LETTERS TO *LANGUAGE*

Language accepts letters from readers that briefly and succinctly respond to or comment upon either material published previously in the journal or issues deemed of importance to the field. The editor reserves the right to edit letters as needed. Brief replies from relevant parties are included as warranted.

A remembrance of darker days

July 22, 2005

To the Editor:

The following is a late comment on your editorial in *Language* 81.1 ('Thoughts on transitions . . .' pp. 7–9, March 2005). I am quite happy to see that you have put historical 'transitions' in our discipline into focus, 'transitions' that are always personal histories as well. It is quite unfortunate that the international linguistic community is so restricted by English as the dominant publishing language, despite renewed interest in the plurality of languages.

The generation of Henry Kahane was different; otherwise he could not have made his way into the United States. On this side of the Atlantic we are currently doing some work on these connections. I apologize for mentioning something I myself am working on, but I think it is relevant and potentially of interest: a catalogue of persecuted and exiled German linguists during the period 1933–1945, entitled *Verfolgung und Auswanderung deutschsprachiger Sprachforscher 1933–1945*, vol. 1, A–F, vol. 2, G–Q, and published by Secolo Verlag, Osnabrück, vol. 1 in 1996 and vol. 2 in 2004; the first volume was reviewed by Ernst Pulgram in *Language* 74.2.365–66, 1998.

Kahane was, together with his wife Renée, one of these 'displaced persons', as is mentioned by Braj Kachru in his obituary on Kahane (*Language* 81.1.237–44). Kachru, however, was apparently not familiar with the material that has been published on this subject (and especially on Henry Kahane himself) in Europe. Let's hope that the consciousness of these transitions will not be lost with the death of the members of Henry's generation.

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Editor's reply: Inevitably, as years pass, older generations pass too, and it is all too easy to forget the details and even the broad strokes of the realities of life for those individuals and groups. It is always useful to be reminded (indeed, this is one of the functions I see for *Language*'s obituaries).

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