and she saw us... she said “no you can’t go, because today is a selection... you have to go to work... so she pulled us out and pushed us back... it was December, I am to the washroom... and I put cold water because I had a head typhoid... I had like a head of ice and that saved me, and I walked to work like that, it took away the fever. Imagine here if you would do that, huh?

In this testimony, I will begin by delving into the process of cohesion and then delve into the comparative device Speaker D uses. The excerpt accounts the typhoid epidemic that broke out during the holocaust, and how speaker D went about dealing with the disease in camp. In regard to the process of cohesion, Speaker D is able to maintain a chronologically structured discourse in the way they account the past. However, the chronology is disrupted by bringing the extreme reality to the present. When describing the experience with disease in camp, the speaker compares it to a normal reality to emphasize the extreme reality of the Holocaust. The speaker gives a lens into the extreme reality of the Holocaust by asking the question: “imagine here if you would do that?” The comparative approach the speaker takes does not function in the same way that metaphors and other figurative language comparisons do. It is not to make sense of an extreme reality or disassociate the speaker from the traumatic experience. In this case, it functions as a sense-making device for those who did not experience the camps. Caruth discusses that many survivors refrain from integrating their
memories into speech because the layman simply cannot understand their experience. (1995, pg. 154) Speaker D, however, attempts to make a bridge for the layman to try and understand the survivors experience.

In turn, the speaker dissociates from the normal reality by asking the rhetorical question “imagine here if you would do that?”. Speaker D makes an effort to explain the extreme reality and compare it to the “here” – that is, the normal reality. The speaker also uses the verb “imagine” because for those that have not experienced the camps can only visualize it as an abstract concept. The speaker therefore creates this divide, revealing the “other” identity that they experienced in the Holocaust and also reveals how the “other” identity is perpetuated into the present. That is, the extreme nature of the experience separates the speaker from the normal world; furthermore, those who had not experienced the camps have no means to understand the emotional trauma of those who did. This exemplifies how the social structures in the present influence the speaker’s choices when articulating an extreme reality. Speaker D has to be selective when delineating their experience to make it as graspable for the listener as possible. Thus, the comparative feature employed in speaker D’s discourse is for the listeners to make sense of an extreme reality, not for the speaker to make sense of the extreme reality they experienced.

4.3 Liberation of Auschwitz

4.3.1 Testimony of Speaker E

SPEAKER E: On the 27th of January, the Russians came in. And they liberated us... I had a particular wonderful story about a soldier picking me up, sitting me down, and rocking me in his arms, and the tears were just flowing down his face. And I can never forget that as long as I live. Just to look at him and figuring in my head “you mean there is somebody out there who cares about me?” It was the first time I had this kind of feeling. I thought only your mother or somebody, but somebody caring about me? It was overwhelming. He wanted to share his food...

This testimony was an anomaly in comparison to the others as it depicts a positive-connoted experience. The event being described is in no means normal, but the notion of showing kindness to others is in the realm of normality. The abnormality of the event lies in the context in which the act of kindness occurred. This demonstrates how social structures influence and shape discourse. Those that were victims of the Holocaust were forced to cope with the subordination inflicted on them by the Nazi regime. One can say that the Holocaust
essentially created a new type of person. The victims had to go from an extreme reality to a normal reality. To expound on this, the extreme reality in which they lived, divided them from normality; thus, in the lens of Holocaust victims, a “normal” reality is perceived as abnormal. This is identified in the speaker’s account of the soldier. The soldier is depicted as “picking [her] up, sitting [her] down, and rocking [her]in his arms. The speaker responds in disbelief to the soldier’s display of kindness and sympathy for her. They respond overwhelmed by his kindness: “you mean there is somebody out there who cares about me? I thought only your mother or somebody, but somebody caring about me?” In the concentration camps, the search for happiness and meaning was limited, but instead fraught with hardship. The speaker’s overwhelming happiness is found through the human interaction and kindness from the soldier.

The speaker compares the soldier’s act of kindness to something that only a “mother” would do for their child. It is also interesting to look at the actions that are described in the testimony; they seem to emulate how a mother would care for a child. The speaker describes the soldier “picking [her] up… and rocking [her] in his arms” In this sense, we can gain an understanding as to why the speaker was overwhelmed by this act of kindness. That is, the degree of kindness the soldier had on the speaker was comparable to a mother-figure taking care of their child.

4.3.2 Testimony of Speaker F

SPEAKER F: I hid when the bombs came... A few days later we were assembled together with the cattle and the horses... January 1945 - - marched out of the camp. We were marched out of the camp... you looked around, you would think the whole world is marching. We marched out with the cattle. Our guards rode the horses. We were marching. And we marched, and we marched, and we marched – and we marched for 100 miles. We marched from Auschwitz to the city of Breslau... our group of the five boys, we held onto each other and we helped each other, and we marched all the way.

In this testimony, I will begin by examining the comparative features of speaker F’s discourse. When the speaker begins accounting the liberation of Auschwitz and the beginning of the marching sequence, the speaker makes sure to include the information that they were “assembled with the cattle and the horses”. This side by side illustration of the Jews and the animals – “cattle and... horses” - can be interpreted in the same vein as the figurative comparisons made in the previous excerpts. That is, although this is not a figurative
comparison, it serves a similar function. The image of the Jews being next to the animals is to demonstrate the “other” identity of Jews in the Holocaust, essentially equating the prisoners to the cattle as they are grouped together. This is in the same vein as Musolff’s study as we can examine this comparative device like that of metaphors and how they reveal ideological processes – in this case being the subordination of the prisoners. The effect of structuring the discourse like this is to show how the prisoners were dehumanized during the Holocaust. Later in the narrative, he mentions the cattle again by stating that they “marched with the cattle”, which reveals how the Jews and the other prisoners were subject to inhumane conditions. It also shapes the collective identity of being the “other” in society during the time.

The speaker also employs lexical cohesion with the repetition of “we marched” to emphasize how long the travel from Auschwitz to Breslau was. In the excerpt above, Speaker F also provides us with the hyperbolic statement “you would think the whole world is marching.” The effect of this is to depict the masses of people who had also trudged on in this march.

5. Concluding Remarks

In this section, I will be discussing the linguistic features that are employed in trauma discourse, what functions they serve, and how they combine to produce the “other” identity associated with Holocaust survivors. I will begin by delving into the process of cohesion and what it can reveal in trauma discourse. As evidenced in Speaker B’s testimony, her account of arriving at Auschwitz retains a chronologically sound structure. Similarly, Speaker C’s testimony also retains some chronology in her discourse; however, the discourse takes a sudden shift when they mention not being able to recall when her head was shaven. I relate this to Modell’s study “Emotional memory, Metaphor, and Meaning” to understand why some articulated memories can retain a chronological structure, while others are fragmented and disjointed. To reiterate, Modell states that there are emotional memories and semantic memories; emotional memories being personal, while semantic memories are based on information, knowledge, and are impersonal. Furthermore, some emotional memories can be more retrievable than others as exemplified in Speaker B’s and Speaker C’s testimonies. This is also similar to Pickering and Keightly’s findings. That is, the individual that was able to retain chronology is their discourse found their experience to be less traumatic, while the individual with a chronologically disjointed discourse was still coping with the trauma.
In Speaker B’s testimony, they are able to retain cohesiveness in her discourse as the events being described are less traumatic and therefore easier to retrieve. Also examined in Speaker B’s discourse is the relaying of the information they received from one of the other prisoners. This, however, would fit in the category of semantic memory as the information is received by someone else; it is not a personal memory, thus making it easier for the speaker to articulate her experience. In the beginning of Speaker C’s testimony, the discourse is chronological. The memory being described is how they developed scabies, in which they are able to go into detail. Speaker C’s account maintains chronological discourse when they are describing the disease and its effects on their body. Despite this being an emotional memory, like in Speaker B’s, one can say that this is a less traumatic memory for Speaker C based on their ability to maintain cohesiveness in their discourse. In contrast, fragmentation in Speaker C’s discourse occurs when they cannot recall when their head was shaven. The discourse shifts tense from past to present; the relaying of information from the past shifts when they explain that they cannot remember (presently) when their head was shaven - nor wants to remember – demonstrates a fragmented discourse. Furthermore, this fragmentation in the speaker’s discourse reveals the severity of the traumatic event, hence her inability to remember it. In a similar vein, speaker A’s discourse become fragmented and convoluted when describing what the camp looked like. The expressive utterance evoked her emotional state as being horrified by the environment in the camp being “total complete misery.” By looking at traumatic discourse and determining whether the discourse is chronologically sound or chronologically disjointed, it can provide an insight into how traumatic the memory is to the individual.

Comparative devices are another patterned linguistic feature found in Holocaust testimonies. Many of the comparative devices used in trauma discourse are implemented as a means to illustrate the “other” identity the Jews were associated with in the Holocaust. I will begin with Speaker C’s and Speaker F’s testimonies as they have similarities in that they compare the Jews to subordinate entities. In Speaker C’s account, they refer to themselves as being viewed as a leper to illustrate the severity of the disease they developed in camp. In reference to the social structures at the time, the comparison of Speaker C as being a leper, reflects how the Jews were perceived as the “other” by German society. In Speaker F’s testimony, they describe the march and how the prisoners were grouped together with the cattle. Although this is not an overt comparative device, it provides comparison in regard to the side by side illustration of the Jews grouped together with the cattle. The effect of this equates the Jews to the cattle, thus evidencing the “other” identity of the Jews in the
Holocaust. Interestingly enough, this “other” identity is still associated with victims of the Holocaust in present day.

Due to the extreme reality that the Jews experienced in the Holocaust, one could say that their experience separated them from a normal reality and perpetuated their “other” identity. We can see this evidenced in the comparative device used by Speaker D, in which they attempt to provide a lens into the Holocaust for those that live in a normal reality or the “here” as they state. Due to the lack of medical resources at the camp, Speaker D accounts that she had to go to the washroom and put water on her head. She recalls it being so cold, that the ice on her head had frozen, creating a “head of ice”. She then says: “imagine here if you would do that, huh?” This change of tense separates the speaker from a normal reality, thus perpetuating the “other” identity to the present. In contrast to Speaker D, Speaker A states that even fictitious representations, like horror films and novels, are unable to illustrate the extreme reality of the Holocaust. This comparison of the Holocaust being incomparable to fictitious representations can be interpreted as the speaker unconsciously “othering” themselves; that is, because they know that those that have not experienced the extreme nature of the concentration camps, will never understand their experience.

Speaker B’s ability to retain a chronological discourse perpetuates their “other” identity when describing the weekly killing of men. As aforementioned, the degree of trauma can be linked to how cohesive or incohesive discourse is. In Speaker B’s testimony, she seems desensitized when articulating that the men were killed weekly, which is revealed by their cohesive discourse. In this sense, it reveals their “other” identity as those in a normal reality would not be able to retain this sort of cohesion if they witnessed someone – or several people - being killed. The extreme nature of the Holocaust was filled with pain, which in turn made it difficult for those to find happiness and meaning in their lives. In Speaker E’s testimony, they are overwhelmed by a soldier’s simple act of kindness. I would say that this is in a similar vein as Speaker B’s desensitized experience. That is, those that live in a normal reality would probably not react as Speaker E did. In this sense, the speaker carries the “other” identity into the present day.

By applying a CDA methodology and identifying and combining the micro-level instances of language, one can uncover macro-level meanings of identity representation. Analyzing cohesion in trauma discourse can reveal the degree of trauma; that is, how easy it is for the speaker to retrieve an emotional memory. Furthermore, comparative devices used in the speakers’ discourse serve multiple functions but seem to produce the same macro-level meaning in terms of the identity construction; it forms the “other” identity both in the
Holocaust and in the present. Thus, analyzing the linguistic elements found in trauma language, we gain a deeper understanding as to why certain discursive processes are manifested.

While this paper can hopefully ignite a discussion or contribute to a broader scope of research, there still remains to be future research done to understand trauma language of those that have experienced extreme realities. The challenge with analyzing language is that it is subjective, ongoing, and language and culture is ever-changing. Research must be done from all angles. Attention needs to be refocused on those that have experienced extreme realities to understand more complex trauma. And as discourse analysis remains subjective, multiple researchers should investigate the same testimonies in order to make more accurate conclusions. Further, larger sample sizes should be taken in order to make more generalized conclusions.
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Appendix I

SPEAKER A: You couldn’t, uh, describe it in any way if you want to do it in a horror movie or a novel or whatever. The minute they opened the wagons, it was just total complete misery; beating and screamings beating and barking of dogs and growling of dogs and whistles of trains and screaming and beatings and screamings, commands given. You open the doors and you find yourself in this inferno in this unimaginable horror that you as an adult or a child would see nightmares and it was just coming through and we were just holding onto each other and in minutes my mother, my sister were dragged to one side and I was dragged with my dad, we were told to go to another side, and never had a chance to say goodbye to my mother; never had a chance to say goodbye to my sister.
Appendix II

INTERVIEWER: You were describing the train trip to Auschwitz; you had no idea where you were going?
SPEAKER B: No idea, you were looking at always, there a little bit like there was no windows, just like, a little opening to coming I guess yeah. So, one girl was looking outside, and she said I think we are in Poland. But she wasn’t sure, but what she said. Tell them she was the oldest one. “I think we made a mistake that we are going, where they are taking us, we should have jumped somewhere and killed ourself because we are not going for life, we are going to die. And she died very soon after that in Auschwitz already.

INTERVIEWER: What time of day did you get to Auschwitz? Was it morning, was it evening? What time of day was it?
SPEAKER B: Daytime. Maybe wasn’t the morning. Daytime we came to Auschwitz, not Birkenau. We came in daytime and we were carrying cover, you noticed everybody is passing suitcase under shoulders and they took us there to the sauna to cover everything from us, what we had.

INTERVIEWER: What did you see when you got there?
SPEAKER B: What did I see? That’s a terrible picture. We didn’t, I never saw S.S. men before, I saw a German soldier in a uniform, but an S.S. I never saw before. They were, they were checking men, naked men, and they were hitting the men before we entered Auschwitz. And before the gate was hanging two flags. One was “Arbeit macht frei” and the other one was a Hakenkreuz. And this was on both sides on the gate before we entered to the block. There were ten blocks in Auschwitz. Ten regular blocks like army blocks, and we were taken to block ten.

INTERVIEWER: Is that all women?
SPEAKER B: All women. At the other side there were all men. There were another ten blocks, but it was a huge... now I forget how you call it... that was already completely...

INTERVIEWER: A fence?
SPEAKER B: Big, high fence. Very tall fence. But we usually between the gate we were looking what was going on. They were beating and shooting mens every Sunday. Saturday usually most of them was Saturday or Sunday. That is what we saw through the small things of the window.

INTERVIEWER: And when you got to block ten, what did they do to you?
SPEAKER B: First they took us to the sauna, the customer our packet passes everything away from us, cut our hair completely off from us, then they put us in a sauna in a water with a heavy smell. And after that, everyone was checked. From a doctor I guess, from a man. You know, in the private part. I don’t know why. Maybe the wanted to know if we were virgins or we wanted to do, wanted to know if we have some Jewelry hidden there. And then they gave us old army, from the Russian army crew, a pair of pants full of steel and black, and a shirt, and a little jacket, and a pair ... I don’t know, I think that was the wooden shoes from Holland, wooden shoes, I think. Everything was taken away from us, our stuff.

INTERVIEWER: You have a number on your arm?

SPEAKER B: Yes?

INTERVIEWER: What is the number?

SPEAKER B: 1019.

INTERVIEWER: Would you like to show it to me please? Yes, that’s fine.

SPEAKER B: I was the 19th. It started from a thousand, and I was like it there when they started asking, cause well, you had to say ”gänsemarsch” you know what mean geschichte mash: one after the other one. That was called gänsemarsch. And they were asking everybody’s name, name yes, what’s your name. So, in Slovak we say Margita Friedmanova. But in German you say Friedman Margaret. And the first eighteen girls were all slapped. Because they didn’t correct him. They kept repeating, “what your name?”. When they came to me, I spoke German, so I knew what they meant. I said “Friedman, Margaret”, so I spared my first slap. That was the first day when I came to Auschwitz.
Appendix III

SPEAKER C: Even at this point, shortly after this point, after it was part of this point because it was a gradual thing that I am going to describe in a minute. Because of the lice, they crawled on the walls, literally. Actually, in my barrack was already covered in lice. I developed scabies; it’s a disease that forms terrible sores between the fingers, and then I was covered with all sorts of sores. Well, virtually everybody was covered with sores especially the people from my bunk the women from my bunk, men were separated, they were in another place. I also developed some sort of a mensch, there’s a word for it, it’s called parch and as a result for it, another was a lice breed for it and the puss so on my left cheek there was practically no skin I had terrible terrible sores and on my neck there was like a coat of armor and the itching was so indescribable it was so excruciating so I couldn’t scratch because the thing the scab would fall off so I used to turn my head which also cased the sores, the scabs to fall off. Ultimately, I had typhus, because I had one of these when I was a child, but it wasn’t a result of filth, but rather there was an epidemic, I was five… four or five years old before the war. So, I was put in a hospital, now let me describe the hospital. It was a barrack, it was in ... I was like a leper, people were afraid to look at me; my hair was shaved, I don’t remember when it was shaved, I don’t remember when it was shaved, nor do I want to remember. Sometimes I’m tempted to ask my sister when it was shaved. This was not the worst thing that happened to me, obviously. But for some reason I want to keep this secret for myself, sometimes it’s better not to remember everything, contrary to modern psychology, catharsis, remember... remember but for us it’s not catharsis, it’s relived anguish.
Appendix IV

SPEAKER D: Everybody has typhus, typhoid. The first four they took to the hospital and I got sick later and my sister, we got sick later, and one day we couldn’t stand it anymore. And we went in a line-up for the hospital and we left the work and that cousin, Malah, she came and she saw us and she said “where are you going” and we said “we can’t stand it anymore” she said “no you can’t go, because today is a selection and I don’t know how I’m going to save the four, never mind six, I won’t be able to save, you have to go to work. And that jappas important others were already in our place but she has, you know, she was stronger than I am, so she pulled us out and pushed us back. So I am, it was December, I am to the washroom, we couldn’t go all the time to the washroom, and I put cold water because I had a head typhoid. You know on head, and I had like a head of ice and that saved me, and I walked to work like that, it took away the fever. Imagine here if you would do that, huh? And it was terrible cold it was 20 or 25 unders below zero and I walked to work and at work my friend hid me, you know, they put shoes on top of me and I slept all day but we had to walk five miles to work and it was just, no medicine no nothing and I got over that. But she saved my life then.
Appendix V

SPEAKER E: On the 27th of January, the Russians came in. And they liberated us. A lot of people have bad memories from that, but I have good ones. I’m very grateful. As I was relating it to Petrenko when he came to visit Los Angeles, that I had a particular wonderful story about a soldier picking me up, sitting me down, and rocking me in his arms, and the tears were just flowing down his face. And I can never forget that as long as I live. Just to look at him and figuring in my head “you mean there is somebody out there who cares about me?” It was the first time I had this kind of feeling. I thought only your mother or somebody, but somebody caring about me? It was overwhelming. He wanted to share his food and he had slonina, which is like slab bacon, and I showed him my stash of bread and I said “no, that’s all I want is the bread. Look how much I have.” But I did take a little piece of his black bread. He had that Russian black bread, but they didn’t have very much. The soldiers didn’t look like the Germans all dressed up. They looked kind of tattered and worn and beaten up. They did not look the same like the Germans, with the clanking of their boots. They hardly at anything like that. And this is my recollection of the Russian liberation.
Appendix VI

SPEAKER F: I hid when the bombs came. When the airplanes came, and I hear a bomb drop. And I got myself, my head up and I see they leveled the SS barrack. Right next to our barrack. Theirs was outside with wires. Ours was inside. But the SS men were in the bunkers. There was no one in the barrack there. A few days later we were assembled together with the cattle and the horses, allowed to take a blanket, January 1945 - - marched out of the camp. We were marched out of the camp, where we hit the main road, you looked around, you would think the whole world is marching. We marched out with the cattle. Our guards rode the horses. We were marching. And we marched, and we marched, and we marched – and we marched for 100 miles. We marched from Auschwitz to the city of Breslau, which was in Silesia. And so many people died on that march, that maybe you couldn’t march maybe for 100 meters, not to see somebody dead on either side of the road. The guards, either they took a disliking to you or you got slow or you just plainly gave up. So, they shot you. And there were people on both sides of the road. We, our group of the five boys, we held onto each other and we helped each other, and we marched all the way. One thing I can’t understand until now, I laugh about it, it’s not funny thing, actually. We marched; the snows were heavy. Sometimes we stopped and night, and they made us go and say whoever could go first into the barn – they let the horses get in there first – and whoever could sneak in there, snuck in there… but the horses used to walk on you. Everything was so crowded. A woman ran away. Left the column. And she must have run maybe 100 – 150 yards and she couldn’t run no more. The snow was up to her chest. And there she was. Stuck. We were marching, people, prisoners were being shot on both sides. Here the woman is yelling in agony. She cannot go. “Somebody shoot me.” she says. She begged the guards to shoot her. And nobody shot her. They left her suffer just like this. I could still hear her when we marched by. “Please shoot me”. And this is something that struck me, and I can’t figure this out still to this today.

INTERVIEWER: Maybe the insanity of the whole thing.
SPEAKER F: Some things you just couldn’t figure out.