



Hearing Voice in Oral History

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ABSTRACTS

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VOICE DATA IN TIME AND SPACE

Louise Ashmore, The Endangered Languages Academic Programme, School of Oriental and African Studies, London

Within linguistic fieldwork, researchers who have traditionally focussed on the sound of the voice are increasingly using video for recording and disseminating language data. Yet despite technology that allows us to record more of the physical context of speech, turning voice into digital data remains a reduction of language to bits, bytes and codecs. Although video is promoted for the ability to record language in context, understanding what is recorded, what is said and what it means continues to be a problem extending beyond the frame or soundbite (Evans & Sasse, 2007).

Decoding voice data not only requires appropriate equipment (see Schüller, 2004, on endangered data) it requires appropriate contextual information and involves an ongoing process of translation and interpretation through space and time. The availability of new digital technology for recording and preserving speech has therefore raised new possibilities and questions for linguists and language communities engaged in language documentation work. Questions about storage, delivery, access and ethics are now becoming increasingly important in any research that records the voice.

Based on oral history narratives told by speakers of Wik-Ngathan, an endangered language of Cape York Peninsula, Australia, this talk will present examples of voice recordings (audio and audio-visual) that highlight the different types of contextual information required by diverse audiences (e.g. family members, linguists, historians and archivists) to interpret the same speech event. The voice, as will be shown, rarely tells the same story to different listeners.

References

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VOICES WE WOULD RATHER NOT HEAR

Geoffrey Bell, Eastside Community Heritage

This paper will examine the dilemmas faced by oral historians reared in a tradition of relaying and propagating hidden voices of the working class when those voices express opinions and relay experiences that proponents of working class self-expression would rather not hear. The paper will focus on two examples – the Protestants working class in Northern Ireland in the 1970s and its anti-Catholic sectarianism and individuals from the white working class in contemporary East London expressing what many would judge as racist opinions. Dr Geoffrey Bell will compare and contrast these two communities; he will quote

from his own research into the former, which resulted in the publication of the ground-breaking *Protestants of Ulster* (Pluto, 1976) and, for the latter, look at recent oral histories, recorded by Eastside Community Heritage. Of the white working class of East London in the course of Eastside's "Working Lives of the Thames Gateway" project.

He will pose the question – do we downplay, simply report, expose, contextualise or condemn opinions which many would interpret as divisive. He will argue that how oral historians interpret such voices is the key to their dissemination.

FROM MERCHANTS TO GARDENERS: KENTUCKY VOICES UNCOVERED

Kate Black & Rosie Moosnick, University of Kentucky

In his essay "What Makes Oral History Different," path-breaking oral historian Alessandro Portelli argues that "oral historical sources are *narrative* sources" which reveal "less about events than about their meaning." Engaging both narrative and meaning, stories—as told and heard—are the underpinnings of oral history. Stories employ a local voice to interpret universal significance. In our presentation we will uncover the voices of Arabic and Jewish shopkeepers in Kentucky, together with those of Kentucky gardeners, whose stories arise from wrestling cultural tensions located between the idealized agrarian and the unseemly other. We will explore how their experiences form, what historian Patricia Nelson Limerick calls "an emotional and spiritual presence, manifested in the accumulated stories of their encounter with a place."¹

Kentucky is a place known for its rich storytelling traditions. But it is equally recognized through a series of enduring stereotypes recycled by journalists, politicians, scholars, fiction writers, and policy makers as a landscape of sameness where time stands still. Oral histories can be particularly effective in disrupting ideas about a place so caricatured and stereotyped because human voice and story have the power to make meaningful interventions. Our projects are situated to reveal the actual diversity of a people and their encounters with this place.

One of the stereotypes about Kentucky that still resonates for many is that its history is predicated on the absence of difference. While it is true that Arabic and Jewish immigrants from the early 1900s until more recently often entered communities unaccustomed to foreigners, over time these merchant families became hybrids, adhering to both southern etiquette and Middle Eastern traditions, creating distinct communities and fresh voices from behind the counter.

Capturing the voices of gardeners, on the other hand, is one way to save what otherwise might be lost, almost *because* of its ordinariness. Though gardening is not as common as it once was and our land has been radically altered by an array of social and economic forces, Kentucky gardeners' reveal an abundance of difference rooted in class, ethnicity, ideology, generation, and region. As the link between food and

¹ "Disorientation and Reorientation: The American Landscape Discovered from the West," *Journal of American History*, *Discovering America: A Special Issue*, Vol. 79, no. 3, (December 1992), p. 1026

landscape, gardening is a rich source of cultural production, a fertile space for narrative and meaning to take hold.

To gather, archive and present the voices of Jewish and Arabic merchants, alongside those of gardeners, is to add new storytellers to the Kentucky storytelling circle while, at the same time, disrupting, challenging, and widening the boundaries of that circle to include some perhaps unexpected Kentucky stories.

HEARING AND NOT HEARING: USING THE IDEA OF POLYPHONY TO EXPLORE THE ROLE OF VOICE IN INTERVIEWS EXPLORING INTER-CULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE WORKPLACE

Joanna Bornat, Leroi Henry, Parvati Raghuram, The Open University.

In this paper we explore what may be heard and not heard in interviews particularly where inter-cultural power relationships within professional hierarchies are discussed. We use the idea of polyphony (Bakhtin, Habermas), to enrich and complicate exchanges between interviewer and interviewee when differing contexts, historical, cultural and research-based, are used to frame voices and are framed by voice. To do this we draw on interviews with South Asian trained doctors who worked in the geriatric specialty in hospitals in England and Wales in the mid-c20 onwards and with an earlier group of pioneers who set up that specialty in the UK.

On first hearing, these voices, with their distinctive accents, are at risk of being marked and categorised unidimensionally, embedded as they are in socio-historical expectations and assumptions as to status and ethnicity. We juxtapose two different interviews, conducted by different sets of interviewers at different times and each involving the recall of power relationships cross-cutting with race in the context of a shifting medical labour market. We then go on to explore the complexities of voice: in communication; dialogue, performance; evidence. We explore ways of hearing these different voices and end by suggesting that the idea of polyphony might make a valuable contribution to the analytical repertoire available to oral historians.

AUDIO TRAILS – WALKING WITH ORAL HISTORY

Dan Boys, Audio Trails

Does this sound familiar:

- . You successfully attract grant money for your oral history project
- . Members of the community come forward to volunteer their memories
- . Oral history recordings are undertaken
- . Memories transcribed and archived
- . Maybe a booklet is produced
- . New skills are learnt
- . Project ends

But hang on, who is actually going to access these priceless memories? Yes, perhaps the most avid of researchers will trawl through them to aid a research project – but these are fantastic memories and that's why you started the project in the first place. These stories, ways of life, accents should be in the public realm so everybody can hear them, shouldn't they?

Since 2005, 'Audio Trails' have been producing downloadable MP3 audio guides for heritage sites that contain recorded oral reminiscences as the core component.

Using examples of our tours, this presentation will address how an audio guide can bring a building, trail or town to life through the use of existing or planned oral reminiscences and provide more meaningful and personal insights for visitors to understand and appreciate local heritage and traditions through our oldest form of communication – the voice.

Reading people's personal stories are enlightening, hearing them is evocative: listening about them in a place where they refer to is awe-inspiring.

SPEECH PATTERNS: IMAGING THE MEANING OF INTERVIEWS

Farel Bradbury, University of Sussex.

Human capability is normally to read up to nearly three times faster than we can hear or speak. But rendering the spoken word into written form loses vast amounts of information and, without, for example, the tone of voice, pitch and emphasis, meanings may be corrupted or even reversed.

There are, however, considerable advantages in obtaining transcripts apart from the speed with which information can be scanned and searched in typographic form.

- 1 Keyword searches can embrace huge volumes of data.
- 2 Indexing, annotating and processing takes on 'scratch-pad' simplicity.
- 3 Visual accessibility facilitates the hunt for word forms and phrases, general subject areas and enhances comparisons between texts and instances.
- 4 Work with written records is essentially silent and without apparatus.

This paper describes some experiments and the use of softwares which integrate the sound wave form of the recorded voice in the transcript so as to add at least two visual typographic dimensions– periodicity and emphasis. With the addition of colour it seems feasible that mood, aspects of facial expression or even an emotional spectrum may be visually displayed. These added dimensions enrich the transcript and improve the accuracy, perception and efficacy of recourse to the original recording for deeper analysis.

Examples are given with 'voice-prints' of personally recorded interviews and seminal examples processed from notable published newscasts.

I'M HEARING VOICES!

Thom Bristow

You tell me your story and I listen carefully,
Something in your telling sort of jogs my memory,
Now your tale is finished so the telling has begun,
Now it's your turn to listen while I tell you one.

Dr. Bristow has been a Professor, Therapist and Storyteller during a long career. He has learned that in each of these endeavors listening to the voices is the most important tool. In each of these Professions he has learned that just telling or talking can be a waste of time. Knowing when to listen and finding the right words when it comes time to speak are the keys to success. Indeed, even storytellers must listen before the stories can be told. Listen to the voices around you and the stories will come. Important point! One of the voices is your own!

He has written many stories and songs that evolved from the voices around him. Like those in the Oral History Society, he gathers stories and he often adds a bit of humor or music in the telling. When you are able to add a smile to the voice that is telling you a story, the story often gets better and more stories are generated. He will introduce you to his Story Gathering Form that is passed out to the audience almost every time he performs. He will share a few brief examples of the stories gathered. He will also show how stories have been set to music with his Tenor Guitar. The effect of voices is expressed in the following verse.

Words that we say to each other,
Can build walls or tear them apart.
Words are hurled in the fury of battle,
Words are held tenderly in the heart.

Come and share your Voice!

ONLINE ORAL HISTORY: NEW PERSPECTIVES AND CONSTRAINTS - THE CASE OF ALUMINIUM WORKER TESTIMONIES

Mauve Carbonell and Jenny Piquet, Institute for the History of Aluminium, Paris

In 2005, three French history associations connected to the electricity (Electra, founded in 1982), aluminium (Institute for the History of Aluminium, 1986) and railway (French Railway Historical Society, 1987) sectors decided to share their experience and pool their technical and human resources for oral archives. Since they were founded, the three associations – centres for research and disseminating knowledge – have conducted programmes of sound recordings between witnesses of developments considered as important in their field and historians or researchers who, through their questions, brought out and set down judgements and memories. As regards Institut pour l'Histoire de l'Aluminium, the corpus thus built up on matters of technical,

economic or social history from executives of France's largest aluminium company (Pechiney) and from smelting pot workers covers the broadest possible memory.

Given the lack of a suitable instrument for processing, disseminating and using these recordings, the three bodies opted to create a common audio database: in addition to the description of the recording, its analysis, the text of its transcription in some cases and related iconographic documents, the base provides direct access to the audio extract, which may be listened to online in answer to a request that may concern a topic or a name, etc.

The potential gains are substantial: open, direct access to sound recordings from ongoing and past collection processes opens up new avenues for researchers' work, whether historians, sociologists or ethnologists, etc. The analysis of audio sources, study of which was hitherto complex (nature of media, technical quality of recording, unfaithful transcriptions, etc.), is much easier as a result. Because, beyond putting the recordings online, the work done on every interview available on www.memoire-orale.org stems from a new methodology: interview selection, audio processing, chronological/topical analysis of interviews, breakdown into audio sequences, indexing by keywords and creation of links to other resources (images, transcriptions, etc.).

Bringing new technologies into the researcher's work, whether upstream (interview and recording) or downstream (use of online testimonies), raises many questions, both methodological and scientific. Can everything be communicated via Internet? What are the legal constraints? To what extent do the researcher and/or collection manager censor testimonies when they are put online? What impact does the general public's consultation of testimonies affect their treatment and distribution? How can an interview be collected and guided in line with the requirements of online distribution? How do witnesses respond? Does the prospect of online distribution change what they say? What are the limits on the communicability of interviews from old collections?

The online database www.memoire-orale.org, by grouping together interviews from old and current collection programmes on different topics and led by researchers from different backgrounds, illustrates these new questions being asked of oral history.

VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY? THE PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION OF MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES IN ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS

Fiona Cosson, University of Northampton

When we approach and work with a community on an oral history project, whose voices are heard? Whose stories are we recording and can they ever adequately 'represent' a community? What about those who do not share their stories?

This paper will explore how "communities" participate in, contribute to and are consequently represented in oral history projects. It will use a case study to analyse the approach and some of the problems of

identifying, accessing and involving so-called invisible or hard-to-reach communities in an oral history project.

The paper will stress how the *participation* of a community in such projects affects the *representation* of that community, potentially glossing over subtle but significant diversity within communities not always obvious to the outsider, and excluding the stories of those the project has failed to engage, reinforcing their exclusion. It will also consider the potential empowerment that oral history projects can create when they adequately and effectively record, represent and communicate the lives, memories and experiences of marginalised communities to a wider audience.

The paper will refer to West Yorkshire Archive Service's recent oral history project, which worked with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered people, and some of the issues and achievements arising from this attempt to capture the oral histories of a historically-hidden, traditionally-excluded, and often socially-invisible, group of people.

VOICES FROM THE MARGINS: SOUTHERN IRISH PROTESTANTS AND "IRISHNESS"

Heather K. Crawford, NUI Maynooth

This paper deals with the nature of voice as evidence in oral and also addresses 'hearing voice in community through oral history' and 'voice as an expression of being within and being without'.

It is based on the findings of a doctoral study which used oral testimony from a hundred people, Protestant and Catholic, to explore issues surrounding twentieth-century identity and exclusion in the Republic of Ireland.

The study demonstrated how the emotional legacy, anchored in communal memories of past conflict held at an unconscious level, irrupts into everyday speech. These unconscious 'outcroppings' result in the exclusion of Protestants from the imagined community of the Irish nation. They perpetuate confessional difference by the perpetual conjuring of stereotypes based on unequal power relationships of the past. That these are, in the main, unconscious irruptions does not lessen their effect: Protestants are made aware that they are perceived as not capable of possessing authentic 'Irishness' by virtue of their confessional, ethnic and cultural heritage.

Voice used as instrument of exclusion also produces its own absence: in the face of alienation, Protestants have traditionally chosen silence, rather than confrontation.

In choosing, now, to speak of their experience, the legacy of pain transmitted through the generations becomes apparent.

'DO I REALLY SOUND LIKE THAT?' EDITING THE SPOKEN WORD IN SOUND AND TEXT

Niamh Dillon, National Life Stories, British Library and Sue Bradley Newcastle University's Centre for Rural Economy

Oral historians often translate real-time recordings into sound or text for different audiences. Why do we do this? What decisions are entailed? What responsibilities do we feel to the speaker – or to the audience? Interviewer or interviewee – whose voice counts when it comes to the edit? Whose voice appears on the page? Who are we actually listening to?

We would like to explore these questions with you. To kick off, we will share four short examples from our current work: two edited recordings (Niamh) and two pieces of edited text (Sue). We would then like to open the discussion for feedback, and for reflections on your own experience of the agonies and ecstasies of editing personal testimony. If necessary, we'll break into small groups for the open discussion. Come and join us.

DISRUPTIVE AND ILLEGITIMATE VOICES IN NARRATIVES ABOUT A DISASTER. MEMORIES OF THE 1980 EARTHQUAKE IN TWO POPULAR NEIGHBOURHOODS OF NAPLES.

Nick Dines

This paper will draw on a recent AHRC-funded oral history and documentary project which examined memories of the impact of the 1980 earthquake in two central neighbourhoods of Naples. Naples has traditionally been excluded from the grand narratives of Italian oral history such as the anti-fascist resistance and post-war worker struggles. Moreover, large swathes of the local population in the old city, variously labelled 'popular' or 'lumpenproletariat', have been deemed to lack 'civic consciousness', which by implication includes the participation in the production of collective memory. Although the earthquake caused few deaths in Naples, it had a devastating effect upon the fragile urban and social fabric of the central neighbourhoods, resulting in the transferral of thousands of people to new housing estates outside the city. The research focused upon the memories of two key groups: local residents and professionals such as architects who worked in the neighbourhoods following the disaster. After showing a short extract of the film*, my presentation will consider how certain narratives – from melodramatic recollections in Neapolitan dialect to humorous anecdotes about the misfortune of others – disrupt the typically sober and politicised accounts of the earthquake, and how these express particular attachments to place that challenge local hegemonic ideas about 'civic memory'. I will then reflect upon the process of selection and juxtaposition of different voices during the editing of the film, before discussing how this was received in Naples; in particular why the presence (and sound) of certain interviewees provoked irritation among some viewers.

VOICE AND GENDER: 1968 IN FRANCE AND ITALY

Robert Gildea (Oxford) and Rebecca Clifford (Oxford/Swansea)

Oral history is not new to gender questions. Recovering the voices of marginalised or unheard segments of the population led to listening to women's voices, but this is not the same as exploring the gender angle. In *Gender and Memory* (1996) Selma Leydesdorff, Luisa Passerini and Paul Thompson point out that 'cross-gender studies remain...regrettably rare, and very few oral historians have approached the problem of gender and memory in this way'.

This paper addresses the question of the gendering of accounts of activism in the years around 1968 which were marked by generational revolt, effervescent youth culture and sexual revolution. It concentrates less on the celebratory and hedonistic aspects of 1968 than on the difficulties and conflicts triggered by activism, which have an impact on the narrating voice. This either distances itself from painful memories or is broken up by them. The concept of difficulty is used to explore the gendering of breaking with one's own family for a commitment to activism, of joining a radical group as an autonomous individual or through siblings and friends, of finding oneself at the centre or periphery of a radical group, of separating out to form a separate women's or gay movement, of dealing with violence on the street or directed at the body, and of making sense of things after the collapse of the activist moment.

The paper is based on interviews with a sample of activist groups in France and Italy studies respectively by Robert Gildea and Rebecca Clifford. The French groups include the Maoist Gauche Prolétarienne and Vive la Révolution, which had its own women's group, together with the Action Committee of the Lip factory workers, while the Italian activists are drawn from the extra-parliamentary Left (Lotta Continua and Il Manifesto), and from feminist collective Movimento Femminista Romano.

SILENCE TO CELEBRITY: ORAL HISTORY AND THE POLITICAL AND PUBLIC RECOGNITION OF WAR VETERANS IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND.

Claire Hall, Freelance Oral Historian

*"Would you imagine a girl doing what I did? No. There wasn't anybody to back me up and I just kept quiet about it. If you don't talk about it you just block it out."*¹

Over the past decade war veterans in New Zealand have foregone their code of silence for openness, participating in Crown and community-led oral history initiatives. Some are motivated by a chance to set the record straight; others the nearness of death. Most find more comfort than trauma in recalling memories so long unspoken². Through three decades without the honour of a homecoming, many Vietnam veterans lived anonymously, recognised by few. The shift to celebrity matches a keener public appetite for knowledge of New Zealand's military history and a corresponding rise in political celebration of veterans.

It's been more than 60 years since the end of the Second World War: 35 since Kiwi soldiers returned from Vietnam.

This paper explores why favour - and funding - have recently fallen on veteran communities and examines some challenges to using oral history to capture voices representative of such a diverse cohort. It considers oral history as reconciliation, debunking the myth of preferred silence with evidence from projects recording voices from both wars:

milker, trainer, soldier, sailor,
sister, painter, rifleman, priest

References:

1 Pippa Doyle, interview 29 September 2006; Ranfurly Veterans Home Oral History Project.

2 Alison Parr, *Breaking the Silence: traumatised war veterans and oral history*, Oral History Society Journal, Spring 2007.

AURAL HISTORY AS A FORM OF SOUND COMMUNICATION

Charles Hardy III, West Chester University

The ongoing digital revolution has already had a profound impact on oral history practice, especially in the areas of field recording equipment, preservation, and web-based access and programming. Oral historians, however, have so far paid less attention to the impact that digital technologies have upon the voice as a sonic artifact and aural history as a form of sound communication. Since the mid-1980s I have been teaching workshops on sound documentary production for oral historians. My approach to these workshops changed significantly in 2000, when I designed and taught the first course on Sound Communications for the new Applied Media program at the University for the Arts in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This presentation will explore how reconceptualizing aural history as a form of natural and electro-acoustical sound communication expands oral history practice to include the recording of historically significant soundscapes, sound markers, and sound events; how a better understanding of the grammar and syntax of sound communication improves our ability to author in sound and multiple media; and how it provides oral historians the conceptual tools and understanding to author, compose, paint, and sculpt in sound in creative and exciting new ways. This presentation will make reference to, and time permitting sample, sound documentaries and audio art pieces that have made creative and media-appropriate use of oral history interviews.

VOICES FROM A WEB-BASED TALKING MAP OF VERDUN

Kathryn Harvey,

Few things affect us more than the human voice. Voices speak for themselves; they don't need interpretation which, perhaps, is why professional historians have generally ignored sound as a dimension of past experience, favouring the sense of sight instead. "Seeing is the origin of knowing," writes Joan Scott. We are told that veracity is in eyewitness accounts, and historians are 'observers' of past events. In graduate school, I was instructed to read texts closely, not to listen deeply. But in the winter of 2007, I began to listen deeply to a group of seniors who had signed up for a series of workshops I led, exploring the history of Verdun.

In these weekly workshops participants used pictures, maps and memories to make collages that told their stories of growing up in this largely Scottish-Irish working-class neighbourhood in Montreal, Canada. This process was captured on video and is now a 15-minute short film entitled *Cutting, Pasting, and Remembering*.

These seniors represent a dying community of English-speaking immigrants whose families settled in Canada between the Wars. The culture that evolved was an oral one with a distinct lexicon and accent, both of which, in recent years, have been eclipsed by Quebec nationalism and the dominant homogenizing media culture. But voice, like anything else, changes over time.

At this conference I would like to present the voices from our current project, a web-based talking map of Verdun. This map not only identifies voices with landmarks, but also historicizes these voices, and in so doing captures another layer of the past lost to the text-based historian.

SEEING SIGN IN COMMUNITY

John A Hay, University of Wolverhampton; Avril Hepner, BSL Strategist, British Deaf Association

The presentation covers a wide diversity of issues while recording oral reminiscences of Deaf people whose preferred language is British Sign Language (BSL) for several heritage projects funded by different sources over the past ten years.

Recently granted an official recognition by HM the Government, BSL is ever-evolving in its use by some 50,000 deaf people in the UK. Since the Milan Congress of 1880, sign language has been in and out of favour in education until the 1980s when researchers in the USA and the UK began to recognise linguistic nature of sign languages.

The definition of oral history is simply spoken history, however, we have to consider the new definition when recording the signed version of oral history as expressed by interviewees with the term 'signed history' being the most suitable.

Issues arising from sign-narrations include the narrow demography of deaf communities; the limited number of deaf schools and hence similar experiences expressed by individuals; linguistic observations of generational and regional (dialect) signs; technological advances in increasing communication and access; more consideration of signing space for clarity for comprehension.

Recent heritage projects cover six main thematic subjects – school experiences; being deaf at home and at work; socialising at deaf clubs; participating in Deaf Sports and the Deaf way of conducting romance.

PERFORMING NURSES VOICES: TRANSFORMING AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT INTO THE OFF-BROADWAY PLAY *NURSE!*

Lisa Hayes, Accokeek Foundation, Maryland

Conducting oral history interviews with nurses at a hospital in Buffalo, New York about their campaign to unionize, I was intrigued by how the process of campaigning for justice, of taking a stand and demanding to be heard, transformed these ordinary women into leaders. As I began exploring how to theatricalize this “finding of voice,” I discovered that a nurses’ strike was in progress in Smithtown, New York. What would drive 400 nurses, mostly women, to walk out of a hospital where many had worked for more than 20 years? I made arrangements to interview the nurses and union leaders, and within a few months I had transformed the interviews into the one-woman play “Nurse!” The play, which debuted off-Broadway during Nurses Week in 2003 with support from the nurses’ union, chronicles the evolution of a strike as it moves from the bedside to the bargaining table and from the headlines to the picket lines. In this performance/ demonstration, I will illustrate the journey to performance of some of the interviews by first performing three monologues from the play and then playing an audio montage of interview excerpts on which these monologues were based. I will also discuss my negotiations with the union regarding their attempt to censor the play, and will share how the play became a small player in another strike, the longest nursing strike in American history.

“CAN YOU SAY THAT AGAIN IN 30 SECONDS?”: THE (SOMETIMES UNEASY) RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORAL HISTORY AND RADIO

Clare Jenkins, University of Huddersfield

The treatment of voice in an oral history project, compared to its treatment in a radio programme.

Through the University of Huddersfield’s Centre for Oral History Research, I am currently working on an MLA-funded oral history of the Remembrance Day two-minute silence (which marks its 90th anniversary next year, November 2009). At the same time, I’ve been commissioned by Radio 4 to make a commemorative programme on the same subject, for broadcast on Remembrance Sunday 2009.

What are the similarities and differences between conducting interviews for two such different projects?

I’ve experienced this potential creative tension before: back in 1999, I was one of over 40 BBC radio producers assigned to create the world’s second largest oral history archive. *The Century Speaks* was a ground-breaking collaboration between BBC Radio and the British Library, involved every BBC local radio station, interviewed over 6,000 people across the nation, and resulted in a series of half-hour programmes, plus an archive that is now stored at the National Sound Archive.

More recently, I’ve contributed in-depth interviews on subjects as wide apart as the TT Races on the Isle of Man and bereavement by suicide, for a number of drama-documentaries, broadcast on Radio 4. *The Minute When Your Life Stops* (January 2008), for example, involved interweaving clips from those who had lost husbands and sons through suicide with a fictional account of one family hit by such a tragedy.

Among the questions I hope to address are: how do interviews for radio from those for an oral history? How does a radio production team decide which audio to edit and use, and where? How do we decide that on a daily basis as broadcasters? What is the decision-making process, and how comfortable can we ever feel with the results?

TRANSCRIBING THE VOICE – PUNCTUATION AND NUANCE IN TRANSCRIPTIONS TO REVEAL THE VOICE.

David Justham, University of Nottingham's School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy

Using extracts from the transcription of the voice remains the preferred way to illustrate papers and articles which use the interview as a means of data collection. Yet there remains no universally accepted format for the transcription of an interview which can adequately address the punctuation of the text, or the inflections and other nuances within a conversation, or capturing dialect, technical terms, or non-verbal signals. There is some guidance to be found in the literature, eg Yow (1994) and Thompson (2000). Should there be a move to standardisation for the benefit of all transcribers?

This paper will be constructed as a workshop to address the challenges of transcribing the voice. Using a few extracts from a series of oral histories captured from former nurses about nursing before the introduction of penicillin, this presentation will illustrate some of the challenges faced in translating the voice to the written word. It is expected that the paper will raise a number of questions about the approach adopted and encourage and contribute to a debate about whether it is appropriate to continue to translate the voice to text in learned papers and theses, or whether the digitisation of the voice should encourage the faithful reproduction of the voice through electronic publications.

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THE VOICE OF THE CROWD

Stephen Kelly

This paper will examine the voice of the crowd as a vehicle for expression. In particular it will look at football crowds and how they express their loyalties, opinions, passions and displeasures. Research focuses particularly on the Kop at Liverpool Football Club, regarded by many as the epitome of football crowds and where the use of joint expression through chanting and song first emerged in the early 1960s. Since then it has been taken up by football crowds around the world and is now regarded as an important element in football supporting.

But how did it all begin? We shall look at the origins of chants and songs and how and why they developed. We shall also examine, through examples, the use of humour, political awareness, satire and originality in song. And just how spontaneous is the crowd? Are songs planned or do they simply emerge spontaneously

as a result of on-the-field incidents? And who starts the song or chant? Is there a chorus-master of sorts? How important is the expression of the crowd to those individuals taking part? Does the chanting at political rallies and marches owe anything to football fandom or is it simply an aspect of the ritual of football-going and a cultural phenomena associated only with football?

The paper will be based on the author's research and publications, including *The Kop* (2006) and *Red Voices* (1999), as well as his own experiences as a football supporter on the Kop at Liverpool.

'BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME': ACCESS TO VOICES FROM THE ARCHIVES

Cathlin Macaulay , School of Scottish Studies Archives, University of Edinburgh

The School of Scottish Studies has, since its inception in 1951, been Scotland's major centre for collecting, archiving, researching and teaching heritage and oral tradition. There are now over 10,000 fieldwork recordings in the sound archive containing oral history, place-names, customs, tales, songs, music, dialect and linguistic studies in the languages of Scotland - Gaelic, Scots and English. As part of a national project, *Tobar an Dualchais/ Kist o Riches*, these recordings are currently being digitised along with the National Trust for Scotland's Campbell of Canna Collection and material held by BBC Alba. An innovative aspect of this project is the employment of cataloguers based in the communities from which material was collected to create bilingual finding aids for use on-line.

A commitment to high quality recording has been a hallmark of the School's work from the start. Now, through the internet, people will be able to listen to friends and relations talking about their lives and their communities. Unmediated, unedited, the voice will be available at the click of a key. Sometimes, for a daughter, son or grandchild, the voice, its timbre and uniqueness is all. But for every listener the inflection, intonation and idiom of the voice can also reach out, conveying a sense of place, a timeline, a locale.

This presentation will discuss the implementation of *Tobar an Dualchais/ Kist o Riches* and issues arising from this exciting resource, focusing on the voice as a carrier of tradition.

DISCOVERING THE VOICES OF COMMUNITY: ENGAGING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN ORAL HISTORY

Kimberly Mahaffy, Marilyn McKinley Parrish, Rita Smith Wade-EI, and Tracey Weis, Millersville University, Pennsylvania

Coinciding with the 150th anniversary of a regional comprehensive university in south central Pennsylvania, faculty and students affiliated with the ethnic and women's studies programs began to document constituents' narratives whose voices had been neglected in the university's history. As the project has evolved, faculty members from the Library, History, English, Sociology, Communication & Theatre, and Psychology departments have engaged their students in carrying out oral history interviews, contributing to a growing oral history collection in the University Archives. During the current academic year, students in an ethnic studies learning community collected oral histories of local Latino and African American residents

living in a mid-sized Pennsylvania city. The oral histories preserved the contributions and perspectives of local residents of color and connected students with the community. The conference paper, presented as a case study, will discuss how students of color collect, analyze, synthesize and perpetuate the histories and voices of their own communities. This collaborative work involves the University Archives as well as communities of color both within the University and local community. Conceptions of voice, evidence, and power, in relation to silence and storytelling within communities of color will be explored, particularly in relation to gender, race, and ethnicity. Finally, student learning through the planning and implementation of oral history projects will be examined.

THE 'SERF' WORD: WHAT WAS THAT WE HEARD?

'THE SCOTTISH PEOPLE ARE STILL JUST A SERF!'

Hugo Manson, UHI Centre for History

So exclaims former gamekeeper Johnnie Morrison in his commentary on the arrival in his land of the North Sea oil and gas industry. It is a claim he extends to the response of Scots to the English over centuries. What is he saying? What is he meaning? What can be heard in his words? Johnnie's connections with both the oil industry and the English have been indirect and accidental yet in his personal narrative these are intimate and powerful forces in the flows of his life.

Johnnie's narrative is set in the North East Scotland countryside. His transcribed words already convey depths of feeling, interest, awareness, sense of identity well beyond that region. In this presentation I ask the question: *does voice, the voice* add to what we can understand from the printed word? I interrogate, by focussing particularly on the utterance of one word, what meanings may be found in and around the utterance of that word, in contexts that include the personal, the social and the political.

Does Johnnie's voice, which will be heard, add meanings in his multiplicity of contexts, to his use of the word 'serf'?

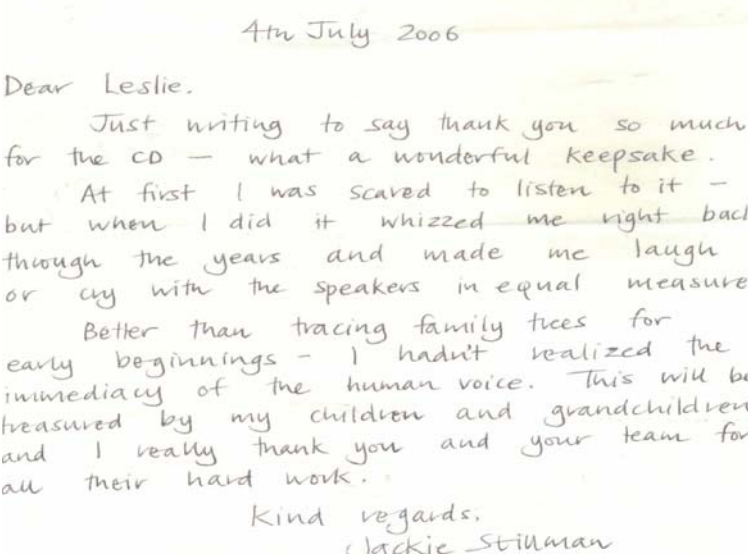
KING'S CROSS VOICES PRESENTS: THE ARGYLE SQUARE SOUND TRAIL

Leslie McCartney, King's Cross Voices Oral History Project

Pick up a copy of the Argyle Square Sound Trail CD and map from the local library in King's Cross or download the fifteen audio tracks to your personal .mp3 player and print out your map from www.kingscrossvoices.org.uk/Argyle_Square_Sound_Trail.asp and you are ready to take an audio voyage around a little known area of King's Cross in London. During your walk, you will hear the voices of several generations of usually ignored or forgotten voices of community members who lived and/or continue to live in this area describing what the area was once like, how it went from a posh area to one of vice and drugs and back again; the story of one young woman's survival from a bomb blast; street songs and hilarious antics.

The beauty and poetry of creating a sound trail from the actual voices of a project's participants is a wonderfully creative way of disseminating social oral history in interesting and unique ways. Instead of an exhibition of text and photos, an audio trail of an area using the actual oral history recordings is one that engages listeners directly with primary source or the recorded voice of community members. As people stroll and pause along the almost one hour trail listening to the stories, their eyes filling with tears of laughter or sadness, they are also experiencing layered sensory stimulation with the physical environment they are experiencing of today: the smell of curry that fills the streets, children playing ball, dogs barking, church bells pealing, and all the while, hearing generations of stories of the area. Some things changes; some things remain the same.

But there is another side to this experience. Those community members whose voices are heard on the sound trail told us how proud they were that their stories were being heard and used in such a wonderful way; how empowered it made them feel; how they thought it was a wonderful educational tool for the local schools and how they felt they were leaving something meaningful to their grandchildren. Jackie Stillman was one such person and I have included her handwritten note to us:



4th July 2006

Dear Leslie.

Just writing to say thank you so much for the CD - what a wonderful keepsake.

At first I was scared to listen to it - but when I did it whizzed me right back through the years and made me laugh or cry with the speakers in equal measure.

Better than tracing family trees for early beginnings - I hadn't realized the immediacy of the human voice. This will be treasured by my children and grandchildren and I really thank you and your team for all their hard work.

Kind regards,
Jackie Stillman

In this presentation, approximately 15 minutes of clips from the actual sound trail will be featured so sit back, relax, and enjoy listening to the little known or understood area of King's Cross from those who have experienced it first hand.

OUR MAD HISTORY – A COMMUNITY HISTORY PROJECT RECORDING THE HISTORY OF THE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE USER MOVEMENT IN LOTHIAN.

Jim McGill & Anne O'Donnell, Oor Mad History project.

Oor Mad History is an exciting community history project supported by NHS Lothian, documenting and celebrating the history of people with mental health problems who have been involved in collective action in Lothian – the service user movement. By using the word “mad” we are reclaiming the word in a positive and strong way and challenging perceptions of people with mental health problems.

Voices of people with mental health problems have been historically silenced and disempowered by society and psychiatry. People with mental health problems have and are also often silenced by societal attitudes; by discrimination, fear and stigma.

People became involved in the service user movement to reclaim power, to have a stronger voice in the collective, to enforce change in the psychiatric system and improve services. Service user groups also offer a sense of community and power from shared, lived experience.

It is easy to take service user involvement in decision making today for granted, but it has not always been like this. By honouring and recording this hidden history we can see the achievements that have been made, how far the movement has come and where it is heading in the future. We can document the key role service users have had in developing services for people with mental health problems. We can record and begin to analyse the many voices of a social movement. This will make the voice of the service user movement stronger today and in the future.

THE SUTHERLAND TAFE ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

Carol McKirdy

For the Sutherland TAFE Oral History Collection I am recording the oral histories of students, teachers and additional staff at Sutherland College, Loftus and Gymea campuses. The oral histories are linked to History topics studied in the Junior syllabus in NSW schools and History studied in Vocational Access and Social Inclusion courses in TAFE NSW at Australian Core Skills Framework Levels 1 and 2.

The project began in Semester 2, 2008 and recordings so far include:

- An eyewitness account of the Hungarian Uprising
- Escape from North Vietnam
- Escape from South Vietnam
- Working on the Snowy Mountains Scheme
- Life on board a British Navy vessel during WW2
- Living in Iraq during the Iran Iraq War and later conflicts
- Living in Malta during the sieges in WW2
- Vietnam conscription.

The premise behind the collection's use in Education is that students' learning is enhanced through the study of original descriptions, interpretations and recollections of events. Access students especially engage with learning when they are exposed to resources with which they can identify. My project includes the development of teaching resources and digital sites for teachers in schools and TAFE NSW to house the histories.

Sutherland TAFE is a large educational community. All the student histories are from adult Access students who are either second chance learners, from non English speaking backgrounds or refugees. Educational disadvantage usually stops people telling their story but this project captures histories that would otherwise be lost and empowers students and validates their histories. My second chance learners are all enrolled in Adult Literacy and vocational support classes because for various reasons they missed significant periods of school education. Using voice to record reminiscences is essential when the interviewee has important history to tell but lacks the literacy skills to compose text.

Teachers have the opportunity to tell their stories and their physical voice, so important to a teacher's work is preserved. Despite being key members of every community teachers stories are lacking in Australian oral history collections

The project has the support of TAFE and NSW Schools systems. I have been awarded a NSW Premiers History Scholarship to assist my research.

REPRESENTING VOICE IN PRINT: AN APPROACH DEVELOPED FOR A STUDY OF THE AFTERMATH OF THE COLUMBINE SHOOTINGS

Carolyn L. Mears, Morgridge College of Education, University of Denver

On April 20, 1999, Columbine High School emerged from relative anonymity and became internationally recognized as a symbol of school violence. As a parent whose child survived the attack, I struggled to make sense of the tragedy and decided to conduct research to learn lessons that might help others exposed to community-wide trauma in the future. In combination with other strategies, I conducted modified oral history interviews of Columbine parents and presented their voices in excerpted narratives as a form of data display. An unexpected by-product of this research emerged, for it not only disclosed findings on trauma but also provided a model for conducting narrator-centered research that preserves voice.

Through the excerpted narratives, the approach grounds the findings in real expression, allowing parents to confirm that their voice was accurately represented and their meaning appropriately conveyed. It makes stories available to those lacking access to recorded interviews, and also allows narrators to *hear* their own voice in print, as an objectified whole, so that they enrich their own understanding as well. This approach (which I call *gateway*) has been recognized by the American Educational Research Association (AERA) as a significant contribution to qualitative research practice.

This presentation explores the concept of voice and presents a strategy for making the product of an OH interview accessible through print representations that go beyond transcription. It explores the potential for collecting OH interviews and representing voice so that researcher, narrator, and reader all gain a better understanding of the depth of experience.

'YOU STOP TELLING PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY DON'T BELIEVE YOU ANYWAY': GIVING WOMEN IN THE BRITISH NORTH SEA OIL INDUSTRY A VOICE.

Catherine O'Byrne

The UK oil and gas industry - crucial to British economic stability since the late 1970s - has begun to enter the history books, but largely as a masculine story. Women have been present in the industry since its inception but their experiences and voices have largely been ignored. This paper will analyse the life histories of women touched by the British North Sea Oil Industry – asking what their voices reveal about the industry as a whole. Issues of class, hierarchy, gender, nationality and age will be discussed through the use of short excerpts from interviews, revealing the rich and diverse history of the industry.

This paper will pose questions about the nature of transcription and the importance and problems of allowing the voice to be heard in written research. It will specifically look at initial attempts to balance a coherent transcription, interviewees' own reservations about their voices and speech patterns, and the necessity of an oral accompaniment to my thesis. The pros and cons of this approach will be discussed and some theoretical and practical issues will be examined.

It will also engage briefly with the subject of voice as performance; specifically looking at the effect of rehearsed dialogue on oral history and our response as both researcher and listener.

Finally this paper will pose questions about the effect of the voice of the interviewer on both the interviewee and future researchers.

VOICES FROM INDIA'S TRIBAL/MINERAL BELT

Felix Padel & Samarendra Das

"Is it development to mine these millions-of years-old mountains, just to satisfy the greed of a few officials?" (Bhagavan Majhi, a leader of the Kashipur movement against Hindalco's Utkal alumina project⁶, 2005)

The tribal areas of eastern-central India are also the areas richest in minerals. Nearly half the population of Orissa are Adivasis and Dalits (tribals & untouchables), but the State's mountains contain over half of India's bauxite, about a third of its coal, iron & manganese deposits, and 98% of its chromite. Hence the recent proliferation of mines, metal factories and big dams. About three quarters of the people displaced are Adivasis and Dalits. When Adivasis, in particular, lose their land and homes, what they face amounts to cultural genocide.

This fact is not reflected at all in the mainstream discourse on "sustainable development" & "development-induced displacement". Worse, the main companies, such as Vedanta, Tata, Mittal, Posco, Rio Tinto, NHP Billiton, Hindalco and Jindal, spend huge amounts of money on PR firms, promoting an image that their CSR projects (Corporate Social Responsibility) are raising people's living standards - Tata claims in 25,000

villages! - when the reality is a mass impoverishment. Even Orissa's anthropologists fail to question the idea that tribal people are "primitive" and "backward", and rarely, if ever quote the people themselves.

Yet these people are articulate, and when someone is interested, explain their situation with a vivid clarity that breathes inspiration into anyone who believes in the principle of sustainable lifestyles, especially since the movements opposing mining companies' takeover of land and resources in Orissa and neighbouring states are among the strongest in India, if not the world.

VOICES IN COMMUNITY RADIO

Jacob J. Podber, Southern Illinois University

This project is based on the voices of Indigenous and Aboriginal People in Australia who have become actively involved in producing, hosting, and performing on local community radio stations throughout the country. Using the model that I established in examining media usage within the tri-racial Melungeon community of Appalachia (recently explored in my book *The Electronic Front Porch: An Oral History of the Arrival of Modern Media in Rural Appalachia and the Melungeon Community*, Mercer University Press), I have begun to consider ways to expand my oral history research to include other "outsider" communities. My research with the Melungeons explores how they have used new technology to redefine their individual and community identities by creating their own Websites and "virtual" communities. Similarly, my work with Aboriginal people in Australia has focused on how they use technologies such as community radio to broadcast their voice in ways that help them redefine identities and communities and advocate for social justice. Like the Melungeons, the Aboriginal and Indigenous people of Australia have strong oral traditions. My research suggests that the interrelationship of oral tradition and technology has revolutionary potential for social change in Aboriginal communities involved in the creation of community radio, especially as they begin to disseminate their radio programs via the Internet. More broadly, by using oral history methodologies to compare this interrelationship among the Melungeons and Aboriginal peoples, this project seeks to illuminate processes of continuity, change, and the power of voice in the construction of identities in "outsider" communities.

EXPERIENCE OF EXILE – AN INTERGENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Alicia Pozo-Gutierrez, University of Southampton; Padmini Broomfield, Southampton City Council

This paper explores the voices of different generations affected by the experiences of traumatic evacuation and exile and focuses on how the story, of one generation's removal from their homes and families to the safety of a new country, has been remembered, transmitted to and kept alive by their descendants.

The oral data analysed is based on the recordings of the symposium, '*Los Niños – Experience of Exile*', held in Eastleigh, Hampshire, in October 2007, as part of a series of events marking the 70th anniversary of the evacuation of nearly 4,000 children (*niños*) from the Basque Country following the bombing of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War.

At the symposium, surviving niños, who had settled in the UK, narrated their memories and discussed the impact of exile on their lives, some using creative forms of expression e.g. paintings, posters and poetry; while their children reflected on how their parents' experiences had been passed down to them and the effect on their own lives.

The paper considers how the same narrative is voiced by different first generation informants in different ways, ranging from the 'learned script' of those who have told the story several times before, to the hesitant and reluctant narration of those who have not, or the matter-of-fact reflection of those whose exilic trajectories through various countries have led them to identify themselves as 'citizens of the world'. Similarly, the second generation's expression of an exile family history varied from the intensely politicised voices of the children of politically active exiles to the more detached, pragmatic or introspective approaches of others.

'FIT WEY WILL A SPIK?' THE USE OF SCOTS LANGUAGE IN ORAL HISTORY

Lindsay Reid

This presentation explores briefly the use of the Scots language in oral history through the medium of one of my interviewees: Doddie Davidson of the North-East of Scotland. Doddie was a howdie: an uncertified midwife who practised in the 1930s and 1940s.

Of the oral history midwifery interviews that I have undertaken, although most of the interviewees were Scots, most spoke English at interview. There were a few exceptions. A few used Scots words, Scots grammar, Scotticisms. Doddie was the only one who spoke Scots. Yet, she hesitated. As I was preparing the tape-recorder prior to beginning the interview she said to me: 'Fit wey will A spik?'

This talk looks at Doddie's use of 'the voice': why did she hesitate? I wanted her to speak in Scots, yet I, too, hesitated: to ask her to do so. The talk looks at this and discusses why I did not feel able to ask her directly to do this. Given Doddie's ethnic background of pre-World War II rural Aberdeenshire, was Scots the most comfortable language that she could use in this interviewing situation?

I also look at some aspects of the use of Scots, and some attitudes to it along with use of language in general. Can we say that one language/accent/dialect is perceived to be 'better' than another? Why do some people appear to think that their language is somehow inferior? Many people can 'change' their voices/speech/language depending on the situation. Why, apart from the practicalities of being understood, do they do this? And, do some people 'put on' a voice for the purpose of the oral history recording?

Some people find others' use of language funny. Why? Does it make them feel embarrassed, or uncomfortable or is it just hilarious? I have a specific example pertaining to Doddie's testimony which demonstrates this.

There is an end-tale: Doddie's reaction to publication. She did not like to see herself speaking in Scots. In a phone conversation she pointed out that 'her' chapter is the only one in Scots in my book* and seemed to think that it set her apart from the rest in a way which I did not intend.

*Reid L, 2000, *Scottish Midwives: Twentieth-century voices*. Tuckwell Press; reprinted 2008 Black Devon Books

VOICES OF WOMEN IN THE AMERICAN NEWS MEDIA

Anne G. Ritchie and Donald A. Ritchie

Radio and television executives in the U.S. initially considered women's voices to thin and high-pitched to deliver "hard-core news," prejudices reflected as well in newspapers, which limited women reporters to social news and the "women's pages." The Washington Press Club Foundation sponsored the "Women in Journalism" project, audio and video oral histories with sixty pioneer women reporters, in all branches of the news media. Anne Ritchie served as an interviewer on the project and will discuss the initial reluctance of women reporters, who considered themselves interviewers by profession, to engage oral historians to conduct the project, the many difficulties in interviewing them, the themes pursued, and the differences between the audio and video portions. Donald Ritchie served as an advisor to the project and also used many of the interviews while writing *Reporting from Washington: The History of the Washington Press Corps* (Oxford University Press, 2005). The interviews provided both first-hand information and clues for conducting further research, and drew unexpected conclusions about the comparative merits of the audio and video components. Their presentation will evaluate the project from the perspective of the doer and user of oral history, and draw conclusions about the strategies with which women reporters overcame the obstacles in their professional careers. Anne G. Ritchie is oral historian and archivist at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Donald A. Ritchie is associate historian in the U.S. Senate Historical Office, where he conducts an oral history program. He is the author of several books, including *Doing Oral History* (Oxford University Press, 2003). Both served as president of the U.S. Oral History Association, and both served on the council of the International Oral History Association.

LISTEN TO YOURSELF! TECHNOLOGY, VOICE, AND THE SELF

Linda Sandino, V&A Museum/Camberwell College of Arts

Participants in oral history research have often expressed a sense of strangeness and unease when listening back to their recordings, a sense that has been difficult to articulate, or pin down. Working principally with life histories, this aspect of participants' feelings about the recordings has become increasingly significant for my understanding of life histories as documents of the self. But, is the very notion of the 'self' one that is stable, or mutable? How can we understand oral histories as documenting different conceptions of what selfhood means? How do the technologies of inscription help us to understand listening, and voice as markers of the self?

Drawing on Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* (1975), a visceral representation of what it means to be confronted by a former self, and the artist Richard Serra's video work *Boomerang* (1974), this paper explores how technologies of inscription (audio tape, and video) have documented the estrangement of selfhood, and the interplay between a unified and dispersed subjectivity.

HEARING THE VOICES OF PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA THROUGH REMINISCENCE

Pam Schweitzer, Director European Reminiscence Network

The onset of dementia often brings with it significant barriers to communication, increased isolation, a diminution in one's sense of self-worth and a loss of identity.

Spoken communication can become more challenging as it takes more time to process what someone else is saying than is generally allowed for, and more time to assemble the words to reply than listeners are prepared for. Carers are under great pressure as they struggle to sustain their person's and their own social intercourse, and to maintain both their life-long conversation and their positive approach to the relationship.

A reminiscence project entitled "Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today" involves people with dementia and their family carers in retracing their life stories with others in a similar situation, supported by reminiscence group leaders and health care professionals. They work together over 18 weeks through a series of structured sessions related to the life course, from earliest childhood memories through working lives, marriage, having children, etc. Each session incorporates creative approaches to reminiscence, including singing, dance, dramatic improvisation, drawing and writing, as well as group discussion.

There is provision within the sessions for one-to-one work, small group discussion and whole group discussion. People with dementia are at the heart of the sessions, and time is allowed for them to gather thoughts on the subject for the day, stimulated by relevant photos, objects, actions and input from others in the group. They are encouraged to share a spontaneous memory or a fragment of memory thus stimulated, and, because their own voice is often very quiet through lack of use and confidence, their verbal contribution is amplified by the family member or volunteer they are working with, and shared more widely in the group. This demonstrates for them and others that they are valued members of the group and can contribute. As people's confidence grows, they contribute more often and take risks in the failure-free environment created for them by the project.

Often the carers of the participants are surprised by what their person can recall and express, given sufficient stimulus and support, and this helps them to increase their motivation, skills and confidence as carers. Focusing on their person's intact powers of communication, rather than dwelling on deficits, carers find they can help their person to piece together again their life story and the links between their past and present selves, so they do not feel so lost and personally disorientated.

"Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today" is now the subject of the biggest ever Department of Health-backed investigation into the effectiveness of reminiscence, with groups running in 8 centres in the UK and

24 groups running during the next 2 years. Pam Schweitzer, consultant and trainer to the project, will talk about ten years of reminiscence and life story work with families affected by dementia and demonstrate with DVD footage.

NEGOTIATING CULTURAL AND PHYSICAL LANDSCAPES:

LIFE STORY RESEARCH IN NORTHERN MANITOBA, CANADA.

Maureen Simpkins, University College of the North, Aboriginal and Northern Studies Program in Thompson, Manitoba, Canada

The proposed conference paper will describe the personal and collaborative process of conducting life story interviews with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and Two Spirit (glbtt) community members in northern Manitoba. "Two Spirit" is a self-descriptor that is increasingly being used by gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered Aboriginal people in Canada. The term acknowledges the interconnectedness of all aspects of identity such as spirituality, sexuality, gender and relationship to land.

The stories and experiences of the glbtt population have not been heard and included in the history and current changing social and cultural landscapes in northern Manitoba. The experience of gay community members is greatly influenced by the cultures, religions and history of the region as well as the northern landscape itself. Life story interviews will be conducted with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples from a variety of genders, ages, ethnicities and regions in northern Manitoba in 2008/09. The proposed conference paper will describe and share aspects of these northern narratives with a focus on questions such as, "How does identifying a community within a community begin to transform cultural norms and attitudes towards gays, lesbians, bisexual, transgendered and Two Spirit community members in a northern region?"

RAUCOUS VOICES: COMMUNITY CONFLICT

Graham Smith

More than £49M of Heritage Lottery Fund monies has been spent on reminiscence and oral history projects in recent years. This funding has encouraged a welcome renaissance in local history and community oral history, enabling the recording of voices and a democratization of 'heritage' that includes people who would otherwise have been hidden from history. A great deal of this activity is a celebration of group solidarity and above all else 'community'. A smaller number of projects have examined cultural diversity. A few have even looked at conflict within communities, although these have tended to be projects that record the experience of immigrants and refugees. The overall impression, and one that is largely unintentional, is a 'heritage' in which indigenous communities were marked with common interest and common cause and only disturbed when newcomers arrived.

In thinking about this I revisited the recordings made in 1984/5 by the Arbroath History Project. Funded by the Manpower Services' Commission the Project's archive was created at a time when 'heritage', especially

in Scotland, was the subject of much critical thinking. Amongst the testimonies collected are stories of division and conflict between men and women, rich and poor. Most striking are the recollections of conflict between 'toonsers' and 'fishers'. Two distinct peoples living in neighbouring districts in a small Angus town engaged in a history of violence and discrimination against one another for at least 150 years. Even at the time of the recordings a distinction can be made in the stories the two peoples tell *and* in the ways in which they voice their stories. So here are voices raised in division and difference, set in a 'traditional' community with few overseas incomers – a corrective to 'happy heritage'.

'FINDING VOICES' - OUR EXPERIENCE OF ADDING SOUND RECORDINGS TO A REMINISCENCE WEBSITE, REMEMBERING THE PAST, RESOURCING THE FUTURE PROJECT (RPRF), NORTH TYNESIDE

Kath Smith, RPRF; Pip McKeever, North Tyneside Council; Janette Hilton, Living History (North East) Ltd

The RPRF project has been collecting reminiscences from local people in the North Tyneside area of the North East of England for over 10 years, displaying them in written form on its website www.memoriesnorthtyne.org.uk. In the last year the project has taken a major step forward in its ability to preserve the personal details that make up community history thanks to a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The grant has enabled us to add new and pre-existing voice recordings to the website and has involved several challenges, both technical and practical, which the presentation will highlight.

We will talk about our experience of finding new voices to read the transcripts of existing published memories. We have learned that the 'right' voice is needed to tell each story and that reading to reflect the intonation and feelings of the original contributor is a difficult skill to master.

We will comment on our experience of the technical developments that have had to be made to enable the website to support the sound recordings. As a volunteer led project a particular challenge has been training volunteers in the new skills required to maintain an enhanced website. Finally, we will make some observations about the way in which the new feature has helped make the website resource more accessible, in particular to schools.

UNHEARD VOICES: INTERVIEWS WITH DEAFENED PEOPLE

Sarah Smith, Unheard Voices Project, Hearing Concern LINK

For many reasons, including the isolating nature of a profound sensory loss, the individual and collective voice of deafened adults is not strong. Adults with APHL (acquired profound hearing loss) were born with hearing and view voice or speech as their preferred method of communication. Most rely upon lip-reading to understand what is being said. Adults with APHL often experience a loss of

voice; a sense that although it is them who cannot hear, their stories are also not heard. This can lead to feelings of isolation, lack of control and depression.

Hearing Concern LINK is currently creating opportunities for these stories to be heard. Deafened volunteers have been trained by the Oral History Society and interview other deafened adults. Whilst voice is used and recorded in the project, neither voice can be heard. Instead a Speech-to-text Reporter transcribes the interview in real-time, which is displayed on-screen for both interviewer and interviewee to read.

The presence of another person in the interview session, combined with the unavoidable limitations of translation and the varying communication methods and needs of the participants make this kind of oral history interview different to a conventional one. However, the specialised assistance of speech-to-text allows the kind of lengthy communication between two deafened people that would normally not be attempted in ordinary life, thus making a 90-minute oral history interview not only a possibility, but a valuable experience for both interviewee and interviewer.

The most striking finding from the work so far is how much deafened adults, have appreciated the opportunity to be heard, to have their voices listened to and understood.

The Unheard Voices project is a first for deafened people. The project is allowing us to strengthen the collective voice of this group of people by making their voices heard.

GROUP LISTENING SESSION:

HEARING DIFFERENTLY: A GROUP CASE STUDY IN LISTENING

Facilitated by Mary Stewart, British Library Sound Archive

(Please note that this is a 40 minute session)

At conferences we always hear the voices of those presenting papers, and often extracts from oral history interviews are played to illustrate the analysis. In this session my aim is to place the voices within an oral history recording at centre stage, encouraging all those who attend the session to **listen** and **reflect** as a group. We will hear two extended excerpts from a life story interview from the BL collections and consider together the tone, phrasing and voice as well as the content of the recording. I will also play excerpts from an interview with the interviewee's son, in which he reflects upon his father's recording. This will add an extra layer to the discussion as we hear how a family member perceives the oral history and how the recording then sits within an interviewee's family history.

I would like to initiate discussion on the following themes (although this is not an exhaustive list):

- What can we hear in these extracts?
- How is the narrative structured by the interviewee and the interviewer?
- What language is used and what effect does this have?
- What lies beneath the narrative?
- How do we think these extracts sit within the rest of the interview?

- How did the family member feel when listening to these extracts? Did they hear something different to an outsider?
 - How did listening make us feel? Why?
 - How did it feel to listen as a group?
-

ONE VOICE AMONG MANY: NEGOTIATING THE REPRESENTATION OF JAPANESE CANADIANS IN WARTIME AND POST-WAR CANADA

Pamela Sugiman

This paper explores the themes of voice and representation by reflecting on the unfolding relationship between myself (a third-generation *Sansei* researcher) and a narrator in my oral history project on the internment of Japanese Canadians: an elderly second-generation *Nisei* woman, one of 22,000 Japanese Canadians who had been interned, dispossessed, and forcibly relocated during the Second World War. After reading one of my published articles, this 'subject' of my research sent me a note, condemning me for misrepresenting the history of the internment, and for mishearing the voices of her generation. Her message led to further e-mail correspondence. Over a two-year period, over the Internet, we developed a friendly and constructive dialogue about the internment and other racist acts. Subsequently, I invited this woman to participate in face-to-face oral history interviews, thereby allowing me for the first time, to listen to her speak about her experiences and feelings. She passionately articulated an analysis of the internment to which I was in fundamental disagreement. In conversation, however, she effectively contextualized her opinions, and her spoken voice and facial expressions revealed a vulnerability that I had not detected in our prior communication. Importantly, the narrator repeatedly subordinated her literal voice to her written words. As well, she pointedly asked me for agreement or disagreement, forcing me to openly confront our differing interpretations of the internment specifically, and of racism, generally. Housed in a larger project involving 75 *Nisei* narrators, this one relationship provokes questions about the interpretive voice of the researcher, the solitary voice of a research subject, the voice of the community, and the power and depth of the spoken narrative.

CLAYSCAPES: VIEWS OF A WORKING LANDSCAPE, FROM POETRY TO ORAL HISTORY

Shelley Trower

The landscape shaped by the china clay industry in Cornwall is represented in strikingly different ways in written and spoken communication. It appears alternately as beautiful, as bleak, as horribly polluted, and as a source of wealth. This paper will focus on how this landscape – marked in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by white pyramid shaped tips, and pits filled with greenish blue water – is seen in a multiplicity of ways by both visitors and inhabitants, and how their different modes of communication, both written and oral, shape the way the landscape is represented.

The paper will firstly consider the romanticisation of the landscape in literature, by authors including Rowena Summers and Jack Clemo, and will then go on to consider how people living in this locality describe the

landscape in oral history interviews. My examination of the differences between these two forms of description will help to reveal what the voice in oral history can tell us which written (silent) accounts do not. Whereas literary accounts tend to describe the landscape as a view from a distance, and in terms of its aesthetic qualities (as either beautiful or unattractively damaged), the interviews reveal how people involved in the clay industry tend to value the landscape in terms of function and income. This is bound up with writing itself as a vocational alternative to working in the clay industry. Clemo, for example, turned away from the industry in which his father and grandfather had worked, and instead, as a writer, put landscape to work at the service of literary production, to set the scene for his narratives by reflecting character's moods and actions. In contrast, the clay workers interviewed for this project 'use' the landscape directly as a means of earning a living. Moving beyond conventional ideas of landscape as a view from a distance, then, oral history allows us to consider everyday and bodily experiences of landscape through work.

USE AND CONSUMPTION OF CULTURAL ICONS IN POPULAR MUSIC: WHAT CAN THE ORAL HISTORIAN LEARN FROM CONTEMPORARY MUSICIANS?

George Watley, University of Northampton

The common conscience of oral history Ken Howarth refers to should logically extend to the oral history of popular music. Howarth also recognised in 1998 that academics in the UK were generally, " ... *slow to endorse oral history.*" Would this slow endorsement apply contemporaneously to analysis of the oral history of popular music in the expression of social and political voice by minority groups and non-academics?

This paper will address how different forms of popular music convey images to its listeners via cultural icons and how the usage of these icons is interpreted by audiences. These varying image interpretations are dependent on how the triangle of space between the speaker/singer, the audience and the cultural icons is filled. This paper will address this issue and what the oral historian can learn from it.

The use, consumption and interpretation of cultural icons will be further analysed in order to understand how not only popular musicians project their socio-political voice, but also how audiences interpret the usage of such icons as both consumers of music and producers/definers of identity. This paper will simultaneously analyse these issues whilst providing the oral historian with insight into how this particular projection of voice can affect oral history research, particularly as it relates to the primary subjects of oral history research, interviewees.

READING VOICE AND TONE; FROM DIALOGUE TO TRANSCRIPT

Christopher Webb, University of Huddersfield.

In recent years, Oral Historians have drawn a close focus to discussing the complexities of the interview dynamic, using reflective approaches of analysis which regard interviews as products of the relationships which create them. If we continue to look at the interview as a subtlety-riddled negotiation of narrative, it is essential that we are able to trace the sensory experiences which arise within the recording process.

This paper will employ Rhonda Y. Williams concept of 'Voice' and extend it further to explore my own concept of 'Tone' as a term inclusive of the intangible sensory exchange occurring between the interviewee and interviewer throughout the recording process. By tracing how the 'Tone' of the interview is negotiated, this paper builds a model which outlines the way in which those involved as first-hand participants of the interview dynamic are privy to intuitive understandings of its content. In a sense this 'Tone' is an intangible third voice, which is collectively expressed by those involved in the experience of the interview.

Through examining the various filters which 'Voice' and 'Tone' are put through, this model traces the ways in which layers of meaning are lost throughout the 'lifespan' of an interview. My intent is to highlight the contrast which exists between the interview, as a highly sensory experience, and its end product, as a catalogued transcript, with the aim of bringing forth important questions relating to interpretive authority how we read 'Voice' in interviews done by others.

BRITISH THEATRE DESIGN: THE PRACTITIONER'S VOICE

Elizabeth Wright

British theatre design is typically represented by the scale models, costume drawings and photographs which are the only remaining evidence of productions long-since staged. These artefacts are initially created by practitioners as tools for communicating ideas and intentions to the various individuals – directors, technicians, performers and artists – who collaborate together to create performances, and considered in isolation they provide an incomplete picture of theatre design practice. Until recently the practitioner's other significant method of communication – the voice – has been largely absent from exhibitions and publications on the subject.

This paper will draw on life story recordings with British theatre designers created as part of an AHRC-funded collaborative PhD at Wimbledon College of Art and National Life Stories, the oral history fieldwork charity based at the British Library Sound Archive, to explore the potential of the practitioner's voice in the context of British theatre design. The paper will focus specifically on the ways in which intangible aspects of theatre design practice are evident vocally as interviewees narrate their working processes and intentions for the realisation of performances, examining how the voices of practitioners can contribute to existing representations of British theatre design.

OPEN UNIVERSITY VOICES

Hilary Young and Ruth Cammies

In the first television broadcast for the Open University (OU) on the 3rd January 1971 Anastasios Christodoulou, the University Secretary exclaimed how astonished he was that he was not only speaking to his students via the broadcast but also other viewers:

“I doubt that any university officer has ever had the opportunity of addressing 25,000 students of his own University and hundreds and thousands of the general public at one and the same time. And the fact that I have had this opportunity today marks the fulfilment of one of the most exciting dreams of educationalists and broadcasters, the Open University...”

Anastasios Christodoulou, “Open Forum” broadcast 3rd January 1971

Indeed the university was originally conceived by the then Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson as the “University of the Air”; *the voice* was to be the main source of teaching, an audible presence on TV and radio like no other university at the time or since. As the UK’s original distance learning university it has from the beginning had a commitment to recording the spoken word, and to broadcast media, as a means of teaching and communicating.

The OU will celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2009 across the main campus at Milton Keynes and the 13 regional and national offices. The Open University Oral History Project has been established to conduct around 100 interviews with academic, administrative, student/alumni and regional staff from the first appointments in 1969 and the first students enrolled in 1971 onwards. Oral history offers much to the creation of a history of the OU. The project will allow a personal and alternative account of the University to be told as people’s voices from across a wide range of roles, never before heard in the official histories of the university, are woven into the life of the institution.

This paper will use audio excerpts from interviews conducted as part of the Open University Oral History Project to question how the institutional voice is represented, resisted, silenced or has changed across the OU’s 40 year history. Our key questions are to what extent the individual voice can be heard above the institutional voice in an oral history project? Do the voices of those working and studying in the regions and nations differ to those voices concentrated on the main campus at Milton Keynes? How do the early founders voices reverberate if at all in current staff and students accounts of their memories of the university?

SINGING THE BODY ELECTRIC: THE VOICE AND RECORDING TECHNOLOGY

Miriama Young, University of Aberdeen

My talk will focus on the historical precedent and implications that were set in motion by the very act of capturing the human voice in the recorded medium. Considering an early recording of Florence Nightingale’s speaking voice, I look at the way in which ‘the grain’ of the voice reveals the invisible body of the speaker – through language, utterance, diction, tone. As the recorded voice was inscribed onto the phonographic wax cylinder – a form of notation – a form of representation emerged, in which the recording came to stand in for the invisible speaker.

Early attempts to record the voice were, like photography, associated with mystical notions of immortalizing or preserving the body. Just as the photograph preserved a visual trace, the phonograph captured for posterity an auditory remnant of the subject. At last the voice (and by implication the persona with it) became

immortalized through the recording process. With this in mind, Thomas Edison sought to preserve the voices of famous icons of the time including those of Lord Tennyson, Joseph Pulitzer and King Edward VII, in exchange for their endorsement of his new invention, the phonograph.