Voice and its Relationship to Representation in Story

Don Duncan

Student number: 100342029/1

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy by Publication (PhD)

University of East Anglia
School of Art, Media and American Studies

June 2022

Supervisor: Prof. Keith M. Johnston

ABSTRACT

This PhD by Publication explores voice and its relationship to representation in story. Specifically, it explores story in the context of narrative media. As a source of primary research, this thesis draws on a portfolio of practice-based outputs which I have produced over the past ten years, and which includes: journalistic radio packages, a journalistic video package, a photo essay, a video documentary, a factual animation, a fictional short film, and an experimental hybrid work.

The thesis component of the PhD considers and analyses the role of voice in my work and in narrative media outputs generally. It analyses the unique narrative capacities of both verbal and non-verbal voice within the context of narrative media outputs and explores the methods I used to realise these capacities within my own practice work, both in its fiction and non-fiction manifestations.

This thesis also asks whether (and to what degree) criticality and power are consequences of the uses of voice in narrative media outputs. A particular focus is placed on the facilitation of audience criticality through the use of vocal layering techniques. The consequences for power resulting from the use of voice are considered in two ways: firstly, power dynamics between producers and participants involved in the production of narrative media outputs, and secondly, dynamics between people/'characters' contained *within* narrative media outputs.

My original contributions to knowledge are i) new ideas and applications of verbal and non-verbal voice in narrative media production; and ii) a revision of existing ideas in documentary theory concerning voice, particularly in relation to how combining and layering voice affects representation and power.

***

Access Condition and Agreement

LIST OF CONTENTS

***

<div align="center">**LIST OF PORTFOLIO ELEMENTS**</div>

All work below was produced entirely by me except the first three projects listed (*Gail*, *A Sign*, 'Democracy Derailed'), which I was creative lead on but which involved certain aspects and degrees of collaboration.

It is recommended that the contents of this portfolio be viewed/listened to before reading the accompanying thesis. The portfolio contents are listed below in order of media format (video, audio, photo, hybrid) but as the thesis covers the evolution of my practice over time, it would be beneficial to peruse these portfolio pieces chronologically, starting from the earliest piece ('Libya Curriculum Reform', Dec 12th 2011) and ending with the latest piece of work (*Gail*, Sept 14th 2020).

<u>**VIDEO**</u>
Gail
Gail
Short factual animation
QFT (Queen's Film Theatre), Sept 14 – 20th 2020
My roles: Producer, Sound Engineer, Director
Co-directed with Linda Ervine
Total running time: 1:41

A Sign
Un Signe, Un Geste (A Sign)
Short film (fiction)
RTÉ, Sept 5th 2016
My roles: Director and Writer
Co-written with Solenn Le Priol
Total running time: 17:52

'Democracy Derailed'
'Democracy Derailed - Egypt's Unravelled Revolution'
Documentary
The Wall Street Journal (WSJ.com), February 19th 2012
My roles: Producer, Videographer, Editor and Writer
Co-written with Charles Levinson
Total running time: 21:15

'Libya Curriculum Reform'
Purging Libya's Schools of Gaddafi's Propaganda
Video journalistic package
TIME magazine (Time.com), Dec 12th 2011
Total running time: 4:08

AUDIO
Irish Language Renaissance NI
Despite being at the centre of Northern Ireland's political crisis; on the ground, the Irish language is flourishing
Radio journalistic package
CBC, Dec 2nd 2017
Total running time: 3:58

Rohingya
Rohingyas in southern Bangladesh see an opportunity in crisis
Radio journalistic report
RTÉ, Nov 19th 2017
Total running time: 4:34

Tunisian Women Politicians
Tunisian women learning to be more effective politicians
Radio journalistic package
CBC, Oct 22nd 2016
Total running time: 3:55

PHOTO
Voluntary Exile
Voluntary Exile
Phototrophic exhibition
Ashkal Alwan gallery (Beirut), May 18th 2012
14 images

PERFORMANCE/HYBRID
All That Is Solid *
All That Is Solid Melts Into Air
Presented here as a video file; audio with intermittent subtitles
Hybrid documentary performance: spoken word/physical theatre/pre-produced sound
HearSay Festival, Limerick (April 2019)
Liú Lúnasa Festival, Belfast (August 2019)
Total running time: 1:10:08

* Please note that this output occurred as a live performance. What is presented in this portfolio is an audio recording of the entire performance. It is presented as a video file to allow for subtitles during the occasional sections where languages other than English are spoken. Apart from subtitles, there is no imagery in the video track, just audio. Some photographs of the performance appear within the thesis text. All other components of the portfolio listed above are outputs in their full, intended, final formats.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

LIST OF FIGURES

***

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Since my undergraduate days, when I commenced working in print journalism, and later as a broadcast freelance foreign correspondent in the Middle East, I developed a profound faith in journalism as the most reliable way we have to relate experience and approach truth. My conviction was deeply rooted, tied to journalism's fundamental importance to democracy, social evolution and positive change. It was 2012. I had been covering the huge upheavals and violence of the 'Arab Spring' in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya for a year and I moved through the world with an unflappable vocational purpose, one I believed I would possess for the rest of my life. The impetus for this thesis comes from a crisis in that faith.

Syria, that country which many Middle East experts termed the 'kingdom of silence' (Pearlman 2016, 26; Starr 2012, 5; Vignal 2016) had joined the fray and done what no one expected. It spoke up, through revolutionary protests, against the Al-Assad regime. Once reporting trips into Syria became impossible for foreign reporters due to the security risk, I watched from my base in neighbouring Lebanon, as the Syrian uprising failed to follow the despot-toppling pattern of the other Arab revolutions and sank into vicious war. What followed, in the months and years after, was a catastrophic, cataclysmic loss of order, agency and power for civilians living in Syria. By early 2012, tens of thousands of them had begun arriving as refugees in Beirut bringing horrors and trauma with them. It was written on their faces and it was saved as videos on their mobile phones, like the horrifying video of a decapitation in Syria which my friend Ahmad showed me on his phone one day in his tailoring shop in Beirut. He had been swiping through a series of cute photos of his kids who were still back home in Hama, when he came to the decapitation video and nonchalantly

played for it me. I could not quite place my shock: was it due to the graphic content of the video or to how banal this kind of violence had become for this man? I struggled to find ways to render the experiences and emotions I was directly witnessing or being told about by Syrians arriving in Beirut. I applied the journalistic tools that had not failed me before – soundbites; brevity; the need for a larger relevance or 'news peg'; the framing of experience by the reporter's voiceover, etc. – and I found them to be lacking. The stories I was producing failed remarkably to relate the degree and quality of the horror and powerlessness in the reality they were purporting to represent. As a storyteller, it felt like a loss of tongue, a loss of voice, a loss of power.

This clear realisation – that my journalism tools were failing me – crystallised a larger, vaguer, creeping uncertainty that had been festering within my work for about a year. I would feel tinges of discomfort over the significant power disparities between producer and interviewee on which journalism depends. However, I was so deeply engaged with, enmeshed in, and dependent on the culture of newsgathering then that I would simply bat away these moments of conscience and get on with the work. Ultimately, this professional 'crisis in faith' led me to reach out, desperately flailing and grabbing at other tools that might work better. I began experimenting with narrative approaches besides straight journalistic reporting and I noticed that some of them brought power and agency in ways that conventional journalism no longer seemed to for me. This initial experimentation evolved into a kind of quest to expand my practice beyond broadcast journalism, seeking out other, effective ways of capturing and representing experience. Through this quest, my work progressively unmoored itself from the dispassionate, 'objective' journalistic position to further embrace subjectivities and adopt shades of ethnography and autobiography. In

doing so, the narrative stance of my work shifted from a third person 'dispassionate' reporter position to a third person 'engaged' writer-director position to – most recently – a first person writer, actor and director position.

At the core of the professional crisis that sparked this quest – and at the core of the questions driving this thesis – lies a loss of voice and power and the efforts made to regain them. In this thesis, I will critically reflect on those efforts and on the role of voice in a range of practical outputs and narrative experiments that I have produced over the past ten years. I aim to consider 'voice' in broad intellectual and practical contexts, to include voice that is non-verbal as well as verbal. The core research questions driving this thesis are the following:

RQ1: What unique narrative capacities of verbal voice and non-verbal voice can be identified through my fiction and non-fiction media practice?

RQ2: How can media practice encourage audience criticality through the layering of verbal and non-verbal voices?

RQ3: How can media practice utilise verbal and non-verbal voice to create alternative power relationships across both factual and fictional media work?

In pursuing these questions, this thesis will draw on primary research in the form of the media outputs which are included in the accompanying portfolio of works. It is recommended that the contents of this portfolio be viewed/listened to in chronological order (starting from the earliest piece, 'Libya Curriculum Reform' from 2011 and ending with the latest piece of work, *Gail*, from 2020) and before reading the accompanying thesis.

The portfolio contents of journalistic radio packages, a journalistic video package, a photo essay, a video documentary, a factual animation, a fictional short film, and an experimental hybrid work. In addition to this primary research, I will draw on complementary research from relevant fields of academic study. The first chapter of this thesis will survey the key debates and theories in those areas so as to inform the critical analysis work undertaken across Chapter 2, which will assess the various methods I developed in my practice research that relate to the research questions (and what I learned from employing those methods); and Chapter 3, which will reflect on the power dimensions and consequences that emerged from the application of those methods in my practice work.

In this thesis, I will be examining my practice-based explorations of narrative techniques and the vocal potency they can bring to both the people within narrative outputs and to the people producing those outputs. Ultimately, this will lead to an examination and consideration of the power stakes, shifts, transfers and accruals that voice and vocal activation occasions throughout my presented work.

***

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

The diverse, interdisciplinary nature of this PhD by Publication has enabled me to revisit and recontextualise a wide array or formats and genres of published outputs I produced prior to commencing this exegesis. This rich array also brings challenges, especially when it comes to choosing and applying theoretical and methodological frameworks across this diversity of output. At this juncture, therefore, it is necessary that I explain the choice of specific fields of study I engage with in this thesis which ultimately define its scope.

Because the evolution in my practice – as covered by the portfolio of works and in this thesis – begins squarely in journalism and then progressively decouples from that discipline to embrace production methodologies informed by other areas of academic research, this literature review will draw on four main areas of scholarship: journalism studies; documentary studies; sound studies; and memory studies. My engagement with journalism studies here is primarily to explore debates around notions of objectivity and stereotype so as to ultimately show the motivations and reasons behind the shift in my practice away from that discipline. Together with these elements of journalism theory, I have chosen to limit the rest of the scope of this literature review to documentary studies; sound studies; and memory studies as these three areas of scholarship enable me to analyse my practice outputs and ultimately address my stated research questions. As will be evidenced in this literature review, scholarship from the area of sound studies is extremely helpful for various considerations of verbal and non-verbal voice in the diverse array of outputs I have included in my portfolio. Memory studies is essential to the analysis and research I do on generating vocal criticality and on resurrecting voice. As Nash (2011) and Rabinowitz (1994) both argue,

documentary has a relationship to both journalism and art. This broader reach means that the area of documentary studies provides an excellent framework for me to explore my evolution of practice that began squarely in journalism and migrated into more artistic, less journalistically regulated fields.

In all of the above scholarly fields, scholarship pertaining to the broad notion of voice will be elicited in this chapter, firstly to explore verbal, enunciated voice; then voice in cases of silence and other non-verbal communicative strategies; and finally, the positioning and expression of voice.

Discussions around verbal voice as it plays out in media work will centre around theoretical frameworks established by Bill Nichols and contested or amended by the likes of Stella Bruzzi (2006), Broderick Fox (2018), Kate Nash (2010, 2011, 2014, 2022), Carl Plantinga (1997), Michael Renov (1993), and Brian Winston (2017). These discussions will also engage with seminal theory concerning voice from Nick Couldry (2005, 2009, 2010). Much of the focus will be on the various shifts in the power of voice that occurred in media practice as greater inclusion of the synched voices of social actors occurred, starting from the 1960s (Nichols 2017). Considerations of non-verbal voice will rely significantly on theoretical debates in sound studies around the vocal capacities of silence and ambient sound. Finally, these debates and ideas surrounding voice in its verbal and non-verbal forms will lead to a consideration of mobilised voice: the *expression* of voice and the criticality that that expression can facilitate in media work.

1.1 (Some) limitations in journalism

While journalism remains an important element of my practice, it has ceased to occupy the privileged, dominant position in my storytelling that it once did, prior to 2012. I continue to recognise the crucial importance that journalism plays in democracy and I still believe in and use many journalistic techniques in my storytelling practice as it continues to evolve, but for the purposes of this PhD, it is important to focus on – and critically analyse – the aspects of journalism I began to find problematic in 2012.

Walter Lippmann argued that public opinion is formed through a 'triangular relationship' between an event, man's representation of that event, and man's understanding of that event (1991, 17). Of most concern to me here is the second of these components – man's representation of events – and more specifically, the journalistic conventions and practices involved in that construction which began to become increasingly untenable to me in and around 2012. In particular, I will consider language use; the deployment of stereotypes; and the illusion of objectivity as enshrined in journalism practice.

There are several anxieties underpinning and infusing journalism practice which inform and shape its conventions (Anderson 2020; Lippmann 2008; Schudson 2008). These anxieties are criss-crossed with economic and political concerns. Journalism outlets are under economic pressure to deliver news ahead of the competition and in a manner that engages and maintains the public interest (Schudson 2008). They are also under ideological and hegemonic pressures, which similarly inform the journalistic conventions they work by (Anderson, Lippmann, Maris, and Schudson). The economy of language – 'making a small vocabulary express a complicated world' (Lippmann 1991, 30) – is one of the hallmarks of

journalism which arises from the abovementioned complex of pressures and which can present problems to reporters wishing to explore complex nuance. Schudson goes further, arguing that the professionalisation of journalism that Lippmann argued for in the 1910s led to the emergence of a 'journalistic discourse' which enabled 'the news to subsume various voices under a universal, standard voice' (2013, 162).

This standardisation of voice is part of a larger process of systematisation in news making that became further consolidated with the professionalisation of the trade in the early to mid-1900s (Schudson 2012), leading to a situation in which 'social truth' is determined via a series of 'procedural mechanisms' (Anderson 2019, 8). These procedural mechanisms rely on the use of a wide range of stereotypes, 'a treasurehouse of tropes, narrative forms, resonant mythic forms and frames of their culture' (Schudson 2008, 89), as a way to produce news in a fast and systemised manner. Such procedural mechanisms and their resultant normalisation of stereotypes throw up specific concerns among theorists regarding journalism and its role in protecting the status quo and promoting dominant or hegemonic ideologies. New, novel and unique situations or ways of knowing are assimilated by journalism conventions, argues Schudson, 'to the familiar old ways of understanding the world' (2008, 89). Anderson goes further to argue that journalism is 'at least partially subservient to the larger values of society, which means that they are unavoidably and structurally racist' (2020, 94). This indictment can, of course, be extended to other minorities or marginal groups which are not served by , or included in, the status quo.

Journalistic objectivity – or the 'premise of objectivity' as Schudson calls it (2012, 191) – is a core, prized aspiration in journalism practice that emerged from a need to counter sophistry

and propaganda in the profession in the early 20th century (Lippmann 1991) but which

theorists have significantly problematised, arguing that it is delusional and a mask that

obscures the deeper ideological, hegemonic and/or imperialist biases and impulses that

circulate in and permeate journalistic discourse (Anderson 2020; Maras 2013; Schudson

2012). Maras sees journalistic objectivity – or 'pseudo-objectivity' as Doug McGill (2004)

calls it – as a 'culturally and textually negotiated performance' (2013, 226) which at once

serves to defend the press from criticism relating to all kinds of bias (2013, 205) and obscure

those same biases. At worst, the performance of journalistic objectivity actively serves,

'whether willingly or not, the interests of agents of an established order' and reinforces 'a

consensus which mainly protects class and power' (Dennis McQuail qtd. in Maris 2013, 59).

In this sense, despite the positive consequences of conveying objectivity (and its associated

values of fairness, integrity, transparency, apoliticality, etc.), objectivity – as codified and

aspired to by mainstream journalism – has become an obstacle to those journalists seeking

to represent the nuance and complexity of the modern world and ultimately 'play a more

responsible role in public life' (Maras 2013, 58). This, of course, has consequences for voice;

selection of voice; representations of voice; and framing of voice. Having considered some

pertinent limitations of journalism that affected my practice and ultimately helped trigger

its evolution, this literature review will now expand beyond journalism studies to involve a

wider set of frameworks through which voice can be considered in media practice.

1.2 Voice in media outputs

1.2.a Verbal(ised) voice

When discussing voice in the context of media output, it is helpful to distinguish between

voice one can hear (what Bruzzi, drawing on Nichols, calls 'physical voice') and the larger,

'authorial' voice that emanates more generally from a piece of work (Bruzzi 2006, 199).
While authorial voice will emerge as a facet or product of some of the points and debates to
follow, its importance for this literature review is as only a secondary consequence to the
other voices at play in any given piece of media work.

In media practice, verbal voice can be further broken down into two categories:

   i)   Voiceover: which is typically scripted

   ii) Synched voice: which is typically a non-scripted, spontaneous verbal utterance

In 1991, Bill Nichols formulated six 'Modes of Representation' to categorise and help codify
basic and fundamental narrative structures in documentary (1991). These modes have since
become seminal but have met with revisions and criticism by several documentary theorists,
as mentioned earlier. For the purposes of theorising my own work, the modes are a useful
framework through which to consider verbal voice – in its voiceover and synched forms –
and the narrative and political power verbal voice can attain through varying kinds of use
and positioning in media stories.

Nichols's work on voiceover is closely tied to the 'expository mode,' that fundamental,
original mode in his ecosystem of six modes (Nichols 2017; Bruzzi 2006). According to
Nichols, the voiceover – as a disembodied 'Voice of God' or an embodied 'Voice of
Authority' – is a hallmark of the expository mode (2017, 53). In that mode, Nichols sees the
narrative mechanism of the voiceover as analogous to how the figure of the 'movie star'
operates in the fictional narratives of mainstream Hollywood: both serve as a 'primary point
of identification for the viewer' to the story being narrated (2016, 59). Shaped, in part, by

the work of practitioners like John Reith, who helped define the ethos of 'social instruction'

encoded in the BBC's particular public broadcasting culture (Bruzzi 2006, 51); and John

Grierson with his 'Grierson Group' of documentarians (Fox 2018), the 'voice of God'

tradition of narration, according to Nichols, consisted of a 'professionally trained, richly

toned male voice of commentary' and was particularly used to bolster a given

documentary's truth claim and its sense of objectivity (2017, 124). These characteristics and

uses of 'voice of God' narration – particularly in narratives in the expository mode – are

remarkably resilient still, provoking 'an almost Pavlovian response' in spectators over

seventy years since the convention gained widespread use (Fox 2018, 40).

Voiceover contains varying degrees of dictatorial impulse which is widely recognised in both

journalism theory (Couldry 2010; Maras 2013; Schudson 2013) and documentary theory

(Nichols 2016). However, Bruzzi complicates this assertion by finding 'questionable' the

belief that voiceover 'automatically becomes the dominant and therefore subjectifying force

in a film when used.' She asserts that 'it's not invariably the case that to 'tell' (other than

'show') is to immobilise the audience' (2006, 56). Bruzzi argues that Nichols's framing of the

expository mode as 'didactic, the oldest and most primitive form of nonfiction film' is to

blame for the persistently 'negative perception' of both documentary film in general and

the expository mode, specifically (Bruzzi 2006, 48). Bruzzi's understanding of the expository

mode is that it is a more democratic narrative canvas than the expository mode presented

by Nichols. For her, voices in the expository mode can exist with an agency that is not

completely indexed to or dependent on the voice of narration (Bruzzi 2006, 56), a sentiment

echoed by Couldry who sees voices as 'an irreducible part' of their [social actor's] agency'

(2009, 580). This assertion is repeated in Nash's work on power relationships in

documentary production. Drawing on a Foucauldian reading of power, she argues that

power asserts itself multilaterally, through a 'web of power relations' rather than the more

unilateral power dynamic – the simple domination of the social actor by the documentary

maker – that Nichols seems to posit (2010, 24). Bruzzi similarly asserts that Nichols and

other theorists too often conflate 'voice of God' narration with all narration (2006) and her

work goes far to 'rehabilitate' voiceover as a narrative tool by diversifying understandings of

its various narrative and political possibilities beyond those elucidated by Nichols and

others.

Both Nichols (2016) and Bruzzi agree that, especially in the context of the expository mode,

'traditional voiceover' serves as a mask that postpones a spectator's 'realisation that this

mode of representation and indeed its inerrant belief in a consistent and unproblematic

truth, are perpetually on the verge of collapse' (Bruzzi 2006, 59). This characterisation of the

voiceover echoes larger observations in journalism theory of the 'news paradigm' (Schudson

2012, 191) and how it helps hide deeper agendas and power dynamics (Anderson 2019;

Schudson 2008). This masking function, for Bruzzi, makes 'traditional' voiceover 'a hysterical

barrier erected against the spectre of ambivalence and uncertainty' (2006, 59). She

distinguishes voiceover into two categories: the 'traditional voiceover' mentioned above,

and the 'ironic voiceover,' which activates the voiceover as a 'subversive tool, and one not

bound by the conservatism of the expository form' (2006, 59). Bruzzi's feminist critique of

Nichols's work looks closely at how 'ironic voiceover' is 'capable of engendering such a

dialectical distance,' that 'draws the audience into sympathising for the image and sets

them critically back from it' (2006, 59). Drawing on Kaja Silverman, Bruzzi mentions how, in

'less recent' documentaries, female voiceover would subvert the surety of the convention of

male voiceover to 'engender doubt and divest the disembodied male voice of its 'discursive power'' (Bruzzi 2006, 64; Silverman 1988, 164).

The 'dialectical distance' mentioned by Bruzzi was fundamentally affected by the technological innovations and societal changes occurring in the 1960s, a decade which saw the development of the 'largest temporal divide' in the history of documentary (Nichols 2017). Cheaper, lighter-weight film, sound equipment and stock enabled significant changes in how synched voice could be captured and used. In the causal chronology of his modes, which Bruzzi calls a 'developmental progression' (2006, 2), Nichols says that the technological innovations seen in the 1960s brought about a serious and widespread adoption of the observational mode of representation. This shift heralded a host of changes and progressions in media practice, not least an increased presence of the synced voices of social actors, a change which firmly instilled, 'the democratising idea that each speaker, regardless of status, has potential documentary value' (Fox 2018, 86). Such shifts and developments are relevant to Couldry's broader concept of 'materiality of voice' – those social resources and material form which enable (and are required for) individual voice to emerge (2010).

The increase in access to and inclusion of synched voice, brought about by the changes of the 1960s, enabled a definitive widening out of representation to include hitherto neglected or misrepresented identities. 'Social actors – people – entered the documentary in a major way,' says Nichols of the new media practice of that time, adding that 'listening attentively becomes as vital as speaking' (2016, 76). This change also shifted the balance of various vocal powers at play in linear narrative media outputs. A set of 'more complex power

relationships' emerged (Nash 2011, 229) and ushered in a new era of media storytelling, encapsulated in the spirit of the observational mode and subsequent modes such as the participatory and performative modes. With the ascent of these modes, the notion of 'giving voice' became less defined because these modes increased the agency (or possibilities for agency) of social actors. For Nichols, the 'filmmaker now held her or his camera on the one who speaks, in sync. This meant willingly sacrificing full control of the image' (2016, 71). With such shifts brought about by the new, observational impulse – and its central idea of reality capture *sans* intervention – came claims of bolstered objectivity in the 'perennial struggle between forces of objectivity and subjectivity' of which documentary film is a 'hybrid offspring' (Bruzzi 2006, 46). Maras (2015) categorises this blend of the subjective testimony of the social actor with the 'trained judgement and interpretation' of the journalist as an alternative, more active school of objectivity. Nonetheless, this broadening out of the vocal palate of journalism and documentary practices had both narrative and political implications for linear media practice because it added legitimacy and power to the unscripted, voiced testimony of social actors as something which can add to or improve the narrative value of scripted narration.

Nichols's optimistic view of this 1960s watershed in media practice, with its unprecedent affordances of agency in the voices of social actors, has also been problematised and rebutted by Renov, whose interventions regarding voice and forces of objectivity and subjectivity add to those articulated by Bruzzi and Nash. Such detractions and revisions of Nichols's theoretical work play out along notions, projections and negotiations of power between various actors within narrative media outputs. Drawing on Roland Barthes, Renov comments on the fallacy that the observational mode cultivates. Both argue that merely

supressing the 'I' of the author in the story does not make for objectivity (Renov 1993; Barthes 1981), a pushback on a certain notion of objective purity that is championed by Nichols (2016). Bruzzi also picks up on this idea of purity, asserting that both Nichols and Winston promote a 'troublesome notion of 'purity,'' when talking about documentary in the observational mode and framing this notion of 'pure observation' as superior to 'its more mendacious cousins deploying such false mechanisms as voice-over' (2006, 75). These notions matter, especially when it comes to a consideration of voice; the political implications of the expression of voice; and the positioning of voice in the larger, often complex vocal context of narrative media outputs.

Winston also pushes back on the generalised utopian zeal that media theory has shown with regards to the 1960s period, the observational mode, and the subsequent modes (participatory, performative, etc.) that emerged. The documentarian's perennial and 'unavoidable dilemma,' according to Winston, is that the 'outcome of the filming for the filmed and the filmer [are] unequal,' something that is 'inevitable with the mainstream documentary, however *engagé*' (2017, 107, italics are Winston's). Couldry terms it a 'symbolic power differential' and consequentially, borrowing Bourdieu's terminology, sees in the interview process a 'symbolic violence' (2005, 363). In his ruminations on digital technology, smart phones and the internet – that far more recent 'temporal divide' than the 1960s moment that preoccupies other theorists – Winston collapses the 'filmer' and the 'filmed' into a single figure: the 'Filmed/Filmer hybrid' (2017, 112). He argues that the new digital era – which is still emerging and developing today – provides exciting and novel permutations that can transcend the limits of the preceding, conventional media paradigm. Nash extends these notions in her more recent work on interactive documentaries which,

she argues, 'challenge documentarians' singular point of view, ushering in forms of polyvocality and the possibility of radically reconfigured representations of reality' (2022, 8).

Nichols's seminal framework around the modes of representation; the consequences they have for verbal voice; and, most importantly, the detractions and amendments made to it by other theorists, are all necessary for a significant understanding of existent theoretical ideas and debates around verbal voice in media practice. The theory referred to so far in this section 1.2.a engages with audio as inextricably linked with the visual, i.e.: in audio-visual works (TV, video, film). As we now move into considerations around non-verbal voice in narrative media output, this review will engage primarily with sound studies – an area of theory which tends to engage with audio on its own, independent from the visual.

1.2.b Silence and non-verbal voice

When speaking of the power dynamics and narrative potential of both kinds of verbal voice in media practice (narration and synched voice), Renov and Nichols linger on the role of silence within these two verbal layers of media text. Renov points to the signification that silence can acquire in an otherwise verbal context (1993) whereas Nichols discusses the act of 'muting' (or withholding) the interviewer's or narrator's voice in documentary as a way to forestall judgement on the part of the documentary maker and thereby facilitate the emergence of sensitive or controversial truths from social actors who feature in the work (2016, 88).

In media and documentary work, silence and non-verbal communication form another fundamental aspect of voice, one that is distinct from the verbal voice covered above.

Theorists (Birdsall 2009; Said 2000; Strachan & Leonard 2015; Street 2019a; Toop 2004) have all done work on the vocal power of silence and other non-verbal components of media output. Both David Toop and Seán Street draw attention to the fact that voice continues to be expressed even when verbalisation ceases. Unless one is in an anechoic chamber, there is always some level of sound – and by extension, vocal potentiality – present in any given situation. Silence, they therefore argue, rarely means the absence of sound. Street calls it the 'sound under the sound that I thought was silence' (2019a, 200) whereas Toop refers to it as the 'ghost within the sound' (2004, 85). This vocal potential contains a quietness in which 'the invisible becomes visible' (Street 2017, 14). Silence, these theorists assert, can be used to echo, deepen, and add nuance to more explicit notions established by verbal voice; or simply suggest ideas independent of the verbal discourse existent in a given piece of work. Silence is also an important motor in the narrative activation of other kinds of non-verbal voice, such as the vocal potentiality carried in ambient sound, its 'original factual and emotional content' (Cusack 2012). Robert Strachan and Marion Leonard argue that silence (i.e., when verbalisation is absent or ceases) enables non-verbal ambient sound to be foregrounded thus enabling its activation as an 'experiential trigger' for the spectator or listener, invoking them to reflect on memory, loss and identity (2015, 168). Street sees the narrative dynamics of silence in a similar yet slightly different way. He argues that silence – and our cultural conditioning to view it as an entity in a state of lacking – triggers our imaginations to 'create sound out of silence' (2017, 14). He refers to the similar use of this phenomenon in stage drama (naming Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter as prime examples), which frequently 'choreographs' silences in and through dialogue; 'blank windows' in the spoken lines that can layer and echo the utterances of characters and 'take meaning to places where words cannot go' (2017, 28).

The academic field of acoustic ecology, a branch of sound studies, helps advance our understanding of non-verbal meaning making through analysis that prioritises the non-verbal aspects of sound and their ability to 'draw in the listener and heighten aural attention' (Strachan & Leonard 2015, 177). Unlike the verbal voice – anthropocentric by its very generation within the human voice box – non-verbal elements have the ability to generate personification, character and agency in 'non-biological entities' (Street 2012, 101). Sound designer Chris Watson calls this 'geophony,' when the sounds of natural phenomena like rain, tides, earth movements, etc., can be perceived as expressing/voicing meaning (Street 2015, 98). To Watson's 'geophony,' Toop adds 'biotic voices', the exploration and documentarian of the vocal potential of living, non-human creatures and/or non-animal organisms like vegetation (2004, 60). These vocal potentials lie inert in any recording of the natural environment and can be vocally activated – 'moving the listener into imaginative worlds though evocation' (Street 2012, 101) – through the use of narrative strategies in the production process. Such narrative strategies include: verbal explication (either by the scripted narrator or the non-scripted synched voice of the social actor); co-positioning techniques in editing; and audio mixing strategies, among others (Truax 1996). Barry Truax locates this activation between the knowledge and intention of the producer and the knowledge and intention of the listener; a synaptic relationship that helps 'complete [the] network of meanings' existent in any given piece of work (1996, 55).

So far in this chapter, the scholarly debates around voice have focussed on its verbalised (narration and synched utterance) and non-verbalised (silence and non-verbal vocality) forms. When it comes to verbalised voice in media practice, this chapter has shown how there is a perpetual tension between scripted, narrated voice and the non-scripted, synched

voices of social actors; one that often maps on to larger philosophical and political debates around didacticism; agented expression; access; and the democratisation of expression. Non-verbal voice, it has been illustrated above, offers an array of vocal tools which often operates differently to those offered by verbal voice – suggesting, evoking, echoing and activating meaning. Frequently, verbal and non-verbal voice are simultaneously active, co-mingling in narrative media outputs. Both are certainly fundamental to the mobilisation of voice in the form of critical expression. This will be looked at in the next section, with particular regard to criticality concerning memory and the past.

1.3 Expression: mobilising criticality in voice

Triggering memory and accessing the past, as detailed by the abovementioned work by Birdsall (2009), Street (2015) and Toop (2004), is one of the narrative characteristics of voice that can mobilise it towards a stance or expression of criticality, with all the political implications of such mobilisation. Svetlana Boym draws parallels between how nostalgia and media technology operate. Both, she says, have a fundamental reliance on mediation. While media narratives use some of the mediating conventions covered in this chapter to convey story (narration, synched voices, silence, non-verbal elements), nostalgia, says Boym, relies on such mediating materials as 'passages, transits and means of communication' (2001, 346). Both Renov (documentary and media studies) and Boym (nostalgia and memory studies) recognise, in their respective areas of research, that this fundamental mediation requirement complicates notions of representation and replication. Renov states that duplication 'can never be unproblematic' and that 'issues of selection […] always intrude' when it comes to media representations. 'The results are *mediated*,' he states, adding that the 'multiple interventions *come between* the cinematic sign (what we

see on screen) and its referent (what existed in the world)' (1993, 26, italics are Renov's). Boym's belief that nostalgia and memory rely on mnemonic devices for activation (2001, 346) underlines an assertion, not dissimilar to Renov's structuralist reading on the duplication of reality in media representation, that the mimicry in nostalgic reconstructions should not be taken at face value; to do so would be 'dangerous' (Boym 2001, 354). 'Nostalgia,' she says, 'is not the property of the object itself but a result of an interaction between subjects and objects, between actual landscapes and landscapes of the mind' (2001, 354).

Boym's work on memory and nostalgia is instructive for considerations of the critical expression of voice because it studies the narrative and political consequences of nostalgia's ability to have the past inscribe itself onto the present moment. Nostalgia, Boym argues, 'remains an intermediary between collective and individual memory […] a playground, not a graveyard, of multiple individual recollections' (2001, 54), an assertion that positions the 'nostalgic voice' (in its verbal and non-verbal forms) to become a 'vector for recollection' (Street 2015, 46). 'Immigrant souvenirs' – those totemic, physical objects such as outdated calendars, wall clocks, religious objects, etc., that carry a nostalgic co-efficient for people who experience nostalgia for their 'homeland'– are important tools in Boym's field research on nostalgia in immigrant communities from the former Soviet Union in the U.S. (2001, 327). Those 'immigrant souvenirs' made the numerous North American apartments of Soviet emigrants and exiles whom Boym visited look somewhat like Moscow apartments, however, 'they are hardly a direct recreation,' given the mediated nature of nostalgia (2001, 332). R. Murray Schafer's 'soundmarks' – those distinctive, and therefore narratively useful, sonic elements within a larger soundscape/mix/context (Toop 2004) – operate in a similar

way as Boym's 'immigrant souvenirs' in that both can serve as a link between 'ourselves as we are and ourselves as we once were' (Street 2015, 154).

This temporal bifurcation – the 'then' and the 'now' of reflective thought, memory or nostalgia – makes it such that they are mobilisations of voice that can have significant discursive and political consequences. Temporal bifurcation, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter, is something that media work is particularly adept at representing. The positions of 'then' and 'now' are enshrined in the word 'nostalgia' itself, which comes from two Greek root words: *nosos* – return home and *algia* – longing. In her research, Boym categorises nostalgia into two types: 'Restorative,' which tends to the *nosos* side of nostalgia and 'Reflective,' which leans on the side of *algia* (2001). It's useful to consider both categories as they represent different narrative stances involving the temporal bifurcation at the heart of stories driven by nostalgia, memory and reflective thinking. 'Restorative Nostalgia' seeks to rebuild and restore a past moment or situation in order to reinhabit it. At its core, there is an impulse of total escape from the present to the past (2001). 'Reflective Nostalgia' – the category of nostalgia of most interest to my practice research and to this thesis – carries more potential for criticality and the political mobilisation of voice. In the 'Reflective Nostalgia' mode, a person seeks to reconnect with the past in order to understand or inflect the present (2001). There is an aspect to 'Reflective Nostalgia' of keeping one foot in the present and the other in the past. The defamiliarisation and sense of distance that this temporal bifurcation brings about has the power to generate narrative, driving people 'to tell their story, to narrate the relationship between past, present and future' (Boym 2001, 50). Couldry sees this bi-temporal characteristic as being intrinsic to all voice and a key ingredient to the resultant reflexivity

that is a core part of any voice's agency (2010). The past, says Henri Bergson, 'might act and will act by inserting itself into a present sensation from which it borrows its vitality' (qtd. Boym 2001, 50). This temporal bifurcation that is characteristic of 'Reflective Nostalgia' – that 'inhabiting many places at once' (Boym 2001, xviii) – can be particularly well rendered by sound, which has the capacity to 'place us imaginatively in another time, while we physically remain in the present' (Street 2017, 7). This effective rendering of temporal fluidity as afforded by sound, coupled with the technical ability to layer various and separate sounds within edit sessions, unlocks 'diffuse palimpsestic qualities' (Mollaghan 2015, 127). These are of significant consequence – through retrospective/comparative analysis and speculative narrative building – for the potential for criticality of voice.

Through this chapter, I have demonstrated a series of academic debates around the workings and role of both verbal and non-verbal voice, with a specific focus on documentary theory, sound studies and memory studies. These debates and theories provide an important framework within which to understand my own practice research and the two primary questions driving it: i) what the narrative capacities of both verbal and non-verbal voice are, ii) the consequences for criticality and power resulting from uses of those sorts of voice in media production, and (iii) how verbal and non-verbal voice can be used to create alternative power relationships in various media outputs. In the next chapter, I will outline the methodologies I have adopted and adapted across a range of practice-based outputs that employ and explore voice and vocal strategies.

**

CHAPTER 2: METHODS

As this is a PhD by Publication, the approach to methodology is different than if were a PhD by Practice. In a PhD by Publication at UEA, all the practice-based outputs presented in the portfolio have been produced and published in the past, *prior* to the commencement of the PhD itself. Therefore, in this present thesis, I am retroactively considering practice-based methodologies I used when making the work that is presented in the accompanying portfolio. In addition to those practice-based mythologies that I employed in the past, I am also applying methodologies – primarily of critical reflection – in the present day, which I am utilising in this thesis as a means to critically engage with and situate my prior published work in various academic contexts.

As per Gavin Sade's (2022) definition of practice-based and practice-led research, the work presented in the portfolio accompanying this thesis is practice-based and spans a period from 2011 to 2020 and covers a diverse selection of output formats (audio, live action video, animated video, hybrid format); genres (journalistic reportage, factual documentary, factual animation, docu-fiction, and fiction); geographic locations (Belgium, various countries across the Middle East, and both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland); and political contexts. As mentioned at the start of the last chapter, this diversity of disciplines and formats in the portfolio of works proved to be both a strength and a challenge when approaching work on this PhD. When it comes to selecting and testing my research methodology, this multidisciplinary and diversity of the formats pushed me in certain methodological directions, which I will explore in more detail below.

Linda Candy, Ernest Edmonds and Craig Vear (2022b, 34) assert that practitioner-researchers working, as I have, with multiple formats across various disciplines can 'bring forth interesting new knowledge and surprising insights' which can 'change the way practitioners think about how they work.' Falk Hübner calls this process 'emergence' – where new insights can emerge from practice work through meaningful experimentation – and he asserts that emergence can only happen when flexible and adaptable methodologies are applied – a 'fruitful tension between careful design […] and space for emergence to happen and "do its work." In essence, to control and let go and follow' (Hübner 2022, 335).

Therefore, in a) producing the practice-based work, and b) retroactively engaging critically with that work and situating it in various academic contexts, I employed two main methodological frameworks: Hübner's (2022) 'Common Ground Model for Practice-Based Research Design' and Donald Schön's (1983) concept of 'reflective practice.'

Firstly, Hübner's (2022) 'Common Ground Model for Practice-based Research Design' is a broad, flexible methodology that is intended for practitioners operating in diverse disciplines (Hübner 2022). It therefore closely applies to the production of the works in my portfolio. The model's focus is on flexibility, play, and the framing and reframing of practice-based experimentation as ways to trigger the emergence of new knowledge, techniques and methods. Examples of this in my work will be explored in more detail in this chapter. Beyond the concept of 'emergence', Hübner's 'common ground method' contains other tenets that will also be seen in more specific use later in this chapter. Structure, another of the method's tenets encourages a 'flow' in how practitioners work; a flow from one practice-based activity to the next, regardless of discipline or format (2022, 326). The

method's tenet of time contains an important notion concerning the decoupling of the findings of a given piece of practice-based research from the temporal context of the production of the output as a means to enable emergence through the ensuing co-positioning of those findings with other practice-based ideas and findings from different temporal contexts (2022, 328). Time, as per Hübner, also includes the notion of reflection and iteration in practice, methods which also come up repeatedly in this chapter.

Schön's (1983) concept of 'reflective practice' offers useful methods of reflection and ways of 'supporting the emergence of theory from practice' (Sade 2022, 181). Central to Schön's methodology is a distinction between 'reflection *in* practice' (the kind of reflection that happens while one is making practice-based work and is necessary for iterative practice-based research and, ultimately, for emergence); and 'reflection *on* practice' (which tends to happen retroactively, once the work has been completed) (Schön 1983; italics my own). Both kinds of reflection recur throughout this chapter. The latter type of reflection is prevalent in the next and final chapter of this thesis. Research methods that are common in Schön's concept of reflective practice and which come up in this chapter include: action research; use of case study; ethnography; observation, and interviewing, textual analysis; framing, reframing and frame experimentation; as well as 'situation talkback,' a kind of feedback that can lead to a new 'frame' in ongoing practice-based research (Candy, Edmonds & Vear 2022a, 317).

The use of Hübner's Common Ground Model for Practice-Based Research Design and the discrete and combined use of Schön's reflection in practice and reflection on practice are all used in this chapter as a way to explore the research questions stated in the introduction.

***

Looking back on my practice outputs from the past ten years through the lens of the various ideas and debates covered in the previous chapter of this thesis, I have adopted a thematic approach to the various methods at work in the portfolio. This thematic approach will structure the current chapter into two major sections: (i) non-verbal voice and (ii) verbal voice. By organising the chapter in this way, I will be able to reconsider my practice work from several related angles, all of which ultimately inform the overarching concerns of this thesis vis-à-vis voice and its relationship to representation and power in story. As established in the previous chapter, this thesis looks at the notion of voice from a variety of theory and practice-based perspectives: voice as verbal in the form of narration or in the form of the words of social actors; and voice as non-verbal, in the form of silence, non-verbal human sounds and ambient sound. In this chapter, I will apply these understandings of voice to my own practice output but I will add some other understandings, namely the human gaze as a vocal tool and physical/gestural movement as voice. As the practice work under consideration in this chapter spans a diversity of genres and formats – a diversity that throws up certain challenges when it comes to the application of various theoretical frameworks, as mentioned at the beginning of the last chapter – approaches to producing voice in the work vary depending on whether the work in question is a radio journalism package; a video journalism package; a video documentary; a factual animation or an experimental spoken word/pre-produced audio hybrid.

2.1 Non-verbal voice as vocal material in my work

As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, 2012 was a nodal point for my practice; a time when the circumstances in which I was living and working caused me to seek more vocal strategies and approaches to voice than those afforded and privileged by the relatively strict and verbocentric conventions of broadcast journalism, which I elaborated on in the previous chapter. In this first section, I will look specifically at methods used to understand and develop (a) the use of gazes and their vocal qualities in *Voluntary Exile* and *A Sign*; (b) the vocal capacity and use of (hummed) melodies in *A Sign* and *All That Is Solid*; and (c) the vocal potential of ambient sound and how I used that in *A Sign* and *All That Is Solid*.

2.1.a The vocal gaze

Seeking other ways to render experience and approach truth more effectively than those available to me in the 'news paradigm' (Schudson 2012, 191) which I had hitherto relied on exclusively in my broadcast journalism practice, I started to pay more attention than usual to the non-verbal cues occurring during interviews: facial expressions, ticks, the gaze, body language, and physical details in the space around the interview. I pondered the vocal, truth-telling capacity of these non-verbal forms of communication and realised the added importance such a capacity brings to the difficult enterprise of factual storytelling in the complex, fraught moment I was trying to cover at the time. I began to explore sound art, visual art, and fictional narrative films and sought inspiration and effective storytelling techniques I could adopt from those disciplines.

Discovering the work of Turkish filmmaker Nuri Bilge Ceylan was a major turning point in my evolving understanding of narrative and approach to story. His work involving non-verbal

voice, particularly in *Climates* (2006), is remarkable. In *Climates*, as in several of his other films, Ceylan often uses the scripted, spoken word as a shallow counterpoint to the far deeper truth and power conveyed by the film's non-verbal voices, communicated through a complex syntax of gazes, objective correlatives and pathetic fallacies, what Paula Rabinowitz calls the 'logic of inner truth, outer sign' (1994, 25). Across his films, Ceylan frequently situates vocal gazes in a 'shot-reverse shot' editing syntax which interplays the unknowing object of the gaze with the loneliness and desperation of the person who gazes (Harvey-Davitt 2016). Ceylan also uses the vocal gaze in fraught tête-à-tête scenes where the evasive or diversionary verbal voice of the characters exists as a less significant layer of meaning over the emotionally charged, sincere, non-verbal voice at play in the scene, a contrast which serves to deepen the pathos of the story. According to James Harvey-Davitt, 'the use and counter-use of the gaze and its connected montage-style complements the conflicted selves at the heart of [Ceylan's films]' (2016, 12). This layering and simultaneous vocality is an apt example of Couldry's notion of 'internal diversity' within voice, a 'necessary plurality' he sees as 'especially important in modernity where almost all of us are embedded in multiple narrative settings' (2010, 9). This capacity for 'internal diversity', Couldry argues, enables voice to 'reflect from one narrative stream on to another and think about what one strand of our lives means for other strands' (2010, 9).

Figs. 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4: Examples of vocal gazes in *Climates* (Nuri Bilge Ceylan 2006)

The realisation of what non-verbal voice can achieve vocally was an epiphany for me and the influence of that epiphany is evident in the photographic images I was making around the same time, which ultimately became the *Beyond the Surface* group exhibition I was part of at the Beirut Art Center in May 2012. *Voluntary Exile*, the photo essay I contributed to that exhibition, seeks to document the shared home lives of a group of Syrian male refugees who had recently moved, separately and alone, to Beirut to generate income for families back home. I felt that were I to have tried to tell this story using the approach and methods of news journalism, the 'pseudo-objectivity' (McGill 2004) that that paradigm would impose on this story would have destroyed the delicacy and intimacy of the experience I was hoping to document. These men were part of the first wave of refugees arriving to Lebanon after the outbreak of violence in Syria. By the time I photographed them, in April 2012, they had all been in Beirut and were sharing the same small flat for about six months. The project sought to explore the 'constructed family' they had made while in expatriation but also the private, individual pain being experienced by each of them within this same collective

context. I decided on photography as the medium for this project because I wanted to force myself to develop ways of capturing and expressing the experiences and emotions of these men non-verbally, without recourse to the spoken word which had been the default and staple of my journalistic expression up to that point. Susan Sontag asserts that photography 'makes reality atomic; manageable, and opaque' (2001, 52), characteristics I felt were of particular use to me in my efforts to cover and make sense of the Syrian experience as it was developing at that particular place and time in history. In this way, photographs seemed to offer me the ability to create a pause for the viewer – an 'ethics of seeing' (Sontag 2001, 40) – through which she/he could achieve a lingering reflection I felt was needed so as to begin the work of understanding the historical moment at hand.

Through multiple evenings spent photographing these men, a certain 'vocal gaze' – a gaze that expresses an emotional state or state of mind – began to emerge from the photographs I was making. Whether the photograph was of one person alone or of a group of people being social, these vocal gazes were often private, individual and introspective. I began to call these kinds of gazes 'internal gazes.' This 'internal' vocal gaze is particularly visible in figs. 2.5 and 2.6 below. It serves as a deeper, private counterpoint to the more extroverted, communal gazes (vocal gazes I came to refer to as 'external gazes') in images such as figs. 2.7 and 2.8:
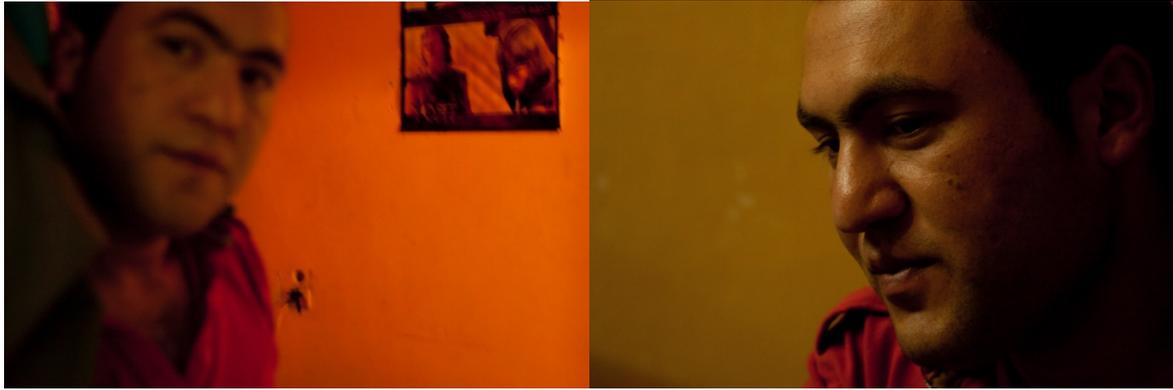
Figs. 2.5 (left) and 2.6 (right): Images G and K (respectively) in the *Voluntary Exile* exhibition sequence. Examples of the 'internal gaze.'

Figs. 2.7 (left) and 2.8 (right): Images H and F (respectively) in the *Voluntary Exile* exhibition sequence. Examples of the 'external gaze.'

The 'internal gaze' gains meaning and depth when there is a contextual understanding of the photo story. In fact, there appears to be an indexical relationship between the vocal clarity of this internal gaze and the degree of specificity of contextual information accompanying any viewing of the photo essay. In the case of *Voluntary Exile*, this contextual information came from elsewhere within the same photo; from another photo within the sequence of photos in the same exhibition; or from the textual information on the context of the photos provided to attendees on arrival at the exhibition. With this internal gaze as a clear vocal element in the photo series, I added layers and nuance to the voice by shooting through frames (a window in fig. 2.9; a mirror in fig. 2.10; a phone screen in fig. 2.11), which helped suggest containment, limitation or immobility. It also helped heighten the awareness

of the observer and problematised his status in the story, underlining his exteriority to the

social dynamic and destiny of the group being photographed.

Fig. 2.9: Image A in the *Voluntary Exile* exhibition sequence.

Fig. 2.10: Image L in the *Voluntary Exile* exhibition sequence.

Fig. 2.11: Image N in the *Voluntary Exile* exhibition sequence.

Another technique which I used to layer onto and add nuance to the vocal gazes in the photographs was the intentional use of blur. I achieved blur in some of the images I made by purposefully moving the frame out of focus, to varying degrees (figs. 2.12 and 2.13). Blurring in this way can be a very interesting tool in photographic storytelling. It's a blunt tool, certainly, but it presents possibilities to the photographer of undermining indexicality without necessarily rendering identification impossible. In this case, I found that blurring helped insinuate notions of destabilisation and moral upheaval to the story being told by the images. It also helped further underline the problematics of the outside observer (and authorship) in such a production context:

Figs. 2.12 and 2.13: Images J and A (respectively) in the *Voluntary Exile* exhibition sequence. Examples of use of blur as a vocal tool.

I built on the realisations made and techniques developed around the 'internal gaze' during the production of *Voluntary Exile* and applied them to subsequent narratives and story formats I worked on. In *A Sign*, a short narrative fiction film I directed and co-wrote over 2013 and 2014 while a mature student at the Belgian state film school, I made significant use of vocal gaze. This was a scripted drama and unlike the photojournalistic (i.e.: observational, non-interventionist, spontaneous) capture of *Voluntary Exile*, the vocal gazes of *A Sign* were premeditated, rehearsed and performed. In production terms, they were fabricated yet had to be performed as natural and spontaneous. To a certain degree, *A Sign*

is fundamentally about inadequacies of the spoken word. The film commences with an extremely declarative, verbal scene showing actor Sophia Leboutte (playing the protagonist, Rosaline) in a church confession box, yelling at the listening, off-screen priest, and berating God for forsaking her by not responding to her prayers (i.e.: her verbal voice). She storms out of the confessional box thereby ending her and the film's investment in the spoken word as the ultimate conveyor of truth and meaning. From that moment on, I chose to communicate Rosaline's growth, fate and salvation chiefly through non-verbal voices that include vocal gazes; vocal ambient sound (water); and hummed melodies.

As part of my desire in *A Sign* to broaden out from verbal voice, a major narrative ambition of the film was to find non-verbal ways through which to express the private pain and deliverances from pain experienced by Rosaline after her devastating loss of religious faith at the beginning of the film. I applied the same narrative ambition to actor Simon André's character, Georges, whose pain relates to a debilitating romantic loss in his past. While workshopping and rehearsing the film, I built on many of the techniques involving vocal gazes which I had initially developed while making *Voluntary Exile*. With actress Sophia Leboutte (playing Rosaline), we devised a system of 'internal gazes' and 'external gazes,' which we would use as vocal devices throughout the film. In scenes where Rosaline is out on the nocturnal Brussels streets working as a sex worker, the vocal 'external gaze' formed part of the public-facing, performative aspects of client recruitment in her sex work. It was also used as a different kind of vocal 'utterance,' when directed at other, rival prostitutes competing on the same street. When creating and developing the internal gazes that the actors of *A Sign* would perform, I drew on my work on the internal gazes of *Voluntary Exile*, which often tended to lack a specific, empirical point of external focus and frequently

occurred as closeups. In rehearsal, I encouraged Sophia Leboutte to focus her attention on something introspective or nostalgic while she delivered internal gazes. When shooting, while I covered scenes by filming them from multiple focal lengths, I knew that the closeups would be key in the final edit to ensure the clearest vocalisation of the internal gazes in the scene in question. In addition, I found that situating the private and intimate internal gaze of a given character within larger, multi-character, social scenes helped to intensify it, vocally. To do this, I drew on some of the sequencing strategies I used in *Voluntary Exile*, such as following a group image with a close-up, internal gaze image clearly from the same context, followed again by another group image. I used the same sequencing logic in *A Sign* and employed the aforementioned 'shot-reverse shot' editing approach of Ceylan, to crystallise the expression of the inner pain and turmoil which Rosaline's 'internal gazes' sought to communicate; pain and turmoil that she herself was unable or unwilling to verbalise:

Fig. 2.14: Initial group image (wide shot; external gazes) in a 'shot-reverse shot' sequence in *A Sign*.

Fig. 2.15: Close up 'internal gaze' image in a 'shot-reverse shot' sequence in *A Sign*.

Fig. 2.16: Concluding group image (wide shot; external gazes) in a 'shot-reverse shot' sequence in *A Sign*.

As I worked on *A Sign*, it became clear to me that the intended vocal meaning of internal gazes is fragile and can be easily overturned. When Rosaline agrees to pose for Georges as he fashions a new puppet based on her likeness, a complex dialogue of vocal gazes occurs between them. Co-writer Solenn Le Priol and I wanted the rapport that develops between them to be safe, mutually healing, and spiritual – a counterpoint to the harsh streets that Rosaline works on (where she both performs and is subjected to heavy, transactional gazes) or the anxious moments she passes alone at home, in front of her makeup mirror. Screen tests undertaken during casting for the film, however, revealed that these vocal gazes were very easily overpowered and rendered almost exclusively amorous whenever an actor auditioning for the part of Georges was close in age to Sophia Leboutte (who had already been cast as Rosaline at that stage). I perceived a risk. The potential for a projection of sexual politics by viewers onto emotionally delicate, largely non-verbal scenes would ruin the non-sexual narrative intention I had for these scenes. This perception of that risk was based on a 'male gaze' understanding of how mainstream Hollywood conventions around heterosexual gender politics often shape audience expectations (Mulvey 2009a, 21). In a bid to lower this risk and thereby help protect the vocal gazes that the story needed for it to work as I intended, I made three distinct changes in tack. Firstly, I altered Georges's age, casting him not as a contemporary of Rosaline but as an older man – a change that I felt might not totally preclude a sexualised reading of the gazes shared by Georges and Rosaline but would at least attenuate such a reading. Secondly, I introduced more verbal voice in the form of brief lines of dialogue in the posing scenes and used them as discreet 'guide ropes,' helping to keep the interpretation of the vocal gazes between Rosaline and Georges away from the sexual. Finally, I worked further with the actors to produce a number of 'registers' of gaze that would help express their characters' inner lives more clearly and thereby help

keep the delicate interchanges in the posing scenes from becoming merely or mostly about flirtation or sexual stakes.

On completing the film and then hearing post-Q&A testimony of many audiences at various festivals around the world, I revised my ideas concerning audience expectations. While considerations of audience and its potential understanding of a work is a perennial factor of scripting, rehearsing, filming and editing; it is also important to revisit one's own understanding of *who* the audience actually is. The 'male gaze' notion of audience expectation has been problematised and revised by critics since Mulvey brought it to prominence in the 1970s. Artists and theorists like Trinh T. Minh-ha began to 'displace the voyeuristic gaze of the traditional Western viewer' and re-theorise the new relationship such displacements occasion between spectator, filmmaker, and performer (Foster & Minh-ha 1997, 89). Irene Gustafson's practice-based work is another example of a revision of Mulvey's seminal gaze theory. In her 2016 work, *Facing the Subject (On Observation)*, she widens considerations of the gaze beyond the human, to include in-frame gazes from non-human animals. Gustafson expands considerations of the gaze to notions of observation, encounter and embodiment (2016). Mulvey herself later stated that the 'male third person' of the male gaze theory 'closed off avenues of inquiry' (2009b, 39). These 'closed off avenues' were open in many audience members' readings of *A Sign* which they shared with me during the aforementioned post-screening Q&A sessions. As the landscape of practitioners and practice evolves, audience expectations are accordingly reshaped and changed and this has led to an expansion in the nature and possibilities of both the spectator's gaze and of the gazes of those people within narrative outputs.

2.1.b Vocal melodies

Building on the economy of vocal gazes developed in *A Sign* as part of its meaning-making, I added melody and humming as another non-verbal voice. At about halfway through *A Sign*, the silence of the posing session is broken into by a melody which Georges spontaneously hums to the puppet he is making. From that initial hum, the melody transposes from Georges to Rosaline who hums it to herself later at home, in front of her makeup mirror. Later still, she hums it again but this time in defiance of Samira, a fellow sex worker and Rosaline's nemesis. The purpose of using hummed melody as voice was to achieve two outcomes in the film: firstly, to create an extremely intimate, non-sexual (vocal) communication directly from Georges to Rosaline; and secondly, to provide a vocal vector of change for Rosaline, one that could help narrate her ascension; her disillusionment with Georges; and her ultimate moment of semiotic understanding and self-actualisation in the film's final scene. Initially, when hummed by Georges, the melody has tender, even melancholic vocal qualities but it transforms when Rosaline appropriates it. As she begins her ascent in the story, the accompanying hummed melody becomes a voice of growth, hope, and defiance. Once the melody's alignment with Rosaline's ascent is clearly established in the story, I decided that this voice should be echoed and supported by further voices, layered onto her humming: extra-diegetic piano and church organ playing variations of the fundamental melody she is humming. By doing this, I sought to embolden and validate her voice much like how the arrival of a choir mid-solo can embolden and validate the soloist's voice. The extra-diegetic use of the church organ had additional vocal properties in that it was also intended as a subtle reference back to the life of faith which Rosaline had turned away from, and as part of the larger system of non-verbal vocal signs surrounding her throughout the film, which she only fully understands at the very end of it.

I used this multi-faceted, vocal capacity of melodic humming again later in *All That Is Solid*, a narrative project operating in a different story format: an experimental hybrid of live, spoken word; playback of pre-produced audio; and live, physical theatre on stage. I was needing to 'combine and/or customise approaches from other disciplines or create new ones in response to the demands of the situation' at hand (Candy, Edmonds & Vear 2022a, 311). The piece's research objectives were two-fold. Firstly, I sought to explore how verbal and non-verbal (including gestural) voices can be used to resurrect, reinhabit and re-understand my experience as a gay child and teen in rural Ireland in the 1980s and 1990s. Secondly, I wanted to see how verbal and non-verbal voice could be used to express and navigate the shifts in identity that have occurred on the island of Ireland since my childhood; shifts that are today enabling new possibilities for empathy and understanding between communities that have been historically plagued by mutual distrust and/or hostility. In *All That Is Solid*, much like in *A Sign*, verbal voice is the engine which starts off and propels the work's various questions about the possible use of non-verbal voice. In *All That Is Solid*, I specifically explore how non-verbal expressions of queerness operated in a conservative historical moment where verbal expressions were silenced or erased. I also explore ways to non-verbally express commonality – in spite of sectarianism – between Catholic nationalists and Protestant unionists. As in *A Sign*, there is one single recurring melody hummed multiple times by different people in *All That Is Solid*, an air derived from the well-known traditional Irish song, *An Mhaighdean Mhara* ('The Mermaid'). I placed the first instance of the melody relatively early in *All That Is Solid* as a non-prominent layer in the larger audio mix played out live on stage. I also occasionally hummed it myself, live on stage, between improvised narrations. At this early point in the performance, I was mindful not to draw explicit, verbal attention to the melody through my on-stage narration. By so

doing, I 'planted' the melody, like a vocal, sonic 'seed' – a soundmark – that could later be resonated with, subliminally, when the melody and its vocal intention was returned to more explicitly.

The song of *An Mhaighdean Mhara* tells the story of a woman standing on the Atlantic coast of Ireland, lamenting the departure of her mother, a selkie unable to persist among humans on dry land and unable to resist the draw back to the ocean. The story the song relates is well known to people in Ireland, the primary imagined audience of the work while I was making it. For this reason, when I used this melody without its lyrics in the piece, I did so as a way to co-opt the ideas of otherness and incompatibility that the melody generally connotes and use those ideas to undergird more specific notions and themes of queerness which I was weaving through the larger story of *All That Is Solid*. As a way to build on and bolster this meaning which I intended the melody to connote, I added treated sounds of seal barks at varying depths in the mix – to suggest the presence and/or potential of magic, mythology and alternate worlds that we associate with the selkie figure. I also layered the sound of tides and waves into the edit, periodically, to echo the melancholic vocal properties of the melody and the otherness the sea represents in the song. The melody, its maritime story connotations, and the maritime sounds I layered onto or close to it in *All That Is Solid*, also helped me construct and develop another theme in the piece: that of commonality despite difference. The melody of *An Mhaigdean Mhara* is hummed in *All That Is Solid* by myself (a Catholic nationalist) and by Mairin Hurndall (a Protestant unionist). As a song, *An Mhaigdean Mhara* originates in the *gaeltacht* (Irish speaking) area of county Donegal in the north-west of the Republic of Ireland, adjacent to Northern Ireland. It's a place where many Northern Irish Protestant and unionist learners of Irish go to improve

their speaking skills in the language due to its relative geographic proximity, but it's also a place where many nationalist Catholics go due to the relative linguistic purity of the Irish that is spoken there. I built on this fact in *All That Is Solid* and positioned the Irish language and Irish language culture – as they exist in this north-western corner of Ireland – as signifiers of commonality, shared touchstones through which I could explore possibilities for exchange and meaningful co-existence between nationalists and unionists on the island of Ireland.

2.1.c Vocalising ambient sound

Ambient sound – in the mould of Toop's 'biotic voices' (2004, 60) or Watson's 'geophony' (Street 2015, 98) – is used as a distinct vocal device in the larger efforts to convey queerness in *All That Is Solid*, specifically in the context of my childhood and adolescence in the 1980s and early 1990s in rural Ireland. I used sounds from bogs and forests to reconstruct – and subsequently give a vocal quality to – the sounds of my sense of childhood alienation. Boots squelching through waterlogged, boggy earth (42:00 – 43:27); the calm, vegetal sounds of the forest (45:17 – 45:40); and the sudden snapping twigs (45:35) are all non-verbal sounds that were given a certain vocal force by both the explicit, contextual information delivered via my live, spoken word narration on stage and by my accompanying physical reconstruction, live on stage, of the scenes that the audio playback was relating.

It was at such multi-layered and multi-vocal moments in the performance – when live spoken word, live gestural communication and live playback of pre-produced, non-verbal audio co-existed – that I felt closest to achieving the research objectives of the work. A good example of this multi-layered, multi-vocal quality is when I reconstructed the scene from my

early teens, where I sought to communicate – through a prolonged hug to a tree in the

forest – my private, unspeakable queerness (40:17 – 47:20). To achieve the desired

narrative effect, I began with a live, retrospective narration establishing the specific

moment in history in question by recounting my situation, feelings and difficulties at that

time. I then shifted, within the live narration, to verbally 'inhabit' that reconstructed past

moment, a direct engagement with the temporal moment being described. This was the

optimal point to initiate, via QLab (a media file playback cuing software)[1], the pre-produced,

mixed audio of the bog and forest. Once the scene had been set up and engaged with by the

retrospective narration, I was then free to physically 'inhabit' that moment through

gestural/physical theatre on stage and thereby physically re-enact that teenage tree hug:

Fig. 2.17: *All That Is Solid* (Limerick performance, April 2019).
The 'tree hugging' scene.

---

[1] QLab is a cue-based, multimedia playback software for macOS, intended for use in theatre and live entertainment. It can handle multiple sources of live and pre-produced media (audio, video, MIDI) as well as pre-programmed cues including fades, layering of media, and lighting configurations. For my purposes, QLab was a very useful tool for managing pre-produced media elements (audio and video) that needed to start and stop at very specific moments in a largely improvised, spoken word, on-stage performance. As the spoken word components of *All That Is Solid* were not tightly scripted, assigning cuing responsibilities to an off-stage technician would not have worked. The software enabled me to fully focus on my performance and to maintain both spontaneity and control all through it.

At this specific moment of the performance, non-verbal voice is being expressed on the gestural level of my physical reconstruction on stage (approaching and hugging an on-stage tree) but also through the pre-produced, mixed audio playing out through QLab, an audio mix containing the by-now personified, vocal sounds of the benign forest space but also the close-mic'd sounds of my breathing as I hug the tree in that pre-produced sonic reconstruction.

This kind of vocalisation of non-human sounds is also a key vocal tool in *A Sign*, where the sound of water and of a water plumbing system are given sustained vocal power. The film opens with a shot on Rosaline's hands as she scoops up water from a holy water font in a church. The sound of the trickling and splashing water is the intentional dominant characteristic in the soundtrack at that moment. From that point on, I wanted the sounds of water (and of the water in the crumbling plumbing system in Rosaline's apartment building) to be a recurrent and increasingly insistent voice which she fails to interpret until the exploding pipe and water leak of the final, climactic scene of the film. This specific non-verbal voice required considerable plotting work when I was writing the script and editing the film. I had to progressively increase the vocal clarity of the water-related sounds as the film progressed, moving from initial, mild suggestion (lowly creaking pipes; 1:36 – 1:56) to a more insistent declaration (an irregular, sudden water surge from her kitchen sink; 9:37 – 9:46), to the climax with the overpowering aqueous 'statement' of the finale (pipe loudly bursting; 14:06 – 14:43), and ending with the soft, restorative sounds of dripping water in the film's denouement.

Whereas non-verbal voice enabled me to introduce a subtleness, depth and nuance that I feel spoken word is less capable of attaining, working with non-verbal voice did come with its own perils. The open, suggestive, non-deterministic quality of non-verbal voice can be wonderful to work with, especially when it leads to the possibility of a variety of feasible understandings and interpretations of the work, but it can also easily lead to confusion and obscurity on the part of the listener or viewer. My experiences of working with non-verbal voice in audio, audio-visual and hybrid formats led me to re-evaluate verbal voice once again, this time prizing its unique ability to anchor and contextualise non-verbal voice thereby helping maximise the latter's vocal potential by mitigating the risk of audience confusion due to its use. The next section of this chapter will examine the methods I used in my work to achieve this.

2.2 Verbal voice as vocal material in my work

As well as having the general ability to deliver precision and clarity, verbal voice can undertake various other narrative functions – as outlined in the previous chapter – such as being the provider of a macro-level overview; as a tool to set up other voices (verbal and non-verbal) and, in the case of factual animation, as a generator of worlds and bodies (or 'vocalic bodies'/'vocalic spaces,' as per Steven Connor's phraseology) in those animated worlds (2000, 35). While the primary focus of this section is on verbal voice in my own work, the section acknowledges that verbal and non-verbal voice often co-exist in practice work, overlapping and bleeding into each other. Therefore, in addition to its primary focus on verbal voice, this section will also draw on some examples of non-verbal voice co-existing and dialoguing with verbal voice. In this section, I will specifically consider: (a) the ability of verbal voice to occasion narrative temporal fluidity in *All That Is Solid*, 'Democracy Derailed,'

Gail, *Irish Language Renaissance NI, Rohingya*, and *Tunisian Women Politicians*; (b) the potential for audience criticality to occur due to the layering of vocal material in *All That Is Solid* and 'Libya Curriculum Reform'; and (c) the problems, solutions and reflections arising from the engagement with non-English language voices in 'Democracy Derailed,' *Gail*, *Irish Language Renaissance NI*, 'Libya Curriculum Reform,' and *Tunisian Women Politicians*.

2.2.a Verbal voice and temporal fluidity

Verbal voice has a potent ability to shift a story about in time, a temporal dexterity that non-verbal voice also has but to a far less articulate degree. There is this temporal fluidity – steered mostly by verbal voice – in all of my work. In the interest of maintaining a clarity of temporal orientation within factual media narrative outputs, it is extremely useful to establish a clear 'present moment' in the story. This is typically a moment in time that serves as an anchor for the storyteller and the story they tell. Establishing a clear 'present moment' facilitates temporal fluidity and enables the storyteller to bring the audience to periods in the past or in the speculative future without causing confusion in the listener/viewer. There are certain 'anchoring' devices, which one can use, that operate as a kind of compass, pointing to the established 'present moment' in the story and thereby helping orient the listener/viewer.

The 'piece-to-camera' (PTC) convention of broadcast journalism is a solid example of such an application of verbal voice's ability to temporally anchor (Marr 2004). When working with colleague Charles Levinson on 'Democracy Derailed' for *The Wall Street Journal*, we had to be mindful to write and draft many pieces-to-camera as we worked our way through the complex story of the unravelling of the initial gains made by the Egyptian revolution.

When editing the film, I ultimately did not use all the PTCs that I had written and shot in Cairo. However, the ones I did use clearly and efficiently returned the story (and by extension, the viewer) to the 'present' of the documentary. I also appropriated the PTC convention – typical of broadcast newsgathering – for use in animation, in *Gail*. After the story moves into Gail's inner imaginary life, having begun in the physical world of East Belfast, it was important to return the story back to the physical, present moment of the animation; an animated present that is purposefully indexical to the real-world East Belfast which the target audience actually lives in. Doing this helped me bring the discursive point of the story home for that target audience. 'Host Intros,' where the host in the radio or TV station reads out live a prepared introduction to the pre-produced package about to be aired; and 'Standard Out Cues' (or SOCs), where the journalist signs off, at the end of the package, with her/his name and location, have similar anchoring properties as the 'Piece-to-Camera' (Marr 2004). I made use of 'Host Intros' and 'Standard Out Cues' to perform this temporal anchoring role in 'Democracy Derailed,' 'Libya Curriculum Reform,' *Irish Language Renaissance NI*, *Rohingya*, and *Tunisian Women Politicians*.

As stated, once the 'present moment' of a story has been established, significant temporal migration, via the verbal voice, is possible with low risk of confusion to the audience. In *Rohingya*, a journalistic radio report with no ambient sound or soundbites, this capacity enabled me to use my narrating voice alone to pitch back and forward in time. This same function of temporal fluidity can be achieved also by non-scripted verbal voice in stories, such as happens in the factual animation *Gail*, where the verbal voice of the real-life Gail McCune moves the story to a physical, remembered moment in the past (first day of Irish language class) and then proceeds to move the story into a more internal, subjective

temporality (her cerebral experience of acquiring language). In *All That Is Solid*, I used this capacity for temporal fluidity inherent in verbal voice to help reconstruct moments in the past such the altar boy/bell ringing scene (25:50 – 28:25) and the scene of lonely solace in the bogs/forest of my teens (40:17 – 47:20). Once the audience's sense of the temporality in the story has been secured by using such anchoring devices as those mentioned above, producers can then layer information in the story and build a more complex narrative texture.

2.2.b Vocal layering and triggering criticality

By adding layers containing other vocal information – both verbal and non-verbal – to the primary verbal voice, additional potency and meaning can be achieved. Layering in this way can help facilitate the occurrence of dialogue between co-positioned vocal layers thus creating a 'dialectical distance' (Bruzzi 2006, 59) in the work. This dialogue between layers in a story and its attendant dialectical distance can be used by producers to help trigger audience criticality from within the story's fabric. Through this kind of use of verbal voice in my work, I have come to appreciate its particular value for the creation and amplification of audience criticality relating to narratives I have created. For example, in the altar boy/church bell ringing scene in *All That Is Solid*, I initiated the return to the past through an overview narration, spoken live on stage from my present-day perspective. Once that past moment was established retrospectively, I played out the pre-produced ambient sound of children playing in a belfry (non-verbal voice) thus creating two layers of voice. This co-positioning of vocal layers with their differing temporalities and points of view created the possibility for dialogue between them and thereby the opportunity for criticality in the audience vis-à-vis the ideas emerging from that dialogue. Once the non-verbal voice of the

ambient sound was sufficiently installed in the performance, I recommended live, spoken

word narration but this time I was speaking from within the scene, inhabiting that past

moment; a further example and use of the porousness of verbal and non-verbal voice. Onto

this, I layered physical performance: climbing up a small step ladder that was on stage (to

represent the actual, far longer ladder in the church belfry of my home village) and then

jumping off it – when the right cue came in the ambient sound playing out through QLab –

to feign the grabbing of a bell rope and the plunging down in time with the giggles and bell

peals emerging from the ambient sound playback.

Fig. 2.18: *All That Is Solid* **(Belfast performance, August 2019).**
Standing atop a stepladder, narrating live and about to jump when the right cue came in the pre-produced
audio which was simultaneously playing out via QLab.

It's useful to break down the vocal layers at play at this moment in the story (the same moment captured in the photograph above):

1. Present day, live narration from me on stage;

2. Pre-produced ambient sound mix (with activated vocal capacities) being played out on the sound system and which helps reconstruct the past moment in question;

3. Narration delivered live on stage but temporally pitched to be located within the past moment; and

4. Physical movement on stage, inhabiting and animating the reconstructed past moment. [In my work up to this point, I had worked only with audio or video-based voice (verbal and non-verbal). With *All That Is Solid*, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, I added a new voice to the repertoire: 'gestural voice'].

When I had these four simultaneous layers of voice at my disposal in the live, on-stage delivery context of *All That Is Solid*, I found the storytelling even more exhilarating. With this set-up, I could apply these layers varyingly and give them different degrees of dominance in the overall combination, according to the specific energy and dynamic I was feeling from the audience at that point of the story in any given performance of the piece. This exhilaration was certainly due, in part, to the inherent thrill of live performance, but it was also due to the control and spontaneity that QLab's multi-layering capacity afforded me as I performed. It was a significant departure from my previous experiences of creating criticality through layering, which had been entirely limited to pre-produced and edited media work.

Layering of voice (verbal and non-verbal) does not need to be this multi-layered or complex to be effective. Simple layering manoeuvres in editing of video storytelling can trigger

criticality. In TV journalism, it is often called 'coverage' or 'cutaways' (Stewart & Alexander 2016, 364). Good coverage involves 'b-roll' footage which contains or shows more information than is delivered by the speaking voice (be that of the scripted narrator or the non-scripted social actor) and can thereby inflect that verbal voice with the additional information it contains (Stewart & Alexander 2016, 315). There is an informational differential here, between verbal and non-verbal voice, and that differential can facilitate the triggering of criticality in the viewer. I frequently use this tool in my video work. At the 2:50 point in 'Libya Curriculum Reform,' for example, Hatem Mhenni, a science expert at Libya's National Curriculum Reform Office speaks on camera about his office's work changing scientific symbols in Libyan schoolbooks, from Ghaddafi-mandated Arabic letter symbols to international-standard Latin letter symbols ('cm' for centimetre; 'mm' for millimetre; etc.). Over his voice is layered a shot of an example of an old, Ghaddafi-era Libyan schoolbook with handwritten annotations signifying what exact changes needed to be made. This layered-on shot does not merely show what Mhenni is talking about it; it is another (non-verbal) voice which dialogues with Mhenni's verbal voice and provides an insight into the process of the syllabus reform. The particular scrawl of the handwritten annotations and their irregular placement on the page as seen in the layered-on b-roll, when combined with Mhenni's verbal voice, provide the possibility for spectator criticality concerning the process of the revision; the people doing it; the effort involved, etc. This layering and resultant facilitation of criticality is of course not restricted to the video format. In audio packages in the portfolio (*Irish Language Renaissance NI, Rohingya* and *Tunisian Women Politicians*) similar criticality emerges from layering of verbal and non-verbal voices.

2.2.c New voices/other tongues

This chapter began with a move beyond journalism practice in search of what I considered more reliable ways to represent experience and approach truth. I was about a year into covering the 'Arab Spring' revolutions when that shift happened and I had noticed that the nature of speech in journalistic interviews I was undertaking was changing. During interviews I did in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya; and later in Syria, I noticed a new, uncensored, fearless verbosity and an urgency of speech that seemed to me to be not only about the interview at hand but also about the larger job of building a multifaceted, multi-vocal democratic society based on human rights, equality and mutual respect (Tufte 2013). The revolutions and wars that unleashed my explorations of other, non-verbal vocal strategies as better ways through which to convey experience and approach truth also unleashed – at least during the heady, initial post-revolutionary period I was covering – many 'new' voices into the public sphere, voices that had hitherto been silenced, censored, repressed, or persecuted (Sadiqi 2018). Women; movements of political Islam; Salafists and other ultra-conservative Muslims; LGBTQI+ people; secularists; liberals; poor people; and certain ethnicities/races were – for a period of time before backlash came from reactionary political and/or military forces – able to speak more freely than before and with less fear of state retribution. These voices spoke about who they were, what they had experienced, and what they wanted for the future.

While working on projects like 'Democracy Derailed,' *Tunisian Women Politicians* and 'Libya Curriculum Reform,' the representation of the diverse, vocal plurality emerging through the revolutionary movements – and in the resultant post-revolutionary public discourse in each country – became a sharp priority for me. This concern with the representation of new

voices and vocal diversity has serious ethical dimensions. Therefore, in pre-production, when shaping the stories for these projects, I was mindful to include a broader range of voices than the urban, middle class, anglophone, liberal voices that were getting disproportionately more airtime than others on Western TV media outlets such as the BBC and CNN. The video stories I was producing were for video desks supplying the websites of legacy print outlets (such as *Time Magazine* and *The Wall Street Journal*) and because the editorial hierarchy of those relatively new video desks was far smaller and had more autonomy of action than editors at the aforementioned TV networks had, I possessed significant power and agency to include a range of 'new' voices that I might not have had if I were a reporter at one of those TV networks.

It was important, I felt, to include the voices of those who could not speak English. While the privileging of English-speaking interviewees saves producers of English language news precious time in a newsgathering production context that is always time critical, the repeated and widespread instance of English language bias meant that – in English language Western media at least – the story of the revolutions was being told from an overwhelmingly urban and middle-class perspective, as those are the niches of society with access to English medium education. Working with non-English language speaking participants threw up interesting questions and dilemmas for me when it came to verbal voice and equity of voices. While it is commendable to avoid English language bias when it comes to whose voices are included in a piece of journalism, the current nature of linear media formats means that some sort of translation-related technical intervention is required on such voices. In my own journalistic work, I most often wrote the English language translation of non-English language soundbites in the script and sent that with the edited media file to the broadcaster. Prior to airing it, they would then have the file dubbed

in-house. This approach is evident in 'Democracy Derailed' and 'Libya Curriculum Reform.'

Foreign languages are interesting to consider as vocal material in the context of this thesis.

They are technically verbal but, unless the listener/viewer understands them, their main

vocal strength is their non-linguistic components (emotion, rhythm, accent, grain). Dubbing

or subtitling over this vocal material creates a layering that facilitates audience criticality

similar to that studied earlier in this chapter. That said, using dubbing as a default tool by

which to include non-English language voices appears quite problematic to me. In the case

of my work, the person dubbing these non-English language voices was often in an office in

New York or London and had no meaningful connection to the location or context I was

reporting from. This approach has led, in part, to a dubbing convention in broadcast

journalism that is vocally flat, neutral, and emotionless. It also narrowed the scope of

representation in my work with the dominant/domineering dub voice being nearly always

one of a native English speaker and frequently one that was middle class, educated and in a

'preferred' accent – 'Received Pronunciation' in the U.K.; 'standard American' in the

U.S./Canada (Darwish & Orero 2014). The linguistic information of the original, foreign

language utterance is mostly carried over – albeit via translation – but the extra-linguistic

information: the emotion, rhythm and texture of the voice is reduced (through fading it

down in the edit mix) and flattened by the dubbed voice that is layered over it.

Occasionally, if time permitted, I took a different tack. Instead of having the foreign

language voices in a story dubbed by a far-flung stranger (in New York or London), I would

either narrate myself over the soundbites in question by paraphrasing their content, or I

would find people and guide them as we recorded their dubs. This latter approach can be

heard in *Tunisian Women Politicians*, which I reported in Tunis but edited in Brussels. I got

my housemates at the time in Brussels, all francophone, to provide the dub voices. Because of our close rapport, I could instruct them as to the kind of context the original utterance occurred in and the emotions that were at play in the moment of interview. This is a way of 'restoring' – by transferring it to the dub voice – some of the emotion, rhythm and texture of the original utterance but it remains an interpretation of the original voice, which can be problematic in itself. It is important to also remember, from the previous chapter, that this original voice being dubbed is not 'pure' (Bruzzi 2006, 75) and has already been highly curated and vetted by the processes and negotiations that form part of the mechanics of the soundbite convention of mainstream media production.

Other techniques I have used to give non-English language verbal voice more space and agency in media stories is to let the original voice play out longer before dipping down its volume for the dub voice to come in over it. This sustained burst of the original voice gives listeners and viewers more time to absorb the character of the original verbal voice, its cadences, emotions and textures. It also 'validates the dignity of the person whose voice is part of the production' (Martin 2017, 208). This also heightens the sense of what is lost once dubbing is imposed. The verbal voice is reduced in the mix and flattened by the overlaid dubbing voice and thereby becomes, for the most part, a low-volume non-verbal voice of sorts; a kind of sound bed that signals other language verbality without undertaking the full function of verbal voice. There are examples of this technique in the *Irish Language Renaissance NI* radio report where I created space for the Irish language verbal voice to play out, unmediated by dubbing manoeuvrers. However, in that same report, there are two speakers – Liam Ó Flannagáin and Jake MacSiacais – who are Irish language activists and live their lives through the Irish language. We undertook all our pre-interview discussions

through Irish but just before switching on the audio recorder, I asked them if they could do the interview through English. To my mind, at that moment, English was the preferred option as it would avoid the problems of dubbing and I knew both men were fluent in English. I now regret this decision. Language is political and speaking and living in Irish, for these men, is a serious act of political resistance to the legacies of British colonialism in Ireland. Compelling them to speak English – the 'coloniser's tongue' as they see it – was an act of political violence on my part but then, so too would fading down their Irish language utterances and dubbing over them with English. I still have no neat solution to this language dilemma but new possibilities are now emerging from recent innovations in digital distribution and production technology such as smart audio and multi-track subtitling being introduced to on-demand platforms.

When producing *Gail*, which is one of a series of similar animations that forms a social media-led communications campaign, subtitling was the translation method of choice from the beginning as that has now become, by and large, the de facto default method for video on social media. This meant that short instances of verbal voice in the Irish language could exist without intervention on the audio level. In addition to the concerns raised above, dubbing the Irish here would have badly disrupted the flow and intimacy of the monologue testimony of Gail McCune in *Gail*. I used subtitling for similar reasons in *All That Is Solid*, to maintain flow and audience understanding, much in the same way that it has been used for years in other live contexts, such as foreign language theatre productions. In my case, I imported any of the pre-produced audio files that included Irish and/or Portuguese language voices into Adobe Premiere and added subtitles, exporting it as a black-screened video file that would show up the white lettered subtitles whenever non-English language

voices occurred in the piece. The video files were projected via QLab onto a screen on stage, not far from where I performed.

The expansion of focus in my practice beyond the verbocentric strictures of conventional broadcast journalism, as covered in this PhD, led me to consider various forms of non-verbal voice – silence, gazes, melodies, ambient sound – but it also caused me to reconsider anew the uses and effectiveness of verbal voice such as: the temporal fluidity which verbal voice can assure; the potential for audience criticality through layering of voice; and the benefits and shortfalls of integrating non-English language voice in media stories. The inciting incident to this expansion was the crisis that occurred in my practice in 2012. That crisis was, in many ways, about power and the sense of loss of power in my ability to sincerely, accurately and honourably represent – using the journalistic tools I was invested in at the time – the heightened complexity of fact and lived experience that emerged with the advent of the Syrian conflict. The next and final chapter in this thesis will return to this notion of power, but from the position of having regained (some) power through the explorations and experimentations with voice across my practice. In that chapter, I will reflect on the dynamics, transfers and accruals of power brought about when voice is generated from silence and when the past is reconstructed, reactivated and revised through re-enactments. In addition to reflections on my own power as producer, the chapter will also consider power and voice at play *within* the work: who gets to speak, and how that utterance is represented and triangulated with other voices/vocal powers in a given output.

***

CHAPTER 3: REFLECTION

In this chapter, I will reflect on the sources of power I discovered once I began to broaden out from the conventions of broadcast journalism and embark on the quest for other techniques and tools with which to relate experience and approach truth. Firstly, I will examine the power dynamics and transfers that exist within the work in the portfolio, both conventional broadcast journalism work and work outside of that genre. Secondly, I will explore power in the contexts of a) the use of media tools to generate voice from silence and then b) the staging of that voice in re-enactments.

3.1 Escaping Expository: transfers in power, shifts in power, gains in power

Significant shifts in power occurred within the kinds of outputs I was producing once I permitted myself to unmoor from the familiar conventions of the 'news paradigm' (Schudson 2012, 191) and the expository mode. When compared to 'Democracy Derailed,' 'Libya Curriculum Reform,' *Irish Language Renaissance NI* and *Rohingya* – all of which were produced in the journalistic expository mode – works like *Voluntary Exile, Gail* and *All That Is Solid* represent a significant shift in the distribution of storytelling power among the various voices in these works. This shift revealed to me some of that perpetual tension, mentioned in the literature review, between dictatorial and democratic impulses that Bruzzi (2006) and Fox (2018) each assert is at the heart of practice in the expository mode (both in journalism and documentary). By choosing other formats and modes of representation, ones that gave social actors in my work more space and agency to articulate their experience than they would have had in the expository mode, I was invested in Fox's democratising idea that every speaker has an innate, potential 'documentary value' (2018,

86) and Couldry's notion of voice being an 'irreducible part' of human agency (2009, 580).

Laura Rascaroli couches this in the larger 'politics of experience' (2009, 107) which emerged

from the 1960s to eclipse and reject the myth of objectivity that had held sway up to then.

Underpinning this new approach that I was taking was a much larger *trust* in the social

actor(s) whom I was engaging with. In this context, Nash sees trust occurring when both the

participating social actor 'and documentary-maker are free agents acting on the actions of

the other, within a web of power relations' (2010, 28).

This same trust informs Wendy Pearlman's approach in her seminal book on the Syrian war,

We Crossed A Bridge And It Trembled: Voices from Syria, an oral history compilation of

verbatim, direct accounts from Syrians themselves, devoid of any narrator-like presence

attempting to contextualise, make sense of or analyse their contributions. 'I was convinced

that they provided not only personal anecdotes,' Pearlman says in the book's introduction,

'but also analytical insight that could explain developments in their country without the

need for additional narration' (2017, xxxiv). Couldry echoes Pearlman's conviction, adding

that voice (in this case, in the form of testimony) is 'reflexive and continuous, an ongoing,

embodied process of reflection' (2009, 580). For both Pearlman and Couldry, this innate

vocal capacity can facilitate trust, on the part of the producer, that the social actor *can* exist

without vocal accompaniment and has the intrinsic capacity for both articulation and

analysis. This same conviction underpins my use and positioning of non-verbal voices of the

Syrian men in *Voluntary Exile*; the verbatim monologue of Gail McCune in *Gail*; and the

lengthy, uninterrupted utterances of numerous social actors (such as my sister, Sallyanne

Duncan; Ian Malcom; and Mairin Hurndall) who formed part of *All That Is Solid*. Had I

produced these outputs within the conventions of the journalistic expository mode, their

utterances would have been subjected to the restrictive, highly formatted conventions of the 'soundbite': short; punchy; one idea per utterance; as simple as possible; a linear progression of logic without repetition or 'false starts'; the absence of many aspects of natural speech such as non-sequiturs, filled pauses, hesitation markers (Stewart & Alexander 2016). In the new formats and approaches I was experimenting with, those rules were suspended and a more ethnographic 'staging of subjectivity' – with all the agency and power that that brings to the social actor – was possible (Rascaroli 2009, 108).

Regardless of the transferences of vocal power happening within the work, the authorial power of the producer – that aforementioned 'symbolic power differential' as per Couldry (2005) – still remained intact through all of this. Despite the increased engagement with and trust of social actors' vocal power, all utterances and vocal material – in any work I was producing, no matter how experimental or 'rebellious' – was ultimately subject to my own authorial powers of 'interested selection' (Maras 2013, 59) positioning and sequencing in the production and post-production phases. While Gail McCune speaks in an uninterrupted monologue for the entire one minute and twenty seconds of *Gail*, that seemingly autonomous monologue was cut down from an original two-hour interview where I asked the questions (i.e.: controlled the framework of the 'conversation') and she answered. While the abovementioned vocal power gained by social actors in this more observational mode is significant, it also creates a certain illusion of compositional power, on the part of the social actor, that masks a whole system of authorial control, on the part of the producer. This specific power structure does not change very much, in degree, from one mode to the next. In both modes (expository and observational), I chose who was included; I composed the questions; I edited the answers; and I shaped the edit of the final output. In

this sense, regardless of my changes of mode, the fundamental macro-level hierarchies and rules of engagement of the work altered very little, if at all. That said, the substance of what the social actors say can have immense power over all the aforementioned unilateral decisions a producer can take during the whole process of making work. Pearlman likens the raw, lengthy initial interview she did with each of the participating social actors for *We Crossed A Bridge And It Trembled* to a 'precious stone' from which she cut 'a piece that displayed its unique gem-like properties and then arrange those gems in such a way that they together constituted a picture greater than the sum of its parts.' (2017, 35). Regardless of my chosen mode or approach, I was always dependent on the social actors in my work, that they deliver, through their speech, those 'gem-like properties' with which I could tell a good story.

In the expository mode, this power dynamic is even more fraught because the narrator feigns omnipotence when in actuality, she/he is dependent on the social actor's discreet (and discrete) vocal powers. Nash argues that power in the producer/social actor relationship 'flows in multiple directions' and that this has implications for 'concepts of authorship and voice' (2012, 329). For example, when producing *Irish Language Renaissance NI*, social actor Jake MacSiacais gave me a 'gem-like' interview from which I could cut the following soundbite: 'If we hadn't've had it so hard, we would never have had it so good.' That utterance was gem-like to me because it did so much narrative heavy lifting: it harkened back to the 'Troubles' as the source of the community solidarity behind the language revival; it repeated the theme of the package; and it carried in it the feeling of a mantra, suggesting that MacSiacais's utterance was potentially a more generally-held belief. On top of that, it was all accomplished within just three seconds, an economy which added

to its gem-like value in this journalistic context, where complex stories must be told in short periods of time (both in terms of package length and in terms of the production time for the package).

In the context of authorial power, these dependencies are of interest because they belie a deeper, veiled dynamic of co-authorship. It is an interesting complication of the notion that participating social actors are inherently subordinate in most kinds of factual media narratives. In her work on power dynamics between documentary markers and participating social actors, Nash explores the veiled weaknesses and anxieties of the producer, a perpetual 'underlying fear' that a social actor can 'simply change their mind and walk away' (2010, 26). As illustrated above, there are explicit projections of compositional power (on the part of the author/producer) and assertions of subjugation (of the social actor) at work in each of the modes I have operated in. However, these obvious power positions (author/narrator as 'God'; social actor as subjugate) disguise less obvious inter-dependencies; a system of circuits and sub-circuits – Nash's 'web of power relations' (2010, 24) – through which vocal and compositional power can flow, exchange and morph. These considerations carry through and are relevant to the focus of the next section of this chapter, which moves from considerations of power as it is negotiated and shared between various voices within my work to other considerations: firstly, of the ability of media to generate voice and narrative from silence through reconstruction, and secondly, the discursive power afforded to the silenced by activating those reconstructed voices in re-enactment.

3.2.a Reconstruction: making silence speak

Claude Lanzmann says that his film, *Shoah* (1985), was 'made against its own possibility'

(qtd. in Rabinowitz 1994, 30). As a documentarian, he had almost no material evidence to

draw on. The film, as its title suggests, is about the Holocaust, something which Lanzmann

refers to as 'not only the destruction of a people, but a destruction of the destruction' (qtd.

in Rabinowitz 1994, 30). This raises a more general question: how can media be used to tell

the story and represent the experiences of those whose voices, for whatever reason, have

been silenced or whose experience has been erased? Ultimately, Lanzmann felt that the

documentary form did not quite have the capacity to do so. Instead, he insisted that *Shoah*

fell under the banner of art rather than documentary because 'only art can ask the

questions of history and memory his [Lanzmann's] film attempts to answer' (Rabinowitz

1994, 28).

A significant part of my more recent work has been taken up by a similar narrative dilemma:

the generation of voice and story where there is no pre-existing empirical trace or

documentation of experience. This concern intersects significantly with Couldry's work on

what he calls the 'materiality of voice': those resources which are external to the speaker

and are thereby beyond her or his control, to varying degrees – language; the externalised,

material form the voice takes; the social status necessary to be recognised as having voice in

the first place (2010, 8). This generative tendency, in terms of the creation of voice, showed

up initially in my work on *A Sign*, where the story arc of the Georges character is taken up

with him recreating – in puppet form – a lost love (Florence) whom Rosaline reminds him of

when they first encounter each other. Throughout the film, he progressively generates a

physical presence in the form of the puppet from nothing but his own memory and

imagination. In *Gail*, we see a similar 'conjuring' at work. Connor's concepts of 'vocalic' bodies' and 'vocalic spaces' are particularly useful to consider in this instance. 'The voice […] seems to colour and model its container,' he argues (2000, 35), thereby generating the animated world of the story (Roe 2013, 96). In *Gail*, the real-world voice of Gail McCune generates the 'vocalic' animated exterior world and bodies of East Belfast and the interior life of her own learning experience. In *All That Is Solid*, I brought similar generative strategies – spoken word storytelling; re-enactments; evocative and narratively charged sound design and props – to the service of my own personal excavations. Using these strategies, I plumbed the unobserved, undocumented silences of my queer youth to then generate – on stage – voices, bodies and scenes from the past which I could re-inhabit in the presence of the audience. There are, of course, all kinds of political and societal consequences that come with 'making silence speak.' Edward Said asserts that silence is of significant importance to historians of subalternity. By finding a way to vocalise, he argues, those who have been oppressed and denied vocal agency can 'shatter [the oppressor's] wall-to-wall description leaving new space to be filled by people speaking for themselves' (2000, 523).

In the work I have made that generated verbal voice and personal agency from immaterial, voiceless experience, there are a number of considerations which are useful to larger reflections on power. As mentioned in the literature review, Street argues that silence can be a potent motor for the triggering of imagination and the generation of vocal capacity – 'taking meaning where words cannot go' (2017, 28). In *Gail*, the generative silence is squarely political. The idea of Protestant unionists, like Gail McCune, embracing and celebrating the Irish language, flies in the face of both the hegemonic sectarian logic that

exists in Northern Ireland and the current culture of political unionism there. For that

reason, Irish speaking unionists like Gail McCune have been minimised, denied public

representation and therefore effectively silenced in the public arena. This silence is the

primary motor behind *Gail* and the larger animation series it is part of. That larger project –

called 'Ulster Gaelic, It's Yours Too!' – seeks to redress that silence by creating

representation and a public voice for the growing Irish-speaking minority within the unionist

community in Northern Ireland. Animation's unique capacity for fluctuations in indexicality

has also had power affordances for the various voices (including Gail McCune's) in the

project. By shifting the indexicality of the image, I intended to signal the real, documentary

value of the person speaking and, at the same time, protect their privacy and easy

identification. In *Gail*, changes in indexicality also enabled me to represent Gail McCune's

interior life and make narrative connections and suggestions within the material. I used

similar manipulations of indexicality (by purposefully shooting images out of focus, to

varying degrees of blur) to convey ideas of moral upheaval and the destabilisation of

personal agency in *Voluntary Exile*, as mentioned in the last chapter. With *All That Is Solid*,

as stated, I had no primary source material to draw on for the purposes of documenting the

queer experience of my youth. This utter silence compelled me to generate voice and

physicality in the piece through reconstruction and re-enactment.

3.2.b Re-enactment: revising the past

Margulies argues that re-enactments provide the possibility to 'critically revise the past and

[…] probe the interface between history and personal experience' (2019, 7). It's a kind of

history making, one in which subjectivities are valid 'historical agents' (Rabinowitz 1994, 32).

For Sven Lütticken, re-enactment can also be used as a tool of resistance in 'acts of

liberation' from hegemonic, bourgeois historicity (2005, 33) or against the 'commodification of the past' (2005, 21). In *All That Is Solid*, I used live, spoken word narrative combined with evocative/'vocalised' natural sound mixes; excerpts of public-facing media, such as the Margaret Thatcher speeches or the theme tune *to E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (Spielberg 1982); and on-stage gestural communication to reconstruct a past version of myself and past moments from my own history. Then, by employing re-enactment within those reconstructions, I was able to regain a certain power over the past by generating voices, bodies and moments from that time so as to encounter, critique and revise them.

At the centre of narrative re-enactment is a hybrid figure who can exist in the past or the present, or both at the same time. Margulies calls it the 'split figure' (2019, 5). Because of its 'protean temporality,' she argues, this 'split figure' of re-enactment has significant powers of revision (2019, 6). In *All That Is Solid*, I was able to verbally reconstruct the moment of the 'teenage tree hug' that I described in detail in the last chapter; then physically re-enact it on stage; and then comment on, analyse and make sense of that moment from a present-day perspective through live, spoken word commentary. Part of the power gained from such a re-enactment is the act of rendering public the secret, scary feelings and experiences of my past. The split figure's power of 'multi-directional temporality' enables re-enactments to be 'effective stages for actualization, exemplary purposes, and critical analysis' (Margulies 2019, 11). By using this function of the 'split figure' device while on stage, I could easily switch between the past moment being re-enacted and the present-day moment on stage and thereby generate a rich dialectic through which to develop sustained and valuable criticality both for myself and (potentially) for the witnessing audience. Within these layers of compositional and revisionist activity, I could also add in – via the pre-recorded sound mix

played out through QLab – the non-verbal 'biotic voices' (Toop 2004, 60) and 'geophony' (Watson qtd. in Street 2015, 98) of the forest and bog. Much like the broader criticality visited in the last chapter, this criticality was also facilitated through layering, this time via the temporal layering of past and present voices and actions.

In order for shared, public criticality to occur, the re-enactment needs to work as an act of public communication. In her work on the relationship between enunciator, text and audience in autobiographical essay films, Rascaroli asserts that these films' 'monologic, self-centred structure always hides a dialogue, which seeks a relationship with the audience' (2009, 109). In *All That Is Solid*, this dialogue played out in a very palpable way for me while I performed. The audience was sitting within a few metres of me; not a removed abstraction as it would have been if the project were an essay film. This physical proximity played a role in the 'alchemy' of the re-enactment I was trying to concoct on stage. It underlined the public ownership of both the re-enactment and the split-figure contained within it. Quoting Rowena Santos Aquino, Margulies asserts that the 'split figure' of re-enactment is 'applicable to a collective since it narrates not only one's past but also references others' experiences and memories' (2019, 10). In *All That Is Solid*, I had to take care to make the 'split figure' in the work a functional, generous, public body; one that was accessible and legible to people from different backgrounds of experience than mine. I achieved this, in part, through a continual blending of personal, micro-level details with collective, macro-level details – the combination of private and public memories. Culturally iconic figures like Thatcher and E.T., in addition to communally-shared experiences like school and religious services, were blended with – and became public access points to – the private intimacies, feelings, and experiences of my childhood. My intention in doing so was that the audience

had the possibility to 'become complicit in the process of meaning making, of making history' (Rabinowitz 1994, 32). In this kind of participatory, historical culture, Margulies argues, 'the replay of a contingent past activity raises it to a momentary universality making its value discernible for the present' (2019, 10).

In this sort of excavation of history, where primary sources are non-existent, one must read 'for absences as much as for presences,' says Rabinowitz, adding that 'the weight of evidence lies in the spoken word [of the witness] and its ability to evoke visual memory as the foundations of historical justice.' Lanzmann, a Jewish filmmaker, was aiming to achieve historical justice for his people with *Shoah* despite an absence of material documentation with which to make it. 'What was called the Holocaust was a tabula rasa,' he said in his film *The Karski Report* (2010), when speaking of the making of *Shoah*, 'and each time I found a survivor it was like a powerful exhumation.' Simone de Beauvoir stated that Lanzmann's art is in 'making places speak, in reviving them through voices' (1995, iii). In such a context, it is not necessary for the audience to see for themselves but to 'look at those who have looked and to hear their emotional testimony' (Lanzmann qtd. in Rabinowitz 1994, 29). In this storytelling paradigm, also extensively used in *All That Is Solid*, voice and story are generated from silence and used to overcome the forces that mandated that silence and to try to correct the damage wrought through that silencing. Through this approach to narrative production, I (re)gained power at multiple stages: through the mere generation of voice from and despite the silence; through the critical reflection, revisions and corrections that were applied to that past once it had been reconstructed; and through the sharing, with a witnessing public, of the entire story and story-making process.

Pocock sees 'politics itself as a language-system and language itself as a political system' (1973, 28). In our verbocentric culture, verbal voice is frequently viewed in relation to and as an instrument of power (what one says, who gets to speak, etc.). In the context of my own practice work, this concluding chapter has reaffirmed and expanded that notion to also include considerations of non-verbal voice. It has also reflected on the power consequences that both kinds of voice possess. This reflection was done in relation to the shift in my practice beyond the limits of journalistic expository mode; the efforts to generate/reconstruct voice from an absence of voice due to oppression or erasure; and the re-enactments of experience within those reconstructions.

***

CONCLUSION

The professional crisis which I experienced in 2012, while a reporter based in Beirut, represented a loss of storytelling power that triggered a journey of research and discovery in my creative practice which has been covered in this thesis and which continues to this day. By unmooring myself from the rigid conventions and dictates of broadcast journalism practice, I was able to encounter, appropriate and adapt alternative approaches, many of which revolved around voice, both verbal and non-verbal. These approaches, in turn, had an impact on vectors of power for people contained within the outputs (narrator and social actors) and people outside of the output (producer and audience). This thesis has explored three research questions that relate to voice and power in my work and has confirmed what I had instinctually felt when I was making the work:

1. That verbal and non-verbal voice both have discrete and unique narrative capacities and were used in my work – individually or in combination – to generate representation with a deeper subjective truth.

2. That layering voices (verbal and/or non-verbal) creates distinct dialectical possibilities in my work which facilitated criticality in the audiences' consumption and perception of the work.

3. That verbal and non-verbal voice can generate power shifts and transferences a) between producers and various participants associated with narrative media outputs and b) between representations of people that are enshrined within narrative media outputs.

The above findings, emerging from the research questions stated in the introduction to this thesis, have resulted in the following original contributions to knowledge:

- My animation work in *Gail* creates an unprecedented representation of the Irish speaking Protestant, unionist and loyalist (PUL) community in Northern Ireland, a community that continues to be largely uncovered in the media. This is the first time that the experience, world and inner life of PUL Irish language learners from east Belfast has been rendered in animated form.

- By using a fluid, dynamic and multidisciplinary approach to production and storytelling, and by leaning significantly on non-verbal voicing strategies in *All That is Solid*, I reconstructed and revised (through 'split figure' re-enactment) the experience of gay youth in 1980s and 1990s rural Ireland. While reconstruction and re-enactment are increasingly becoming key tools used by oppressed communities/identities to overcome a dearth of original, empirical documentary material with which to talk about their pasts, this is the first time that this emerging approach has been used to represent rural Irish gay experience.

My current practice continues to evolve, drawing on the techniques and discoveries covered in the previous two chapters. I continue to make factual animations like *Gail* but I am beginning to push into more complex vocal territory by producing longer outputs that include multiple voices and a deepened utilisation of the vocal powers of ambient sound and sound design. I am also continuing my work with autobiographical and ethnographic modes of storytelling. Building on what I achieved in *All That Is Solid*, I am expanding my practice to include more complex work – such as integrating video-based, essayistic techniques – in a bid to find more effective ways to express subjective truths. I'm engaging

with emergent areas of media practice, notably immersive and spatialised sound, which can help the audience 'move into the media' rather than just have 'the media coming to you" (Dan Pacheco qtd. in Koski, 2015). My intention is to use these immersive and spatialised sounds as effective tools – among the others covered in this thesis – for the capture and representation of experience.

My relationship to journalism is much less fraught now than it was back in the 2012-13 period. I occasionally produce audio and print journalism pieces and while I do still feel restricted by its conventions and reliance on the expository mode, its sheer public reach and influence – while not within the purview of reflections of power in this thesis – are a source of narrative power that I am happy to utilise, when appropriate. Today, I see journalism as one of a range of storytelling approaches (traditional storytelling, theatre, animation, literature and fiction film) that I can comfortably draw on when creating new kinds of narrative outputs. By 'losing' my journalistic storytelling power in 2012 and then seeking empowerment through alternative narrative approaches, I gained a freedom which propels the vibrant practice research and experimentation I continue to this day. From this work, a new and evolving sense of power has emerged.

***

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anderson, C.W. (2019). 'Journalism as procedure, journalism as values. *Journalism*. 20(1), pp. 8 – 12.

Anderson, C.W. (2020). 'From Value to Value, from Field to Discipline: Understanding Journalistic Culture in the 21st Century. *Sociologica*. 14(2), pp. 94 – 99.

Barthes, R. (1981). 'The Discourse of History', in Shaffer, E. S. (ed.) *Comparative Criticism: A Yearbook*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 7 – 20.

Birdsall, C. (2009). 'Earwitnessing: Sound Memories of the Nazi Period', in Bijsterveld, K. and van Dijck, J. (eds.), *Sound Souvenirs: Audio Technologies, Memory and Cultural Practices*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 169 - 181.

Birdsall, C. (2012). *Nazi Soundscapes: Sound, Technology and Urban Space in Germany, 1933 – 1945.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Boym, S. (2001). *The Future of Nostalgia.* New York: Basic Books.

Bruzzi, S. (2006). *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction*. London: Routledge.

Candy, L., Edmonds, E., and Vear, C. (2022a). 'Methods', in Candy, L., Edmonds, E., and Vear, C. (eds.) *The Routledge international handbook of practice-based research.* Abingdon: Routledge, pp 305 – 319.

Candy, L., Edmonds, E., and Vear, C. (2022b). 'Practice-Based Research', in Candy, L., Edmonds, E., and Vear, C. (eds.) *The Routledge international handbook of practice-based research.* Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 27 – 39.

Connor, S. (2000). *Dumbstruck – A Cultural History of Ventriloquism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Couldry, N. (2005). 'The Individual Point of View: Learning from Bourdieu's *The Weight of the World*'. *Cultural Studies ←→ Critical Methodologies*. 5(3), pp. 354 – 372.

Couldry, N. (2009). 'Rethinking the Politics of Voice'. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*. 23(4), pp. 579 – 582.

Couldry, N. (2010). *Why Voice Matters*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Cusack, P. (2012). 'Sonic Journalism' in *Sounds From Dangerous Places*
Available at: http://sounds-from-dangerousplaces.
org/sonic_journalism.html [Accessed 8 July 2021].

Darwish, A. and Orero, P. (2014). 'Rhetorical dissonance of unsynchronized voices: Issues of voice-over in news broadcasts'. *Babel*. 60(2), pp. 129 – 144.

De Beauvoir. S. (1995). 'Preface'. *Shoah: The Complete Text of the Acclaimed Holocaust Film*. New York: Da Capo Press, pp. iii – iv.

Foster, G. & Minh-ha, T. (1997). ''A Tale of Love': A Dialogue with Trinh T. Minh-ha'. *Film Criticism*. 21(3), pp. 89-114.

Fox, B. (2018). *Documentary Media: History, Theory, Practice.* London: Routledge.

Gustafson, I. (2016). 'Facing the Subject (On Observation)'. *Journal of Videographic Film & Moving Image Studies*. 3(1).

Harvey-Davitt, J. (2016). 'Conflicted Selves: The Humanist Cinema of Nuri Bilge Ceylan'. *New Review of Film and Television Studies*. 14(2), pp. 249 – 267.

Hübner, F. (2022) 'The Common Ground Model for Practice-Led Research Design', in Candy, L., Edmonds, E., and Vear, C. (eds.) *The Routledge international handbook of practice-based research.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Koski, O. (2015). 'Step into the Story: How Virtual Reality and Other Technologies Are Fostering Immersive Storytelling'. *Nieman Reports*. 69(1), 8.

Lippmann, W. (1991). *Public Opinion*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publications.

Lippmann, W. (2008). *Liberty and the News*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Lütticken, S. (2005). 'An Arena in Which to Reenact', in Lütticken, S. (ed.) *Life, Once More Forms of Reenactment in Contemporary Art*. Rotterdam: Witte de With, pp. 16 – 60.

Maras, S. (2013). *Objectivity in Journalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Maras. S. (2015). 'Objectivity: when ministers, journalists and a norm collide'. *The Conversation*. Available at: https://theconversation.com/objectivity-when-ministers-journalists-and-a-norm-collide-47414

Margulies, I. (2019). *In person: reenactment in postwar and contemporary cinema*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Marr, A. (2004). *My Trade: A Short History of British Journalism*. London: Macmillan.

Martin, M. (2017). 'Crossing Borders'. Reality Radio: Telling True Stories in Sound. Chapel Hill : The University of North Carolina Press, pp. 204 – 211.

McGill, D. (2004). 'The Fading Mystique of an Objective Press'. *The McGill Report*. Available at: http://www.mcgillreport.org/objectivity.htm

Mollaghan, A. (2015). ''The Rest is Silence': Psychogeography, Soundscape and Nostalgia in Pat Collins' 'Silence''. *The New Soundtrack.* 5 (3), pp. 121 – 132.

Mulvey, L. (2009a). 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'. *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 14 – 27.

Mulvey, L. (2009b). 'Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' inspired by King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun*'. *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 31 – 40.

Nash, K. (2010). 'Exploring Power and Trust in Documentary: A study of Tom Zubrycki's *Molly and Mobarak*'. *Studies in Documentary Film*. 4(1), pp. 21 – 33.

Nash, K. (2011). 'Documentary-for-the-Other: Relationships, Ethics and (Observational) Documentary'. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*. 26(3), pp. 224 – 239.

Nash, K. (2012). 'Telling Stories: the narrative study of documentary ethics'. *Film and Television Studies*, 10(3), pp. 318 – 331.

Nash, K. (2022). *Interactive Documentary*. New York: Routledge.

Nichols, B. (1991) *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Nichols, B. (1993). ''Getting to Know You…' Knowledge, Power, and the Body', in Renov, M. (ed.) *Theorizing Documentary*. London: Routledge, pp 12 – 36.

Nichols, B. (2016). *Speaking Truths with Film: Evidence, Ethics, Politics in Documentary*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Nichols, B. (2017). *Introduction to Documentary* (3rd ed.). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Pearlman, W. (2016). 'Narratives of Fear in Syria'. *Perspectives on Politics,* 14 (1), pp. 21 – 37.

Pearlman, W. (2018). *We Crossed A Bridge And It Trembled: Voices from Syria*. New York: Custom House.

Plantinga, C. (1997). *Rhetoric and Representation in Non-fiction Film*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pocock, J.G.A. (1973). 'Verbalizing a Political Act: Toward a Politics of Speech'. *Political Theory*. 1 (1), pp. 27-45.

Rabinowitz, P. (1994). *They Must Be Represented: The Politics of Documentary*. New York: Verso.

Rascaroli, L. (2009). *The Personal Cinema: Subjective Cinema and the Essay Film*. London: Wallflower Press.

Renov, M. (1993). 'Towards a Poetics of Documentary', in Renov, M. (ed.), *Theorizing Documentary*. London: Routledge, pp 12 – 36.

Roe, A. H. (2013). *Animated Documentary.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sade, G. (2022). 'The Relationship Between Practice and Research' in Candy, L., Edmonds, E., and Vear, C. (eds.) *The Routledge international handbook of practice-based research.* Abingdon: Routledge, pp 179 – 187.

Sadiqi, F. (2018). 'Transforming North African Feminisms from Within: New Post-Arab Spring Feminist Voices'. *Cairo Studies in English*. 13(2), pp. 32 – 53.

Said, E. (2000). *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Santos Aquino, R. (2011). *Necessary P(r)ictions: Reenactment, Embodied Historiography and Testimony.* PhD thesis, UCLA.

Schafer, R. M. (1994) *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*. Rochester: Destiny Books.

Schön, D. A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Books.

Schudson, M. (2008). *Why Democracies Need an Unlovable Press*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Schudson, M. (2012). 'Would Journalism Please Hold Still!'. *Rethinking Journalism: trust and participation in a transformed news landscape*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Schudson, M. (2013). 'Reluctant Stewards: Journalism in a Democratic Society'. *Dædelus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences*. Spring 2013.

Silverman, K. (1988). *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Sontag, S. 'In Plato's Cave' in Thomas, J. (ed.), *Reading Images*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, pp. 40 – 53.

Starr, S. (2012). *Revolt in Syria: Eye-Witness to the Uprising*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Stewart, P. and Alexander, R. (2016). *Broadcast Journalism: Techniques of Radio and Television News*. London: Routledge.

Strachan, R. & Leonard, M. (2015). 'More than Background: Ambience and Sound Design in Contemporary Art Documentary Film', in Rodgers, H. (ed.), *Music and Sound in Documentary Film.* London: Routledge, pp. 166 – 179.

Street, S. (2012). *The Poetry of Radio: The Colour of Sound*. London: Routledge.

Street, S. (2015). *The Memory of Sound: Preserving the Sonic Past*. London: Routledge.

Street, S. (2017). *Sound Poetics: Interaction and Personal Identity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Street, S. (2019a). *The Sound Inside the Silence*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Street, S. (2019b). *Sound at the Edge of Perception*. Singapore: Palgrave Pivot.

Toop, D. (2004). *Haunted Weather: Music, Silence, and Memory*. London: Serpent's Tail.

Truax, B. (1996). 'Soundscape, Acoustic Communication and Environmental Sound Composition'. *Contemporary Music Review*. 15 (1), pp. 49 – 65.

Tufte, T. (2013). 'Towards a Renaissance in Communication for Social Change: Redefining the Discipline and Practice in the Post 'Arab Spring' Era'. *Speaking Up and Talking Back? Media Empowerment and Civic Engagement among East and Southern African Youth*. Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, pp. 19 – 36.

Vignal, L. (2016) 'Syria: The Barbarian State'. *Books and Ideas*. Available at: https://booksandideas.net/Syria-The-Barbarian-State.html

Wake, C. (2013). 'Headphone Verbatim Theatre: Methods, Histories, Genres, Theories'. *New Theatre Quarterly*. 29 (4), pp. 321 – 335.

Winston, B. (2017). *The Act of Documenting: Documentary Film in the 21st Century*. London: Bloomsbury.

***

FILMOGRAPHY

Climates. (2006). [Online]. Directed by Nuri Bilge Ceylan. Turkey: Pyramide Films [Viewed 10 May 2021]. Available from Amazon Prime.

E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial. (1982). [Film] Directed by Steven Spielberg. USA: Amblin Productions.

Facing the Subject (On Observation). (2016). [Online]. Directed by Irene Gustafson. USA: *Journal of Videographic Film & Moving Image Studies*.

The Karski Report. (2010). [Film]. Directed by Claude Lanzmann. France: ARTE.

Reassemblage. (1982). [Film] Directed by Trinh T. Minh-ha. Senegal: Women Make Movies, Inc.

Shoah. (1985). [Film] Directed by Claude Lanzmann. France: Les Films Aleph.

Surname Viet, Given Name Nam. (1989). [Film] Directed by Trinh T. Minh-ha. USA*:* Women Make Movies, Inc.

***