THE ROLE OF SPEECH IN THE CINEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF PSYCHOSIS

THE VOICE FANTASMATIC

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Abstract

In this practice-led research project I explore the stylistic and structural possibilities of the cinematic representation of psychosis with a focus on the creative use of the voice – that phenomenon and activity which spans the porous boundaries between interiority and exteriority, thought and speech, and, particularly in the case of voice-hearers, self and other. The subject of much discussion in psychoanalytic, narratological and structuralist studies, the voice can act as a vehicle and metaphor for the cinematic exploration of the liminal space between individuals and the world. Through analytical writing and film practice I attempt to identify, mobilise and evaluate cinematic techniques that contribute to the creation of a delusional atmosphere – a representation of hallucinations and delusions that induce in film viewers something of the disorientation that comes from being unable, even temporarily, to distinguish fantasy from reality, what the psychiatrist R.D. Laing termed 'ontological insecurity'.[1] I ask whether providing a convincing, immersive representation of the delusional experience can help viewers to empathise with those suffering psychosis, and to conceive of psychosis as a variant of normal human experience and not something that renders its sufferers inaccessible or unworthy of sympathetic understanding. While the stylistic parameters of such an enquiry would seem to privilege fiction film, I also ask whether the creative documentary can achieve such effects.

My starting point for investigating the theory underpinning the cinematic representation of psychosis is Pasolini's pioneering 1965 essay 'The "Cinema of Poetry"' in which he identifies the free-indirect style as fundamental to such a representation.[2] The free-indirect style allows filmmakers to merge a 'neurotic' (in Pasolini's words) character's subjective point of view with the narrator's perspective in such a way as to render making a distinction

[1] Laing, R.D. (2010) *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness*, London: Penguin. (Original publication 1960).

[2] Pasolini's notion doesn't emerge from nowhere, however. Maya Deren covers similar ground in a 1963 panel discussion, published as 'Poetry and the Film: A Symposium', as does Eisenstein in his 1939 essay 'The Structure of the Film'.

between the two impossible, and to leave the viewer stranded in a multivalent, radically ambiguous diegetic world. The free indirect subsequently appears in narratological and structuralist studies and in Gilles Deleuze's notion of the time-image.[3] Indeed Deleuze builds on Pasolini's free-indirect point-of-view shot by introducing the free-indirect speech act. In documentary studies Bill Nichols, as a way of identifying the uncanny, haunting effect of certain re-enactments, proposes the term 'fantasmatic'.[4]

This project has produced four short films – two documentaries and two dramas – in the execution and exegeses of which I have made productive discoveries in the areas of vocal performance practice, phenomenological approaches to (vocal and physical) gesture, and synergies in sound-image relations, which I hope are manifest in the works themselves.

[3] Todorov, Tzvetan (1975) *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (trans. Richard Howard). Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Branigan, Edward R. (1984) *Point of View in the Cinema: A Theory of Narration and Subjectivity in Classical Film*, New York: Mouton. Bordwell, David (1985) *Narration in the Fiction Film*, London: Routledge. Deleuze, Gilles (1989) *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta), London: Continuum. (Original publication 1985).

[4] Nichols, Bill (2008) 'Documentary Reenactment and the Fantasmatic Subject', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 35, no. 1, Autumn, pp. 72-89.

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Links to Films and Film Extracts

Directory of films made for this project

Film	Date	Duration (mins.)	Vimeo Links for Streaming
Voices Drama test shoot with off-screen dialogue	May 2015	11:41	https://vimeo.com/126942212/df139d30e6
Voices Drama test shoot with on-screen dialogue	May 2015	11:52	https://vimeo.com/153706850/96a23e7182
Remember, thou art clay Experimental documentary	January 2017	8:36	https://vimeo.com/brokenislandfilms/clay
Unburied Drama	March 2018	25:47	https://vimeo.com/brokenislandfilms/filmunburied
Voices Apart Lipsync test	August 2019	1:28	https://vimeo.com/418669632/f052c2ce5b
Voices Apart Documentary	May 2020	17:26	https://vimeo.com/brokenislandfilms/voicesapart2020
Rising Drama	January 2023	13:35	https://vimeo.com/brokenislandfilms/rising

Preface

This project brings together two fields of enquiry through two modes of engagement. The role of the voice in cinema and the nature of cinematic representations of psychosis are explored through analytical writing and filmmaking. The process has been reciprocal, with research and writing informing filmmaking, and practical work feeding and directing theoretical enquiry. But while ongoing research informed the approach to the films, the filmmaking process itself was pursued empirically.[5] My objective with the practical work was not to prove a theory – to produce *films-à-thèse* – but to make films inspired by theoretical enquiry, destined for a general audience and capable of standing on their own. My own interest, and that of my filmmaking partner, Elvina Nevardauskaitė, who worked with me in all stages of production across all of the films, is in cinematic storytelling – documentary and fiction – that questions mainstream paradigms while still reaching out to a wide audience. 'Art cinema' might be the most appropriate category label for this work.

The topic that unites the subject areas of voice and psychosis is the phenomenon of voice-hearing, the experience of auditory verbal hallucinations which often accompanies conditions diagnosed as schizophrenia (though there are many examples of voice-hearing that do not attract such an appraisal). I have therefore focused much of my research and filmmaking efforts on the experience and representation of voice-hearing, though other creative uses of the voice are also discussed and implemented in the films.

Throughout this study I have used the term psychosis to denote a mental state characterized by delusion and hallucination which alters a person's relationship to reality from what can be verified by others to be actual or empirically true. In this sense psychosis describes a type of experience, however momentary or prolonged, and is not a diagnostic term. While psychosis can be a symptom of various psychiatric disorders, such as

[5] Noël Burch writes of the rigorous, nearly exhaustive exploration of voice-image combinations in Marcel Hanoun's *Une simple histoire*, 'The organization [thus achieved] is admittedly empirical, but in the last analysis only an empirical organization can attain in film that complete organic articulation' (1981: 88).

schizophrenia, my intention is not to pathologise the experience of delusions and hallucinations but instead to focus on the nature of the experience. Understandably, to have a psychotic episode or to be described as suffering from psychosis is, for many people, deeply stigmatising. For this reason other words, such as 'neurodiverse', have been introduced into our lexicon. But for my purposes a word like neurodiverse lacks precision, since it refers to a spectrum of different kinds of mental functioning including mood disorders and autism. However, I do employ the terms voice-hearers and voice-hearing extensively as they distinguish the experience of auditory verbal hallucinations from delusion and, therefore, from psychosis itself as well as from the notion of mental disorder or disease. On several occasions, when engaging with historical studies that use the word 'madness' to describe psychosis I use the word myself for clarity of reference, acknowledging that although this was once a common term to denote psychotic experiences, the history of stigmatisation that it embodies makes it inappropriate – particularly given that this study finds many positive aspects of psychosis. Indeed, one of our interview subjects declared that she would be bereft if she one day awoke without her voices.

The present study charts not only the results of the research and practice I have conducted since 2014, but a record of the journey of experimentation and discovery which, although mapped out in advance, led me in directions I didn't foresee. A brief account of this project's twisted timeline may serve to illustrate how deeply intertwined the different modes of engagement have been, and also to account for the order of the topics in the chapters that follow which might, without such signposting, appear to lack a deliberate organising principle. The research, analytical writing, and various phases of film production on different projects cross-pollinated in an organic, synergistic fashion. The first films – the drama test shoot, *Voices*, and the documentary *Remember, thou art clay* – were shot in the spring and summer of 2015 (with the interview for the latter being conducted in February 2016), though *Remember, thou art clay* wasn't released until 2017 when it screened at its first festival. By then I had written the first draft of Chapter 1 and part of Chapter 2 of this

dissertation, and Elvina and I had conducted interviews with the voice-hearers from whose testimony the script of our second documentary, *Voices Apart*, would be constructed. While navigating the tortuous path of *Voices Apart* – a journey described in Chapter 4 – we developed and produced the drama based on *Voices* – *Unburied* – which premiered at the Vilnius International Film Festival in the spring of 2018, long before a route forward with *Voices Apart* had been found. But the content of the interviews conducted for *Voices Apart* – rich, vivid, first-hand accounts of the experience of voice-hearing – fed into the scripting of *Unburied*, which began in earnest in the spring of 2017. Chapter 3, in which the formal techniques employed in *Unburied* are evaluated against a background of narrative theory, was drafted in the spring of 2018 after the film's premiere.

The breakthrough on *Voices Apart* was finally made in the spring of 2019 and the re-enactments were shot in 7 days over 5 weekends between October 2019 and February 2020. We worked on the postproduction of the film in the spring – as usual Elvina taking the lead on editing the picture and I on the sound – while I wrote Chapter 4. The film premiered at the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival in November 2020, just shortly after winning the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Research in Film Award 2020 for Best Doctoral Film. Boosted by the £5000 prize money we immediately started planning the final film for this project, *Rising*, the concept for which had come to me some years before, but which we set about scripting in earnest in the summer of 2020. The development process was again slow, but it gradually took shape to form a variation on the theme of *Unburied* – a similar subject matter but viewed from a different vantage point through a different metaphorical lens – a mostly major-key treatment of the material orchestrated in a minor key in *Unburied*. *Rising* was shot in September 2021. Chapter 5, which includes an evaluation of *Rising*, was begun in the spring of 2021 and completed in January 2023.

Given the organic, progressive nature of the process, and the fact that the writing needed to respond to the filmmaking as the films were finished, if the analyses were to feed into the next production, I decided that the order of the chapters in the final draft should

remain chronological in order to accurately reflect this. As a result, the direction of this dissertation describes less a teleological thrust toward an answer or solution (though insights are uncovered along the way), than a spiraling around the central concerns outlined above, viewing them from different perspectives as prompted by the practical outcomes. Thus, formalist, psychoanalytical, structuralist, narratological and phenomenological approaches are mobilised in the spirit of open-minded enquiry and the testing of ideas. References from literature, theatre and performance practice are also brought into play to provide points of thematic, narrative, stylistic and technical comparison. The work of Samuel Beckett and Gérard de Nerval provides literary touchstones for the subjective representation of psychosis.

What remains outside the scope of this study, due to limitations of length, are an assessment of whether the methods that have been used to create a delusional atmosphere in existing films are historically and/or culturally contingent; a survey or taxonomy of the numerous and complex varieties of psychotic experience, how these affect the sufferers, and how they may have been represented in cinema; and accounts of production processes, including script development, fundraising, pre-production, directing, and distribution. However, as the production of the five films presented here took up such a significant amount of time, energy and money, it's important to include a brief outline of the process to highlight the impact that such practical concerns exerted not only on the films themselves, but on the form of the completed dissertation, governed as it was by the rhythms of the production process.

As everyone knows, film shoots – even for short films – are logistically complex and costly, thanks to the many elements that must be brought together at the same time and place to produce an authored artefact with input from many contributors. The smaller the budget the more challenging it is to secure locations, crew, actors, accommodation, catering, equipment, props, costumes, make-up, set dressing. (Postproduction elements such as colour grading and music added to the planning and budget pressures for us.)

Negotiating permission to block streets (*Rising*), gain access to a working morgue (*Unburied*), or shoot on a factory floor during production (*Remember, thou art clay*) are all significant hurdles to overcome, not only a small budget, but with a small production team. And the smaller the budget, the faster the film must be shot, which increases the time pressure, limits rehearsals for cast and crew, and reduces the number of shots that can realistically be planned. *Unburied* (with a running time of 26 minutes) was shot in 5½ days; Rising (14½ minutes) was shot in 3½ days. With multiple location moves, accommodating the schedules of various and changing cast and crew, and adapting to weather delays, these drama shoots were very challenging to complete within the time that we could afford. The documentaries, having smaller casts and crews, as well as less art direction, were somewhat easier to produce, though *Voices Apart* still required 7 locations, 5 actors, a picture car, a motorcycle and a drone. Thankfully, Elvina shouldered the vast majority of the producing duties, while I raised the budgets and managed the festival strategy.

The budgets of the films varied considerably. *Remember, thou art clay* (shot in 3 days, with an additional ½-day for the interview) cost just £2,500. The budget for *Unburied* was over £20,000. *Voices Apart* cost £5,600, and *Rising* £10,250. Much of the money for the films came from the research fund at Middlesex University where I teach full-time. Middlesex contributed £10,000 to *Unburied*, the entire budget of *Voices Apart*, and £5,250 toward *Rising*. I am extremely grateful for this support. The remaining budget for *Rising* came from the £5000 AHRC prize, while I personally funded half of *Unburied* and all of *Remember, thou art clay*. The postproduction facilities were secured free of charge at Middlesex University where all of the surround-sound editing and mixing was done, and where we secured the use of the colour grading suite for our colourist. The films were produced by Broken Island Films, the company that Elvina and I incorporated in the UK in 2014 at the urging of one of my doctoral supervisors, Robert Smith, with a branch in Lithuania where all of the films (apart from the test shoot, *Voices*) were shot.

To conclude this preface I will circle back to the first stage of the filmmaking process:

developing the screenplays. Extensive periods of time were devoted to scripting *Unburied*, *Voices Apart* and *Rising*. (*Remember, thou art clay* was based on a shot list, the footage from which was edited in conjunction with the audio of the interview, which was obtained later.) Although performed in Lithuanian, *Unburied* was written in English and went through 11 drafts (after the initial treatments) before we locked the script and Elvina began translating it into Lithuanian – a monumental task in itself for which she was obliged to seek help from two Lithuanian screenwriters. (I will discuss the challenges of translating and subtitling Lithuanian in Chapter 4.) The long development process of *Voices Apart* is described in Chapter 4; all that needs to be added here is that, once we finally settled on the form of the film, we produced 12 drafts before locking the script. *Rising* went through innumerable drafts. I have 27 numbered drafts in my production folder, though many of these represent small changes and aren't technically separate drafts. As with the scripts of *Unburied* and *Voices Apart*, I would guess there were about a dozen full drafts in total for *Rising*. Although in the chapters that follow I refer only rarely to the screenplays, I have included the final drafts as appendices. In terms of storytelling they are quite spare, in keeping with screenplay style, but they do give a flavour of the tone of the films as well as providing a point of comparison between the conception and the finished film, since all of the films differ to some degree from their scripts due to changes made on set or in the edit.

My inspiration throughout this journey – indeed beginning from the initial conception of the project – is the practice-theory paradigm of Sergei Eisenstein whose research and theorising informed his films, themselves a laboratory for formal and conceptual innovation. A polymath, he regularly drew inspiration from beyond cinema (science, history, ethnography, linguistics, literature, music, theatre, art), which widened the scope of his enquiry and led to many startling ideas, some of which I touch on in what follows. The synergistic feedback loop between practice and theory ensured continuous experimentation and development despite the many and changing political pressures he faced. I hope that in my own work on this project I have channelled just a little of this spirit.

Introduction: The Inside-Outside Problem

> Among distinctions, there is assuredly none more clear-cut than that between the organism and its surroundings.
>
> Roger Caillois, 'Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia' (1984: 16)

Toward the end of an ostensibly entomological article on insect mimicry, published in 1935 in the French surrealist journal, *Minotaure*, Roger Caillois extrapolates from his discussion of the failings in insect behaviour effectively to defend against predators, through blending *too well* with their environment, to the case of humans who experience such a pronounced 'disturbance in the perception of space' that they lose their sense of an independent identity (1984: 28). Caillois describes what he calls a schizophrenic condition as '*depersonalization by assimilation to space'* (30, emphasis in the original). The article highlights a fundamental aspect of psychotic experience – a confusion between self and other – and links it to a failed survival strategy. Indeed, psychosis often results from a trauma that the sufferer, unable to assimilate the experience, dissociates. In the case of voice-hearing, an aspect of one's inner voice is externalised, either projected into the physical environment, and possibly onto other people, or identified as a separate voice within the mind. Inside and outside become disordered.

From a cinematic perspective representing psychosis presents several challenges linked to the inside-outside dichotomy. Viewed entirely from the outside, psychotic behaviour can look irrational and incomprehensible, and therefore hinder audience sympathy. On the other hand, a subjective portrayal risks appearing unduly stylised or simply unbelievable. Furthermore, any representation of psychotic experience raises ethical questions about power relations (where does control of the medium of communication lie and how is this power negotiated?), authenticity (if the fictional or documentary material is gathered from outside a lived experience of the condition, how is it brought inside the film?), and the filmmaker's objective in making the film.

My interest in this subject has to do with what the study of psychosis reveals about the thin, porous and shifting barrier separating our experience of reality from our imaginings of it and how, for me, some of the most interesting cinematic moments stem from filmic techniques that blur the boundary between filmic reality and a subjective conception of it. Cinema has been talking about and representing psychosis since at least *The Student of Prague* (Rye 1913). In the many renderings of psychosis, particularly those more subjectively oriented, cinema can offer viewers insight into the psychotic experience, insight that comes from cognitive, emotional, and somatic (perceptual, including spatial (dis)orientation) engagement. Films might trigger thoughts, memories or feelings that give us the sense of having experienced something similar. They might create a 'delusional atmosphere'. I believe that providing a convincing, sympathetic representation of the delusional experience can help viewers to empathise with those suffering from afflictions such as schizophrenia, and to see psychosis as a variant of normal human experience and not something that should attract opprobrium. While such an enquiry would seem to privilege fiction film, I also ask whether the creative documentary can achieve such effects.

In approaching this project from the dual perspectives of filmmaking and analytical writing, I set out to address several key questions. As a powerful vehicle for the depiction of inner states, how has cinema portrayed the complex perceptual and emotional experience of psychosis? Given its prominence in psychosis, what can the role of the voice bring to these portrayals? How might cinema generate representations that encourage a sympathetic understanding of such experiences from its audiences? In what follows I attempt to answer these questions through reference to existing films and theory on the subject, but also through reflection on my own films, which were made in tandem with the written component presented here, in a reciprocal process described in the preface.

Chapter One provides a survey of the rich field of fiction films featuring psychosis, as well as an examination of the stylistic and structural approaches to their representations. Narrative point of view naturally plays a fundamental role in determining how audiences

relate to characters but there are many degrees of narrative focalisation on the objective-subjective spectrum. The free indirect style offers a powerful narrational strategy for the sympathetic representation of psychosis, since it maintains an ambiguous relationship to narrative point of view, allowing character experience to be interpreted as both subjective and objective, real and imagined. Clearly this characteristic makes it an effective device for the representation of delusion, a condition in which two contradictory beliefs are often held simultaneously. The voice, given its capacity to span the inner-outer divide as thought and speech, also figures importantly, not only in the representation of psychosis, but in the very formation of the self. An examination of psychoanalytic theory offers a framework for understanding the critical importance of the voice in the development of the self and in our response to psychic trauma. The excursion into psychoanalysis leads to a consideration of the nature of the spectatorial activity in films that attempt to create a delusional atmosphere. How can audiences be induced to feel a sense of ontological insecurity? The chapter concludes with suggested strategies – stylistic and structural – to achieve such an impact, supporting the findings with reference to feature films that successfully mobilise these strategies.

Chapter Two begins by asking, if the filmmaker wants the audience to engage critically with the subject of psychosis, is it necessary to mobilise self-reflexive practices or other means of estrangement. The theories of Brecht, Eisenstein and the Russian Formalists are considered alongside those of Roland Barthes, Michel Chion, Julia Kristeva and Paul Willemen. The question is then raised whether documentary can – while maintaining a link to indexical reality – create a delusional atmosphere. Bill Nichols' writing on the fantasmatic documentary provides insight into re-enactment, the stylistic possibilities of creating a sense of the uncanny as well as the ethical dangers. Re-enactment cinema opens the possibility of employing verbatim techniques: embedding documentary testimony into creative re-stagings. To conclude the chapter, the first two films made for this project, the

drama *Voices* and the documentary *Remember, thou art clay*, are evaluated for their use of the voice in creating a delusional atmosphere.

Chapter Three focuses on the role of speech as a narrational tool, whether as on-screen narration, voiceover, or inner speech. Edward Branigan's classification of cinematic narration into eight levels is examined from the perspective of voice, with the term 'cognitive focalisation' coined to designate the narrational level of inner speech, along with subjectively represented dreams and hallucinations. As an aid to analysing the portrayal of auditory verbal hallucinations (or 'AVH' – a defining experience of voice-hearers) a four-part categorisation is introduced. It charts the level of focalisation on the objective-subjective continuum against the character's awareness of the origin of their hallucination to ascertain the effectiveness of AVH representations to draw in the viewer. The more subjective representations, such as that in *Birdman* (Iñárritu 2014), are more likely to encourage identification with the protagonist and to create a delusional atmosphere. However, the extent to which this holds true depends upon the narrative focalisation of the picture track and the surrounding narrative context. These parameters are further explored in the analysis of the third film made for this project, the drama *Unburied*, which features dreams, visual hallucinations, and auditory verbal hallucinations.

Chapter Four introduces Tzvetan Todorov's definition of the literary fantastic and applies it to cinema. Todorov stresses the importance of the free indirect voice and modal verbal constructions to create the ontological ambiguity in the text necessary for keeping the reader in a state of hesitation or uncertainty as to what is real and what is imaginary. These features are incorporated in the fourth film made for this project, *Voices Apart*. Based upon the recorded oral testimony of three Lithuanian voice-hearers, the documentary features actors who perform the documentary subjects in creatively imagined re-enactments in which they lip-synch to the testimony. With its re-enactments the film attempts to conjure the documentary subjects as fantasmatic beings – simultaneously and impossibly both present and absent – and firmly to situate itself within the realm of the

fantastic. The chapter concludes with a positive assessment of the documentary experiment: it is indeed possible for a documentary to remain tied to the indexical reality on which it is based while also generating a delusional atmosphere for its audience, and empathy for its characters.

Chapter Five proposes a phenomenological approach to the analysis of psychosis as a means of better understanding the perceptual exchange between self and world, applying key concepts used by Merleau-Ponty, such as entwinement, to explore perception as both a projection into the world and an introspection of ourselves. Merleau-Ponty identifies the creative aspect of this double-movement through the painting practice of Cézanne (who believed that the objects of the world thought themselves in him) and thus gives value to the originality of psychotic perception. Phenomenology also admits access to an embodied exploration of features fundamental to this project: the voice, vocalised sounds, and breathing. A focus on the breath and voice in performance practice can increase the sympathetic understanding of character for actor and audience. *Voices Apart* is used as a test case. Finally, a discussion of the fifth and final film for this project, the drama, *Rising*, gives an opportunity to question assumptions regarding the formal strategies that might generate a delusional atmosphere. Distinct from the previous four films, the narration of *Rising* avoids a subjectively-inflected representation of the protagonist's experience as well as any use of voiceover or inner speech. Instead, the film relies principally on story events to generate a sense of the fantastic. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of this approach in relation to the aims of generating a delusional atmosphere and creating an empathetic portrayal of psychosis.

As one of the key aims of this project rests on the notion that empathy is a natural human proclivity and a positive force toward achieving mutual human understanding, despite individual differences, and that this force can be catalysed by cinema, it is worth noting that the value and limits of empathy are a subject of ongoing academic – and indeed populist – debate (the latter exemplified by Paul Bloom's 2016 polemical *Against Empathy:*

The Case for Rational Compassion).[6] Within academic circles, competing theories of empathy are interestingly played out in cognitivist, phenomenological and psychoanalytic theories of cinema spectatorship. In this study I have embraced a phenomenological framework of empathy, supported by neuroscientific research, as elucidated by Vittorio Gallese and Michele Guerra's ground-breaking work, *The Empathic Screen: Cinema and Neuroscience* (2020). Using brain-imaging technology to track the activity of mirror neurons and motor neurons in human subjects as they watch films, the authors demonstrate that cinema invokes what they term 'embodied simulation' in the viewer, an impulse that leads to a condition of intersubjectivity – even between real people and fictional characters. They describe this non-linguistic neural activity as follows:

> Embodied simulation is a basic functional mechanism of the brain by means of which part of the neural resources that are normally employed to interact with the world around us, shaping our relationships and relations, are reused for perception and imagination. Our understanding of the meaning of much of the behaviour and experience of other beings relies on this reuse of the neural circuits on which our personal agentive, emotional, and sensory experiences are based. We reuse our mental states and processes, represented in corporeal form, to attribute them functionally to others. Embodied simulation provides an integrated and neurobiologically credible framework for this type of intersubjective phenomena.
>
> (Gallese and Guerra, 2020: 1-2)

Their claim is that empathy plays a fundamental role in our experience of cinema, triggered particularly by images of motion, and of touch, and close-ups of faces, and that through embodied knowing (multimodal sensory experiencing that 'overcomes the separation between physical and mental') we not only 'establish a direct intersubjective link between

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[6] Bloom's stated objective is 'to persuade you to be against empathy' (3). His central contention is that empathy is a poor moral guide; he advocates rational compassion instead. However, he overstates his case by putting a disproportionate emphasis on human reason and neglecting seriously to consider the role of empathy in fostering the mutual understanding necessary to engender compassion (see page 141). By judging empathic behaviour solely according to a (his) moral framework he not only presents an impoverished and unrealistic picture of human nature but highlights the speciousness of his own argument when he is finally compelled to admit in his concluding remarks: 'I don't deny that empathy can sometimes have good results' (240).

ourselves and others' but we also learn about ourselves though this process of identification (2020: 158, 163). In effect, the authors provide the neurobiological evidence for Merleau-Ponty's concepts of 'entwinement' and *chiasm* which he set forth in his *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) and *The Visible and the Invisible* (1964) respectively, and to which the authors refer (see particularly pages 76-79, 157, 190).

It should be stressed, however, that empathic engagement with characters in cinema is not a constant affective state throughout the viewing of a film, nor can it be predicted how viewers might be influenced by their experiences of empathy once the screening concludes. In *Engaging Characters: Fiction, Emotion and the Cinema*, Murray Smith distinguishes between sympathetic engagement with characters and empathic identification, contending:

> Our basic stance toward characters is not an empathic one in which we experience the fictional world consistently from their imagined perspectives; but through simulation . . . we flit rapidly in and out of characters empathetically, moving with imaginative agility through a variety of perspectives which are then aggregated and interrelated to produce the structure of sympathy – that integrated, dynamic picture of the characters populating the fiction in terms of their moral-emotional appeal.
>
> (2022: 269)

For my purposes, viewers will ideally be drawn into the subjectivities of my characters, imaginatively mirroring their feelings, even if intermittently – possibly through sharing with them a sense of ontological insecurity – and with enough affective force to stimulate sympathetic reflection on the films once they are over.

Although the present project was conceived in relation to the cinema, it would be interesting to explore the effect of more immersive technologies, such as VR, on viewers' (or players', or participants') empathic involvement. While the assumption must be that, by their very nature, more immersive forms will produce, *mutatis mutandis*, greater degrees of such engagement, it is equally possible to imagine the opposite case. First-person gaming experiences, for example, encourage identification with one's own avatar rather than with other characters, while Spielberg's dream of complete, unmediated entry into virtual worlds

may encourage an attitude toward the characters encountered there which is more akin to our interactions with people in our embodied exchanges in real life where we don a persona as support for our ego. Perhaps the barrier of the screen (be it cinema, television, computer, or mobile phone) combined with viewers' physically passive state before it – a state in which they have nothing personally at stake in the unfolding story – create the ideal conditions for imaginatively extending beyond ourselves while maintaining a (fluctuating) reflective distance. 'Seated in the cinema,' suggest Gallese and Guerra, 'It is almost as if there is an emotional transfer between actors and spectators; the latter, being forced into inactivity, are more receptive to feelings and emotions' (2020: 43). Indeed, without cinema's requisite barrier and the particular passivity it requires, might there even be a danger of solipsism in virtual experiences if they constantly entice us to identify primarily with our own experience? Certainly, work remains to be done in the comparative study of empathic engagement as experienced by cinema viewers and the users of recent immersive technologies.

In relation to the films produced for this project – which were inspired by, and reflect upon, the theoretical deliberations that follow – I would like to acknowledge the ethos that my co-director, Elvina Nevardauskaitė, and I shared. We followed working practices typical of the film industry: collaborative but hierarchical. Crew composition and complex schedules (tied to budgets), shaped around an overarching creative vision (director) and logistical strategy (producer), are managed according to agreed-upon frameworks. The director leads the creative team, the producer the production team. While Elvina and I shared creative responsibility for the films as co-directors, we also collaborated productively with all members of our teams (actors, art directors, colourist, composers, documentary subjects, gaffers, sound recordists). Everyone involved in the realisation of our films was informed in advance of what to expect, willingly agreed to participate, and were remunerated appropriately. While it must be acknowledged that other, more artisanal

working practices exist, which might treat additional members of the team as co-directors,[7] given the aims of this project, which involved responding to the same set of research questions in different cinematic forms and styles across four discrete films, I determined that maintaining a unified creative focus was essential for achieving coherent outcomes.[8]

Throughout this study I have been keenly aware of how the vantage point on any person or event influences one's understanding of them. We all know that everything appears different from the inside, from our singular point of view. As a contributor from *Voices Apart* observed: 'From the inside psychosis is a spiritual journey. But when you see it from the outside it's mental illness.' One of the aims of this project is to attempt to enact, through film, a perceptual reversal and (to use Merleau-Ponty's expression) to invite audiences to be possessed by the characters facing them.

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[7] Marcus Coates' collaborative effort, *The Directors* (2022), is a recent example: https://www.artangel.org.uk/project/the-directors/ The ethnographic filmmaker Jean Rouch was, of course, a trailblazer and exemplary figure of this kind of working practice.

[8] Even many experimental filmmakers, operating outside the industry, adopt a firmly hierarchical approach to their work – in some cases going a step further. For example, Turner Prize winning conceptual artist Gillian Wearing (CBE, RA), has directed numerous films, which are known as the product of her sole authorship despite the fact that she did not film them. She hired a cinematographer who was paid, but whom she did not credit, thereby creating the impression that she performed the role of cinematographer on these films. This lack of acknowledgement does not happen in proper industry practice.

Chapter One: Sounding the Field

> Narcissus looked around wildly. / 'I'll stay here,' he shouted. / 'You come to me.' And 'Come to me,' / Shouted Echo. 'Come to me, / To me, to me, to me.' / Narcissus stood baffled, / Whether to stay or go. He began to run, / Calling as he ran: 'Stay there.' But Echo / Cried back, weeping to utter it, 'Stay there, / Stay there, stay there, stay there.'
>
> Ovid, 'Echo and Narcissus' (1997: 77)

Introduction

Filmmakers have been representing psychosis on screen since the earliest feature length dramas of the silent era. *The Student of Prague*, scripted by fantasy/horror writer Hanns Heinz Ewers based loosely on Edgar Allan Poe's 'William Wilson', premiered in Berlin in the summer of 1913 promoted as an art film – likely Germany's first. At the top of one contemporary poster '**Kunstfilm???**' features prominently. In the film, the protagonist's divided psyche takes the form of a doppelgänger (both characters played by Paul Wegener) which required cinematographer Guido Seeber to innovate seamless double exposures and complex choreography staged in depth. The film was enthusiastically received by the public and the critics and doubtless influenced subsequent better-known films such as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Wiene 1920) and *Nosferatu* (Murnau 1921). It can thus be seen, in its engagement with the fantasy genre, commitment to psychological enquiry, formal innovation, and macabre theme, as a precursor to German Expressionism and a significant initial foray into the representation of psychosis.

Psychoanalyst Otto Rank, discussing the film in detail in his article 'The Doppelgänger', which first appeared in Freud's *Imago: Journal of the Application to Psychoanalysis to the Humanities* in 1914, noted that 'the uncanny double is clearly an independent and visible cleavage of the ego' (1989: 12) representing, as with literary treatments such as Dostoevksy's *The Double*, a 'paronoiac clinical picture': 'a delusional state, and confusion with reality' (27). In his introduction to the film, Rank defends his choice of a 'photoplay', still widely considered to be a low form of cultural expression, as an object of analysis:

> It may perhaps turn out that cinematography, which in numerous ways reminds us of the dream-work, can also express certain psychological facts and relationships – which the writer often is unable to describe with verbal clarity – in such clear and conspicuous imagery that it facilitates our understanding of them.
>
> (1989: 4)

Rank concludes his discussion of the film by extolling the manner in which it perplexes the spectator with images and incidents that seem to extend beyond rational understanding to generate an 'obscure but unavoidable *feeling'* that the viewer is privy to a profound and tantalising revelation of the problems of the human psyche (7, my emphasis). For Rank the film seems to have the capacity to put the audience into a psychological state that renders them susceptible to intuiting what the experience of psychosis might be like. It endeavours to create a delusional atmosphere.

The Student of Prague highlights two key aspects of the present study which I will elaborate in this chapter: the imperative of formal innovation in conveying a psychotic condition, and the relevance of such representations from a psychoanalytic perspective. From *The Student of Prague* to *Twin Peaks: The Return* (Lynch 2017), stylistic and structural experimentation have been employed to convey subjective states of mind and to position the audience in relation to psychotic experiences, particularly through manipulations of narrative point of view. Psychoanalysis provides insights into cinematic representations of psychosis and the fundamental role accorded to the voice in such mental disturbances. While naturally there are no audible voices in *The Student of Prague*, speech still plays a significant role in the protagonist's psychotic experience. The character Scapinelli (Satan in disguise) who, in Faustian fashion, strikes a deal with the protagonist Balduin that results in the 'cleavage' of his ego, gets Balduin on his own and conspiratorially beguiles him in untitled dialogue (the film is remarkable for its very sparing use of intertitles). His body language – ingratiatingly tapping Balduin on the shoulder and walking with a simpering gait (which Max Schreck will echo in his performance of Nosferatu) – suggests the confidential manner of the double in 'William Wilson' who

whispers all of his speech as though it emanated from within the protagonist rather than originating from without. This is the voice fantasmatic – a voice ghostly in its form, and 'fanstastic' in its function – which spans the internal-external / subjective-objective divide, just as narratives within the genre of the fantastic aim to straddle the fantasy-reality divide to keep the audience in doubt about the ontological status of events. The voice fantasmatic can thus be understood both as an element of, and a metaphor for, psychosis.

In his book, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, based upon his original article of 1914 and published in 1925, Otto Rank devotes the final chapter to the narcissistic personality disorder – the source of another form of doppelgänger – and analyses the mythical character, Narcissus. Of significance to the present study, however, is Echo and the role of the voice. Though she and her would-be lover share a similar fate, wasting away from unrequited love – she for him and he for himself – Narcissus dies and passes on to the Land of the Dead whereas Echo maintains an earthly existence as voice alone 'wandering heartbroken among the hills' (Ovid 84). Earlier in the tale (in the passage quoted in the epigraph above) Narcissus, having strayed from his companions, calls out to them and receives Echo's voice in reply, sounding like that of another. Indeed, it IS the voice of another, though it can only repeat the words of Narcissus. His words returning to him in a different voice sets up his misrecognition of his own reflection in the pool of water as the image of another. At the water's edge, what voice does he hear as he speaks with his reflection? '"When I tell you my love I see your lips / Seeming to tell me yours – though I cannot hear it"' (81). This is just before he realises that the boy in the water is himself, so he is unable to attribute the sound of his own voice to the adored image, though he must hear it; he just expects it to sound like the voice of another. While Echo does not reflect his voice back to him here, she materialises as he breathes his dying words: 'His last words, / As he gazed into the dark pool, / "Farewell, you incomparable boy, / I have loved you in vain" / Returned from her lips with sorrow doubled: / "I have loved you in vain"' (83). The problematising of the link between voice and body, sound and sight, and the concomitant

confusion between self and other provide an apt metaphor for both voice-hearing (the experience of auditory verbal hallucinations, often associated with psychotic experience) and the fantasmatic voice in cinema. In both cases the voice, seeming to float free of a body, is perceived as the voice of another, yet originates from yourself – a voice which is therefore your own, yet foreign, echoing thoughts you did not know you had. Yet from this disorientation and confusion might there come illumination? Narcissus eventually realises that he is in love with himself. Indeed some stories of the fantastic, according to Todorov in his landmark study *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, prompt us to ask ourselves 'whether or not madness is actually a higher reason' (1975: 40). We will return to Todorov and the genre of the fantastic in Chapter 4.

In this chapter I will confine my examination of the formal and psychoanalytic aspects of the cinematic representation of psychosis to fiction film. Documentary's distinct and contrasting mode of address to its audience, predicated on an engagement with reality and the ethical imperative to avoid the deceptiveness fundamental to the fantasmatic, raises the question of whether documentary can, or should, attempt to venture into the fantastic. I will address this issue in the next chapter. Meanwhile, to conclude this introduction, it is important to outline the key features of psychosis. The term refers to certain kinds of mental disorder that can by symptomatic of pathological conditions, such as schizophrenia, though they need not be. Psychosis involves some or all of the following kinds of experience: hallucinations, delusions, thought disorder, catatonia (Cooke 2014: 10-11). Delusions, however, are the defining feature of psychosis. While hallucinations may accompany delusions, they are not sufficient in themselves to warrant the evaluation of psychosis. In contrast, although delusions can occur in a variety of conditions, they are considered to be pathognomonic of schizophrenia and, for many, to epitomise 'madness' (Garety and Hemsley 1997: 1-11). In the psychiatric community it is now generally agreed that delusions — strongly held ('incorrigible') beliefs about the world arrived at through faulty reasoning — are not of a different order from normal beliefs, but share

> characteristics with the latter, so that for any given dimension (belief strength, preoccupation, systematization, etc.), a delusion may be placed at any point along the continuum. Many delusions will, it is predicted, lie at extreme points on some, but not all, identified continua.
>
> (Garety and Hemsley 1997: 17)

Delusions, and psychosis generally, are different in degree but not in kind from normal mental operations. But, as with all mental phenomena, delusions (and hallucinations) give rise to particular formal challenges from a filmmaking perspective. How should these internal subjective incidents be rendered, particularly if the aim is to represent them empathetically and in such a way as to induce the audience to intuit what the experience of psychosis might be like?

Narrative Point of View: Objective, Subjective, Free-Indirect

Fiction films focusing on the representation of psychosis offer filmmakers a range of formal alternatives, the choice and the quantity or duration of which depends upon the degree of subjectivity aimed for – itself dependent upon the film's perspective on the psychotic condition – and the nature of the phenomena to be represented. In cinema, hallucinations can be represented directly, as if the audience were actually experiencing them along with the character. Representing delusions is more complex, requiring the mobilisation of character dialogue, actions and reactions, and possibly combining this with the subjective rendering of hallucinations. Nevertheless, of all the arts cinema is arguably in the best position to convey — convincingly, immersively — the experience of psychosis, since cinema itself, as has often been remarked, mirrors the movement of our thoughts and perceptions.

Already in 1916 Hugo Münsterberg (echoing Otto Rank) declared that cinema is 'shaped by the inner movements of the mind' (2005: 185), not only the minds of the viewers making sense of the spectacle, but 'what the persons in the [film] see in their own minds' (106). It would thus seem that how a director shapes a film, stylistically and structurally, depends in

part upon the nature of the mind mirrored. Although Münsterberg's *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study* predates *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, Robert Wiene's expressionist exploration of psychosis provided an early extreme example in support of Münsterberg's contentions. Indeed, the entire film may portray the ruminations of a character beset by paranoid delusions. Since *Caligari* an array of films have attempted to represent psychosis, their stylistic approaches spanning the objective-subjective continuum. In some notable explorations of the psychotic experience, from the classic Hollywood era's *The Snake Pit* (Litvak 1948), *Harvey* (Koster 1950), and *The Three Faces of Eve* (Johnson 1957) to more recent mainstream films such as *Black Swan* (Aronofsky 2010) and *Blue Jasmine* (Allen 2013), the perspective on the action remains predominantly objective and anchored in a recognisable representation of our shared reality. In contrast, *Spellbound* (Hitchcock 1945), *Repulsion* (Polanski 1965), *The Machinist* (Anderson 2004), *Shutter Island* (Scorsese 2010) and *Birdman* (Iñárittu 2014) depart markedly, though to varying degrees, from an objective account of reality in an attempt to convey what it might feel like to experience psychosis. In addition to considering the nature of the character being featured, the effect the director intends the film to have on the audience also influences the formal strategy. The creation of a delusional atmosphere, one that in some cases leads to a sense of ontological insecurity – an uncertainty about where reality lies – not only for the character in the story but also for the audience, distinguishes the latter subjectively-oriented films, from the former more objective films.[9] A key means of suggesting character interiority stylistically — as opposed to narratively through dialogue and action — is by supplementing the representation of what a character perceives with an indication of how that character perceives it. In relation to vision, Edward Branigan, in his book *Point of View in the Cinema,* contrasts the normal

[9] The term 'ontological insecurity' is used by R.D. Laing in his 1960 book, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (2010) to describe psychotic experience.

point-of-view shot,[10] neutral concerning the expression of a character's mental state, with the 'perception shot' on the one hand and the 'projection shot' on the other, both of which convey a mental condition. The difference between these latter types of shot depends upon whether the condition (eg, drunkenness, fantasy) is rendered literally or metaphorically (1984: 94). The perception shot is framed from the character's point in space and produces a likeness of what that character might actually see, such as the first-person DMT-induced visions of Oscar in Gaspard Noé's *Enter the Void* (2009). The projection shot frames the character's vision by association, diverging from what the character's perspective would be from their position in space, for example Riggan's (Michael Keaton) levitation at the beginning of *Birdman* or Carol's (Catherine Deneuve) delusional perception of her own rape in *Repulsion*. What the audience sees on screen is not what the characters literally see, but a representation of their mental state, from a position separated from their own physical point in space. Indeed, in these two examples we see the characters themselves projected into their own subjective perception of the world. What makes these cases more complex than those featuring the perception shot is the uncertain relation between the subject and the objective elements. How much of what we see exists objectively? While the room and the objects around the levitating Riggan and the traumatised Carol do exist within the diegesis, as the behaviour of the other characters confirms, the protagonists' actions within the space may not. These shots therefore represent a hybrid representation, indicating not just what the characters may be perceiving, but something of the personal (subjectively infused) nature of the world they inhabit.

But these metaphorical framings not only project the character's subjectivity into the shot; they may also incorporate the director's perspective on the story events. In his 1939 essay 'The Structure of the Film', Sergei Eisenstein wrestles with the problem of how to

[10] Along with the 'reflection shot' which, like the strict point-of-view shot, does not convey a mental condition. Unlike the POV shot, it is not framed from the character's position in space but is associated with their position.

convey a character's attitude toward something while simultaneously 'embodying the author's relation to a thing' and accurately positioning the audience:

> [W]ith what methods and means must the filmically portrayed fact be handled so that it simultaneously shows not only *what* the fact is, and the character's attitude toward it, but also *how* the author relates to it and how the author wishes the spectator to receive, sense, and react to the portrayed fact.
>
> (1949: 151, emphasis in the original)

In his answer Eisenstein arrives at the concept of 'organic-ness', a unification of form and content (or 'structure' and 'theme') as organised through the director's sensibility. He further posits that if one wishes to transport the audience — 'to gain a maximum "departure from oneself" in the spectator' — a story of great pathos is required. In order to navigate the story the audience needs a 'guide': 'a personage gripped by pathos' (168). The audience will journey out of themselves, identifying with a protagonist who undergoes his or her own ecstasy, 'who in one way or another, "goes out of himself"'. The protagonist's condition will manifest beyond him or herself, 'radiating out into the surroundings and environment' (168-9). Eisenstein cites the storm scene in *King Lear* as an example as well as the work of Zola who, he notes, describes the character's surroundings 'in a *realistic* and *physical* way, but always as required *by the structure* of the condition' (169, emphasis in the original). Rather than simply describing the pathetic fallacy, Eisenstein here marries the director's perspective to that of the protagonist, an approach later advanced by Pier Paolo Pasolini.

Pasolini addresses the notion of imbricating the director's and character's points of view in his 1965 essay 'The "Cinema of Poetry"', coining the term 'free indirect point-of-view shot', a stylistic approach to the image that involves a 'mutual contamination of the worldviews' of the character and the filmmaker (180). Pasolini contrasts classic cinema, which privileges narrative prose, with the modern cinema of poetry which employs stylistic devices to reveal character — and not just any character, but specifically characters who

suffer from some kind of mental illness. Ultimately this enables the filmmaker to make of the entire film a 'free indirect point-of-view shot':

> In *Red Desert*, Antonioni . . . looks at the world by immersing himself in his neurotic protagonist, re-animating the facts through her eyes. . . . By means of this stylistic device, Antonioni has freed his most deeply felt moment: he has finally been able to represent the world seen through his eyes, *because he has substituted in toto for the worldview of a neurotic his own delirious view of aesthetics*, a wholesale substitution which is justified by the possible analogy of the two views.
>
> (Pasolini 2005: 179-80, emphasis in the original)

Pasolini asserts that filmmakers such as Antonioni, Bertolucci and Godard use 'neurotic' protagonists as a pretext: 'the filmmaker makes use of the "dominant psychological state of mind in the film," which is that of a sick, abnormal protagonist, in order to make it a continual *mimesis*, which allows him great, anomalous, and provocative stylistic freedom' (182). Putting to one side the motivation of filmmakers in choosing to focus their films on protagonists who suffer from some kind of mental distress, Pasolini's description would account for the periods in a number of filmmaker's careers in which they do employ the free indirect style: Alain Resnais' *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* (1959), *Last Year at Marienbad* (1960), and *Muriel, or The Time of Return* (1963); Ingmar Bergman's *The Silence* (1963), *Persona* (1966) and *Hour of the Wolf* (1968); the apartment trilogy of Roman Polanski — *Repulsion* (1965), *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and *The Tenant* (1976); Andrei Tarkovsky's *Mirror* (1975), *Stalker* (1979), *Nostalghia* (1983) and *The Sacrifice* (1986); David Lynch's *Lost Highway* (1997), *Mulholland Drive* (2001) and *Inland Empire* (2006). But Pasolini insists that the free indirect style in cinema is expressed visually. He doesn't recognise the role played by sound. Considering just the list of titles above, this seems a significant oversight, since many of these films do rely on the soundtrack, while some exploit the voice in particular.

The Role of the Voice in the Free Indirect Style

Pasolini's argument leaves open the possibility that, in regard to the soundtrack, the voice at least could contribute to the free indirect style. However, he neglects to pursue this line

of thought, confining his discussion of speech to the manner in which it is used in literature, and comparing this with cinema's use of the gaze. For Pasolini, speech in literature and the gaze in cinema mimic a character's nature, the manner in which they speak or see the world. Through style — the 'language of poetry' — rather than the linguistic component of language, the author is able to express himself through the character. In contrast to a literary author, he argues that if a director 'immerses himself in his character and tells the story or depicts the world through him, he cannot make use of that formidable natural instrument of differentiation that is language. *His activity cannot be linguistic; it must, instead, be stylistic*' (2005: 178, emphasis in the original). Curiously, he focuses exclusively on the linguistic element of voice in relation to film, ignoring the physical and stylistic aspects of it. In so doing, he passes over not just speech in cinema, but the entire soundtrack.

However, in relation to the picture track, sound makes a vital contribution to the free indirect style and the creation of character interiority. While music and sound effects add to the ambience of a scene and inflect the audience's perception of a character, much like mise-en-scène and lighting, the most character-specific sound element is voice, given its capacity for individual creative expression, both linguistic and textural. Even though he didn't have the opportunity to make use of the full potential of sound in his own films, Eisenstein enthused about the potential of the voice. After meeting James Joyce, Eisenstein wrote in his 1932 essay 'A Course in Treatment', 'And how obvious it becomes that the material of sound-film is not dialogue. *The true material of sound-film is, of course, the monologue*' (1949: 105-6, emphasis in the original). Eisenstein believed that the inner monologue provided the means to create a polyphonic cinema which would "[abolish] the distinction between subject and object" (1949: 104). It would bring together in a single moment different places and times, events and moods, contributing to the representation of complex human subjectivity and the numinousness of the inner life. Later, in his 'great

speech of 1935',[11] 'Film Form: New Problems', Eisenstein asserts the need in cinema for 'sensual thinking' which is based upon the syntax of the inner monologue. He finds in the imagistic, associative, emotion-laden nature of inner speech a metaphor, if not a model, for both the compositional process and the final form of works of art: a correlation between inner and outer worlds. Here Eisenstein cites an example from the experience of the Bororo tribe of Brazil who assert an identity between themselves and the red parakeet: 'They directly maintain that they are in reality these actual birds. It is not here a matter of identity of names or relationship; they mean a complete simultaneous identity of both' (136). The vehicle for this correlation between the inner and outer is the pre-logical, imagistic thought process, capable of making associations and uniting opposites: inner speech. The implications of Eisenstein's argument thus extend beyond formal experimentation in cinema, or even an interrogation of what we might we might believe to constitute mental illness, to the plausibility of maintaining a dual identity in more mundane situations: for example, in the case of actors taking on an alternative persona when performing a role. I will return to this subject in the discussion of documentary performance in Chapter 4.

In *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Deleuze develops the ideas of both Eisenstein and Pasolini and postulates the 'heautonomous image', which he applies to both picture and sound, their disjunctive interaction ideally creating 'a relation of very precise incommensurability, not an absence of relation' (1989: 246).[12] From Eisenstein's theorising of the 1930s, Deleuze develops his notion of the 'spiritual automaton' — a cinema that induces, through its 'irrational intervals' between sound and image, sensual thinking in its audience. He states that Eisenstein's conception of the inner monologue works

> through figures, metonymies, synecdoches, metaphors, inversions, attractions … From the outset, Eisenstein thought that the internal monologue found its extension and importance in

[11] Deleuze extols this essay in his chapter 'Thought and Cinema' from *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1989: 157).

[12] In *The Critique of Judgement*, Kant uses the term heautonomy to refer to judgements that apply to one's own beliefs about the world, though not to the world itself. Thus, a self-producing, independent 'law' (Kant 1952: 24).

> cinema rather than literature. . . . It is in the speech of 1935 that he discovers it to be appropriate for the spiritual automaton, that is, to the whole film.
>
> (1989: 154)

To incorporate the voice into his schema, Deleuze adapts Pasolini's notion of the free indirect point-of-view shot to the soundtrack. Although he doesn't use this exact phrase, his concept could be called the 'free indirect speech act' to describe those occasions when a character's act of narration becomes for a time the principal narration of the film, with the character seeming to take over the role of director. Deleuze identifies two obverse approaches: 'free indirect speech may be presented as a passage from the indirect to the direct, or the other way round, although this is not a mixture' (1989: 232). For Deleuze, the cinema of Eric Rohmer represents the test case in which indirect speech is treated as direct. Indeed, Rohmer himself discusses his approach to film dialogue in his 1977 essay, 'Film and the three levels of discourse: indirect, direct, and hyperdirect', although he is mostly concerned here with his method of composing a screenplay from an existing narrative source (Rohmer 1989: 84-92). Nevertheless, Deleuze rightly notes the indirect quality in some of the speeches of Rohmer's characters who speak of themselves almost as characters in someone else's novel. This comes through most clearly in *Claire's Knee* [*Le Genou de Claire*] (1970) and *Perceval* [*Perceval le Gallois*] (1978). Deleuze suggests that Rohmer's use of speech shows how people create their identities and their given realities through the creative use of language, a '"realizing fabrication", creative of the event' (1989: 233). The cinema of Robert Bresson represents the opposite approach, according to Deleuze. Rather than telling 'tales' and making themselves into their own storybook heroes, as do Rohmer's characters, the Bressonian protagonist 'speaks as if he were listening to his own words reported by someone else, hence achieving a *literalness* of the voice, cutting it off from any direct resonance, and making it produce a free indirect speech' (1989: 233, emphasis in the original). In stark contrast to Rohmer's characters who seek to individuate themselves, Bresson's characters efface their personalities and put

themselves at the service of, or in connection with, an eternal human, spiritual essence – what Deleuze refers to as 'myth'. But the differences in this distinction are not only functional; they are also stylistic. Deleuze neglects to note here (though he does in his discussion of Dreyer's *Gertrud*) that Bresson's use of the voice exploits not just the linguistic aspect of the voice, but also the expressive: the timbre, cadence, rhythm, pitch, volume — all of the elements 'seemingly recalcitrant to the signifier' (Dolar 2006: 20).

While Deleuze may conflate categories of expressive and linguistic (sound and sense) in differentiating Rohmer's and Bresson's use of speech, the two poles of the free indirect speech act that he identifies illustrate that the voice, taken linguistically, can initiate a relationship to the image that casts the latter in a subjective light. What the characters say, even apart from how they say it, inflects the image with their inner life, loosening the connection between sound and picture. Deleuze explains that

> the speech-act is no longer inserted in the linkage of actions and reactions . . . It turns in on itself; it is no longer a dependent or something which is part of the visual image; it becomes a completely separate sound image; it takes on a cinematographic autonomy and cinema becomes truly audio-visual.
>
> (1989: 233)

The most obvious example is a certain use of voice-over narration that remains incommensurate with the image, whether the narrating voice is embodied in the narrated story, as in *Badlands* (Malick 1973), or disembodied and extra-diegetic, as with the two young women who comment on the action throughout *India Song* (Duras 1975).[13] In his emphasis on the stylistic treatment of a particular filmic device Pasolini perhaps neglected to take into account that the *combination* of devices — including, broadly, those of picture with sound — creates itself a stylistic inflection on the devices in their singularly. So while Deleuze usefully proposes two categories of classification for the free indirect speech act — 'tale' and 'myth', or perhaps self-projection and self-reflection — he points out more

[13] They are credited as *Voix intemporelles* [Timeless Voices] in the film, and Voix 1 and Voix 2 in the script (Duras 1976).

generally that the separation of picture and sound allows cinema to make 'thought immanent to the image'[14] (1989: 168): 'The visual image and the sound image are in a special relationship, a free indirect relationship' (Deleuze 1989: 250).

Deleuze is not the first to make this distinction of course; in addition to Eisenstein, Pascal Bonitzer, Claude Bailblé and Michel Chion made key contributions to the study of sound-picture relations with a particular focus on the voice, as did, in their filmmaking practice, Marguerite Duras, Jean-Luc Godard, and the filmmaking duo Danielle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub. As we will see in Chapter 3, Maya Deren makes a vital early theoretical contribution from a filmmaking perspective. Branigan too, although primarily concerned with the image in relation to questions of point of view, briefly considers sound in his taxonomy of devices. He applies the projection shot to sound and to voice, demonstrating that unusual sounds, silences, or sound quality (whether produced by the voice or by objects) will be metaphorically attributed to the mental state of the protagonist if the 'framing' of the scene doesn't permit another explanation. As with the image, the character can become the locus of, and explanation for, non-naturalistic changes to the environment, as with the guilt-stricken heroine in Hitchcock's *Blackmail* (1929) who hears the word 'knife' isolated and repeated numerous times. The sound is neither wholly subjective, nor objective; rather, 'it perpetuates a double confusion', between what she actually hears and what she might imagine hearing, and between what she might be hearing and what the director creates for us to hear (Branigan 1984: 137). Essentially, as Branigan points out, it bears an analogy to the 'literary style of the free indirect' (134). In terms of generating subjectivity, hearing functions similarly to seeing when it is framed from a character's point of view, whether literally or figuratively. Speech, however, is a 'second-order subjectivity': the spectator doesn't say what the character is saying (as he or she see or hears what the

[14] Deleuze employs this phrase in his discussion of depth-of-field, although it is equally applicable to the relationship between sound and image.

character does in subjective framings), but listens to the character as if an interlocutor (99). Perhaps this was Pasolini's reason for overlooking voice as a vehicle for the free indirect. Despite this, and as Deleuze and Eisenstein point out, the speech act can contribute to the subjectification of the image, both linguistically and through its expressive qualities, drawing the spectator into a view of the diegetic world inflected by the thoughts and beliefs of the protagonist.

The Voice in Psychoanalytic Film Theory

Deleuze describes the gap between man and the world as a 'perceptual hole in appearances', which certain characters in cinema – 'seers' – are able to grasp as the intolerable in ordinary life — a banality, a meaninglessness, the existential 'absurd' perhaps (1989: 164-5). The seers' unnatural-sounding monotonic delivery suggests this 'break in the link between man and the world' (1989: 164). Bressonian characters exemplify this break but so too do some of Dreyer's, notably those in *Vampyr* (1932), *Ordet* (1955) and *Gertrud* (1964). I will return to this in the context of my discussion of psychosis. Firstly, however, in addition to tonality, other auditory qualities of the voice need to be considered. In his ground-breaking essay, 'The Grain of the Voice' (1972), Roland Barthes discusses the musical qualities of the voice, separating them from linguistic signification. He attributes the latter to the Father, the phallic, and the former to the female: 'The "grain" is that: the materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue' (1977: 182). This psychoanalytic move heralds a period of investigation into the gendered nature of the voice in cinema. In *The Voice in Cinema* (1999), Chion embraces Lacan's reference to the maternal voice as an *objet petit a*, an object productive of desire, the mother's voice becoming for her child a future fetish object, something external to the child, its otherness felt as a lack. But while Chion focuses our attention on the materiality of the voice in this context — its source in, and connection to the body — it does lead him to some contestable assertions. While discussing the impact and significance of the scream he states:

> The man's shout delimits a territory, the woman's scream has to do with limitlessness. The scream gobbles up everything into itself — it is centripetal and fascinating — while the man's cry is centrifugal and structuring. The screaming point is where speech is suddenly extinct, a black hole, the exit of being.
>
> (1982: 79)

The male voice proclaims virility and enacts mastery, while the female voice resides in interiority, mystery — but above all in the body: 'we might also speculate that for men, the woman's scream poses the question of the "black hole" of the female orgasm, which cannot be spoken nor thought' (77). There is, suggests Chion, something sadistic at work in male writers and directors bringing female characters to the point of screaming; female directors on the other hand make of the female scream something 'properly human' (78).

Writing in the mid-1980s feminist film theorists such as Kaja Silverman, while critical of some of Chion's gender stereotyping, nevertheless reinforce it in their discourses on the voice, in line with the psychoanalytical model, which they use as an investigative framework even while they attempt to find a way out of it. In *The Acoustic Mirror,* Silverman argues that the female voice in psychoanalysis and classic cinema is embodied, trapped within the body as well as within the (male orchestrated) diegesis, in contrast to the male voice — eg, the voice of narration — which can stand outside the diegesis and comment upon it, 'relegating the male subject to a position of *apparent* discursive exteriority by identifying him with mastering speech, vision or hearing' (1988: *ix*, emphasis in the original). It is literally, but also metaphorically, a disembodied voice, and much the stronger for it. However, she cites female directors, such as Chantal Akerman, Sally Potter and Yvonne Rainer (though curiously overlooking Marguerite Duras, so innovative in her work on the voice in cinema), who problematise this reductive framework by 'disembodying' the female voice: de-synchronising it, doubling it, removing it from the diegesis altogether. Thus 'the female voice has enormous conceptual and discursive range once it is freed from its claustral confinement within the female body' (186). While the cognitive effects of these

strategies apply equally to the male voice, of course, they are seen to provide alternative means for conveying female experience.

The 'acoustic mirror' of Silverman's title is an expression coined by French psychoanalyst, Guy Rosolato, which Silverman cites from his 1974 article in *Revue française de psychoanalyse*: 'La voix: entre corps et langage' [The Voice: Between Body and Language].[15] It refers to the subjective experience of the speech act, which is simultaneously that of speaking and of hearing oneself speak. This double action of projecting and having oneself reflected back, as it were, blurs the boundary between interiority and exteriority, what is self-generated and what comes from outside the self. The nature of voice and hearing makes this self-reflection different in nature from that experienced when having one's image reflected back in an optical mirror. The reflection of our bodily image remains a clearly separate entity, however much it may initially tantalise and perplex the Lacanian infant. The inner voice of our thoughts, on the other hand, which appears to be the expression of our very self, is easily confused with our physical voice. Inner speech often precedes a vocal utterance which repeats the inner speech, which itself may then be internalised in a loop that can destabilise subjectivity. Silverman observes that one of the implications of Rosolato's theory is that

> since the voice is capable of being internalised at the same time as it is externalised, it can spill over from subject to object to subject, violating the bodily limits upon which classic subjectivity depends, and so smoothing the way for projection and introjection. Paranoia — the attribution of material density to hallucinated sounds — is only one possible permutation of this slippage.
>
> (1988: 80)

But according to psychoanalytic theory, this internal voice, the voice of the self, is itself at least partly formed (or spoken) by language, a product of a specific society and culture and, in the west at least, patriarchal. The internalisation of language through the activity of

[15] Guy Rosolato (1974) 'La voix: entre corps et langage', *Revue française de psychoanalyse,* vol. 37, no. 1, p. 79.

listening — what Otto Isakower, cited by Silverman, calls the 'auditory aura' — thus contributes to the formation of the superego. Silverman notes that Isakower's psychoanalytic model of the voice focusses upon 'the replication of this inside/outside structure within the psyche itself — upon the setting up the auditory aura within the subject's own self, in a position of superior exteriority to the ego' (99).

Silverman, and the psychoanalytic school broadly, represented more recently by Mladen Dolar in his exemplary Lacanian study, *A Voice and Nothing More* (2006), focus on the dual, transgressive nature of the voice. On the one hand, our identification with the maternal voice prior to ego formation leads to the transformation of the mother's voice into a primary fetish object (*object petit a*); on the other hand, the internalisation of the voice of the Father results in an auditory aura and a split in the psyche. Silverman and Dolar highlight the role of the voice in the creation and expression of psychosis, particularly the way in which the auditory aura can lead to paranoia and to auditory verbal hallucinations, both phenomena that figure prominently in delusion. The fluidity and mutability of the voice, slipping between exterior and interior, eliding the objective and subjective, can be a prime contributor to the confusion of the psychotic experience. Whereas Deleuze refers to the voice of the seer as echoing an existential break with the world, the voice from a psychoanalytic perspective can figure breaks of a different order: both the inevitable, originary separation from the Other out of which subjectivity forms, and its inverse, the mutual permeation of self and world which can lead to the dissolution of the self in the form of psychotic or ecstatic experiences.

Psychosis and Spectatorial Activity

As we have seen, for Eisenstein and Deleuze cinema has the power to stimulate creative, pre-logical thinking in the viewer, bypassing instrumental reason. From a psychoanalytic perspective, cinema can induce a kind of second order hallucination or, for Patrick Fuery, an even stronger reaction. In *Madness and Cinema: Psychoanalysis, Spectatorship and*

Culture, Fuery explores the links between mental illness and cinema, arguing 'that to be a spectator of a film is to experience madness; that this madness is a necessary requirement of watching all films' (2004: 2). He asserts that spectators find themselves faced with resistances to meaning and excesses of meaning that render analysis an activity without end, the endless play of signifiers (Derrida's *différence*) leading to *jouissance* — a pleasure in cinema's inherent heteroglossia. This challenge to interpretation is coupled with the spectator's uncertainty concerning the ontological status of the filmic reality he or she witnesses. Fuery's notion of madness thus reads very much like a psychotic episode in which one's grasp of reality becomes attenuated. For Fuery the diegetic world looks like the real world in many respects but the artifice brought to bear in the creation of filmic reality leaves the spectator in a state of uncertainty, undecidability. The aporias, the polysemy, the blurring of ontological boundaries, together constitute a challenge to knowledge, akin to dreams and to the Freudian unconscious:

> One of Freud's most profound contributions is the idea that the rational, civilised person is driven by an unconscious that deals in madness, and that to the conscious mind is madness. This is the psychopathology of everyday life. . . . In short, it is the idea that madness, in the version of the unconscious, defines our subjectivity, our cultural orders, our production of knowledges.
>
> (Fuery 2004: 134-135)

In this passage it appears that what Fuery means by madness is irrationality, rather than serious mental illness, which is how madness is ordinarily defined, for it cannot be the case that even if the unconscious contains irrational drives and is unknowable in itself, every individual is literally 'mad'. And if it were, it would be a meaningless assertion. Madness would be the new sanity.

Fuery's argument suffers from a category error. Although in some passages he describes 'madness' as a state akin to psychosis, elsewhere he equates madness to unreason of the sort which can lead to new understandings, new truths — of the kind he believes we gain in the cinema. But in so doing he makes of madness simply a metaphor

for a textual operation, freely entered into, performed by the cinema spectator in trying to make sense of a film. One of the defining characteristics of psychosis, as noted above, is its tenacious grip on an irrational belief about the real world against all evidence to the contrary. The cinema spectator decodes the signifiers in a film (which he or she knows to be a mere representation of the world) to arrive at an interpretation. If the inability to interpret particular moments or events in a film causes the spectator confusion or anxiety, this is unlikely to be something that is then projected onto the real world. The person suffering from psychosis is, in some profound way, out of touch with reality; the 'normal' cinema spectator is not, and spectating will not make them so. To claim, as Fuery does, that there is a spectatorial pleasure in the enigmas of cinema is broadly true, but this cannot be equated to madness which, in most cases, is a traumatic affliction that the individual must endure. Fuery ignores the significant role that emotion plays in most psychotic episodes: 'Often these experiences occur at times of particular stress and are linked to strong emotions and feelings, for example worry, anxiety, fear, depression or feeling overwhelmed by events' (Cooke 2014: 11). Psychosis is not only a cognitive phenomenon. Fuery's insistence that 'the act of spectating is a form of madness' (4) is, if taken as a metaphor, trivial; if taken literally, false. Even his less categorical statements of his central contention do not bear scrutiny: 'In the spectator's resistance to meaning, the image, the narrative forces, and so forth, we find acts of madness — not madness itself, but sensibilities that, in any other context, would be considered mad' (44). The sensibilities that Fuery refers to here are (transgressive) desire, disorientation, possibly confusion and frustration. They are not the hallmarks of madness: hallucination, delusion, thought disorder, catatonia. To imply even that the spectator exhibits *signs* of madness shows a fundamental misconception of psychosis.

Fuery endorses what Lisa Blackman, in her book *Hearing Voices: Embodiment and Experience,* identifies as the constructionist position, one in which the 'body becomes "thought" as an effect of discursive processes' (2001: 211) rather than her view that it is the

site of combined biological, psychological, and social forces, which includes emotion. Indeed, studies in the field of cognitive psychology have found 'evidence that indicates that emotion (anxiety, depression, anger and elation) may have a direct role in the formation and maintenance of delusions' (Freeman and Garety 2004: 21): 'A central idea in the cognitive approach is that beliefs are linked to emotions. . . . [T]he positive symptoms of psychosis are often associated with emotional distress' (ibid.: 39). But if Fuery overstates his case, he nevertheless highlights key aspects of the spectatorial experience in relation to psychosis when contending that 'cinema is resistance to ontological certainty' (48). Certain films (but in no way all films) do indeed induce the viewer to feel disoriented, confused, fearful, even delirious. While having a sense, temporarily, of ontological insecurity is not akin to experiencing madness, it does encourage the viewer to picture reality from an alternative perspective, and perhaps to feel different about reality. Indeed, this seems to be exactly what Deleuze is proposing with his category of cinema, the spiritual automaton: certain films force us think differently.

It may be that there is something about this particular kind of cinematic experience that leads the viewer to recall personal experiences that lie on a continuum with experiences often taken to be signs of madness. Auditory verbal hallucinations provide an example. Hearing voices is often seen to be a sign of schizophrenia; in fact, many of us have had similar experiences, either erroneously believing that we have heard someone speak, momentarily confusing inner with outer speech, or — most powerfully perhaps — hearing unidentifiable voices in the liminal moments between sleeping and waking. That many of us have had experiences which might be called hallucinations, gives strength to the claim made by the Hearing Voices Network, an international self-help group for voice-hearers, that 'hearing voices is a normal variant of behaviour, much like left-handedness, and is not merely a sign of disease grounded in the biochemical reactions of the brain' (Blackman 2001: 189). From the psychiatric perspective (as distinct from Blackman's own), what

determines whether the hearing of voices may be a sign of psychosis is the ontological status accorded them by the hearer. Blackman summarises psychiatry's position:

> The key distinction of 'insanity' was to become a person's capacity to judge between internal and external reality. It was in relation to this capacity that hallucinations were to act as 'tests of insanity'. The hearing of voices was not considered a symptom in and of itself of madness, rather the test was whether persons believed in their reality.
>
> (2001: 162)

So while cinema spectatorship may not be akin to madness, theorists since Münsterberg have found it to be similar to daydreaming, or dreaming, or at times even hallucinating. In his influential study, *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier*, Christian Metz writes that viewers may

> hypercathect perception to the point of touching off a paradoxical hallucination: a hallucination because of its tendency to confuse distinct levels of reality and because of a slight temporary unsteadiness in the play of reality-testing as an ego function, and paradoxical because unlike a true hallucination it is not a wholly endogenous psychical production: the subject, in this case, has hallucinated what was really there, what in the same moment he in fact perceived: the images and sounds of the film.
>
> (1982: 104)

But how much more disorienting for the spectator if within the film's diegesis itself there are conflicting levels of reality and uncertainty about what is real – if the film generates a delusional atmosphere? To provoke a sense of psychical disorientation in the viewer, filmmakers have at their disposal not only stylistic devices, but also structural means, with the interrelation between the two complex and highly persuasive.

Creating a Delusional Atmosphere: Narrative Structure and Style

The narrative structure of fiction films inflects story events and can create a sense of ontological insecurity, key to generating a delusional atmosphere for the spectator, through two key plot-based structural strategies that could be called 'parallel delusion' and

'retrospective delusion'.[16] In parallel delusion, the delusional narrative runs parallel to a second narrative that represents the real diegetic world and frames the delusional episodes. Examples of the parallel delusion structure include episode 17 of season 6 of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, 'Normal Again' (Rosenthal 2002), in which Buffy finds herself incarcerated in a mental hospital for believing that she is a vampire slayer. The mental hospital plot and the vampire slayer plot run in tandem, both scenarios equally (im)plausible, leading to a genuine undecidability as to which plot strand represents reality. In the UK television series *Life on Mars* (2006-2007) police detective Sam Tyler (John Simms) is hit by car in present day Manchester and regains consciousness in Manchester of 1973. The narrative line set in 1973 is interrupted by incursions form the present day in the form of voices and images. The story set in 1973 could be a metaphor for the delusional experience of a traumatised individual; but paradoxically — and similar to the *Buffy* episode — it is equally plausible that in the parallel delusion narrative the events of the framing narrative represent the delusions. The co-existence of two distinct narrative lines running in parallel and featuring the same character, makes reality impossible to identify with certainty. Without a single reality to believe in, the viewer is left suspended between the two possible realities, inhabiting the same uncertain relationship to diegetic reality as the character.

Retrospective delusions function as plot twists, sudden revelations about the status of prior story information that make the viewer realise that what they took to be real was actually the protagonist's delusional perception of events. For example, in *A Beautiful Mind* (Howard 2001) we only realise well after the fact that John Nash's high-level code breaking efforts for the Pentagon are delusory. Suddenly he falls in the viewer's estimation from genius to mentally ill invalid. Similarly (but inversely), in *Proof* (Madden 2005) the

[16] I am indebted to neuroscientist and clinical psychologist Vaughn Bell for drawing my attention to this distinction, although I do not use it in the same way that he does. I am also grateful for his introducing me to the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* episode, 'Normal Again'.

protagonist Catherine (Gwyneth Paltrow) suddenly remembers that she, and not, as we had been led to believe, her famous mathematician father, was the author of a complex, ground-breaking mathematical proof. In an instant she is elevated from depressed and delusional underachiever to mathematical genius. Both twists are achieved through relatively brief flashbacks. *Mulholland Drive* shares this strategy but the paradigm shift is seismic, occurring as it does very late (110 minutes into the 140-minute film) and recasting the foregoing story into what could be the delirious imaginings of a dying woman, replacing character names and recasting identities and relationships. All three films prompt a sudden shift in perspective on the preceding action causing the viewer to share the characters' disorientation and their changing belief about reality. What makes *Mulholland Drive* qualitatively different from *A Beautiful Mind* and *Proof* is the absence of a framing narrative which clearly differentiates the delusory reality from the stable, shared reality of the other characters. *A Beautiful Mind* and *Proof* move between subjective and objective narration. In *Mulholland Drive* all of the events we witness could be filtered through the consciousness of the protagonist, Betty/Diane (Naomi Watts). Despite what appears at times to be objective narration, the film's dream logic is anchored in Naomi Watts' characters. As Brian Henderson says of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *Last Year at Marienbad*, the recounted '"past" may be delusional and therefore the "remembering" itself a strictly present action' (1983: 6). Of the films just discussed – those featuring a parallel delusion structure (the 'Normal Again' episode of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Life on Mars*), and those employing retrospective delusion (*A Beautiful Mind*, *Proof*, *Mulholland Drive*) – *Mulholland Drive* arguably exploits the free indirect style most comprehensively, due in no small part to its stylistic extravagances and innovations in sound-picture relations.

A delusional atmosphere pervades *Mulholland Drive*, partly generated by the genuinely strange events and incongruous behaviour of certain characters, but also by stylistic devices such as the unnerving hovering camera in the Winkies Diner scene featuring the man suffering from a recurring nightmare, and the occasional, marked incommensurability

of sound and picture. The sequence at Club Silencio overtly, and famously, bares the device of this Deleuzian incommensurability when the devilish MC declares that the trumpet playing is faked: 'It's all recorded. No hay banda! It is all a tape. Il n'est pas de orchestre [sic]. It is an illusion.' The Latin American singer-songwriter, Rebekah Del Rio (who plays herself), then makes a cameo appearance on stage. But when she collapses midway through her song, her voice continues to sound in the auditorium, carrying on with the song uninterrupted. The groundwork for this sequence is laid much earlier by an episode in which Betty, who is living in her aunt Ruth's flat, realises that Rita/Camilla (Laura Herring) is an intruder, and not a friend of her aunt as Betty had been led to believe. The scene demonstrates the power and subtlety of the off-screen voice as a means of representing a dissociative mental state. Betty lounges on the sofa in Ruth's sitting room chatting on the phone with Ruth. When Ruth reveals that she doesn't know Rita, Betty sits up suddenly. The camera tracks away from Betty out of the room, down the corridor, and finally into the bedroom where Rita sits on the edge of the bed. While the camera moves away from Betty, her voice gradually fades. Yet the camera seems to represent the focus of her interest: Rita. What sort of nefarious deed might this intruder be up to? The camera explores the space, apparently divorced from Betty, until it crosses the threshold of the bedroom. A cut to the reverse angle (no longer a Steadicam shot, but a stable shot from a tripod) reveals Betty just as she enters the bedroom. Suddenly we are forced to question our prior assumption. The camera may not have been wandering off on its own, but actually representing Betty's own movement through space. Yet the drop in volume of Betty's voice as the camera moves away from the sitting room indicates that Betty remained there. We are left with a subtle, evocative spatio-temporal disjunction, the significance of which can only be guessed much later: what we are witnessing is not reality.

As suggested above, the first 110 minutes of *Mulholland Drive* might represent the dissociative mental state of Diane Selwyn, failed actress and spurned lover of Camilla/Rita. Betty would be an imago of Diane who, in her dying moments, re-imagines (dreams?) her

career and her relationship with Camilla. The movement of the camera away from the sitting room might then be seen to represent the point of view of the dreaming/dying Diane, who is at one and the same time Betty on the phone, and Betty roving through the corridor to check up on the suddenly suspect Rita. But the marked separation of voice from body implies, and also viscerally conveys, the notion of a spirit self or soul that might exist separately from the body, or temporarily take up residence in a different body — a theme that Lynch also explores in *Lost Highway* and *Inland Empire*. The Club Silencio sequence, including Rebekah Del Rio's act, serves as both metaphor for, and illustration of, this itinerant self. The moment of the singer's bodily collapse (death?) strongly suggests that the voice (and therefore, by implication, the self or soul) goes on existing independently — despite the irony of her voice being, so we are told, just a recording. The effect of this flagrant yet uncanny artifice is not dissimilar to the experiences described by Daniel Paul Schreber (1842-1911), the German judge afflicted with paranoid schizophrenia who was treated in a mental asylum in a case that drew the attention of both Jung and Freud. Schreber believed that the people he came into contact with at the asylum were not real but 'fleetingly improvised' (*flüchtige hingemacht*) souls, 'temporarily given human shape by divine miracle' (Schreber 2000: 28). Schreber elaborates:

> I have witnessed not once but hundreds of times how human shapes were set down for a short time by divine miracles only to be dissolved again or vanish. The voices talking to me designated these visions the so-called *"fleeting-improvised-men"* — some were even persons long ago deceased . . .
>
> (2000: 18)

The voices talking to Schreber are disembodied beings of divine nature — the inverse of the temporarily embodied men he encounters in the asylum who are like 'miraculously created puppets . . . [who] did not give the impression of being capable of holding a sensible conversation' (18). In *Mulholland Drive*, the entire story leading up to Betty's disappearance and Naomi Watts' waking up as Diane Selwyn, could be figured as a

delusional episode, akin to those endured by Schreber. When Betty becomes Diane it is as if everything prior to this unexpected transformation is tainted with unreality.

Separating the voice from the body — making it *acousmatic* (heard while its source remains unseen) — is, as Mladen Dolar points out, 'inherently uncanny' (2006: 63). But acousmatising the voice while the body remains visible, as in the Club Silencio episode, is more disturbing still. It is as though we are witness to the spirit leaving the body. According to Dolar, it was Pythagoras who discovered the power of the acousmatic voice. The philosopher would keep himself hidden behind a curtain as he taught his disciples for the first five years of their apprenticeship.

> The point of this device was ultimately to separate the spirit from the body. . . . [I]t was the voice itself which acquired authority and surplus-meaning by virtue of the fact that its source was concealed; it seemed to become omnipresent and omnipotent.
>
> (Dolar 2006: 63)

Dolar goes on to speculate that '[t]he voice, separated from its body, evokes the voice of the dead' and 'presents a puzzling causality, as an effect without a proper cause' (2006: 64, 67). Given that the hearing of acousmatic voices is a common symptom of schizophrenia it is surprising how few films, even those that take psychosis as their subject matter, use the voice in this way. Perhaps this is because there can be something awkward in voiceovers that we are meant to attribute to hallucinations: the voice, even without a body, strongly evokes the impression of a body. The timbre, the cadence, the rhythm, the pitch, the accent — all of these properties evoke an image of the body that might produce such a voice. Possibly in order to avoid an implausible or risible effect, mental voices that are not the character's inner speech, are mediated through technological devices — the television in the horror film *The Babadook* (Kent 2014) — become a cacophony of indecipherable whispers, as in *Clean, Shaven* (Kerrigan 1993) and *Scanners* (Cronenberg 1981), or are embodied in hallucinated figures as in *A Beautiful Mind*, *Shutter Island* and, most unusually, *The Voices* (Satrapi 2014), in which the voices are produced by the protagonist's cat and

dog — to disturbing and humorous effect! This leaves very few films that represent verbal aural hallucinations in manner that attempts phenomenological accuracy.

A key film in this regard is, of course, *Psycho* (Hitchcock 1960) in which the voice of Norman Bates' dead mother is heard intermittently throughout, although only in the final scene in a recording dry and close enough to indicate that it originates from Norman's thoughts. In *The Voice in Cinema* Michel Chion discusses *Psycho* as a case of 'impossible embodiment', referring to the voice of the mother as a 'ghost' haunting Norman (1999: 140-151). In the course of the film the mother's voice transforms from a seemingly external phenomenon to a decidedly internal one, a movement that can indeed occur in psychotic conditions when the hearer may initially attribute the voices to physical sources 'in the world' only to recognise, if this attribution becomes untenable, that the voices occur internally — though this doesn't necessarily mean they are acknowledged to be self-authored. So, while *Psycho* aims for phenomenological accuracy, it does not achieve the 'organic-ness' extolled by Eisenstein which would lead the audience to empathise, if not identify, with Norman, as well as with the viewpoint of the director. On the contrary, by the end of the film Norman is reduced to a patient, a case study for his doctors and for the film's viewers. He is caged, quarantined, and his psychotic experience clearly differentiated from what is considered to be normal human experience. This stark demarcation is reinforced by the film's style and structure – not to mention its title! To return to a distinction made at the start of this chapter — that between objective and subjective representations of psychosis, and of interiority generally — in *Psycho*, despite the ongoing presence of the mother's voice which Norman alone experiences, the representation of Norman's condition is primarily objective. Viewers are not invited to share his experience to the degree that a sense of ontological insecurity ensues; the character's perspective on events remains quite distinct from that of the film's author; there is no 'mutual contamination of the worldviews' of filmmaker and character, as described by Pasolini; there is no sustained use of the free-indirect style.

A film contemporaneous with *Psycho* also enacts — but more disturbingly — the 'impossible embodiment' of a voice using a different stylistic approach, a free-indirect style. *Last Year at Marienbad* approaches the subject of psychosis more through its form than its content. In doing so it remains one of the most sustained examples of the free indirect style used to create a delusional atmosphere. The voiceover of 'X' (Giorgio Albertazzi), the man who courts, pursues, hunts or haunts the woman 'A' (Delphine Seyrig), appears to journey freely, disembodied, through space and time, only to return to the here-and-now, and to the body of its owner, on the occasions when X physically confronts A. Numerous spatio-temporal disjunctions serve a radically indeterminate narrative and combine with the voice and voiceover of X to create an uncanny, disturbing and disorienting effect. Subjective and objective perspectives are inextricably, irreducibly bound together. As with *Mulholland Drive,* space — and the events that appear to take place within it — becomes infused with subjectivity. These two films thus provide an illuminating contrast with narratives more objectively presented, such as *Psycho*. They seem to evoke a delusional atmosphere more effectively, despite the fact that they are not overtly about psychosis.

Returning to the two narrative structures that can be used to support free-indirect stylistic strategies with a view to creating a delusional atmosphere, *Mulholland Drive*, as already mentioned, mobilises 'retrospective delusion' while *Last Year at Marienbad* employs 'parallel delusion' in a flashback structure that compares the present to a past that may have actually existed, or might just be the ravings of the seductive, predatory X. Both strategies are equally effective because they refuse to resolve the doubt they generate and thus harmonise with disorienting sound-picture relations to present a world that extends beyond the reach of our rational understanding.

Conclusion: An Internally Divided Form

This chapter has defined a particular relationship between the director and the spectator, a relationship negotiated through character and mediated by style, a style first articulated by

Eisenstein and later picked up and refined by Pasolini who identified it as free-indirect. Eisenstein linked this approach to subjectively-inflected stories featuring characters forced out of themselves by the great pathos of their circumstances. Pasolini declared that the perfect vehicle was the character who suffered from a neurotic condition that would result in their seeing the world differently, justifying the foregrounding of style in a project that transforms filmic prose into poetry. Subsequent theorists, such as Seymour Chatman[17] and Edward Branigan, elaborated on the application of the free-indirect style to cinema. However, with the exception of Eisenstein these theoretical enquiries privilege picture, rather than sound. In *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Deleuze applies Pasolini's free-indirect point-of-view shot to speech, shifting the focus to sound more generally, and to sound-picture relations. Deleuze also stresses the need for a vehicle to justify stylistic excess, a character outside the norm, a 'seer' to create of cinema a 'spiritual automaton'. Again, the subjective representation of this character's experience justifies a relationship of incommensurability between picture and sound. The film metaphorically enacts the character's experience in the world.

Having explored the application of the free-indirect style to cinema and some ways in which the voice might be included as a key stylistic parameter, some of the insights offered by psychoanalysis into the role of the voice in ego formation were examined. Feminist film theorists such as Kaja Silverman draw attention to the gendered nature of the voice. The psychological incorporation of the voice of the Father from the 'auditory aura' of childhood sets up an opposition within the self between the voice of authority, internalised with the acquisition of language, and the voice of the ego. Certain mental illnesses, such as paranoid schizophrenia as suffered by Daniel Paul Schreber, stem from this inner division.[18] Furthermore, the dual nature of the voice as a vehicle for both outer and inner speech can

[17] Notably in Chatman's *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (1978).
[18] Evidence suggests that Schreber's father was a punitive authoritarian in the home (Schreber 2000: xv-xvii).

lead to situations in which the hearing of our own voice, originated as a thought and projected into the world, returns to our thoughts in a loop that begins to dissolve the boundary between outer and inner worlds — Silverman's 'acoustic mirror'. In an extreme form, this dissolution of the boundary between self and the world may be seen as a sign of psychosis. But the abolition between subject and object is precisely what Eisenstein aimed for with his notion of 'organic-ness' in the cinema — a complete integration of story world, character, style and the ideology of the filmmaker — all for the benefit the audience who would lose itself in the experience. And the principal vehicle? Inner speech. Thought. As Deleuze muses, thought becomes immanent to the image.

The separation of the voice from the image implies, and can lead to, the separation of the voice from the body. When the voice wanders off on its own, as Echo does in 'Echo and Narcissus', or simply refuses to sit comfortably with the body to which it is attached, as with the automaton, Olimpia, in Hoffman's 1816 tale 'The Sandman', it evokes the uncanny. It takes on a spiritual or a ghostly dimension. In *Mulholland Drive* and *Last Year at Marienbad*, it is suggestive of death. It may be that it implies a spiritual death, a dispersal or dissolution of the ego, rather than a physical death. Is this perhaps what Deleuze means by his notion of the 'spiritual automaton' – both a description of the cinema as time-image, and of characters featured in this form of cinema? If so, to what degree is psychosis also a spiritual experience? In Chapter 4 we hear from an interview subject who describes his battle with psychosis as a spiritual journey. Hearing voices that have no origin in the external world is commonly taken to be a sign of schizophrenia; it is also the province of psychics and mystics. In its capacity to express the inner life cinema has the means to entice its audience towards the contemplation of such spiritual states.

Chapter Two: Sound Practice(s)

> This is how life becomes nothing and disappears. Automatization eats things, clothes, furniture, your wife, and the fear of war. . . . And so this thing we call art exists in order to restore the sensation of life, in order to make us feel things, in order to make a stone stoney.
>
> Viktor Shklovsky, 'Art, as Device' (2015: 162)

> If the sound or voice is not tied up with a picture of its source, it may grow beyond the dimensions of the latter. Then it is no longer the voice or sound of some chance thing, but appears a pronouncement of universal validity. . . . The surest means by which a director can convey the pathos or symbolical significance of sound or voice is precisely to use it asynchronously.
>
> Béla Balázs, *Theory of the Film* (1952: 209-210)

Introduction

For a cinematic representation of psychosis to successfully convey something of the disorientation of the lived experience it must, at a minimum, create a delusional atmosphere. As described in the preceding chapter, a delusional atmosphere induces in the audience an ontological insecurity in relation to the diegesis, an uncertainty about what is real and what may be fantasy, which triggers an existential unease, a sense of cognitive vertigo. Reality – both diegetic and actual (the hallucinatory experience of cinema spectatorship, as described by Metz) – seems suddenly other than what was assumed. It may be that competing and mutually exclusive interpretations of events destabilise a unified reading of the film, as in *Life on Mars* or *Mulholland Drive*. But what must a film do in addition to this if it aims to engage its audience in the difficult matter of mental illness, not just as a vehicle for a diverting entertainment, but as a provocation, an invitation to consider a matter of serious social significance? Can the film be realistic (illusionistic) or must it employ Brechtian devices of estrangement to encourage the audience to consider not only story elements but also the nature of their construction and ideological implications? Paul Willemen calls this space between the representation and reception of a film – the space of negotiation in which viewers seek to comprehend the film through drawing on their

understanding of both its aesthetic strategies and the social/historic realities it refers to and is bound up in – the 'in-between'. To activate this in-between space filmmakers must use 'a strategy of address that tries to mobilise meanings rather than impose them. . . . [A] kind of dialogue is set up between film-maker and viewer in which the film-maker proposes a way of making sense, but simultaneously invites critical attention to the way this is done' (1994: 166). A self-reflexive form of cinema, then, and one that includes ambiguity?

Given the practical component of the present project, determining what cinematic elements a director needs to employ in order to create such effects, and how they ought to be mobilised, is fundamental to the enquiry. The previous chapter stressed the effectiveness of the free indirect style and disjunctive picture-sound relations in troubling the comfortable illusionism of realist storytelling. Yet there are films that seem to create a delusional atmosphere through story incidents alone, without recourse to obvious formal means of estrangement, as we will see later in this chapter. And as I am engaged in both fiction and documentary filmmaking, it's necessary to ask the same questions of the documentary form. However, the challenge in attempting to create a delusional atmosphere in documentary rests primarily with the ethical implications of deceiving the audience about the reality of the representation. Since by definition a delusion does not accord with objective reality, and a person experiencing psychosis cannot recognise that their beliefs and perceptions are at variance with verifiable reality, for a documentary filmmaker to create a delusional atmosphere is to mislead the audience – at least temporarily. But if, as with most re-enactments and stylised sequences, the departure from fact is signaled, it undermines the effect. Errol Morris' use of stylised and contradictory re-enactments, beginning with *The Thin Blue Line* (1988), Clio Barnard's use of actors lip-synching to the recorded testimony of documentary subjects (a technique influenced by verbatim theatre – the practice of using documentary testimony as the basis for a play's text) in *The Arbor* (2010), and the occasionally fanciful reconstructions in *Notes on Blindness* (Middleton and Spinney 2016) could be pushed further – but would it tip documentary into fiction? This

risks not only breaking the tacit contract that documentaries make with their viewers concerning the actuality of the events portrayed, but also undermining the film's purpose to communicate the real, lived disorientation of delusion and hallucination, casting them into 'mere' fiction. Verbatim methodologies could prove helpful, as could a concept linked to re-enactment introduced into documentary theory by Bill Nichols – the 'fantasmatic subject' – which raises questions about 'the experience of temporality and the presence of fantasy in documentary' (2008: 73).

While researching relevant films and film theories can lead to an understanding of the impact of various stylistic and structural methods used to create a delusional atmosphere in fiction film, and also to provide an approach to addressing a question central to the present study – what can the role of the voice bring to the representation of psychosis? For theory alone cannot supply the knowledge and experience of how these strategies work in practice, nor whether there are untried methods or combinations of devices that might lead to representations as yet unseen. In other words, research can help to know *what*, but not to know *how*. In *Practice and Research in the Arts* Robin Nelson distinguishes between the scientific method and the practice-as-research method that takes place in the arts, wherein the knowledge gained 'is not of a propositional (descriptive-declarative) or falsifiable kind' (2013: 50). He goes on to say, 'In the best PaR, there is an intellectual diagnostic rigour in the critical reflection on practice, in the movement between the tacit know-how and the explicit know-what and in the resonances marked between know-what and know-that' (60). To know how to make the films I aim to make naturally requires an engagement with film practice, informed or inspired by theory and a knowledge of what filmmakers have already done. Furthermore, although they may exist, I am unaware of any documentaries that create a delusional atmosphere, though there are several that contain important elements, as we will see below. Thus, to find out whether this is possible I can only attempt it. The empirical filmmaking work of the initial stage of this project comprises a test of the use of off-screen voice (the drama extract, *Voices*) and a documentary trialing an experimental use

of voiceover in an attempt to create a fantasmatic voice (*Remember, thou art clay*). At the end of this chapter the outcome of these experiments will be evaluated using the diagnostic tools provided by the research. Prior to this, I will expand upon the three key topics I have raised above: spectatorship; formal strategies, including the role of the voice; and the place of re-enactment in a documentary practice that seeks to create a delusional atmosphere.

'Estrange' Fascination: Buttonholing and Beguiling the Spectator

What kind of spectatorial position must a filmmaker posit if he or she aims for an audience to engage critically with a film, but also for that audience to be (at least at times) carried away by it, and what role might the voice play in this consideration? The Russian formalist concept of estrangement (*ostranenie*), often referred to in English translations as defamiliarisation, provides a sound starting point. For the Russian formalists – particularly Viktor Shklovsky, who coined the term in his essay 'Art, as Device' quoted in the epigraph to this chapter – 'making strange' was seen to be the fundamental purpose of art. Strategies can range from the choice of composition or colours in a painting, to the use of an unusual rhyme scheme, metaphor or turn of phrase in literature, to Eisenstein's protean, oft-revised notions of montage. The viewer is expected to follow the denotative meaning of the text while simultaneously (or in oscillation) appreciating the formal means by which this is expressed. Eisenstein's intellectual montage requires viewers to be at once focussing on the development of the film's narrative and inferring the connotative meaning of a particular juxtaposition of shots. One activity requires making sense of the film on the horizontal plane of combination and the other on the vertical plane of substitution. While Eisenstein envisaged the audience of intellectual montage all arriving at the same conclusion (interpretation), this needn't be the desired outcome, as he himself recognises in later essays in which he introduces the concepts of overtonal montage and 'organic-ness', and

criticises his earlier formulation of intellectual cinema as being in 'error'.[19] His revised ideas about montage leads him to promulgate a notion of 'dual-unity'. A work of art should demonstrate:

> an impetuous progressive rise along the lines of the highest explicit steps of consciousness and a simultaneous penetration by means of the structure of the form into the layers of profoundest sensual thinking. The polar separation of these two lines of flow creates that remarkable tension of unity of form and content characteristic of true art-works.
>
> (1977: 145)

With the term 'sensual thinking' (which comes from the same essay: 'Film Form: New Problems') Eisenstein introduces into film language the idea of a syntax of inner speech, a pre-logical, imagistic kind of thinking: 'Inner speech is precisely at the stage of image-sensual structure, not yet having attained that logical formulation with which speech clothes itself before stepping out into the open' (130). In effect he anticipates Lacan's category of the imaginary. For Eisenstein, inner speech as embodied in art is exemplified by the figure of synecdoche, where a part can stand in for a whole, where, from the point of view of sensual thinking, a part IS a whole. One thing can be another in a unity, while each paradoxically maintains its separate identity: 'dual-unity'. This duality applies both to motifs within the film and to the viewer's reactions in experiencing them. Eisenstein reflects upon actors being at one and the same time wholly themselves and wholly the character that they perform, and of a theatre audience experiencing a 'fluctuating dual apprehension of stage action as both a reality of theatre and a reality of representation' (137). A comparison with Brecht's theory of the spectator in this regard is both apposite and illuminating.

Brecht's notion of the *Verfremdungseffekt* comes directly from exchanges with the Russian formalists in the 1930s. Indeed, as the editors point out in their notes to Brecht's foundational essay on the topic, '*Verfremdung* Effects in Chinese Acting' (1936), in the root

[19] In his 1935 essay 'Film Form: New Problems' Eisenstein states that the theory of the intellectual cinema 'fell into the error of letting us have not a unity of form and content, but a coincidental identity of them, because in unity it is complicated to follow exactly how an effective embodiment for ideas is built' (1977: 147).

of both the Russian *ostranenie* and the German *Verfremdungseffekt* is 'strange' (Brecht 2019: 185). Thus, the 'estrangement effect', or V-effect (rather than the 'alienation effect' of the original translation) better captures the connection between the two, as well as Brecht's objective 'to make the incidents represented appear strange to the public' (176). Brecht's ideas about performance style differ from those of Eisenstein (although the latter made frequent use of social gestus, so vital to Brecht's theatre). Brecht aims for a performance in which actors remain psychologically removed from their characters, commenting both upon their performance and their role. Nevertheless, like Eisenstein, Brecht wants the audience to be of two minds, identifying with the actor's situation while maintaining a critical distance to the events, ideas, and opinions portrayed. To illustrate the attitude he favours for the audience, Brecht describes Piscator's production of *The Good Soldier Schweik*:

> The performer's self-observation, an artful and artistic act of self-alienation, prevents the spectators from losing themselves completely in the character. . . . Yet the spectators' empathy is not entirely rejected. The audience identifies itself with the actor as being an observer, and accordingly develops the attitude of observing or looking on.
>
> (2019: 178)

In agreement with Eisenstein, Brecht notes that estrangement can be created not only by performance, but also by music and mise-en-scène (182). And, as Walter Benjamin observes in his article 'What Is Epic Theatre?', the choice of story and story structure also play a significant role. The story should be 'unsensational' and should feature an 'untragic hero' whose narrative journey does *not* lead to 'Aristotelian catharsis' (2003: 16-18). Based on a montage aesthetic, scenes are organised into a succession of tableaux.[20] Brecht criticises plot-based, Aristotelian drama and, in his 'Notes on *The Threepenny Opera*' (1931), enjoins the playwright to reject 'this practice of subordinating everything to a single idea, this urge to propel the audience along a single track where it can look neither right nor

[20] Hence, according to Roland Barthes in his essay 'Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein', 'nothing separates the scene in epic theatre from the Eisenstein shot', both of which are notable for 'erecting a meaning but manifesting the production of that meaning' (1977: 71).

left, up nor down' (Brecht 2019: 82). All of Brecht's strategies are designed to create a particular spectatorial experience, summed up by Eisenstein in this way: 'The spectator not only sees the represented elements of the finished work, but also experiences the dynamic process of the emergence and assembly of the image just as it was experienced by the author' (1947: 32).

But there is another kind of estrangement that manifests particularly in response to mise-en-scène, though it may also arise from other elements such as story, performance, camerawork or voice, or a combination of these. It leads not to distanciation of the sort that Brecht describes when he imagines his ideal spectator adopting a casual 'watching-while-smoking attitude' (2019: 82), but rather to the inverse, an almost hallucinatory state of fascination with the excess or materiality of the signifier: shots that last 'too' long, camera movements or montage effects that are 'too' elaborate, mise-en-scène that exceeds its narrative function. In short, stylistic overdetermination. In *Last Year at Marienbad*, for example, the character 'A' (Delphine Seyrig) stands at the bar with 'X' (Giorgio Albertazzi) who, in an incantatory address to A (but all the while looking away from her and toward the camera) attempts to provoke A to recall an incident from the previous year. As he describes the incident, A steps back in surprise (horror?) and drops her glass to the floor where it shatters. The crowd in the bar gathers to watch as a waiter arrives to clean up. Motionless and completely silent, the crowd looks on with fascination as the waiter picks up the broken glass one piece at a time. The overdetermination of this moment, which comprises three silent shots lasting a total of 33 seconds, creates a mesmerising effect, heightened by the preceding sequence of shots that provide a stylistic counterpoint: camera movement, disruptive editing and the dominant voice of X as he stares ominously into the middle-distance.

In his essay, 'The Third Meaning', Barthes introduces what he calls the 'obtuse meaning' to describe this kind of mesmeric fascination. He notes that it belongs to the realm of Kristeva's *signifiance*, the ungraspable or excessive meaning generated by 'a

signifier without a signified' (1977: 61). Such a signifier (for example, X as he stares fixedly and for an excessively long time into the middle distance) 'declares its artifice but without in so doing abandoning the "good faith" of its referent' (58). In other words, the signifier (in this example, the actor Giorgio Albertazzi) continues on one level to point to a referent (his character and its place in the narrative), yet on another level its significance exceeds it and we begin to notice the shard of light reflecting on his white shirt, the sheen on his hair, the robotic nature of his performance (is he hypnotising or hypnotised?), his Italian accented French pronunciation, his repetitive falling cadences as he reaches the ends of his phrases or sentences. The 'grain of the voice', the term Barthes coined in an article of the same name published two years later, refers to the same excess, but specifically in relation to the voice. The materiality of the voice – the combination of timbre, cadence, rhythm, pitch, accent, volume – exceeds the linguistic message it delivers, as well as our ability to codify it. Certainly the quality of X's and A's voices contributes to the sense of strangeness or dislocation that pervades *Last Year at Marienbad*.

Five years after Barthes' 'The Third Meaning', Julia Kristeva appears to pick up on his 'obtuse meaning' when she writes that cinema's 'specular seduction' is triggered by the pre-symbolic traces of signifiers 'in excess as compared with the represented, the signified' (1986: 237). However, Kristeva takes Barthes' notion further, positing a spectatorial reaction to such traces, partly of desire, but principally of dread or terror (*frayeur*) at being confronted by the mere 'fantasm' of signification:

> At the intersection between the vision of a real object and hallucination, the cinematographic object brings into the identifiable . . . that which remains beyond identification: the drive unsymbolised, unfixed in the object – the sign – language . . .
>
> (1986: 237)

The frustrated drive toward meaning, to the fulfilment of 'this identifying, labelling glance' (236), recalls for Kristeva the dream, 'that private cinema of the public' (240). However, as with the totalising conceptions of spectatorship posited by Jean-Louis Baudry and Christian Metz in which all viewers are thought to be positioned by the cinematic apparatus

in the same way, Kristeva seems here to overstate her case. While it follows logically that if cinematic signifiers are by their very nature excessive then all films would have the potential to induce a specular fascination, and even 'phantasmatic terror', in the audience, it doesn't follow that all viewers would react in the same way to the same signifiers – particularly given the excessive, polyvalent nature of cinematic images. Nor does it follow that all films would induce the effect to the same degree. Kristeva may obliquely recognise this. She praises Eisenstein's mise-en-scène in particular for 'an artistry worthy of the most learned topologist' and singles out Hitchcock films, the horror genre and the western as prime vehicles. But most pertinent for this study is the notion of moments in narrative cinema in which the spectator's logical construction of the story and its significance are sidelined by a feeling of almost hallucinatory fascination. It seems to me impossible to take these moments entirely out of their narrative context, however – something that, once again, Kristeva obliquely suggests. What contributes significantly to the specular fascination of the bar scene in *Last Year at Marienbad*, for example, is the dread generated not just from *signifiance* but also from (and compounded by?) the inferred yet unconfirmed threat that X poses for A. Viewers – each in his or her own way – might dwell on the sensuous, multivalent signifiers (lighting, staging, the deliberate manner in which the waiter collects the pieces of broken glass, the sudden hush in the soundtrack), while simultaneously feeling that the pressure of the plot freights these details with all the greater (inchoate) significance. This is Eisenstein's dual apprehension, but with the fundamental addition of a particular state of disorientation or bemusement that might accompany it.

Formal Strategies: Positioning and Manipulating the Voice

A number of stylistic strategies for generating a delusional atmosphere were surveyed in the previous chapter, and the creative potential of the voice to contribute to the effect was explored through reference to Eisenstein, Deleuze and Chion, among others. Separating the voice from the body is a key means of creating a feeling of the uncanny, as it seems to

upset obvious cause-and-effect relations (a body or diegetic machine of some kind is needed to produce a voice), making of the voice an effect without a cause. A disembodied voice (Chion's *acousmêtre*) makes the strongest impact, but even a calculated use of the off-screen voice can be unsettling.[21] Eisenstein contended that the inner monologue could be instrumental in abolishing the separation between subject and object by turning speech into thought. Deleuze concurred, while also stressing that the nature of the vocal delivery, whether on screen, off screen, or in voiceover, has the potential to create an estrangement effect, a monotonic delivery suggesting a character in a state of abstraction or separation from the world around them. Barthes highlighted the materiality of the voice itself as an element that can give rise to an excessive focus on the signifier and result in the audience's feeling of estrangement. Nowadays, the positioning of the voice in the cinema auditorium (or living room, personal devices, etc.) must also be taken into account. Mary Ann Doane, in her article 'The Voice in the Cinema', written before the advent of surround sound, contends that

> the screen is given precedence over the acoustical space of the theatre – the screen is posited as the site of the spectacle's unfolding and all sounds must emanate from it. (Bailblé asks, 'What would be, in effect, a voice-off [off-screen voice] which came from the back of the theatre? Poor little screen . . .' – in other words, its effect would be precisely to diminish the epistemological power of the image, to reveal its limitations.)
>
> (1986: 338)

Since the coming of surround sound, which has become ever more complex, precise and spatially nuanced,[22] it seems that although sounds and voices in the surround speakers can indeed distract from the image, they needn't necessarily do so, and habituation to the technology may also play a part in helping audiences to stay focussed on the screen while simultaneously processing the quality and spatial positioning of the audio. Furthermore, the

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[21] 'As soon as the sound is detached from its source, no longer anchored by a represented body, its potential work as a signifier is revealed. There is always something uncanny about a voice which emanates from a source outside the frame' (Doane 1986: 340).

[22] Introduced in 2012, Dolby Atmos – at the time of writing – allows up to 128 separate speaker feeds into the cinema auditorium.

narrative level and function of the voice have a marked impact both upon its visceral impact and how it is interpreted.

In the placement and manipulation of the voice, the following parameters can be identified:

- quality of the voice (timbre, cadence, rhythm, pitch, volume)
- physical position within the diegetic space and distance from the camera (quality of reverberation and loudness)
- synchronisation (does the voice match the movement of the character's lips?)
- position in relation to the picture (on screen, off screen, voiceover)
- narrational level on which the voice occurs (non-diegetic narrator, diegetic narrator, nonfocalised narration, external focalisation, perceptual focalisation, cognitive focalisation)[23]
- physical positioning of the audio within the cinema (monophonic, stereo, surround, Dolby Atmos)

In addition to specifying where the voice is placed in the objective/subjective and non-diegetic/diegetic axes, the narrational level also indicates the relationship of the voice to the picture track. These parameters permit a great number of expressive possibilities, many of which have been explored in the films cited above. However, there are areas where further experimentation may yet lead to significant discoveries, particularly where it comes to the specific combinations of variables.

In my initial practical work I therefore attempted to find out what the effect might be of positioning all the speech – dialogue in the drama, and interview in the documentary – off screen. Might this create an uncanny, if not ghostly, impression, if the characters in the drama are both visually present, but only when listening, never when speaking? The physical positioning of the voice in the cinema speakers can also be explored. My resources only allow for a 5.1 surround mix, but the right and left surround channels are sufficient to test the effect of placing voices behind the cinema audience. Along with the

[23] Narrational levels and point-of-view will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

positioning of the voice in the cinema auditorium, the amount of reverb used can also suggest a greater or lesser distance from the microphone/screen. In order to create a greater sense of the sometimes ethereal nature of hallucinated voices they can be moved into the surround speakers and treated with reverb as well as with equalisation to attenuate the lower frequencies of the voice, making it sound thinner, fragile. These techniques can equally be applied to the documentary. Finally, *Voices Apart* (discussed in Chapter 4), the documentary based on interviews with voice-hearers, was designed to test verbatim techniques – putting the recorded voices of the documentary subjects into the mouths of actors, who lip-sync to the testimony. In concert with the careful manipulation of the spatial quality of the vocal recordings, recorded dry (without reverberation) in a recording studio, a subtle but suggestive estrangement effect could be achieved. For example, if the actors are seen in a large interior space in a long shot, the voice could nevertheless be heard dry, in audio close-up. This is not dissimilar to a convention used in many documentary and fiction films to ensure that despite the physical distance of the camera to the subject, the dialogue is heard clearly (a strong, disconcerting use is made of this technique by Nuri Bilge Ceylan in his 2011 drama, *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia*). However, the reverse approach is rarely used: combining a camera close-up with an audio long shot. (Carl Dreyer uses this technique in his 1932 film *Vampyr* – to unsettling effect!) Furthermore, intentional slippages in the synchronisation of mouth and voice could also create further estrangement. Naturally all of these devices and techniques must be calibrated in relation to other stylistic parameters, such as the editing rhythm and emphasis, in order to achieve the calculated effect of a delusional atmosphere.

When discussing the effect of creating a delusional atmosphere the question inevitably arises: for how long must the audience endure a feeling of ontological insecurity to come to a visceral sense of the psychotic experience? Undoubtedly this will vary among individual viewers but, broadly, the film could be suffused throughout with disorienting stylistic effects and narrative mysteries (eg, the 2017 series *Twin Peaks: The Return*) or could, on the other

hand, involve few picture-sound disjunctions (or none) and avoid the use of the free-indirect style altogether. An example of what I see as a limiting case of formal minimalism is the 2016 film, *Yourself and Yours*, by South Korean director Hong Sang-soo. Despite the film seemingly having little to do with mental illness, its significantly disorienting impact is achieved with a simple story, the minimum of stylistic fuss, and an ultra-low budget. As it nevertheless manages to raise core questions about the cinematic representation of psychosis it is worth considering in detail.

Set in contemporary Seoul, lovers Youngsoo and Minjung, after a particular bitter argument, decide to take a break from their relationship for a while. Sometime later, sitting in a bar on her own, Minjung is approached by a man who claims to know her. She professes ignorance, but he insists. She tells him that he might be referring to her twin sister. Some days later another man claims to know the attractive and seemingly guileless Minjung, but again she insists she has never met him. Nonplussed, the man nevertheless pursues her. Is this a case of mistaken identity? Does Minjung really have a twin sister? Meanwhile Youngsoo pines for Minjung and tries to find out what has become of her. Finally, he catches up with her. As with her response to the other men who claimed to know her, she seems not to recognise Youngsoo. Youngsoo is as baffled and discomposed as the viewer, especially when Minjung agrees to go out with Youngsoo as if they are on a first date. She behaves in every way as if the two former lovers have never met, whereas the audience (and apparently Youngsoo too) experience an uncanny sense of déjà-vu that forces us to question everything that has come before, along with our own perception.

The style of Hong's film is unadorned and naturalistic. Unexceptional locations (bars, cafés, cramped apartments, suburban streets) feature throughout, and most scenes are covered in a single shot, varied only with the occasional use of a zoom. Although it lacks the overt political content of a Brecht play, it contains a number of Brechtian features: an episodic structure, ordinary characters (apart from the mystery at the heart of Minjung's behaviour), and a low-key drama without catharsis. There is no subjective narration and the

off-axis camera placement and zooming-in from a fixed camera position provide a distancing effect. It hardly seems like the sort of film to generate a sense of vertiginous disorientation in an audience. But the inability to gauge Minjung's ontological status leaves the audience in a space of radical uncertainty about the reality of what we see. Is Minjung's second incarnation a different person (the twin sister?), or some kind of doppelgänger? Is she playing an elaborate game or, more disturbingly, experiencing some kind of fugue state? The uncertainty surrounding Minjung even leads to a questioning of the film's genre. If the second incarnation of Minjung is a doppelgänger this supernatural element would put the film in a different category from what it would be if she were suffering from dissociative identity disorder. Stylistically and narratively the film remains studiously non-committal; maintaining its ontological impenetrability seems to be the filmmaker's point.[24] Early on, Minjung tells Youngsoo, 'Don't try to know everything'. Unlike the unresolved mystery of another kind of film (eg, *L'Avventura*) in which the film's narrator simply refuses to provide the missing information (the whereabouts of the missing character, Anna), here it is the inscrutable character's identity that is ultimately unfathomable, as if the viewer were confronted with Kristeva's 'phantasmatic terror one speaking identity holds for another' (1986: 240).

In *Yourself and Yours* the dedramatising, objectively oriented style, along with an absence of editorialising on the part of the film's narration, create the conditions in which a character's sudden change of identity or behaviour is so unsettling that it generates a delusional atmosphere which colours the film as a whole and persists as a conundrum after it ends. In this case it seems that a single plot point – Minjung's unexplained change of

[24] In his review of the film for *Variety*, Scott Tobias writes: 'An inspired reversal of Luis Buñuel's *That Obscure Object of Desire*, which had two different actresses playing the same woman, the film casts one actress playing multiple versions of herself — or so it would seem' (Tobias 2016). Comparing Buñuel's 1977 film with *Yourself and Yours* on this point suggests that while Hong Sang-soo's use of the female protagonist is essential to the film's exploration of identity and the perception of reality, Buñuel's use is paradoxically without mystery, as the doubling of actresses primarily serves an ideological point concerning sexual politics.

identity – casts the meaning of the entire film into irreconcilable doubt. However, while *Yourself and Yours* throws the shadow of a delusional atmosphere over the otherwise ordinary reality it depicts, it doesn't invite an identification or empathy with the character whose identity is in question. The narrative point of view therefore precludes the emotional involvement that I require of a representation of psychosis. Though viewers may be unsettled and disoriented, they won't consider how the (potentially psychotic) character experiences the world.

The stylistic devices and narrative structures that serve to create a subjective perspective in films such as *Life on Mars*, *Mulholland Drive* and *Last Year at Marienbad* invite the audience to identify with characters who appear to suffer from some form of psychosis. Relying on narrative incident alone, as in *Yourself and Yours*, or viewing the psychotic experience from an external perspective, as in so many horror films and psychological thrillers, from *Psycho* to *Split* (Shyamalan 2016), fails to engage the audience *phenomenologically* with the condition of mental illness. The question that remains to be addressed is whether audience engagement of this kind can be achieved through documentary, a form that doesn't ordinarily mobilise overtly stylised formal practices in order to create subjective representations.

Documentary Re-enactment

My research into the field of re-enactment fed into the conception of the second documentary for this project, *Voices Apart*. An examination here of the conjunction of the voice with re-enactment will throw light on the creative potential of the voice in documentary generally. Re-enactments allow filmmakers not only to resurrect the past, bringing it to vibrant life in the present, but also to interpret historical events creatively. However, because we know that the past does not literally repeat itself, its restaging can create an uncanny effect. At the beginning of Clio Barnard's *The Arbor* (2010), a documentary about the life and work of Bradford playwright Andrea Dunbar (1961-1990),

Dunbar's two daughters, Lorraine and Lisa, now in their late 20s, return to their childhood home. They wander through the council flat while talking about memorable incidents growing up. As they stand in their old bedroom facing the camera and recounting an occasion in which they accidentally started a fire in their bedroom, we see on a bed behind them flames rising toward the ceiling. When Lisa talks about their mother sitting in bed writing her plays, she glances into her bedroom where we see Dunbar doing just that. These scenes exhibit an uncanny quality for several reasons. The daughters exist in the present tense of the film, but the incidents they describe from the past co-exist with them in the present. More than just an illustrated memory bracketed by flashback devices, the moments from the past – fire and mother – share the same frame with the daughters. The there-and-then is also here-and-now.

This spatio-temporal dislocation creates an impossible reality made more disorienting by the daughters' nonchalant acceptance of it. The fact that the daughters are not actual documentary subjects, but actors lip-synching to the recorded testimony of the real daughters, complicates the spectator's relationship to the image since elsewhere in the film we are not always sure when we are seeing re-enactments and when we are seeing real subjects. For me this was most pronounced in the scenes at the Royal Court Theatre with Dunbar and theatre director Max Stafford-Clark. There were moments when, on a first viewing, I couldn't be sure whether or not the footage was archive.[25] Story structure, mise-en-scène, framing, casting and performance thus all play a role in imbricating past and present, archive, interview and re-enactment. Moments in which the recorded testimony

[25] In an article on documentary theatre, Lib Taylor cites this section of the film, noting: 'While there is an exact vocal matching of Stafford-Clark's recorded words with [actor Danny] Webb's lip-sync, there is a disjunction in the embodiment of the role. . . . The performance looks sufficiently like Stafford-Clark for an informed audience to recognise him, but the physicality subtly but perceptibly mismatches the real person enough to reveal the masquerade' (2013: 375-6). But the question naturally arises, what about the experience of the uninformed audience, or the audience that doesn't spot the masquerade? In this case, it does indeed seem as though the audience could claim to have been deceived. To avoid this the masquerade ought to be made apparent in some way.

and its sound quality unintentionally fail to match exactly with the lip-synching of the actors and spatial qualities of the locations contribute to an unconscious sense of dislocation for the spectator. How would the effect of the film differ if the filmmaker had *not* included a pre-title caption announcing the film's central stylistic strategy: 'This is a true story, filmed with actors lip-synching to the voices of the people whose story it tells'? Without this opening caption the film would face ethical questions regarding the deception of the audience and the misrepresentation of its documentary subjects and would also risk provoking audience confusion.[26] Yet for a film that might actively seek to generate confusion, how much is too much? At what point do stylistic devices and structural storytelling techniques more commonly found in drama render the documentary a fiction, weakening the film's claim to represent lived experience?

The technique of lip-synching to recorded testimony used in *The Arbor* was pioneered in verbatim theatre performances designed to forge a closer connection to documentary reality. As Lib Taylor writes in her article on the verbatim work of British playwright Alecky Blythe, having actors listen to recorded testimony can shape their performances both vocally and physically. And while actors might ultimately use their own voices in a stage performance, lip-synching to the recorded testimony, as in *The Arbor*, adds another layer to the representation. In both cases, however, the emphasis on the documentary voice aims to forge a stronger link to the historical reality represented on stage or screen:

> In fact-based performance, the audience looks at and through the performer in order to see beyond him or her to the real person who preceded the representation. In [playwright Alecky] Blythe's work, that sense of looking through becomes listening through, and thus draws attention to the materiality of voice and the sonic dimension of embodiment.
>
> (Taylor 2013: 371)

[26] In an undergraduate documentary directing workshop that I teach, I screened the opening six minutes of *The Arbor* to my final year filmmaking students, purposefully omitting the explanatory caption. The students were intrigued and puzzled, and they immediately questioned the reality of the representation and the techniques used to achieve it.

For *Voices Apart*, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4, we planned to make the vocal testimony of our three subjects central to the film, using their accounts of past experiences as a trigger for present-tense re-enactments – similar to Alecky Blythe's play, *London Road*, in which the story is 'told in the past tense using direct address, though specific events are acted out as if in the present time of their occurrence' (Taylor 2013: 370). The film draws on Brechtian estrangement techniques such as an episodic story structure and a self-aware performance style that shifts between commitment to the role and a comment upon it. What is re-enactment after all but the performance of a performance, as Brecht makes clear in his essay 'The Street Scene': 'The street demonstrator's performance is essentially repetitive. The event has taken place; what you are seeing now is a repeat' (2019: 204-5). The resulting disjunction, indeed slippage, between the past and present, real and imagined, documentary and fiction, should invoke a fantasmatic aura – the sense of things and events being at once present and absent – that nevertheless remains rooted in the documentary reality of our subjects' rich, complex, and sometimes painful lives.

For Errol Morris, who makes extensive use of re-enactments, such re-stagings and creative interpretations of real events allow him (as he has discussed in many interviews, as well as in his own writings) to get at the truth. However, they can prove challenging to audiences, and Morris has faced a great deal of criticism over the years for his approach.[27] In his innovative 1988 film, *The Thin Blue Line*, Errol Morris used multiple different re-enactments of the same historical event – the shooting of a police officer on a highway in Dallas – to test the truth claims of eye-witnesses. These re-enactments are not overtly signalled by the film's narration (the transitions from contemporaneous interviews to re-enactment could equally serve to introduce archive footage), although the glossy noir-ish

[27] For example, Jonathan Kahana notes that Morris' film about the notorious offences committed by the military personnel at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, *Standard Operating Procedure* (2008) 'drew fierce criticism for its luridly stylized dramatizations of torture and beatings of detainees' (2009: 49).

images, slow-motion cinematography and fiction film editing conventions, should provide the viewer with sufficient clues. But the reaction of audiences and critics to the film made Morris interrogate his approach: 'How do we know what is real and what is re-enacted in a photograph? What is real and what is a simulacrum?' (Morris: 2008).[28] As the border between real and re-enacted scenes in documentary has become ever more fluid – with films such as Sarah Polley's *Stories We Tell* (2012) purposefully deceiving the audience about the ontological status of the images (mixing real archive with scenes staged to look like archive), and Bart Layton's *American Animals* (2018) seeming more often like fiction than documentary – filmmakers must ask themselves what the purpose of using re-enactments is, and what sort of re-enactments are appropriate to the task of representing historical, lived experience.

In his 2008 article 'Reenactment and the Fantasmatic Subject', Bill Nichols suggests that although re-enactment has the power to conjure the past into the present, the resulting revivification takes the form of a fantasm:

> The reenacted event introduces a fantasmatic element that an initial representation of the same event lacks. . . . Viewers must recognize a reenactment as a reenactment even if this recognition also dooms the reenactment to its status as a fictionalized repetition of something that has already occurred. Unlike the contemporaneous representation of an event – the classic documentary image, where an indexical link between image and historical occurrence exists – the reenactment forfeits its indexical bond to the original event. It draws its fantasmatic power from this very fact. . . . The viewer experiences the uncanny sense of a repetition of what remains historically unique. A specter haunts the text. This specter is a variation on the ghost of the absent subject.
>
> (2008: 73-74)

[28] In an opinion piece for the New York Times, Morris admits: 'It never occurred to me that someone might think that the re-enactments were not re-enactments at all, but honest-to-God vérité footage shot while the crime was happening. It's crazy for someone to think I had just happened to be out on that roadway, that night, with a 35-millimeter film crew and many, many cameras – cameras taking multiple angles, high angles from overhead, low angles at tire-level looking under the car, even angles inside the suspect vehicle. How could anyone think that? How could anyone believe that? Of course, people believe some pretty amazing things, and it made me think: is it a legitimate question?' (2008).

Nichols cautions, however, that in raising this spectral double, if the re-enactment isn't recognised as such by the spectator, then 'the question of deceit arises' (73). From an ethical standpoint the re-enactment need not be signalled in advance as Clio Barnard opted to do in *The Arbor,* nor noticed by the viewer at the outset. Rather, as with *Stories We Tell* and much of Morris' work, audiences can be left to interpret stylistic signs of re-enactment and to deduce the ontological status of the images from the historical realities being presented. For example, it would have been impossible for the camera crew to be present at the scene of the crime represented in *The Thin Blue Line* – and if by some miracle they had been, the question of conflicting testimonies central to the film's investigation wouldn't have arisen. Furthermore, the end credits can be used to clarify the stylistic approach of the film, if not also the status of particular scenes or sequences. Deferring or embedding the question of the ontological status of re-enactments shifts the documentary toward fiction which allows the film to benefit from stylistic strategies that increase viewer engagement and character empathy – through the use of subjectively oriented narrational devices for example. Yet if, as Nichols suggests in the quotation above, the re-enactment gains power from the audience's recognition that what appears to be the repetition of history is not actually that, then it behoves the filmmaker to leave significant traces discoverable by the audience, even while refusing to allow the film's narration openly to acknowledge the sleight of hand. In this way the audience will be encouraged to view the film with a split mind – in what Nichols calls the 'I-know-very-well-but-all-the-same formulation' (2008: 80) – and ideally to experience a sense of the uncanny, which in turn facilitates empathy with the documentary subjects.

The voice is commonly used as a transitional device to move a narrative from the documentary present – an interview, for example – to a re-enactment of the past. However, if the voice is separated further from its indexical source through technical manipulations that alter its quality, spatial relations, or synchronisation with the picture, or even place it in another body, it can be used to sow uncertainty – a vital ingredient for the creation of a

delusional atmosphere – even while the recorded voice maintains a (perhaps attenuated) indexical link to documentary reality (eg, the original interview). As with verbatim theatre then, the ontological status of the vocal narration that underpins the representation acts as a guarantor of authenticity and encourages the audience to *listen* through it to the actual embodied human experience being described.

Filming the Fantasmatic: Psychodramatic Speech Acts

In parallel with the theoretical investigations detailed above, my filmmaking partner, Elvina Nevardauskaitė, and I made two films, each of which explores a different aspect of voice-image relations. *Voices* (2015), a trial for the short drama which would eventually become *Unburied* (discussed in Chapter 3), tests the effect of a sustained use of off-screen dialogue to destabilise an ordinary conversation and contribute to a delusional atmosphere.[29] The short documentary *Remember, thou art clay* (2017) about a centuries-old brick factory in Lithuania, features an experimental use of voiceover aimed at infusing the industrial spaces with a spectral subjectivity.[30]

With *Voices* we endeavoured to portray our protagonist's (Caroline) psychotic episode in such a way as to encourage the audience to empathise with her disorientation and emotional distress. To do so we established a subjective perspective on events through the use of point-of-view shots, both literal (optical) and metaphorical (Branigan's projection shot, described in Chapter 1), and of an auditory point of view on the voices from the hallucinatory characters whom Caroline 'hears' as a result of her delusion. These voices are sometimes rendered as though they emanate from inside her head. Recorded dry, with a close microphone perspective, the voices lack the reverberation and distance that would position them within a physical space. At other times, however, they are spatialised using

[29] *Voices* can be viewed via this unlisted link: https://vimeo.com/126942212/df139d30e6.
[30] *Remember, thou art clay* can be viewed here: https://vimeo.com/brokenislandfilms/clay.

reverberation and the manipulation of the stereo image (panning the voices to the left or the right channel). This latter strategy is used when one of the voices — the heavily accented female voice of the character Eglė — speaks directly to Caroline (rather than just speaking about her). Making Eglė's voice sound as though it comes from within the wardrobe gives it a strong sense of embodiment, in contrast to the disembodied voices Caroline hears in her head. Ordinarily a spatialised off-screen voice creates the expectation of the imminent appearance of the character who possesses it. As Chion remarks, acousmatic voices create a strong desire in the viewer to see their source revealed (to have the voice 'de-acousmatised'):

> Being in the screen and not, wandering the surface of the screen without entering it, the acousmêtre [the off-screen character whose voice is heard] brings disequilibrium and tension. He invites the spectator to *go see*, and he can be *an invitation to the loss of the self, to desire and fascination*.
>
> (Chion 1999: 24; emphasis in the original)

The disembodied voice does indeed generate the sense of a phantom – a sonic entity etherealised through its apparent lack of a physical home. And to deny the expectation of an ultimate revelation of the off-screen character can create a supernatural presence of this voice, the possessor of which seems to exist outside physical laws. This is the effect intended by keeping Eglė's voice off screen.

Perhaps a more unusual stylistic strategy trialled with this film was to edit a version in which all of the dialogue spoken by the two embodied characters, Caroline and her office colleague Holly, is delivered off screen. By separating the characters' voices from their bodies (even though we see Caroline and Holly moving, listening, thinking) their physical selves seem, at least in part, to dematerialise. (Comparing this version to a 'normal' continuity style edit, with most speech onscreen, highlights the impact of putting the dialogue off screen.)[31] The technique creates a subtle disorienting effect and contributes to

[31] Link to the version of *Voices* with on-screen dialogue: https://vimeo.com/153706850/96a23e7182.

the delusional atmosphere. The sense of uncertainty regarding the reality of characters and events hints that a hidden, threatening significance inheres in the fabric of Caroline's subjective experience. Destabilising Holly's physical presence by separating her voice from her body, associating her disembodied voice with the voices in Caroline's head, raises the possibility that Holly is not actually visiting Caroline (such an unlikely occurrence in any case), but that Caroline may be imagining the entire episode. Coupled with unusual incidents, such as the toppling over of the lamp, and stylised sound design that generates a subjectively inflected sound world, the film functions in the mode of the free-indirect, casting the entire story as (possibly) the subjective, hallucinatory experience of the protagonist.

In *Remember, thou art clay*, the narrative spine is provided by the testimony, presented exclusively in voiceover, of a retired septuagenarian engineer who worked for over forty years at the ancient brick factory featured in the film. Her voice was recorded in a 90-minute interview conducted on the factory floor and is positioned within a stylised soundtrack over what is often an elaborately choreographed and edited image. For the majority of the film the factory workers are background figures; the factory itself and the clay pits where the raw material for the bricks originates are the ostensible subject — at least inasmuch as concerns the picture. But the voice of the engineer categorically changes the viewer's reception of the image. No longer solely about a factory, the addition of the voice inflects the images with the psyche of the acousmatic engineer, just as (inversely) the spaces visually represented seem now to lodge themselves within an imagined off-screen space: the mind of the engineer. These mutual reflections create a cinematic version of what Michel Foucault refers to as a heterotopia — a place real and unreal in equal measure, which he explains with reference to mirrors:

> The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a

> heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there.
>
> (Foucault 1986: 24)

By virtue of the addition of sound, *Remember, thou art clay* complicates Foucault's elaborate visual metaphor. We 'see' the engineer where she is not, creating of the factory a virtual place; yet the engineer's voice, its timbre, cadence, pitch — in short, its *grain* — is real. The images of the factory on the other hand exude a realness by virtue of their indexicality which, in a counter action, render the engineer's voice ghostly, unreal. The cinematic representation of an ordinary space becomes the site of a psychodrama. The engineer talks about her visits to the factory; she dwells in her memory and returns compulsively to the factory in the past: 'And it seems that I'm back in the same time again, spinning in the same vortex.' A fantasm, her voice at times almost a whisper, she evokes in incantatory fashion workers from days gone by and haunts the present-day workers we see on the factory floor. Her voice chimes with the image and the soundscape, the heterotopia opening into a dream space for the viewer. The engineer's voice pervades the factory, troubles it; her voice seems to exist within the space as if generated within it, rising above the sounds of machinery, subsiding, rising again. Its constant presence suggests omniscience, especially when the engineer's musings are made to coincide with the image as, for example, when she muses on the Soviet-era sign instructing the workers to 'Cherish Machinery' just as the picture reveals the sign (fig. 2.1). Chion comments on the apparent power inherent in a voice whose body remains unseen:

> *The acousmêtre is all-seeing*, its word is like the word of God: 'No creature can hide from it.' The one who is not in the visual field is in the best position to see everything that's

> happening. The one you don't see is in the best position to see you — at least this is the power you attribute to him. . . This is the paranoid and often obsessional *panoptic fantasy*, which is the fantasy of total mastery of space by vision.
>
> (Chion 1999: 24; emphasis in the original)

The power of the acousmêtre as described by Chion chimes with the lived experience of many voice-hearers whose voices, while observing, tracking, criticising and intimidating them, can exert a panoptic control. But in *Remember, thou art clay* the visual mastery that

Fig. 2.1 Remember, thou art clay: voiceover (subtitled) and picture coincide.

Chion postulates is tempered by the periodic domination of the voice by the factory sounds. The controlling force of the narrative remains uncertain; is it the visual space, site of the noise and activity that forms the basis of the image, or the voice that discourses on that space? Does the voice conjure the image, or does the image contain — or even perhaps give rise to — the voice? This fundamental undecidability results in a hybrid space, at once physical and psychological. It suggests the hallucinatory coalescence of thought and world: a hallmark of delusion, though this need not be attributed to the engineer.

At the heart of this cinema-dream is the melancholy spectre of death. As with the disembodied voices of *Psycho* and *Last Year at Marienbad*, the wandering voice seems to search for its resting place:

> De-acousmatization roots the acousmêtre to a place and says, 'here is your body, you'll be there, and not elsewhere.' Likewise, the purpose of burial ceremonies is to say to the soul of the deceased, 'you must no longer wander, your grave is here.'
>
> (Chion 1999: 28)

But in *Remember, thou art clay* the voice fails to find its resting place; it is not de-acousmatised. Its journey, the movement of the film, suggests a circle: present to past, and from the vantage point of the past, a look forward to the future which immediately situates itself back in the past. At the end of the film, as the bucket of a huge digger crane dumps earth onto a conical pile, the engineer recalls her mindset as a young woman: 'I wasn't afraid, and I was thinking that in any case I am just a particle of dust myself and I need a lot of knowledge. I need to learn a lot in practice and theory, and I don't think that I'll always be walking around in overalls.' The switch of tenses from past to present as the retired engineer imagines her younger self looking forward to a successful career, evokes a hopeful future which is already the past. The image of the loose earth spilling down the slope suggests, as the voice falls silent, a burial.

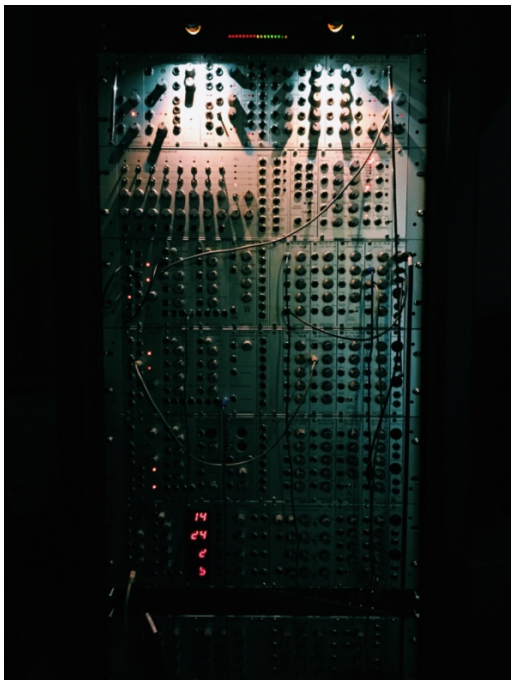
Conclusion

At the outset of this study I posed the question: in representing psychosis in drama and documentary how does a filmmaker create a delusional atmosphere, and what can the role of the voice add to this? This chapter has entertained the question from two opposing but entwined perspectives: the directorial and the spectatorial. The former position calls for a consideration of the parameters and strategies that might be exploited in an attempt to innovate (technically, formally) with the voice, from its 'grain' and the manner in which it is recorded and manipulated to its positioning in the cinema auditorium. The latter looks at how the audience can be engaged in an active, dialogical manner: carried along by the narrative, yet alert to the film's formal and ideological propositions. Ideally this critical engagement leads to a deeper reflection on the subject matter itself. In this regard, the notion of estrangement was examined from three perspectives, the Russian Formalist,

Brechtian and semiotic, with voice-image relations emerging as a key parameter, including within documentary re-enactments.

As noted in the preface, *Voices* and *Remember, thou art clay* were produced concurrently with the research and writing of Chapters 1 and 2 with the aim of provoking Eisenstein's 'sensual thinking' (through the 'dual-unity' within the films themselves), an engagement with the films that involves pre-logical thinking and gives the audience a taste of the split cognition and perception of psychotic experience. *Voices* was shot and edited in the spring of 2015, while *Remember, thou art clay* was shot in the summer of 2015 and completed, after a prolonged postproduction period, in the summer of 2016 (figs. 2.2 and 2.3). Its publication date of 2017 is based on its first festival screening in January of that year (fig. 2.4).

In the two films the free-indirect style permits not only a correlation between inner and outer worlds, but a journey through time and space propelled by the movements of the protagonists' minds. It encourages the viewer to empathise with the protagonist, whose thoughts and subjectively-inflected world we share. While it is true, as Pasolini asserts, that the free-indirect style can be achieved using the picture track on its own, the inclusion of the voice as a vehicle not only for conveying characters' thoughts, but also for drawing a closer connection between the mental and physical worlds, allows for the deeper involvement of the spectator in the fantasmatic world co-created by character and filmmaker. It positions the acousmatic voice in a relationship of Deleuzian incommensurability with the image. And whereas the images present a world we assume all can see, the disembodied voice seems to murmur into *our* ears alone. We feel the transports of emotion more strongly and the hallucinations of delusion more deeply, guided by the voice.



Figs. 2.2 & 2.3 Remember, thou art clay: audio postproduction. Left: the Theremin used to generate the eerie soundtrack. Right: David working in the recording studio.

Fig. 2.4 Remember, thou art clay: David and Elvina (centre & centre right) present the film at the London Short Film Festival in 2017.

Chapter Three: Narration, Inner Speech and Psychosis

> . . . they'll have said who I am, and I'll have heard, without an ear I'll have heard, and I'll have said it, without a mouth I'll have said it, I'll have said it inside me, then in the same breath outside me, perhaps that's what I feel, an outside and an inside and me in the middle, perhaps that's what I am, the thing that divides the world in two, on the one side the outside, on the other the inside, that can be as thin as foil, I'm neither one side nor the other, I'm in the middle, I'm the partition, I've two surfaces and no thickness, perhaps that's what I feel, myself vibrating, I'm the tympanum, on the one hand the mind, on the other the world, I don't belong to either . . .
>
> Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable* (1997: 438-39)

Introduction

Although narrative theorists have written a great deal about the relation in film between story and discourse, point of view (Genette's 'mood')[32] and narrative voice, the overwhelming focus has been on picture rather than sound, on vision rather than voice.[33] Of course, theorists such as Seymour Chatman and Edward Branigan have given a nod to the role of the voice in cinema, but the parameters and possibilities of speech in relation to point of view and narrative voice have not been formulated in as detailed a fashion as, say, Branigan's taxonomy of the visual representations of subjectivity in his landmark *Point of View in the Cinema* (1984). Beyond narratological studies, Kaja Silverman and Michel Chion, among others, have made valuable contributions to understanding the role of the voice within psychoanalytic and stylistic frameworks. Chion's notion of the *acousmêtre* introduced a rich vein of enquiry to complement existing analyses of off-screen voice and voiceover.[34] As discussed above, in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1989) Gilles Deleuze introduced the concept of the free indirect speech act to account for moments in which a

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[32] Genette uses the grammatical term 'mood' to indicate the narrational distance from, and perspective on, story information. See Gérard Genette ([1972] 1980), *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP.

[33] When referring to the concept of voice in relation to narratology, I will use the term 'narrative voice'. The word 'voice' on its own is thus reserved for references to speech.

[34] The concept was introduced in *The Voice in Cinema* ([1982] 1999) those characters whom we perceive, temporarily or permanently, solely through their voice

character, through dialogue, narration or inner speech, seems to become co-creator of the narrative with the film's narrator. However, in order to conceptualise picture-voice relations more accurately perhaps finer distinctions can be made to describe the ways in which inner speech and voiceover interact with the film's narration. This may help in identifying the range of approaches to representing auditory verbal hallucinations (AVHs) for both analytical and practical purposes. Examining feature films that feature inner speech and voiceover will provide points of comparison with my own work – the documentary, *Remember, thou art clay*, discussed in the previous chapter, and the drama, *Unburied* – which I can address from a practitioner's perspective. But before considering representations of speech in diegetic worlds, it is instructive to explore the role of speech in our empirical world, as a fundamental contributor to our sense of self and, consequently, to hallucinations linked to psychosis (AVHs).

Speech, whether inner speech, thoughts we give voice to, or others' speech that we attend to, shapes our identity. Lacanian theory posits not only that the infant's gaze at itself in the mirror leads to an understanding of its separation from the world and the notion of a distinct self, an entity that can be referred to by the self-same person as 'I', but also that the infant's perception of its own voice (as distinct for example from its mother's) can lead to the same awareness, and possibly at an earlier stage of development. Glossing Derrida in a larger discussion of Lacan's *objet petit a*, Mladen Dolar observes, 'To hear oneself speak – or, simply, just to hear oneself – can be seen as an elementary formula of narcissism that is needed to produce the minimal form of self' (2006: 39). Indeed, Derrida went so far as to say, 'The voice is consciousness' (quoted in Dolar: 193). But voice is distinct from speech. While voice may indeed form the basis of our consciousness, language forms the basis of speech, including inner speech. Yet language is not a personal code, but a public one. In Lacanian terminology, acquisition of language inducts us into the realm of the symbolic and forms the foundation of our socialisation. Inasmuch as we make use of language in the development of our identity and expression of self, it remains an

external structure. How much of our identity is attributable to the language that contributes to the formation of our psyche?

The epigraph above from Samuel Beckett's novel, *The Unnamable*, dramatises the dual nature of vocalised speech, a physical phenomenon (sound waves) that either emanates from, or transduces to, thought. If we attend to it, hearing ourselves speak can be disorienting. Voice transforms the internal and private into an external object. An inner impulse projects thought out of us as sound, which then loops back inside us as our own voice enters our ears. We are not only speaking to another, but also to ourselves. Elaborating on the Lacanian notion of an 'acoustic mirror', discussed in Chapter 1, Kaja Silverman points out, 'The boundary separating exteriority from interiority is blurred by this aural undecidability – by the replication within the former arena of something which seems to have its inception within the latter' (1988: 79). And apart from voiced speech, inner speech continues whether or not we voice it. How much control do we exert over it? Are we being spoken to from both without and within? If so, then where and who are 'we'? Beckett's narrator declares of himself, 'on the one hand the mind, on the other the world, I don't belong to either'. This undecidability or confusion about the origin and ownership of voice can be a sign of psychosis, as indeed it seems to be for Beckett's protagonist.

Narration and Inner Speech in Cinema

Although inner speech is a vital aspect not only of our day-to-day, moment-to-moment experience of consciousness, and a key part of the formation and consolidation of our identity, cinema makes use of it much less frequently than the novel. It is commonplace to hear that prose narrative deals more effectively with states of mind than cinema, with its external, optical perspective on character, does. While the diegetic mode of prose allows authors to describe characters' thoughts and feelings, and even the narrator's thoughts about characters and situations, the predominantly mimetic mode of cinema privileges dialogue, action and the representation of the external world and, in classical cinema at

least, normally attempts to efface the act of narration. Chatman speculates that 'since films *show* everything, offscreen voices [voiceover] in general have come to be thought obtrusive and inartistic' (1978: 194).[35] However, since the early days of sound cinema many films have featured a diegetic or non-diegetic narrator who comments on the story in voiceover, a practice which became very popular in the 1940s, especially in *film noir*. And although far fewer films use voiceover to represent inner speech, it too was employed in the first years of sound cinema.[36]

Both narration and inner speech can take the form either of synchronised speech (we see the character speaking on screen) or of voiceover, with the latter being far more common. The two key differences between narration and inner speech are the grammatical tense of the speech act and the intended audience. A narrator speaks from a position temporally removed from the story being related and always addresses someone – even if his or her audience is unidentified within the film, or imagined, or beyond the diegesis (eg, the film's audience). Inner speech, on the other hand, must be in the present tense and addressed to no one – unless to oneself. As Chatman expresses it, with inner speech '[t]he current discourse-moment is the same as the story moment; hence any predicate referring to the current moment will be in the present tense' (1978: 182-83). In regard to narrators, there are many variations of the range and depth of knowledge they might possess, as well as of communicativeness, reliability and self-consciousness,[37] and their degree of prominence in the film as whole, but in all cases, while we are hearing the narrators' thoughts, they are being voiced to *someone*. In *Double Indemnity* (Wilder 1944), for

[35] On the differences between narrational strategies available to literature and film, see particularly Seymour Chatman (1978) *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. See also David Bordwell (1985), *Narration in the Fiction Film,* Madison: U of Wisconsin P, pp 3-40., and Seymour Chatman (1990), *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*, London: Cornell UP, particularly pp 38-55.

[36] Two of the earliest examples of inner speech in the cinema that I am aware of are Hitchcock's *Murder!* (1930) and Mamoulian's *City Streets* (1931).

[37] See Bordwell (1985), pp 57-61. Although Bordwell's discussion treats the film's narration, rather than that of a given character, the attributes he identifies remain a useful analytical tool for analysing diegetic narration.

example, Walter Neff (Fred MacMurray) speaks into a Dictaphone a confession meant for his boss, Barton Keyes (Edward G. Robinson). This on-screen speech becomes voiceover narration when the film flashes back to the scenes Neff describes. In *Badlands* (Malick 1973) by contrast, Holly (Sissy Spacek) relates her story to an unspecified listener, from an unspecified time and place. We do not see her present-tense character in the film, as we do the narrator of *Double Indemnity,* and we cannot gauge very precisely her temporal distance from the story she comments on.

American Psycho (Harron 2000) exhibits a more complex case in which narration occasionally slides subtly into inner speech. The film begins with the protagonist (Christian Bale) addressing the film's audience in voiceover (in the indicative mood), introducing himself and explaining his daily routine: 'I live in the American Gardens building on West 81st Street, on the 11th floor. My name is Patrick Bateman. I'm 27 years old.' His voiceover guides us through the story, but as things begin to go wrong for the materialistic, vain and irascible Bateman his narration slips into inner speech. In an office meeting at their prominent Wall Street investment banking firm the employees compare business cards. After he shares his card Bateman, in voiceover, declares, 'I can't believe that Bryce prefers Van Patten's card to mine.' And when Bryce shows Bateman Paul Allen's card, Bateman nearly swoons as he thinks, 'Look at that subtle off-white colouring, the tasteful thickness of it. Oh my god. It even has a watermark'. While the narrative point of view between these two instances of voiceover (narration and inner speech) remains the same (Bateman's), the narrative voice shifts to one of greater subjectivity as Bateman's position in the text shifts from that of a controlling (diegetic) narrator addressing the film's audience to a character whose thoughts (inner, not outer, speech) are mimetically conveyed to the audience as if unmediated. By the end of the film we realise that because almost all of the story events have been filtered through Bateman's consciousness, his killing spree may only be a product of his fantasy, born of frustration. This interpretation is suggested by narrative information delivered by Bateman's lawyer attesting that he had just met with one of the

characters whom we thought Bateman had murdered, and also through a momentary shift in narrative point of view from Bateman to his secretary Jean (Chloë Sevigny) who riffles through his desk and finds his office diary filled with graphic drawings of violence: possibly the doodlings of evil daydreams.

When the narrative point of view aligns itself with the inner speech or perception of a diegetic character, it can be referred to as focalisation. This distinguishes it from the narration of narrators who stand outside the diegesis, including that of the film's implied author:

> Focalisation is the anchoring of narrative discourse to a specific subject position in the story: the projection of a diegesis through the interested 'point of view' of a given character. . . . If, however, the narrating instance is one that *does not* attach itself to a character within the world of the text, or is 'extradiegetic', the problem of focalisation does not arise. Who is the extradiegetic narrator, and where does he or she stand? These are questions only of *voice*.
>
> (Murphet 2005: 89, emphases in the original)

Narrative voice refers to the expression given to the recounting of story (traditionally, the discourse), as distinct from the narrative point of view from which the story events are viewed.[38] In the quotation above, the author doesn't mention that multiple levels of narration can co-exist at any given moment. For example, in the opening of *American Psycho*, Patrick Bateman's voiceover makes him a diegetic narrator, focalising the story through his direct address to the viewer. But the camera and mise-en-scène continue to provide a 'higher level' narration that guides the viewer's interpretation of the action as it plays out on screen. In *Narrative Comprehension and Film* Branigan identifies eight levels of narration; the top five do not involve focalisation. In descending order, from greater to lesser epistemological scope, these are: historical author, extra fictional narrator, nondiegetic narrator, diegetic narrator and 'character (nonfocalized narration)' (1992: 87).

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[38] 'Perception, conception, and interest points of view are quite independent of the manner in which they are expressed. When we speak of "expression," we pass from point of view, which is only a perspective or stance, to the province of narrative voice, the medium through which perception, conception and everything else are communicated' (Chatman 1978: 154).

'Diegetic narrator' refers to the role of those characters in *Double Indemnity*, *Badlands* and *American Psycho* when they narrate. 'Nonfocalised narration' features characters who provide us with narrative information simply through what they do and say, with no special stylistic devices to foreground a particular character or provide a subjective point of view. Branigan notes, 'One way we learn about characters is through their actions and speech in much the same way that characters learn from each other' (1992: 100). The next three levels of narration in Branigan's schema involve focalisation of increasing subjectiveness or depth: 'external focalization', 'internal focalization (surface)' and 'internal focalization (depth)' (1992: 87). The first of these categories refers to instances in which, through camera (eg, a close-up single shot) or mise-en-scène (eg, special lighting, expressive blocking), a character is highlighted by the extradiegetic narration, and becomes for a time the focus of the discourse. 'Internal focalization (surface)' refers to narration which align us with a character's perceptual experience, such as point-of-view shots, while 'internal focalization (depth)' involves narration that represents thought-based activity such as 'dreams, hallucinations, and memories' (Branigan 1992: 103). Significantly, the language used in narrative theory to describe subjective narration relies on metaphors of vision – focalisation, focus, point-of-view – and sound and voice are indeed accorded less discussion. Although Branigan doesn't make an explicit distinction between narration and inner speech, two categories of narration in his schema – 'diegetic narration' and 'internal focalization (depth)' – imply one. Inner speech belongs in the latter category.[39]

Branigan's terms for internal focalisation are somewhat clumsy, and I wonder if these narrational levels might be more clearly identified by adopting two terms used by Chatman in his discussion about representing a character's consciousness:

> Without plunging into psychology, one can separate two kinds of mental activity: that which entails 'verbalization,' and that which does not – roughly the distinction between cognition

[39] Even in his *Point of View in the Cinema* (1984) Branigan devotes very little discussion to speech, merely noting that dialogue is already 'a second-order subjectivity' (95).

> and perception. I am sometimes conscious of saying to myself as I pass a market the words 'I must get milk and bread,' but rarely of saying, as I pass a garden, 'That rose is red' or 'Look at that red rose' or 'The redness of that rose.' The latter is something 'felt' rather than said.
>
> (Chatman 1978: 181)

Cognition includes conscious and unconscious mental activity and mental images. It can therefore embrace dreams, hallucinations and memories, as in Branigan's 'internal focalization (depth)', while 'perception' can be restricted to immediate sensory (visual and auditory) experience as represented subjectively through point-of-view shots and auditory perspectives. This would give us, as the bottom two levels of narration, 'perceptual focalisation' and 'cognitive focalisation', while the term 'internal focalisation' could be used to refer to the two collectively. In this case we would have the following levels:

- historical author / filmmaker
- extra fictional narrator
- nondiegetic narrator

  } extradiegetic narration

- diegetic narrator
- nonfocalised narration
- external focalisation
- perceptual focalisation
- cognitive focalisation

  } internal focalisation

Thus, foregrounding the experiences of individual characters as they undergo them, whether from an external or internal perspective, necessitates focalisation, a shift in the subject position of the film's narration, moving us from an unfocalised ('objective') point of view on the action, to that of a diegetic character. Branigan notes that with internal focalisation, 'story world and screen are meant to collapse into each other, forming a perfect identity in the name of a character' (1992: 102), even though this point of view is simultaneously framed by the extradiegetic narration which enables it to emerge. The shift in focus causes a change in narrative point of view and the modality in which this information is conveyed, for example, through action, dialogue, perception or thought. In classical film form, grounded in a realism anchored in continuity style, a transitional device

is normally employed to accommodate this shift as seamlessly as possible.[40] In the case of inner speech, this might be a cut to a close-up of the character whose thoughts will be heard in voiceover, a dipping of the volume of the ambient sound, etc. Otherwise the sudden break in the narrative point of view – or 'momentary infraction of the code which governs that context' (Genette 1980: 195) – might compromise the integrity of the established discourse. A change to inner speech in cinema is thus not unlike a soliloquy in the theatre and requires the same care in integrating it into the surrounding action. In the theatre, this might entail a clearing of the stage, a dimming of the stage lights, or a spotlight on the character whose thoughts we will hear.

As noted above, that inner speech is rarely used in the cinema may be due to the difficulty in making a transition to cognitive focalisation that doesn't jar with the surrounding higher-level narration, predominant in realist films. Cognitive focalisation often slows down the forward movement of the plot, privileging texture over plot, contemplation over action – or in Maya Deren's conception, the 'vertical' over the 'horizontal'. According to Deren, drama drives forward on the horizontal plane (syntagmatic, or Roman Jakobson's axis of 'combination') while poetry plumbs the moment in depth (paradigmatic, putting emphasis on Jakobson's axis of 'selection'):

> [T]he poetic construct arises from the fact, if you will, that it is a 'vertical' investigation of a situation, in that it probes the ramifications of the moment, and is concerned with its qualities and its depth, so that you have poetry concerned, in a sense, not with what is occurring but with what it feels like or what it means. . . . Now it also may include action, but its attack is what I would call the 'vertical' attack, and this may be a little bit clearer if you will contrast it to what I would call the 'horizontal' attack of a drama, which is concerned with the development. . . .
>
> (Deren 2000: 174)

Sam Fuller's *Shock Corridor* (1963) provides an example of the unsuccessful combination

[40] Shifts in visual focalisation may involve such changes as a cut from a wide shot that isn't anchored to a particular subject position (unfocalised) to a close shot favouring one character (external focalisation). Staging, lighting, eyeline matches and point-of-view shots can also shift the focalisation.

of horizontal and vertical attacks. This plot-driven, predominantly realist film features a brash, goal-oriented protagonist, yet the film incorporates inner speech to provide a subjective point of view on events. The film tells the story of a journalist who fakes mental illness in order to be admitted to a psychiatric hospital where he attempts to solve the mystery of a murder that occurred there. While the film contains some subjective imagery, including double-exposures used to portray the content of thoughts, and three short segments of colour documentary footage (in an otherwise black-and-white drama) to convey flashbacks and associations, the voiceover of the protagonist Johnny Barrett (Peter Breck) at times feels like a stylistic anomaly. The opening scene takes place in the office of the psychiatrist, Dr. Fong, who coaches Johnny in faking his mental illness. In the midst of this dialogue scene between Johnny, Dr. Fong, Johnny's girlfriend Cathy, and his boss Swanee, an abrupt cut to a single medium close-up of Johnny leads into his voiceover: 'I feel sorry for Doc Fong. Professionally he knows he's playing with dynamite, but he just couldn't turn down his closest friend, Swanee. They were in psychological warfare back in World War II. Today the doc's a top-flight head-candler, and Swanee's my boss, Managing Editor of the Daily Globe'. The expositional content of the speech suggests that the voiceover is meant to function as narration, to provide the audience with information that the film's author deemed important. But the speech takes place in the present ('I feel sorry for Doc Fong'), not at a temporal remove, which indicates that it should be taken to be Johnny's actual thoughts at that moment. While the shift to cognitive focalisation is clear, there remains a confusion of narrative voice. The backstory about Dr. Fong and Swanee is of a different order from Johnny's expression of his immediate personal feelings. It is something that an extradiegetic narrator would say. Furthermore, the strikingly reverberant and distant quality of Johnny's voice (the very antithesis of the dry, closely recorded voiceover that we associate with the representation of inner speech, which takes place in a space – the mind – without extension and therefore without reverberation) presents an additional problem for the integration of this device. The result of this break in both point of

view and narrative voice is a moment that feels highly contrived.

But Deren maintains, correctly of course, that it is possible to combine the horizontal and vertical simultaneously. She puts the emphasis on voice-picture relations:

> One of the combinations that would be possible would be to have a film that is a dramatic construct, visually, accompanied by a commentary that is essentially poetic; that is, it illuminates the moments as they occur, so that you have a chain of moments developing, and each one of them is illuminated. . . . [T]he development of the film [would be] very largely 'horizontal,' that is, there is a story line, but this is illuminated constantly by the poetic commentary so that you have two actions going on simultaneously.
>
> (Deren 2000: 175)

Intriguingly, Deren's conception recalls the function that Eisenstein attributed to inner speech and prefigures Deleuzian 'incommensurability', when sound and image follow different lines of action.

In *Diary of a Country Priest* (1951) Robert Bresson successfully integrates the Priest's inner speech into the fabric of the narrative through a frequent cognitive focalisation on the Priest (Claude Laydu), established early in the film by linking the Priest's voiceover to the thoughts he records in his diary. As we see him write, his voiceover accompanies the composition. In subsequent dialogue scenes Bresson uses stylistic devices to signal a change in focalisation and ease the transition from a nonfocalised narration to cognitive focalisation. For example, to prepare for the Priest's voiceover thoughts to interrupt his conversation with the Curé de Torcy in a cattle hut, the camera dollies in to a low angle medium close-up of the Priest, the Curé falls silent, and a music cue enters.[41] In *Psycho* (1960), Hitchcock uses a similar strategy to integrate inner speech. In the final scene of the film, incarcerated Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins) muses (with his mother's voice) on his

[41] The status of the Priest's voiceover is complicated by the fact that his thoughts are framed in the past tense, making them function like narration (eg, 'I hadn't realised I was crying. I wasn't thinking about it.') despite their interrupting the present tense narrative like the intrusion of inner speech. The explanation for this hybrid speech act (similar in its dual function to the example above from *Shock Corridor*) would seem to be that we are hearing in voiceover the Priest's diary entries, which he will make at a point *after* the scene in which we hear his thoughts. Chatman explores in greater detail Bresson's highly unusual formal strategy in *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (1978), pp 172-3.

predicament. His voiceover expresses his present-tense thoughts and is meant for himself alone. Although this is the sole instance in which we hear Norman's thoughts, Hitchcock prepares for this moment by staging the scene with Norman alone in his cell and having the camera dolly in to isolate Norman in the frame. Furthermore, because this follows a scene in which the psychiatrist explains Norman's psychosis, we are expecting some response from Norman to give us a clue as to whether the psychiatrist's diagnosis is correct: 'Norman Bates no longer exists. He only half existed to begin with. And now the other half has taken over . . . the mother half of Norman's mind'. Norman's thoughts provide confirmation of this, primarily because the voiceover in which they are presented is the voice of his mother. As with *Diary of a Country Priest*, the narrative ground has been prepared, and the visual strategy of the scene – in both cases the camera dollies in to a medium close-up – provides a context for the inner speech to take place.

It seems that picture and sound must be coordinated if instances of inner speech are not to jar with the point of view and narrative voice of the context in which they arise, and thereby appear forced or false. With the right picture to support it, even stream of consciousness can be incorporated effectively. At the start of *Hiroshima mon amour* (Resnais 1959) a two-minute poetic voiceover monologue accompanies extended fluid travelling shots, devoid of diegetic sound, of the city of Hiroshima. What appears at first to be stream of consciousness is revealed to be Elle's (Emmanuelle Riva) conversation with her lover, but in the moment in which we hear it, it functions as inner speech. Alain Resnais takes this approach a step further in *Last Year in Marienbad* (1960) in which the narration of the character X (Giorgio Albertazzi), ostensibly directed at his love interest A (Delphine Seyrig), may in fact be his delusional ravings to himself. As with *Hiroshima*, the long travelling shots accompany the voiceover, but in this case revealing the hallways and rooms of the chateau where the story is set. On other occasions, the voiceover is accompanied by incidental action, or action with little or no diegetic sound. The ominous chromatic organ score also plays a vital role in creating an otherworldly atmosphere which

compliments the disturbing, repetitive ravings of X's voiceover. In several scenes the volume of the voiceover rises and falls, emerging from the organ music for a time before gradually fading down to be overcome by the music. Particularly in the opening sequence Resnais draws attention to the dual nature of the voice as a conveyor not only of sense, but of sound. Here the voice's sonic quality functions like an instrument in the score. With crescendos and diminuendos, the repetitiveness of the phrases ultimately renders the voice as much music as a conveyor of meaning.

The challenge of integrating horizontal and vertical approaches to story is a question of discourse, specifically narrative voice. In focalising the storytelling through a particular character's subjective perspective, a shift in point of view will occur, in certain instances accompanied by a change in narrative voice. The greater these changes are, the greater the risk they will create a stylistic discontinuity. And unlike literature, which has only the written word for discourse, cinema has the added complexity of coordinating two vehicles for the transmission of story: image and sound. Thus there may be a shift in the point of view of represented by an image without a corresponding shift in the point of view of the soundtrack. In fact, this happens regularly with the traditional point-of-view shot, a perceptual focalisation that creates a change in visual perspective, while often leaving the auditory perspective unchanged. Furthermore, the shift in narrative point of view triggered by a point-of-view shot is not ordinarily accompanied by a shift in narrative voice; the extradiegetic narrator continues to control the style of the image that represents what a character sees – except in the case of subjective point-of-view shots, which might include shaky camera movement, an out-of-focus image, etc., to suggest a particular emotional or psychological state. This minimal change in discourse accounts for the relative ease of integrating point-of-view shots into a nonfocalised narration. By contrast, in *Shock Corridor,* the change from nonfocalised narration to cognitive focalisation creates, with a single picture cut, a radical and disruptive change in both point of view and narrative voice. The close-up single shot of the protagonist (external focalisation in the picture track) marks the

transition to cognitive focalisation featuring inner speech on the soundtrack. The inner speech indicates a change in narrative voice – but only in terms of the soundtrack; the picture remains in the narrative voice of the extradiegetic narrator. The seamless integration of the inner speech of *Hiroshima* and *Marienbad* can be attributed, perhaps, to an accompanying image track that sits at an undefined level of narration: it bears marks of subjectivity, but with no character present to attribute the images to, the images remain of uncertain point of view and narrative voice. This results in an image track that doesn't work against the subjective narrative voice generated by the inner speech. Put inversely, the inner speech induces the viewer to interpret the narrationally undefined images as subjective – possibly as the mental images of the person whose thoughts we hear in voiceover. In approaching the making of a film featuring inner speech, coordinating the point of view and narrative voice of both picture and sound is essential. If successfully done, a narrative can incorporate horizonal story development with the poetry or texture of vertical depth, conveying not only what happens, but what the event or experience 'feels like' to the character.

With *Remember, thou art clay* (2017)[42] we drew inspiration from Resnais' use of voiceover in *Hiroshima* and *Marienbad*. Set in a centuries-old factory in Lithuania which today manufactures clay bricks, the film takes the factory itself as its main subject. The mobile camera explores the labyrinthine, palimpsestic rooms and machinery, while the workers remain transient supporting players. The sounds, whether made by the machinery, the workers, or the non-diegetic Theremin, become the multifaceted voice of the factory. But a single human voice emerges from the environment, occasionally rising above the factory sounds, at other times submerging, its owner never seen. The interview subject was in fact an elderly woman, now retired, who worked at the factory for over forty years and returns to the factory on occasion to reflect on the past she shares with the factory. Her

[42] The film can be viewed using this unlisted link: https://vimeo.com/brokenislandfilms/clay

voiceover sometimes links tightly with the image as she names objects and remembers factory processes at the moment they appear on the screen, but it also diverges when, for example, she recites the names of former factory workers, rendering any connection to the picture associative or metaphorical. In addition to recalling her memories of the factory, she tells her own story: a young woman who starts her working life wearing overalls, but eventually (it is implied) works her way up in the organisation and gets off the factory floor.[43]

Without an image of the elderly woman to anchor her voice in space, the voice freely roams the factory. Where the camera takes the viewer, the voice follows; occasionally the voice appears to lead. The voice cannot be located but it pervades the many spaces of the factory and adds another layer to the visible historical strata. In the juxtaposition of voiceover and image, the voice becomes a part of the factory, a sound that mingles with the sounds of the machinery yet also, as a verbal utterance, stands apart. So, while the voice seems to emanate from the very walls of the factory, in its dialogic relationship with the images it suggests an all-seeing presence, separate from the factory. Michel Chion remarks, with some hyperbole perhaps, of the nature of the unseen voice, '*The acousmêtre is everywhere*, its voice comes from an immaterial and non-localized body, and it seems that no obstacle can stop it. . . . *The acousmêtre is all-seeing*, its word is like the word of God: "No creature can hide from it"' (1999: 24, emphases in the original).[44] Indeed, in a sudden leap or inversion akin to a moment of the Kantian sublime the elderly woman (the person behind the voice) encompasses the factory – its physical structure, its workers, its history – which comes to seem nothing more than her mental construct. Such is the strangeness of a disembodied voice projected into the space of images – and particularly a voice the owner of which remains unseen – that audience members have called the film

[43] In fact she was trained as an engineer, although this isn't stated in the film.

[44] According to Chion, the acousmêtre is a being whom we perceive, temporarily or permanently, solely through its voice.

'ghostly' and 'scary' and speculated that the owner of the voice is now dead. The disjunction between voice and image invites metaphorical interpretations and speculation.

However, I'm sure these reactions are not entirely due to the particular juxtaposition of voice and image. As in *Marienbad*, the voice is occasionally treated as a sound effect, dipping into unintelligibility as the sounds of the factory or the Theremin overwhelm it. It isn't treated in the privileged fashion ordinarily accorded voice in the cinema. The first rule of sound mixing is that if a voice is heard, it must be intelligible.[45] Also like a sound effect, the voice is distributed to the surround speakers;[46] indeed, unlike most speech in the cinema, in *Remember, thou art clay* the voice does not occupy the centre channel at all. Furthermore, the voice is equalised (EQ'd) to reduce the natural bass and accentuate the treble (fig. 3.1). Combined with the addition of heavy reverb, the voice thus sounds much brighter, thinner and more dispersed than it would in reality. In fact, the interview was conducted on the factory floor when the factory was closed, and recorded with a lavaliere microphone to achieve a clean, close, dry sound. Only through processing (with EQ and reverb) and routing (into the surround channels) is the voice made to sound as if it comes from a space with different qualities (eg, size, content) from what we see in the picture track. This effect is designed to create a sense of strangeness or otherworldliness, the cause of which most audience members probably don't consciously identify. I believe that the nature of the voice comes to be interpreted more as inner speech than narration, thanks to the absence of the person speaking and the technical manipulations, which in turn allows the voice to function in a dual capacity: voice of the factory and voice of delirium co-creating the images we see. As important as its communicative function is, it is mainly the

[45] In his work with David Fincher, sound designer Ren Clyce often challenges this convention.

[46] While it is common to channel the reverb added to a dialogue track into the surround channels, the relative level of this compared with that of the centre channel is very low, and there will be no direct (non-reverberant) sound in the surrounds.

Fig. 3.1 Remember, thou art clay – sound edit: 1. the contributor's audio; 2. the EQ insert which rolls off the bass (left side of the slope); 3. the surround sound panner which shows the left and right channels of the original audio being panned hard left and right and centred between the left and left surround, and right and right surround (the positions are circled); 4. the master fader which shows the audio level of the 6 channels in this order, left-to-right: Left, Centre, Right, Left Surround, Right Surround, Low Frequency Effects. There is no audio coming from the Centre channel or the LFE when this track (soloed in the project) is being played.

texture of the human voice that supports the construction of the factory's identity, contributing to a sort of interiority: the ghost in the machine! From a narratological perspective, while the speech in the film provides a subjective point of view, the images could be interpreted as objective or subjective (cognitive focalisation of the interview subject). Considered together, then, the picture-sound relations produce a free-indirect narrative voice throughout.

Inner Speech in the Representation of Psychosis

Separating the voice from the body for an extended period of screen time can lead to the sense of a psychological split in character, as it does in *Last Year at Marienbad*. This doesn't hold true in the case of narration proper, in which the voice emanates from a time different from that represented in the picture. With narration, the voice and body are still assumed to be united; while the voice accompanies the picture like a visitor commenting

on it from a future time, the implied (imagined) speaker resides resolutely 'off screen' in a different time (and often a different place). The picture and the voiceover narration thus share the same 'space', but the voice is projected (as it were) into the time of the picture. A clear indication of this spatio-temporal disjunction is that the voiceover usually doesn't take on the sonic qualities (eg, reverberation) of the visual space in which we hear it. Inner speech, on the other hand, appears to share the same time and space with the picture, while also lacking an obvious addressee. But if this inner speech is 'on screen' then where do we imagine the body resides if no body is visually present? In *Remember, thou art clay* a sense of dissociation stems from this split, which may be why viewers describe the voice as ghostly. Indeed, if a voice wanders off on its own, detached from its body, we may ask, where is the 'I' that it refers to? Is the self somehow contained in the voice, or does it reside in an unseen (off-screen) body? As both propositions seem untenable, we are left with the uneasy sense of a split. The etymology of the word 'schizophrenia' traces back to the Greek, 'split mind', a condition that goes to the heart psychosis.

It would seem that inner speech, conveyed through voiceover, were the perfect tool for representing psychosis from a subjective point of view. *The Snake Pit* (Litvak 1948), an early example of such a film, employs voiceover for both the thoughts of the protagonist, Virginia (Olivia de Havilland), and the voices that she hallucinates. The opening scene introduces Virginia's condition as well as the device of inner speech. Virginia sits on a bench in what appears to be a park and at the sound of birdsong looks up to see a songbird in a tree. In a close single shot, she hears a man's voice ask her a question and turns toward the camera to address an off-screen presence. She answers aloud, but then asks herself a question in voiceover. The quality of her inner speech is close and dry, in contrast to her dialogue and that of her interlocuters which are not as closely recorded. Another man, presumably off screen, asks her a question and she turns to address him. The mono soundtrack doesn't allow the placement of this voice to the side of the screen; nevertheless, the sense is clear: Virginia believes the voice has come from her right. She searches for the man behind her as

the camera dollies back to reveal that there are no men nearby, only a woman on the bench to her right. Deftly the film establishes that Virginia is aurally aware of the real world around her (the birdsong), and also that she is hearing voices in her head that she assumes also emanate from the external world. In short, she suffers from auditory verbal hallucinations (AVHs).

Voice-hearers do often perceive their hallucinated voices to emanate from outside themselves, but equally they may hear the voices as if the voices entered the mind directly through some kind of telepathic transfer – as if it all happened 'in the head'. When voices are perceived to emanate from outside, they can be thought to belong to a person existing in the world (really existing or imagined to exist, and either present to, or absent from, immediate observation). In the case of voices being perceived to come directly into the mind, voice-hearers may perceive them to sound either close or distant (in terms of the quality of reverberation we would say 'dry' or 'wet'), talking directly to them or 'overheard', comprising a single voice, or many voices, either intelligible or indecipherable. In *The Snake Pit* Victoria believes the voices belong to existing people whom she is unable to see at that moment. We realise later that one of the voices she hears in the opening scene is that of her psychiatrist. She even imagines that the second speaker may be hiding in the bush behind her.

In their cinematic representation, AVHs which are perceived to emanate from the mind can take several forms: either with voiceover or unvoiced. In the latter case, while the audience hears nothing, the character responds as if they have heard a voice. Hitchcock does this in *Spellbound* (1945) for Gregory Peck's character John Ballantyne. The approach positions the audience outside the character's experience. This nonfocalised viewpoint suits *Spellbound*'s narrative point of view, given that the film's protagonist is Dr. Petersen (Ingrid Bergman) – who observes a number of Ballentyne's attacks – and not Ballantyne himself. In one of the attacks witnessed by Dr. Petersen, Ballentine stares into the middle distance away from the doctor who observes him from the side. As if responding to a

hallucinated voice and vision he yells, 'Don't stand there with that wiseacre look. I'm sick of your double-talk!' According to the narrative, the person whom he hallucinates is an aspect of himself – a guilty conscience he developed after a childhood trauma which now haunts him.

In contrast to *Spellbound*, Lodge Kerrigan's *Clean, Shaven* (1993) not only uses cognitive focalisation for much greater subjectivity, but dynamically shifts its focalisation in relation to the protagonist's psychotic attacks. A complex sequence that begins in a public library provides a good example. After his release from a psychiatric hospital Peter Winter (Peter Greene) goes in search of his young daughter. He visits a library to look for public records that might help him in his search. As he scans the shelves an unintelligible sibilant whisper followed by a brief flashback to a view from inside a moving car interrupts the present moment. With a return to the library scene, voices and other sounds, including a dog barking and electronic interference, generate greater discord and prompt a longer flashback of the protagonist's disturbing but inconclusive encounter with an aggressive man in the street. Back in the library, an array of sounds builds to a painful cacophony in Peter's mind impelling him to bang his head against a bookcase. On a sudden cut to a wider shot, the synchronous sounds of Peter's head-banging replace his subjective sound world. As the camera dollies back, it gradually reveals library patrons who turn to watch the unusual spectacle. The film's audience is now positioned outside of Peter's experience, abruptly forced to face how threatening his behaviour appears to those unfamiliar with his psychological process. While this lack of transition to prepare for a narrational move from a cognitive focalisation to non-focalisation jars, unlike the example from *Shock Corridor* it achieves a positive calculated shock effect. The move to greater narrative distance and less information (what Genette calls *paralipsis*), because it accords with a perspective we are in

a position to understand and accept (ie, an external one – the one that we, as viewers, would be in were we to be present in the scene), feels acceptable.[47]

As with *Clean, Shaven*, Iñárritu's *Birdman* (2014) presents a hybrid case, showing both an objective and subjective view of the protagonist's attacks, with the significant difference that this is usually effected not through sudden changes in focalisation, but through the simultaneous conjunction of subjective and objective perspectives. The film tells the story of the once-famous actor Riggan (Michael Keaton) who made his name in cinema playing the comicstrip hero, Birdman, but has suffered career stagnation since turning down the part in *Birdman 4*. From the opening scene we understand that the world we witness differs from reality. Meditating in his dressing room prior to going out to rehearsal, Riggan sits cross-legged in his underwear, levitating several feet off the ground. As the camera dollies closer, a deep voice (dry and closely recorded) intones in voiceover: 'How did we end up here? This place is horrible. Smells like balls. We don't belong in this shit hole.' We quickly surmise that the voice resides in Riggan's head, though he doesn't appear to react to it. Gradually we understand that the voice is an internal manifestation of the character of the Birdman and represents the confident, brazen, ambitious side of Riggan that likely underpinned his past success – his alter ego. The long takes and mobile camera which track Riggan (and sometimes others) through his various movements and activities create an external perspective on the action, belied by the internal perspective generated by the voiceover. This dual perspective generates a tension between two different perceptions of reality. Unlike *Clean, Shaven*, which maintains a raw edgy realism in spite of its subjective representations of the protagonist's cognitive experiences, *Birdman*'s approach creates a

[47] Genette contrasts the rhetorical term *paralipsis* with its opposite, the neologism he proposes, *paralepsis*: 'giving information that should be left aside'. The problem with the moment from *Shock Corridor* discussed above is, in Genette's framework, an unjustified *paralepsis*, 'giving more [information] than is authorized in principle in the code of focalization governing the whole' ([1972] 1980: 195).

hybrid world with a strong streak of surreality. Naturally, these incompatible perceptions of reality must eventually clash.

As the story progresses, Birdman becomes increasingly abusive, in what seems like an effort to undermine Riggan before the opening night of his Broadway play. 'Maybe that's what you are: a joke', says the voice. 'You are lame, Riggan.' Finally Riggan starts fighting back: 'Stop saying "we". . . . You're so fucking annoying. Shut up!' At this moment Riggan's lawyer walks in to his dressing room to witness the outburst. Similar to the library scene in *Clean, Shaven*, we suddenly gain a new viewpoint on Riggan's worsening condition from this abrupt shift to an outside perspective. But the seesaw of narrative point of view soon tilts markedly in the opposite direction for a sustained five-minute sequence. At the beginning of the final act the mainly objective image[48] becomes decidedly subjective with the Birdman's physical entrance into the diegesis. Upon this intrusion Riggan's reality becomes that of a superhero film in which an epic battle takes place between the military and a flying monster, and Riggan flies through the streets of New York to land just outside the theatre where the curtain will soon rise on the opening night of his play. But at the end of this delirious sequence, the events are undercut by a return to objective reality. A cab driver chases after Riggan into the theatre shouting, 'You didn't pay me!' The variety of different levels of focalisation, and the continual shifts between them, creates a constantly fluctuating point of view (as we have seen in the discussion of *Remember, thou art clay*) resulting in a dual perspective – broadly subjective/objective – which is nevertheless held together by the narrative voice established in the opening scenes: the free indirect. The overtly subjective experiences (levitating, telekinesis, hearing the voice of his alter ego, the appearance of Birdman) are not set off in the filmic equivalent of quotation marks. The film's narration doesn't provide a clear transition from nonfocalised to internally focalised

[48] While the camera has maintained an external perspective on events (avoiding character POV shots), the mise-en-scène has included numerous acts of telekinesis by Riggan. This is yet another indication of the complexity of point of view and narrative voice in cinema.

action using shot changes or lighting, for example, that would inform the audience that the narrational point of view is, or is not, at any given moment, attached to the character of Riggan. The diegetic world thus becomes infused with Riggan's subjectivity.[49]

To summarise, based on the preceding examples, possible approaches to the representation of AVHs can be categorised as follows:

1. the hallucination is not represented, only its visible effect on the character experiencing it, as in *Spellbound*;

2. the AVH is perceived to originate from a (real or imagined) external person,[50] seen or unseen, as in *The Snake Pit* and the sequence in *Birdman* when the Birdman appears;

3. the voice-hearer perceives the AVH as originating in the mind and recognises it as such, but the voice cannot be deciphered (*Clean, Shaven* and also, for example, *Through a Glass Darkly* [Bergman 1961]);

4. the AVH takes the form of intelligible speech and is recognised to originate in the mind, as in *Birdman*.

The first two cases have a greater degree of objectivity, though this can be offset through point-of-view shots (*Spellbound*), or the inner speech of the character (*The Snake Pit*) or through mise-en-scène (*Birdman*). Equally, the latter two categories, while more subjective in terms of the representation of the hallucinations, may be tempered by objective camera framings, or sudden shifts to nonfocalised narration.

[49] The clear exceptions are the scenes in which Riggan is not present – scenes between Mike (Ed Norton) and Sam (Emma Stone), and between Laura (Andrea Riseborough) and Lesley (Naomi Watts) for example.

[50] Or animals, as in the case of *The Voices* (Satrapi 2014), in which the psychotic protagonist imagines that his pet cat and dog are speaking to him. The animals' mouths are animated to make their speech more convincing.

Representing Psychosis – In Practice

From a practitioner's point of view, if the goal is to create a delusional atmosphere to induce the viewer to experience something of the disorientation felt by the characters who suffer hallucinations and delusion, then a subjective narration is likely to be more effective. Moreover, the narrative voice with the greatest potential to disorient the viewer through the simultaneous combining of different orders of reality is the free indirect. It could be argued that some films operate entirely in this voice – *Last Year at Marienbad* and *Mulholland Drive* (Lynch 2001) for example – films in which there exists no secure footing in an objective reality beyond the protagonists' febrile delirium that we see play out on screen. Although the focalisation may shift, the ambiguity (or duality) of perspective remains constant.

When we embarked on writing a script for *Unburied* (2018),[51] which tells the story of Eglė, a successful career woman in her thirties who, upon the unexpected death of her violent father, suffers a mental breakdown, I wanted to provide an accurate, sympathetic, and subjective portrayal of someone in the grip of paranoid delusion. I also aimed to induce in the audience a sense of a delusional atmosphere – to give them something of the feeling of disorientation and unease suffered by the protagonist herself. This was intended to help the audience empathise. I also counted on a subjective approach to allow us more narrative and stylistic licence, since many seemingly surreal incidents could thereby be attributed to the protagonist's mental state. However, we grounded the narrative in an objective reality in order to convey the actuality, and severity, of Eglė's situation – a situation worryingly common nowadays.[52] I didn't want to create a film of which the narrative as a whole could be dismissed as a delirious fantasy – as compelling and evocative as *Marienbad* and *Mulholland Drive* are. Of the 19 scenes in *Unburied*, eight are framed from a predominantly

[51] The film can be viewed on Vimeo using this private link: https://vimeo.com/brokenislandfilms/filmunburied.

[52] 'Up to 10 per cent of people will at some point in their life hear a voice talking to them when there is no-one there' and about 1 percent of people in the UK 'receives a diagnosis of schizophrenia' (Cooke 2014: 15)

objective point of view.[53] As in *Birdman* the focalisation varies, even within scenes, and competing points of view overlap in moments of free indirect style. The film uses AVHs and visual hallucinations, but not the inner speech of the protagonist in her own voice. Given the challenges of writing convincing stream-of-consciousness dialogue, compounded by the difficulty of achieving a credible vocal performance, this technique would risk alienating the audience.

In the pre-title sequence, Eglė (Severija Janušauskaitė) is awoken before dawn by a girl's whispered voice urging her to awake. 'It's father', says the thin, closely-recorded voice emanating from all sides. In postproduction I routed the girl's voice into five channels (left, centre and right, and left and right surrounds) but in this case without any reverb. The voice is thus like a whisper in the ear, or a voice in the head – one that cannot be located in space, yet envelopes the protagonist (fig. 3.2). A moment later footfall sounds from

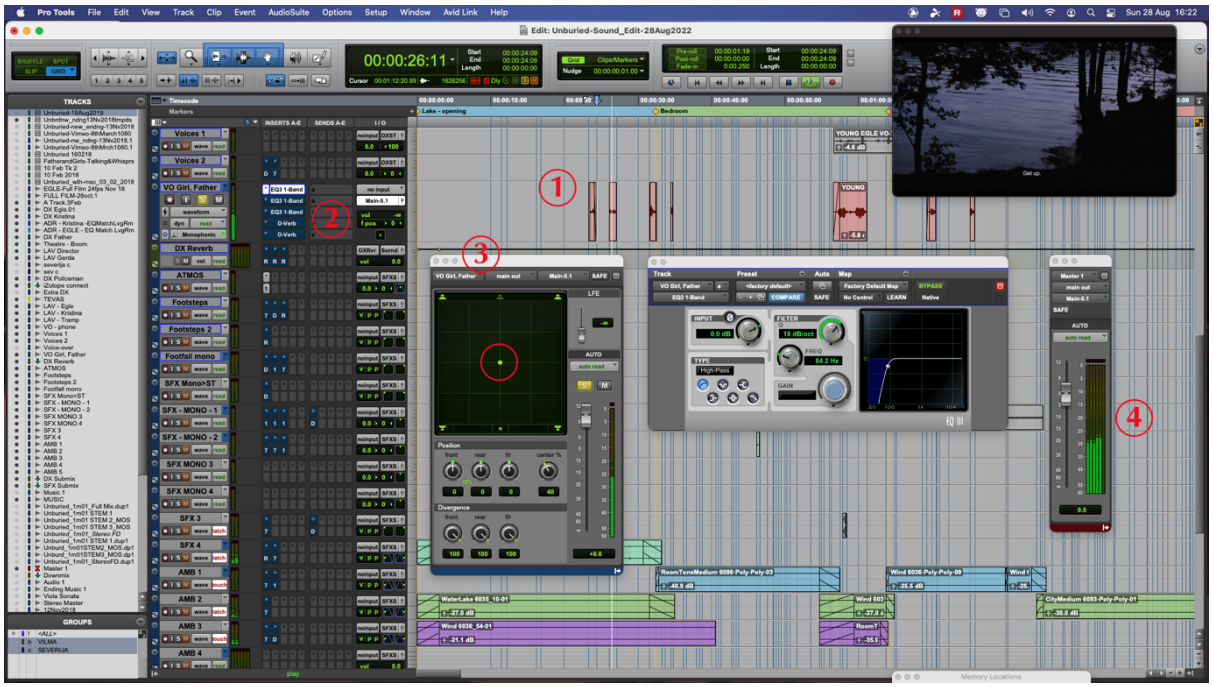

Fig. 3.2 Unburied – the sound editing project: 1. the girl's audio; 2. the reverb inserts are de-activated (dark blue); 3. the surround sound panner shows the mono audio of the original recording is being positioned centrally (the audio position is circled), between the 5 channels; 4. the master fader shows the audio level of the 6 channels in this order: Left, Centre, Right, Left Surround, Right Surround, Low Frequency Effects. The only channel without sound is the LFE.

[53] From a production standpoint there are 24 scenes, but for analysis I have grouped some together.

outside the bedroom door, and after a knock the same voice, now firmly located behind the door, calls out to Eglė to get up. Here I put the voice behind the door by panning it to the right, reducing the high frequencies to muffle it, and creating space around the voice by adding the reverb of a hallway. On the cut to the shot of the door I centre-panned the voice to indicate its precise location (fig. 3.3). Taking the same voice out of a close, enveloping whisper and (in continuous story time) putting it into diegetic space like a normal embodied voice creates an unsettling effect. At a stroke the voice transforms from disembodied to embodied, from a ghostly sound in the head to an ordinary girl behind the door. The viewer might conclude at this point that the whispered voice was part of Eglė's dream in the moments before waking, and now the actual girl (her daughter, for example?) has coincidentally arrived outside Eglė's door. But a brief ellipsis to a shot of Eglė now standing at her bedroom window, her back to the camera, problematises this hypothesis. The girl

Fig. 3.3 Unburied: sonically embodying the voice of the ethereal girl: 1.the surround sound panner shows the mono audio of the original recording positioned exclusively in the centre channel; 2. the EG inserts roll off the low and high frequencies to create a muffled effect; 3. the reverb insert creates space around the voice, to position it in a physical interior; 4. the master fader shows that the audio of the girl's voice comes solely through the centre channel.

again whispers to Eglė, this time from the right ('What's going on?'), causing Eglė to look toward the source. Then suddenly the voice is centre-panned. 'Where is he?' asks the girl's

voice. Eglė turns to look behind her, and into the camera (fig. 3.4). The audience now knows that the voice is either supernatural or the product of hallucination, while Eglė's look into the camera implicates the viewer in her predicament.

Fig. 3.4 Unburied: Eglė looks for the girl's voice and into the camera.

One of the strategies employed to create empathy for Eglė, in tandem with generating a delusional atmosphere, is to effect a misrecognition of, or uncertainty about, characters' identities – on the part of both Eglė and the viewer. As the story unfolds, the audience learns that Eglė's sister, Lina, drowned when she was around 11 years old, and that the trauma haunts Eglė. The voice of the girl whom we hear at the beginning, and throughout, cannot be Lina, since this voice speaks about Lina in the third person. It may be that the viewer reaches the conclusion that the girl is the ghost of the 10-year-old Eglė – the traumatised girl within the adult Eglė, still trapped in the past due to the unresolved grief and guilt. If not, the viewer will likely assume that it is just another voice in Eglė's head, along with the voice of Eglė's father, and the ghost of the grown-up Lina, voiced by Eglė's actress friend, Kristina (Vilma Rubaitė), who also role-plays Lina in an unsuccessful attempt to help Eglė overcome her delusion. This is another character whose identity is uncertain. At times Eglė believes that Kristina is actually her sister Lina who, like her, would now be in her thirties. After the premiere of the film at the Vilnius International Film Festival in March 2018, some viewers said they understood that Kristina was merely pretending to be Lina,

that she had taken the lead from Eglė when she addressed Kristina as Lina. Others remained uncertain about the identity of Kristina and thought she might really have been Eglė's sister, who had therefore never really drowned. And still others, based on Kristina's appearance in the final scene, thought she didn't really exist at all. How much ambiguity viewers are willing to accept will vary from individual to individual. *Last Year at Marienbad* was reported to have caused fights outside Paris cinemas! But of paramount importance is that the narration's withholding of information (*paralipsis*) suits the nature of the story being told (ie, that the discourse accords with the story).

Two other principal strategies were used to generate indeterminacy, multivalence, mystery and suspense: visual hallucinations and dreams. The hallucinations shift the narrative voice into the free indirect, since they are not bracketed by transitional shots or devices that definitively establish a change from an objective to a subjective focalisation. In the morgue, for example, after Eglė identifies the corpse of her father, her father turns toward the viewing window, opens his eyes and glares at Eglė. Immediately following this the morgue technician directs a discreet, knowing smile at Eglė, apparently signalling his complicity in this surreal event. However, the policeman accompanying Eglė takes no heed. As with the examples from *Birdman*, two narrational points of view here exist simultaneously: a nonfocalised narration, and an ostensible internal focalisation representing Eglė's personal experience – 'ostensible' because, without a point-of-view shot of the father, a close-up single of Eglė, or some change in the mise-en-scène, the audience can only *infer* that this incident represents Eglė's experience. Had the policeman acknowledged the father's look, we would be in the realm of the supernatural. But without such a reaction, the occurrence being an hallucination on the part of Eglė seems the most likely hypothesis. Importantly, however, and in keeping with the free indirect style, the truth of the matter cannot finally be determined.

Eglė has three dreams in the course of the narrative, all of them involving imagery of a lake, most probably the lake where Lina drowned. Like hallucinations, the representation of

dreams requires cognitive focalisation, inviting the viewer, seemingly unmediated, into the mind of the character. The final dream consists of just two shots, one of an oar cutting into the water, and the second of a jetty receding into the distance as the rowboat glides further from shore. When I began working on the sound edit, the only sound in these shots was that of the oars which had been inserted during the picture edit. The splashing of the oars makes a satisfying sound bridge from the bathroom scene into the dream, mirroring as it does the splashing of water in the bathtub, yet the lake scene seemed dramatically flat. It was beautiful but lacked resonance and a strong narrative reason for being. Then I remembered that in the script we had planned for the father's voiceover to come in over this scene as the jetty receded: '…selfish, cruel, liar.' Adding this line (and the next one – 'It's all her fault' – which in the script came in with the following scene, when Eglė awakes in bed) transformed the significance of these shots (fig. 3.5). Inflected by the voiceover, the two shots changed tense and narrative voice. Suddenly it seemed a projection of the past, a moment in someone's memory or imagination. (Indeed, the night-time bedroom scene that follows confirms that the lake images belong to Eglė's dream, possibly based on a memory.) Sound, and speech in particular, has the power instantly to transform an objective space into a mental space through such juxtapositions, as discussed in relation to *Remember, thou art clay*. This is Deleuze's *time-image*, when 'talking and sound cease to

Fig. 3.5 Unburied: The outside world infused with subjectivity through voiceover.

be components of the visual image' and 'instead of a seen image *and* a read speech, the speech-act becomes visible at the same time as it makes itself heard, but also the visual image becomes legible as such, as visual image in which the speech-act is inserted as a component' (1989: 249, 224). The link between sound and picture loosens and 'a free indirect or incommensurable relation' (267) is established.[54]

Already in the 1953 symposium 'Poetry and the Film', published in 1963 by the journal *Film Culture*, Maya Deren hypothesised the free indirect style in cinema. She pronounced that the vertical is 'the relationship between the images in dreams, in montage, and in poetry', disparate images 'held together by either an emotion or a meaning that they have in common, rather than by the logical action' (2000: 178). She goes on to identify the fundamental role of sound and voice in creating a poetic cinema:

> The words are not necessary when they come, as in the theatre, from what you see. You see, the way the words are used in films mostly derives from the theatrical tradition in which what you see makes the sound you hear. . . . However, if they were brought in on a different level, not issuing from the image, which should be complete in itself, but as another dimension relating to it, then it is the two things together that make the poem.
>
> (2000: 179)

Using sound as a counterpoint to the picture, rather than as a device to underscore it, allows the filmmaker to delve deeper into the subjective experience of the characters while also keeping the story moving forward. Marguerite Duras was blunter. She objected to the voice being 'screwed into' the image, as she described it.[55] Voices, she writes in her introduction to the script for *India Song*, can function as a '*means* of exploration, revelation' (1976: 6, emphasis in the original).

I have tried to use voice in this fashion in *Unburied* as a route into the depths of Eglė's psyche, but also, in tandem with the poetic or surreal elements, to keep the film grounded

[54] Kurosawa once remarked that 'cinematic sound is that which does not simply add to, but multiplies, two or three times, the effect of the image' (Cardullo 2008: 26).

[55] Pascal Bonitzer quotes this phrase of Duras in *Le Regard et la voix: Essais sur le cinéma* (1976: 44).

in a believable diegetic world. The girl's voice, as well as the father's and Kristina's/Lina's, are all heard in Eglė's dreams, then bleed into her waking experience. In the pre-title sequence, the girl's voice begins over images of the lake, but continues as we cut to Eglė's bedroom, and even after Eglė wakes. The voices from the third dream also continue beyond Eglė's waking. She sits up in bed and listens to her father and Kristina/Lina talking about her. The voices here are treated with EQ and reverb to sound as though they originate from the adjoining living room. Positioning the voices in such a way gives greater reality to Eglė's belief that her father really *is* in her apartment and talking to her adult sister. This disorienting imbrication of dream and waking is designed to prepare the ground for the climax: the obligatory scene in which the father finally appears in Eglė's flat. Together, the auditory and visual hallucinations and dreams, and Eglė's own confusion about the identity of Kristina, combine to give the final scene its complexity and believability. The audience may initially be surprised to see the father lying in Eglė's bed, but there is a dream logic to it. A world in which nightmares can become reality has already been created in the morgue scene. And when Kristina enters and fails to react to the father's presence, the viewer cannot know whether this is because she cannot see him or because she is by this point beyond surprise.[56] As in the morgue scene, there is no stylistic indication that a change of focalisation to Eglė's internal experience has taken place. Once again, the free indirect allows this kind of ultimate undecidability to exist. And the inability to distinguish what is real from what is imagined is the cornerstone of delusion. When Eglė casts her gaze into the camera in the final shot of the film, the audience is again implicated (fig. 3.6). Are we, too, unable – if only momentarily – to distinguish where reality lies?

[56] The audience members at the premiere who thought that Kristina doesn't really exist must have assumed that she *did* see the father.

Fig. 3.6 Unburied: Eglė challenges the viewer; Kristina seems unable to see the dead father.

Conclusion: Inner Speech As the Voice of Another

In *Unburied*, AVHs provide the solution to hearing Eglė's own thoughts which, as noted above, would otherwise risk appearing artificial. Even celebrated stream-of-consciousness portraits in literature, such as in Joyce and Woolf, demonstrate discernible artifice. Inner speech is not ordinary speech spoken in one's mind; rather it is 'speech-like', with not all thoughts formed precisely into words and phrases, and with verbal aspects of thought interrupted or supplemented by mental images. To avoid literalness, and indeed literariness, which is less acceptable in mainstream cinema than in literature, externalising characters' thoughts and inner experiences results in more convincing results than attempting to portray their thoughts in voiceover. But inner speech remains a vital component, even if this is represented as the voice of another. Inner speech can be composed and delivered as dialogue – much better suited to a mimetic narrative form. It is the voice of another in the voice-hearer's ears or head that is both sign and symptom of mental confusion and can lead to a crisis of identity, dividing the psyche and dispersing the sense of selfhood. British psychiatrist Julian Leff contends that AVHs 'strip us of our belief that we control our own thoughts' ("Living with Schizophrenia" 2017).

Beckett's *The Unnamable* traces the dissolution of the first-person narrator's identity, a person who is spoken by a voice, or voices, that may or may not be his own. The experiences described by the narrator bear eerie resemblance to those suffered in certain forms of psychosis: dissociation, loss of a sense of reality, confusion, voice-hearing.

> But I don't say anything, I don't know anything, these voices are not mine, nor these thoughts, but the voices and thoughts of the devils who beset me. . . . That's to lull me, till I imagine I hear myself saying, myself at last, to myself at last, that it can't be they, speaking thus, that it can only be I, speaking thus. Ah if I could only find a voice of my own, in all this babble, it would be the end of their troubles, and of mine.
>
> (Beckett 1997: 397)

Psychosis is nowhere mentioned in the three novels that comprise Beckett's trilogy, which culminates with *The Unnamable*, and it may be that while the suffering of *The Unnamable*'s protagonist bears many similarities to the experience of schizophrenia, ultimately the novel is about more than this. Perhaps it is a discourse on the fragile and elusive nature of our identity which the first-person narration and inner monologue provide the best means of exploring. While cinema must use different means, it can pursue similar ambitions to literature.

Unburied is my second foray into representing psychosis in dramatic form, after the 2015 test shoot, *Voices*. These films have led me to the realisation that key formal strategies used to portray psychosis on film are equally important in the exploration and portrayal of subjective experience in film drama more generally. What psychologists sometimes call double-accounting – when a situation or event can simultaneously mean two incommensurate things in the mind of the individual experiencing it – is central not just to psychotic conditions, but to ordinary ways of relating to our experience. In *Unburied* Eglė believes she identified her father at the morgue, and also that it was not her father. She believes that Kristina comes to her flat to help her, but also to undermine her. In ordinary experience, we also often hold incommensurate beliefs, as if we had multiple voices within us. And because our beliefs colour our perception of the world – because reality is infused

with our subjectivity – the most convincing way to represent this view of human psychology in the cinema is through some form of free indirect style. The free indirect is the narrational equivalent of psychological double-accounting.

Chapter Four: Voice in the Fantasmatic Documentary

> I believe that the human imagination has never invented anything that is not true, whether in this world or in other worlds, and I could not cast into doubt what I myself had so distinctly *seen*.
>
> I was struck by a dreadful thought: man is double. . . . There is in every man a spectator and an actor, someone who speaks and someone who replies.
>
> Gérard de Nerval, *Aurélia* (1999: 285-6, emphasis in the original)

Introduction

The short documentary *Voices Apart* (2020) implements and combines insights gained through the documentary and fiction practices explored separately in the first two published productions, *Remember, thou art clay* (2017) and *Unburied* (2018). It also realises an intention that lies at the heart of the PhD project and provided the impetus for embarking upon it back in 2014: to hear from voice-hearers about their experiences and to use their testimony as the basis for a film that would portray them in their complexity, contradictions and profundity while encouraging viewers to adopt a sympathetic attitude toward them. I decided at the outset of *Voices Apart* to attempt to achieve this in some measure through creating a delusional atmosphere that would, in tandem with the content of the testimony itself, help the audience to feel as well as understand the double-mind – or dual perception – of psychotic experience.[57] In this chapter I will consider the significance of the project both to the dissertation and to associated documentary practice and wider theoretical debates. I will begin with an overview of the development and production processes, as decisions made in these stages naturally had a direct bearing on the final form of the film. Indeed, the search for the form itself was such a challenging and protracted process that I

[57] In *Immaterial Bodies: Affect, Embodiment, Mediation* (2012) Lisa Blackman uses the term 'double-brain' to denote the physical division of our brains into two hemispheres, neither of which is dominant but which function in parallel, in duality. This structure lies at the heart of the phenomenon of the 'bicameral mind' which has different modalities of attention and which Blackman describes as 'undermining the notion of a bounded, unified self' (165). She is concerned with refiguring subjectivity as a duality in order to explain experiences that have traditionally been pathologised as psychotic, such as hearing voices. I use the term double-mind in the sense of bicameral mind.

devote a separate section to this. I will then go on to evaluate the finished film in three sections: structure and style, performance, and directing.

The *Voices Apart* project was conceived in the spring of 2016. Alongside books and articles by clinicians, I had been reading extended first-hand accounts of psychotic experiences such as Daniel Paul Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* (2000), originally published in 1903, and *Living with Voices: 50 Stories of Recovery* (Romme et al. 2009). I was struck by the graphic descriptions of the subjects' delusions, their aural and visual hallucinations, and the humanising effect of their first-person accounts. That those who wrote these testimonies had managed to overcome their extreme mental suffering astounded me; it conveyed a message of hope. While fictionalised renderings of such stories can generate considerable impact and insight, a documentary account has perhaps a greater capacity 'to bear away our faith' as André Bazin famously asserted in relation to the ontology of the photographic image (Bazin 1967: 14). How much stronger then if the testimony were recorded and accompanied by a compelling picture track? I hadn't seen such a documentary. Only the experimental docu-drama biography *Shock Head Soul* (Pummell 2011), based on Daniel Paul Schreber's memoires, was comparable. This ambitious production mixes interviews with contemporary mental health specialists, dressed in period costume and set in period surroundings, with period reconstructions of episodes from Schreber's life, and CGI renderings of some of his more extravagant visions. The result – an elaborately illustrated examination of Schreber's writings and psychological condition – prevents empathic involvement with Schreber due to the film's overriding objective to inform and explain. With *Voices Apart* I was determined to test the possibilities of creating a delusional atmosphere in the documentary form which, to my mind, depended upon encouraging identification with the characters while avoiding the expository impulse and also a narrative comprised solely of interviews. The film would need staged scenes, but how far could we take the stylisation before the film could no longer be considered a documentary?

Nineteenth century French writer Gérard de Nerval offers inspiration here. His fictionalised account of his own bouts of debilitating mental illness in the 1855 novella, *Aurélia* (1999), infuses a detailed, Schreber-esqe description of his protagonist's mental activity with the formal distancing of a first-person narrator looking back on this period of illness from a position of relative well-being. The effect that this dual perspective generates – a credulous character in the grip of delusion, tempered by a reflective version of that character (the implied author) who casts some measured doubt on the truth of these experiences – leads to a now classic example of what Tzvetan Todorov defines as the 'fantastic' in his 1970 study, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1975). The abiding ambiguity as to what the narrator (or, for that matter, Nerval himself!) believes about the hallucinatory experiences he relates leaves the reader in a state of ongoing uncertainty about whether or not the present-tense narrator is still unwell. A double-mind seems to persist despite protestations of mental clarity. For example, the narrator's sudden and forcible incarceration in a psychiatric hospital causes him to reflect on his condition:

> When I saw I was among the mad, I understood that everything up to this point had been mere illusion. *All the same*, *it seemed to me* that the promises I attributed to the goddess Isis were being fulfilled through the series of ordeals I was destined to undergo. I therefore accepted them with resignation.
>
> (1999: 304, my emphasis)

The narrator repudiates his previous beliefs while continuing to cling to them ('all the same'). Yet the manner in which he describes his ongoing delusion (his belief in the goddess Isis) suggests an uncertainty ('it seemed to me'). And we do not know whether this uncertainty persists into the present, or was confined to that particular moment of hospitalisation. As we cannot know we suspend judgement, keeping alive two contradictory hypotheses – in effect, adopting the very double-mind that the narrator evinces.

Aurélia provides a touchstone for narratives that recount a record of lived mental illness while generating the feeling of ontological insecurity necessary to make the reader share a

degree of the character's experience. On a formal level, as Todorov explains, the novella's particularly disorienting effect depends to a large degree on semantic uncertainties generated by modalisation (phrases that suggest the attitude of the narrator to the object or event described and can cast doubt on its truth status without changing the thing itself, eg, 'It seemed to me', 'I believe,' 'I felt that', 'as if') and the use of the imperfect verb tense, which together create logical, temporal and spatial slippages – as I've highlighted above – effects we tried to incorporate in *Voices Apart*. But the fact that the reader likely knows (or can certainly find out) that Nerval weaves his own experiences into the pattern of the fiction, right down to details concerning places, people and events, contributes further doubt as to the ontological status of the story: how much of it actually happened? The pervasive ambiguity of the novella thus resides on two levels: semantically within the story, and meta-diegetically in the truth status of the novella itself. Extraordinarily, this effect is heightened by the knowledge that Nerval committed suicide between the publishing of the first and second parts of the novella, fulfilling an intention his protagonist expresses on several occasions. The literary transformation of lived experience results in a hybrid genre of fiction-autobiography in which the fluid boundaries must remain forever blurred. Describing in a generically and perceptually fluid form the mental processes of a character-narrator-author suffering from psychosis, the novella can shed light on the formal strategies of *Voices Apart*. I will revisit the work of Nerval and Todorov later in this chapter when I examine the finished film.

Returning to the background of the film production, it is important to note that my filmmaking partner Elvina Nevardauskaitė and I decided to make the film in Lithuania because, as with *Unburied*, the production conditions would be more favourable and less expensive than in the UK. However, the stigma of mental illness is greater in Lithuania than in the UK (and was greater then than now), so we knew that finding subjects would be challenging. We needed subjects who had suffered marked instances of psychosis and would speak honestly and without inhibition about them. Given the stigma associated with

voice-hearing it wasn't surprising that the subjects we found were young (between twenty and thirty-three years old) since the older generations have an attitude of stoicism and silence on matters of mental health.[58] One of the questions we had planned to ask our contributors was about the nature of their very first experience hearing voices, so the fact that the onset of their conditions occurred relatively recently meant that the first occasion was still present clearly in their memories. We agreed with our subjects that in order to protect their privacy they would not be filmed – only their voices would be recorded – and their real names would not be used.[59]

To make an appropriate choice of contributors, and ensure their well-being during the project, we consulted with psychologist Aurelija Auškalnytė, Project Manager at Mental Health Perspectives in Vilnius, a non-governmental organisation advocating and supporting mental health and human rights in Lithuania.[60] Through her work in the field of psychosis Aurelija was able to recommend suitable subjects, two of whom we ended up collaborating with: Laurynas and Mantas. She also advised us on our interview questions. A translation of her written communications with us can be found in Appendix 5. In addition to this, all ethical procedures as required by Goldsmiths College were adhered to, and the ethics form for the project completed and approved in advance of filming.

The decision to film in Lithuania brought the added complication of producing a dialogue-heavy documentary in a language understood by an infinitesimally few people outside the country. The need for subtitles raises an important question concerning to what degree the majority of viewers will register the quality of the subjects' voices (intonation,

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[58] This attitude toward mental illness may partly account for the high suicide rate in Lithuania. According to the World Health Organization, in 2016 Lithuania had by far the highest suicide rate in Europe (discounting Russia).

[59] Neither have I used their real names here in writing about the production.

[60] The published vision and mission statement of Mental Health Perspectives are: "all mental health conditions are perceived as meaningful human experiences and nobody suffers discrimination or derogation as a result of it"; and "to establish human rights based approach to mental health with empathy, respect and person-centered services being at the core of it" (https://perspektyvos.org/en/about-us/organization/). Their stress on empathy naturally accorded with my own aims in pursuing this project.

timbre, cadence), which significantly inflects their utterances – in effect *modalising* them, not semantically or verbally but expressively, performatively.

To skip forward in the production process for a moment, it's worth noting here that the two main elements of film subtitles – the translation and its graphic inscription on the image – both presented us with serious challenges. The Lithuanian language slides more readily between verb tenses than English, so a literal translation can read as awkward if not incorrect.[61] For example when Agnė describes driving in England, a literal translation into English would read: 'There was this incident last summer, in England. I was driving. I am going to some kind of class. I was driving in the car.' In the subtitling we omitted the change to the present tense, and also amalgamated the third and fourth sentences to avoid a feeling of repetitiveness (which doesn't exist in the same way in Lithuanian because Agnė uses different verbs for 'driving' when in English we don't have that option). But in adjusting the syntax to English the sense of temporal fluidity, critical to the contributors' experience and expression of their memories, can be compromised. The greater combinative capability in Lithuanian (thanks to the case system and the way verbs are formed) often results in the use of fewer words than in English to express a similar meaning. For example when Laurynas tells the story of drinking Christ's blood he begins by saying 'rūsio viršuje' which required six words to translate: 'at the top of the basement.' Similarly, Marius says 'miegodavau', which took four words to render in English: 'I used to sleep.' While these are just the ordinary concerns that any translator faces, one detrimental effect from our point of view was the large number of subtitles required to translate what was expressed in fewer words orally thus requiring viewers to spend a good deal of time reading.

[61] Surprisingly, in Lithuanian the future tense can be used to express an action in the past. Linguist Antanas Klimas cites some common examples, including: 'Mes ėjome šaligatviu, ir jis man kad spirs į koją.' "We were walking on the sidewalk and he just kicked me in the leg." N.B. *spirs* literally means "will kick", but the real meaning is "kicked"' (Klimas 1996).

In my opinion the graphic element of the subtitles presents a more significant worry than the translation itself since it distracts from both image and voice. Given that the film is interview-based and the characters speak quickly, the audience can find themselves reading the film as much as seeing and hearing it, preventing them from submitting to what should be a sensuous and immersive audio-visual experience.[62] For the films of Straub and Huillet, Danièle Huillet found a radical solution to the problem: simply to leave some of the dialogue untranslated. In an interview with *Cahiers du cinéma* she explains: 'The subtitles are only an aid to hear the text. I don't translate everything but what I translate I translate as literally as possible'.[63] In the same interview, Jean-Marie Straub elaborates:

> The untranslated things never interrupt the continuity of the discourse. What is missing is often purely descriptive. . . . People have to be able to see the images without spending their time reading subtitles and those who don't know German have to hear a bit of German for once, without being there to catch any concepts from reading.
>
> (Bergala et al. 1984)

While I agree entirely with the reasons behind Straub and Huillet's approach to subtitling, their solution seems to me unsatisfactory. Since an audience depending on subtitles can't understand what they haven't understood, they cannot know that Straub-Huillet deem the omitted material to be 'purely descriptive' – and even so, does this necessarily mean that it is unimportant, or less important than the image? From the audience's point of view any untranslated dialogue presents a lacuna in the narrative, and immediately distracts from the viewing experience; the viewer rightly wonders what has been left out. In other words, far from allowing them to 'see the images', viewers are likely to remain in a semantic mode of thought rather than moving into a more perceptual or aesthetic mode.

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[62] Pooja Rangan summarises David MacDougall on this point: 'The visualization of the oral as subtitles . . . can make audiences visually word-oriented and dependent, inducing a sense of passivity that detracts from a more active engagement with the sonorous grain and non-verbal expressive range of the speaker' (2019: 41). Cf.: MacDougall D. (1998), *Transcultural Cinema*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP.

[63] Huillet imposed tight constraints on her translations: 'Using word-for-word translation and respecting the original syntax wherever possible, metaphor and equivalent expressions in the second language were to be avoided at all times. The translation was to be neither a replacement of the original nor an "interpretation" of it. This method pushes comprehensibility to its limits . . . ' (Byg 1995: 202).

We therefore decided to subtitle *Voices Apart* in the traditional manner and rely upon the audience to glean from their perceptual experience a sense of the way in which the characters speak even if they are unable to experience it fully on a first viewing. While this undoubtedly represents a compromise, it highlights a fundamental aspect of both translation and subtitling. Walter Benjamin compares translating to gluing together fragments of a vessel which 'must match one another in the smallest details, although they need not be like one another.' The result is to make 'both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel' (2015: 79). Just as, for Benjamin, translation is always a broken whole which nevertheless harmonises with the original, so perhaps can subtitles be regarded, at a further remove, as the scars on the body of the film, a witness to the violence of translation which nevertheless allows the film to speak to a wider audience. The pre-title sequence of *Voices Apart*, in which the three contributors' voices are introduced, acknowledges this violence and gives the non-Lithuanian speaking audience an opportunity to hear their voices without subtitles for the only time in the film. The voices emerge from a cloud of reverberation, as if coming into focus. Two simultaneous vocal tracks for each character create an aural doubling which resolves in a clear, single voice only briefly at the end of each segment. Although several words (apart from the director's naming of the characters) will be comprehensible to a Lithuanian speaking audience, we elected not to subtitle these despite their being suggestive (for example, one can hear Laurynas say '… those thoughts … if you can't control it …') in order to try to keep semantic thinking at bay. The doubling and extreme reverberating of the voices indicates to the audience that they need not understand what is being said; rather the voices exist as sonic objects to be perceived aesthetically.

The interviews were conducted in August 2016 in three different recording studios, one in Kaunas and two in Vilnius. We chose to record them in sound-isolated studios in order to achieve the driest possible audio quality, which would then permit the maximum creative potential in postproduction. We recorded 90 minutes of testimony from each of three

subjects, and 60 minutes from a fourth subject, resulting in 5½ hours of footage. Initially we planned to make a film without showing any human subjects, so we arrived at the title with an eye on the fact that the voices would exist apart from any bodies. We also believed *Voices Apart* suggested that the unusual experiences voice-hearers undergo set them apart from the majority of people, those who have never had auditory hallucinations. However, as the project developed the title came to seem more significant, alluding to the revised formal strategy we adopted, not just of setting the voices apart from the bodies that originally produced them but of placing them in the bodies of others. This seemed a figurative rendering of the experience of voice-hearers who hear disembodied – in fact, un-bodied – voices, voices that are not produced by bodies. Immaterial voices.

Finding a Form

The first version of the narrative, which we made into a 10-minute film in 2018 entitled *Three Voices*, positioned the oral testimony of the documentary subjects alongside associative imagery.[64] There are no people represented in the film, though some shots (for example, those from moving cars) suggest a proximate human presence. While the film contains intriguing imagery and some suggestive convergences between sound and picture, the narrative fails to engage due in part to the absence of a visible human presence, and also to the extreme separation of sound and picture. At times the picture appears entirely unrelated to the content of the oral testimony. We simply couldn't find the non-human imagery necessary to contribute meaningfully to the subjects' very human stories, and we wanted to avoid imagery that appeared tangential or forced.

[64] *Three Voices* hasn't been included in this dissertation, but for reference it can be viewed here: https://vimeo.com/249575950/901511ca5d

Peter Liechti's powerful experimental film,[65] *The Sound of Insects: Record of a Mummy* (2010), provides a cautionary comparator. Based on a real event as creatively imagined in Shimada Masahiko's 2004 short story 'The Diary of a Mummy', the film follows the slow death by starvation of an unnamed character who goes into the woods alone in order to commit suicide. The protagonist's (fabricated) diary entries form the basis of the short story and are delivered in voiceover in the film. As the main character is never shown, much of the picture track focusses on the physical surroundings (forest, tent), some of it represented as if from a subjective point of view. As the film progresses and the protagonist hallucinates more frequently, associative imagery comes to dominate. Many of these images connect to the story, even if obliquely (inasmuch as the narrative perspective is subjective and we follow the character's train of thought), while some shots seem entirely random and therefore distract from, or dilute, the thematic focus.[66] The challenge with this cinematic form is to strike a balance between two extremes of semantic distance from the oral testimony: too close (a literal illustration) and too far (figurative images that in their level of abstraction break the link to the testimony). In his 2005 documentary *Black Sun,* Gary Tarn also attempts this balancing act, using associative imagery to support the oral testimony of his blind contributor who is never shown. As with *The Sound of Insects*, *Black Sun* also features images of great subjectivity, such as representations of what a blind person might 'see'. Some images seem to float free of the testimony, however, and risk taking the viewer out of the film in a way similar to the gaps in Staub and Huillet's missing subtitles. Given that much of the testimony of *Voices Apart* is concrete and specific,

[65] *The Sound of Insects* is usually classified as a documentary, although *Variety* calls it a 'cinematic essay'. I define it as an experimental drama since it contains no indexical audio or visual record of the real person or event it portrays.

[66] I later discovered that some of the images in the film had been shot by Liechti on other occasions, and not specifically for *The Sound of Insects*, as he reveals in a book about his work, *Dedications* (2016). Whether or not these shots are the ones that seem to me an ill fit remains an open question.

relating particular events in detail, the approach followed by *The Sound of Insects* and *Black Sun* didn't seem appropriate.

Following the *Three Voices* experiment we realised we had to incorporate visual human presence into the film but we were concerned that the stories told by the documentary subjects wouldn't stand on their own, particularly given that we had no images of the subjects, only their oral testimony. How could we achieve our dual goal of creating a delusional atmosphere while generating sympathy for the subjects if the subjects themselves were never to appear? In an attempt to solve this problem we decided to embed the testimony within a larger fictional narrative in which actors would play the documentary subjects (or variations on them) in scenarios populated by additional fictional characters. Over a period of eighteen months we prepared three successive treatments for different versions of this approach. In the first treatment a fictional narrator, who stands outside the diegesis, guides and comments on the stories related by the documentary subjects in a manner similar to the narrator in Jørgen Leth's renowned short film, *The Perfect Human* (1968), which supplied the inspiration for Lars von Trier's 2003 documentary *The Five Obstructions*. This permitted us to explore more expansively and with greater freedom issues concerning the experience and representation of voice-hearing, and the stigma attached to it. However, the presence of an extradiegetic narrator made conjuring a delusional atmosphere much more difficult. It appeared that creating this added narrational level might be received as too obviously rhetorical and risk upstaging the testimony itself, diminishing the wonder, truth and power of it.

Next we removed the narrator from the film and developed a second treatment in which re-enactments of the contributors' stories alternated with entirely fictional scenes that obliquely illustrated other aspects of their experience. We hoped by this to flesh out the contributors' characters so the testimony wouldn't seem fragmented, merely the answers to questions posed by the interviewer, but would play like the unfolding of a single story. But the two strands sat uneasily next to one another. The re-enactments stood out as a

different mode of discourse from the scripted scenes, and the transitions between them lacked an organic connection. In addition, writing dialogue for the scripted scenes landed us in a moral quandary concerning the epistemological status of the whole project. Although the audience might not register the difference between the two modes, would we confuse them about what was 'real' and what was imaginary? It put me in mind of the documentary *American Animals* (Leyton 2018) which intentionally blurs the boundary between documentary and fiction, beginning with uppercase text on a title card – 'THIS IS NOT BASED ON A TRUE STORY' – only to fade out three words in the middle 'NOT BASED ON' to reveal a statement with a hole at its centre: 'THIS IS A TRUE STORY'. The film questions re-enactment cinema with its own re-enactments, though it grounds the story in the documentary testimony of the subjects on whose experience the film is based even occasionally showing the to-camera interviews. But the elaborate production design and staging suggest a drama film, while the sheer quantity of narrative devoted to re-enactment make the documentary interviews feel like an interruption, if not a fabrication. Certainly the fictional and documentary styles sit uneasily together, likely causing the audience to question the veracity of the events portrayed.

In the third version we dispensed with the re-enactments altogether and used the testimony within a fictional story in which the testimony was put into the mouths (not the voices, only the words) of fictional characters no longer based upon the documentary subjects. With this we freed ourselves from concerns about the epistemological status of the film – it was now a fiction – and opened up much greater possibilities for generating stylistic effects that might induce a delusional atmosphere. But we had sacrificed the documentary reality captured in the audio interviews. The link to documentary truth was broken and the authenticity of the original interviews effaced. There could be no sympathetic understanding of the real-life subjects. In this version the interviews were merely primary research for a drama film.

Determined to include the original audio recordings in the film we returned to the source material. Not only do the recordings provide the indexical link to documentary reality, they also preserve the contributors' inimitable vocal delivery, the grain of their voices, voices which were neither hallucinated nor invented. We realised that if we were highly selective with the testimony and kept the running time short, the testimony wouldn't seem fragmented and prosaic, but suggestive, intriguing, dramatic. And if we planted the recorded voices of the documentary subjects into the mouths of actors, we could use reconstructed interviews alongside enacted scenes that the characters relate in vocal sync even as they experience them. In this way we solved the problem of straying too far into the realm of fiction for viewers to register the film as a documentary and allowed ourselves a means of dramatising (in a low-key fashion) some aspects of the subjects' experience. This dramatisation, and the transitions in and out of interviews, would open up the possibility of creating a delusional atmosphere. Of course this stylistic strategy has previously been employed in documentaries, notably in *The Arbor* (2010) and *Notes on Blindness* (2016), but in *Voices Apart* the subject matter benefits especially from the approach. Not only does the lip-syncing act as a figurative rendering of the disembodied voice, but the present-tense narrating of incidents as they play out visually triggers the logical, temporal and spatial dislocations that Todorov identifies as fundamental to the experience of the fantastic – the moment in which we hesitate in trying to determine whether what we see is reality, illusion, or imaginary.

Structure and Style: A Spectre Haunts the Text

The structure of the film alternates scenes or sequences featuring each of the three characters individually before culminating in a scene in which they come together in a collective sharing of experience. After the pre-title sequence each character is introduced first by their voice, and then presented in an interview setting, which establishes the documentary nature of the project. Although we understood in planning the film that many

viewers would recognise early on that the documentary subjects were performing or being performed, we aimed to delay this realisation for as long as possible in order to make a strong first impression. In cognitive psychology the primacy effect describes the psychological impact of first impressions: they are harder to shake. And in returning to the interview setting in subsequent episodes we hope to activate viewer's confirmation bias by providing them with more reason to maintain their initial assumption that these characters are the actual documentary subjects, and that there may be (but how?) some way in which, while they are interviewed, what they describe in the past actually plays out in the present. Of course, what happens on screen is a logical impossibility. When, as Mantas describes his fear of his father's return, the lighting suddenly changes from day to night and we hear distant heavy footfall coming from outside Mantas' flat, we understand that we are in the realm of re-enactment. Hopefully, however, the smoothness of the transition creates, if only fleetingly, an uncanny effect which the subsequent scene with Mantas lying on the floor holding a knife reinforces. Here – as with the scenes of the car accident, jumping from the balcony, and grocery store – we aimed to induce in the viewer the sense that two mutually exclusive conditions somehow coexist, what Nichols calls 'the I-know-very-well-but-all-the-same formulation at the heart of psychic reality' (2008: 80). In reference to the fantastic, Todorov describes this as the evanescent moment of 'ambiguous perception' in which the viewer hesitates: 'The fantastic . . . lasts only as long as a certain hesitation [in which viewers] must decide whether or not what they perceive derives from "reality" as it exists in the common opinion' (1975: 41). As short as this hesitation may be, it does suggest, however subtly, the dual perception of psychosis and aims to cultivate empathy for the documentary subjects through aligning the audience's experience to that of the characters, at least to some degree.

This dual perception reintegrates the past with the present. Victims of trauma (re-) experience past traumatic events bodily and emotionally as something that takes place now. In *The Body Keeps the Score* (2015) Bessel van der Kolk describes the experience of

recollection ‘as apparently unmodified by the passage of time’, with the brain behaving ‘as if the trauma were actually occurring’ (44). Because the experiences themselves, as well as the memories of them, stimulate the right brain (the seat of emotions) and deactivate the left brain, verbal ability is disabled or disorganised. ‘All trauma is preverbal’ (43). While our documentary subjects certainly suffered a great deal of trauma, not all of the experiences they describe are necessarily traumatic. Mantas’ visit to the grocery store is perhaps more disturbing or disorienting than traumatic. Nevertheless trauma lies at the heart of their conditions. It may therefore strike the viewer that the often phlegmatic delivery of the contributors is incommensurate with the experiences they relate. Agnė states, ‘When I turned fourteen my father died. . . . As soon as he died I moved to England.’ Her stolid and laconic manner must, we may imagine, belie her real feelings. And indeed, given that she began hearing voices shortly after this event, it does seem as though it affected her profoundly. Laurynas’ dispassionate delivery of the story about his girlfriend jumping off the balcony seems at odds with the shocking nature of the event: ‘I told her to jump and went to another room. I thought she was going to jump, but I thought maybe she won’t. I wasn’t sure if I wanted her to jump. I didn’t know, I was lost.’ This surprisingly frank admission of contradictory feelings bemuses with its impassiveness. The seamless disjunction between emotion and event (the jump) correlates with the smooth interjection of past into present. Temporal transitions are here fundamental to generating ambiguous perception.

Another significant temporal transition occurs in what begins in a traditional flashback form. As Agnė describes her attempt to ‘test’ the truth of her voices’ predictions, the picture cuts from the sit-down interview to an image representing the time she recounts: a car drives down a country road. Her testimony, momentarily in voiceover, hovers in the air over the drone shot of the car: ‘For example there was this incident last summer in England.’ The sonic quality of her voice remains the same as in the interview setting, just as we would expect from a flashback – particularly a documentary flashback in which the quality of the recorded voice is less likely to be overtly manipulated. But as we cut to the

car interior, the sound of Agnė's voice changes; it takes on the sonic signature of the small, enclosed, audibly hermetic space of the car, the reverberation much reduced from the larger space of the interview room.[67] The noise of the moving car assists in grounding the scene in a new reality. (If the car were silent, for example, the distance between past and present would be accentuated, as if the film were here representing a memory.) And when Agnė speaks on camera from inside the car ('I was driving to some class') the scene shifts to a new spatio-temporal plane. Agnė finds herself in a different place, therefore logically she must also be in a different time, but the uninterrupted dialogue, still delivered in perfect lip-sync but with a contrasting sonic quality, merges the present tense of the interview with a new present tense which takes place one year ago in a country 2000 kilometres away. The fact that Agnė still speaks in the past tense and addresses herself to an off-camera interviewer indicates that whatever 'present' this might be, it is not that of the actual incident she describes – it must be a re-enactment. Yet when the accident she recounts occurs at the very moment she invokes it – 'And then a motorcyclist came and hit me' – we experience what appears to be another temporal shift: now we are in the actual moment of one year ago. History has, impossibly, repeated itself. Of course we know that this isn't the case, but if viewers are disoriented, even for an instant, they will have caught a glimpse of the psychic reality the film aims to suggest.

However, what the audience may not yet know, five minutes into the film, is that the vocal quality of the interview scene has itself been manipulated. As noted above, the original recordings were made in sound-insulated studios to achieve as dry a timbre as possible. With this raw material we were able to manipulate the audio in such a way as to make the voices conform to whichever spaces the characters occupy. Agnė's voice in 'Grandma's house' sounds distinct both from her voice in the car and from that of the

[67] A lipsync test conducted using this scene highlights the difference in vocal quality between the original audio and that of the finished film: https://vimeo.com/brokenislandfilms/review/418669632/2599c2fe10.

studio. Indeed, even within a single location the vocal quality is altered, sometimes moment to moment. In Grandma's house, when Agnė turns away from the camera and walks toward the wall of photographs, equalisation is used to muffle her voice, and the volume is dipped. When she scans the photographs, turning away from, then toward the camera, the EQ and volume are adjusted accordingly. This is standard practice in fiction film dialogue editing. At this point the audience may also have yet to realise that the voices they hear, post-synchronised or not, do not belong to the bodies they see on screen. Interestingly (and unexpectedly), in a test screening some viewers claimed to know from the first moment that the voices were foreign to the bodies, while others didn't reach this conclusion even by the end of the film. Clearly viewers notice, and react in an individual manner to, different stylistic elements. This is likely to have something to do with their level of film training, but also their involvement in the unfolding narrative. Be this as it may, the studio scene at the end was designed to reveal unequivocally that the documentary subjects were played by actors lip-synching to the original recorded testimony: Mantas (played by Pranciškus) gets a line wrong, we hear the actor's own voice overlap with the contributor's, and the actors come out of character at the end. We even portrayed the director in this scene tapping the spacebar on her laptop to begin the playback of the voice recordings, twice followed by a countdown.

There is an ethical obligation to make clear to viewers where documentary reality lies in a film and, rather than undermine its power, this awareness may contribute to the strength of the uncanny effect. Bill Nichols affirms this:

> Viewers must recognize a reenactment as a reenactment even if this recognition also dooms the reenactment to its status as a fictionalized repetition of something that has already occurred. . . . [T]he reenactment forfeits its indexical bond to the original event. It draws its fantasmatic power from this very fact. . . . The viewer experiences the uncanny sense of a repetition of what remains historically unique. A specter haunts the text.
>
> (2008: 73-4)

Whereas Clio Barnard reveals her verbatim technique with on-screen text at the beginning of *The Arbor*, we delayed a definitive revelation until the end of *Voices Apart* in an attempt to maximise the fantasmatic effect of our techniques. As Todorov contends, the fantastic exists in the present, the moment of ambiguous perception, and will only exist until the audience decides either in the reality or illusory nature of what they perceive. Keeping the audience uncertain about the film's epistemological status gives greater opportunity for the spectres of identity, memory and hallucination to haunt the film. In *Voices Apart* this haunting figuratively represents the psychotic experience.

Because Todorov bases his morphological study of the fantastic on prose fiction, he doesn't take into account the added impact of photographic realism that film brings to the representation. As Bazin contended, the photographic image has the capacity 'to bear away our faith' (1967: 14). So even if viewers do conclude in the early stages of *Voices Apart* that actors are lip-synching to pre-recorded testimony, moments of hesitation should still occur in a way that correlates with Mantas' eloquent description of hallucination in the studio scene: 'But when it's happening I think a human is incapable of thinking rationally and understanding that a hallucination is a hallucination because he has already experienced it as reality.' Our hope is that certain unexpected logic-defying transitions will still catch the audience off guard, inducing them to believe, momentarily and *in spite of their knowledge to the contrary*, in such events: the interpenetration of past and present when Laurynas looks up from his interview and sees his girlfriend on the balcony reproachfully staring back at him (figs. 4.1 and 4.2); the spatio-temporal slippage that


Figs. 4.1 & 4.2 Voices Apart: Laurynas and his girlfriend lock eyes across space and time.

to occur when Agnė turns from the window and walks toward the wall of photographs prompting us to realise that she has been at her Grandma's house throughout the interview – and at the very moment in the past when she destroys Grandma's photographs (fig. 4.3);

Fig. 4.3 Voices Apart: Agnė appears to step back in time.

Mantas' lapse into present tense description of the past outside the grocery store ('I hear a voice. . . . So I turn . . . and say…') coupled with his apparent act of ventriloquism when his voice issues from the mouth of the bystander. But each of these incidents will be all the more effective if the audience believes in the documentary reality underpinning the film. Bazin's notion of realism is founded on cinema's photographic capture of pro-filmic reality. Documentary form entices us all the more persuasively to confer our faith. By drawing on elements of documentary style we attempt to reinforce this inclination. In addition to the to-camera interviews, the subjects are constantly aware of the camera in the re-enactments, often turning to look into the lens as if seeking a reaction from the implied director. And the studio scene is designed to mimic a cinéma vérité experiment of the kind pioneered by Jean Rouch. I discuss this scene in the section 'Performance: A Strange Case of Double Possession' below.

The unmarked nature of these logical, spatial and temporal transports increases their effectiveness as a representation of mental process. We follow the movement of the subjects' thoughts, experiencing memories as if they were present, entering a psychic

reality that nevertheless looks like our common shared reality. The film should thus create a figurative palimpsest. The past is not confined to the past; it lives on in the present. This place is also that place. That person there is also me. As Nerval writes in the passage quoted at greater length in the epigraph to this chapter, 'man is double' (1999: 285). While this may be true of general human experience, psychotic experience can lead to a further fragmentation of the psyche and the perceived dissolution of the boundaries between mind and matter, self and other. Voice-hearing provides a common example. Immaterial voices are attributed to others, either seen or unseen, physical or spiritual. Nerval's narrator remarks of his hallucinations: 'I could not cast into doubt what I myself had so distinctly *seen*' (1999: 285, emphasis in the original, substitutable in the present context by *heard*). As Todorov remarks in reference to the narrator's experience in *Aurélia*, '*the transition from mind to matter has become possible*' (1975: 114, emphasis in the original). Todorov continues: 'It is curious to note here that such a collapse of the limits between matter and mind was considered, especially in the nineteenth century, as the first characteristic of madness' (115). With *Voices Apart* we aimed to dramatise this mental activity, but in such a way as to de-stigmatise it. At the heart of this effort is the portrayal of the documentary subjects through the performance of the actors who represent them.

Performance: A Strange Case of Double Possession

Casting actors to play the documentary subjects places the voices heard by the voice-hearers (their auditory verbal hallucinations) at a further remove from their cinematic representation. Instead of the documentary subjects describing their AVHs directly to camera, actors intercede and add another degree of mediation to the phenomenon, thus pushing the AVHs to two removes: actor > contributor > AVH. When the film employs voiceover, which we attribute to the actors, another level is added: voiceover > actors > contributors > AVHs (fig. 4.4). Put another way, while the contributors are 'in possession'

Fig. 4.4 Voices Apart: the contributor's voiceover attaches to the actor.

of their AVHs, the actors effect a double possession.[68] They possess not only the voices of the contributors, but also the contributor's AVHs. Although we obtain a practical outcome by using actors, namely the protection of the contributors' privacy, formally the film benefits from this additional level of mediation. No matter how accurate the vocal synchronisation, nor how precise the re-creation of the sonic signatures to match the spaces occupied by the characters, a slippage inevitably results – a gap between the audio recording and the moving image. There is always something left over, an excess, that cannot be contained by the situation represented: an additional lip movement that doesn't correspond to the cadence of the voice; sonic reflections that don't correlate perfectly with the visual space. The audience's uneasy feeling that something is not quite right, or perhaps that everything is not quite right, teases into being the sense of the uncanny – even before, and beyond, the logical, temporal and spatial slippages discussed above.[69] But more than just inducing

[68] The notion of 'possession' changes according to one's attitude toward the phenomenon or to the voices themselves. As Lisa Blackman points out, '[V]oice hearing arguably appears as a contemporary form of possession. Indeed, many voice hearers . . . attest to this view, and even with how their own experiences of possession are remade through their participation in the practices cultivated by the [Hearing Voices] Network' (2012: 152). And as we see with the experience of Agnė, some voice-hearers wouldn't be without their voices.

[69] One of the most extreme experiments in this sort of vocal possession, certainly in mainstream cinema, can be found in the feature animation *Anomalisa* (Kaufman & Johnson 2015) in which all characters speak in the same voice apart from the protagonist Michael and, for a little while, Lisa, whom he falls in love with. But once Michael and Lisa consummate their relationship, she also begins to speak in the same universal voice. The film presents a deeply unsettling subjectively-oriented portrait of solipsism and depression.

the uncanny, this double possession speaks of an unusual case of performance and raises questions about the acting process and its relationship to voice-hearing.

As with the animation process, in which the vocal track is recorded first so that the visual track can then be created in sync with it, so in *Voices Apart* the actors were required to synchronise their performance to the pre-recorded oral testimony. The obvious major difference from the process followed by animators is that we were dealing with human beings and live-action filmmaking. Although from the audience's perspective the result is no different from dubbing – adding voice to an existing picture – the process itself is fundamentally different. Our actors underwent a long period of preparation in order not only to learn their lines, but to learn to repeat them with syllable accuracy and appropriate expression. (On set they were additionally required to move according to our direction while maintaining accuracy and expressiveness.) The rapid delivery of some lines and the hesitations and occasional extended pauses posed particular challenges for the actors, something the actors themselves comment upon in the improvised end to the final scene. Gintautė says, 'They talk so fast.' And Sergeius replies, 'Yeah, and those pauses…' In order to overcome them, the actors had to breathe, swallow and smile in time with the bodies of the recorded voices, and find ways to match with their bodily movements the cadences and idiosyncrasies of the original vocal delivery. In doing so they were brought into a close harmony, if not empathy, with the documentary subjects whom they hadn't seen or met. Gintautė, who plays Agnė, remarked on how close she felt to Agnė, even to the point of inadvertently taking on Agnė's mannerisms in her everyday life and entertaining Agnė's beliefs. She asserted that she understood Agnė better than she might have done if she had only read her testimony on paper. The actors thus possessed the voices of their ghostly personas while allowing themselves to be possessed by them. This double-action mirrors that of voice-hearers who can experience possessing as well as being possessed by their voices. In relation to this double-action the act of listening takes on increased significance.

Naturally the actors spoke their 'lines' with their own voices as they lip-synched, as the film illustrates in the studio scene when Pranciškus first begins to repeat his lines and we hear the actor's voice and the contributor's voice sounding in parallel (channelled into the left and right speakers to increase separation and clarity). However, as the actors spoke they were also listening, both to the lines that they uttered and to the lines spoken by the contributors which were being played back on set as a reference. In this situation the split in mental focus between speaking and listening (normal in any conversation but usually unnoticed) becomes amplified and perhaps partly accounts for a special quality of the performances in the film – a sense of the actors/characters being particularly open and vulnerable to the camera. With their attention occupied by different forms of listening, in tandem with the accurate delivery of lines, there is little room left for self-consciousness (figs. 4.5 and 4.6).

In *Immaterial Bodies* Lisa Blackman notes, 'Where hearing might be considered monological, listening is always dialogical and relational, directed towards the other' (2012: 139). Being in sync with the recorded lines also synchronises the actors with the personalities of the contributors, generating an affective energy that can be perceived by the audience. In discussing affective energy Blackman paraphrases an observation of

Figs. 4.5 & 4.6 Voices Apart: Laurynas and Agnė confront the viewer.

R.D. Laing: 'in the presence of someone that you are open to . . . your breathing will synchronise' (2012: 85). Elsewhere she remarks that 'voice hearing might confound distinctions between the interior and external, past and present, self and other, material and immaterial, and even living and dead' (2012: 139). Breathing in time, listening while

mimicking speech, allowing themselves to become the body for an invisible other's voice – this channelling transforms the actors into characters, but also into mediums, and the perfect 'objects' to represent the voice-hearing subjects. It comes as no surprise that, as Blackman points out, 'there is a significant body of work exploring the proximity of spiritualism to cinema' (122). But as Deleuze examines in detail in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1989)[70] cinema also functions as a spiritual tool through which to enact, and experience, the dissolution of physical and psychological barriers.

Set in a film studio, the final scene of *Voices Apart* stages an encounter between the actors and the voices that animate them. The scene begins with the actors speaking in their own voices for the first time (though this may not be picked up by the audience on an initial viewing) as they take their seats and get settled. However, when Pranciškus speaks with two voices – his and, seemingly, the contributor's – the audience is directed to perceive the separation, yet displaced identity, between the actor's body and the contributor's voice. It was intended that this moment (regardless of what any individual viewer believes about whether actors or documentary subjects perform the characters on screen) would create a Brechtian estrangement effect in both senses: the distanciation that results from the actors visibly performing a performance; but also the stylist excess of one actor possessing two voices, resulting in the viewer's increased focus on the image and sound (and particularly the relationship between them) to a degree that could draw the viewer into an appreciation of the style at the expense of the narrative action. It is clear that when Pranciškus the actor first gets his line wrong ('Sorry. Can we start again?'), then masters it on the second attempt, we are witness to the moment that the contributor's voice enters the actor (or, in fact, replaces the actor's voice), and the actor goes into character – or rather shifts from one characterisation (Pranciškus playing Pranciškus) to another (Pranciškus playing

[70] See particularly Chapter 7 'Thought and Cinema' in which Deleuze describes his notion of the 'seer' and the 'spiritual automaton'.

Mantas). Discussed in Chapter 2, Eisenstein's notions of dual-unity and the sensuous thinking they encourage of the audience are apposite here. The split mind that these effects entail hopefully brings the audience into closer sympathy with the characters and their experience of psychosis.

Directing: The Documentary Voice

In representing the re-enactments we aimed to suggest a matter-of-fact and literal directorial approach, to use the minimum of stylistic embellishment, the minimum of metaphor, in order to avoid straying materially from the testimony. We wanted a style that would result in a truthful-seeming account and have the best chance of maintaining the viewer's faith in the documentary underpinning of the film.[71] Of course three instances of metaphorical thinking stand out: the falling of the red scarf, which resonates with Laurynas's story of Christ's blood flowing down the stairs and foreshadows his girlfriend's jump from the window; the sudden lighting change (from day to night) as Mantas recounts his fear of his father returning from prison to murder him; and the drone shot concluding Agnė's story about the motorcycle accident which suggests, perhaps, the voices that guide her life from 'above'. Only the woodpile scene of Agnė's introduction is pure invention, though it plants the idea of a hearth fire, which pays off when she burns her grandmother's photographs. The nightclub sequence introducing Mantas was inspired by his comment in interview (not used in the film) that the place in which he feels least safe and healthy is a noisy nightclub.

We staged the interviews themselves as straightforwardly as we could: composed frontally with characters looking into the lens (figs. 4.7 and 4.8). We didn't need cutaways, since the vocal testimonies were edited in advance, and we didn't want to risk affectation

[71] A directorial approach that represents a scene using elaborate stagings and a multiplicity of shots of different sizes and angles for rhetorical emphasis draws from a fiction filmmaking tradition and therefore suggests a fictional content as, for example, in Bart Layton's *American Animals* (discussed above).

by cutting to shots of the interview subjects from the side, or of their hands – shots typically used to facilitate a cut in documentary interviews. The locations of the interviews were selected according to the social class of the subjects and the stories they tell. For example, to reflect Laurynas's working class background, we found a flat in a typical Soviet-era housing estate with a balcony from which we could stage his girlfriend's jump. But no


Figs. 4.7 & 4.8 Voices Apart: Mantas and Agnė interviewed looking straight into the camera.

matter how unadorned one's style, the director's figurative voice still emerges through stylistic inflections and the choice of actors, locations, art direction and staging. The re-enactments are obviously creative interpretations of our contributors' stories. And as we didn't solicit any additional information about the circumstances surrounding these events, much of what is seen on screen is necessarily imaginative invention. For example, we based the staging of the motorcycle accident on three principle considerations: narrative point of view, dramatic impact, and logistical capability. We wanted the camera to be with Agnė as she tells the story of the motorcycle hitting the car so that the viewer might experience it with her; avoiding an objective representation was essential in this regard. The collision needed to be as surprising as we could make it in order to heighten the dramatic impact; Agnė was shaken by the incident so the scene must demonstrate why this encounter reinforces her belief in her voices. And, finally, because we executed the scene with an extremely small crew and a tiny budget we had to be creative in the framing in order to imply the impact of the motorcycle rather than to show it (fig. 4.9). We faced

Fig. 4.9 Voices Apart: the motorcycle strikes Agnė's car.

similar considerations in directing other re-enactments, such as Laurynas' girlfriend jumping off the balcony, and Mantas' encounter outside the grocery store. All of these creative and logistical decisions betray the directors' rhetorical aims, and ultimately their sensibility. This sensibility, or embodied perspective, forms part of the fabric of the film.

When our documentary subjects finally view the film, they may struggle to recognise their own stories. Indeed, they may have difficulty recognising themselves in the appearance and performance style of the actors. The experience might very well be akin to having a stranger spontaneously recount your memories to you – the moment in which your doppelgänger confronts you. Beyond the spectres of identity and memory, another spectre thus haunts the film: the psyche of the director. In his article on documentary re-enactment, Bill Nichols comments on the presence of the documentary filmmaker in his or her film:

> The documentary voice speaks through the body of the film: through editing—through subtle and strange juxtapositions, through music, lighting, composition, and mise-en-scène, through dialogue overheard and commentary delivered, through silence as well as speech, and through sounds and images as well as words. This dispersed and polymorphous voice possesses an intrinsically desubjectivized form. The workings of a fantasmatic arise through it.
>
> (2008: 78)

The director is the force that brings together past and present in the eternal present of a moving image and creates the conditions for the fantasmatic to emerge. Nichols assumes

throughout his article, however, the participation and visual presence of the documentary subject(s) in the film (he cites for example Jarecki's *Capturing the Friedmans* (2003), Guzman's *Chile, Obstinate Memory* (1997), Herzog's *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* (1997) and Marlon Riggs' *Tongues Untied* (1989)), subjects who are therefore liable to experience the uncanny themselves in the course of re-enacting their own memories. He notes: 'These extraordinary moments, in which the participants attempt to will themselves back to the past and yet know very well that the effort must fail, border on the work of mourning that cinema, and video, make possible' (75), although he adds that this work may also entail a certain feeling of 'gratification' (74). In Nichols' discussion only the re-enactments staged in *The Thin Blue Line* (1988) bear a resemblance to those in *Voices Apart*, inasmuch as Errol Morris' stagings do not involve the actual subjects whose accounts they recreate. On the other hand, the actors don't speak in the subjects' voices; the vocal testimony is instead employed as voiceover within the flashbacks. Despite this the subjects are still physically present in the film in the act of sharing their memories with the director. *Voices Apart*, meanwhile, presents an absence in excess of the memory of a past event. It stages the contributors' re-enactments using doppelgängers, revivifying the past selves in a hybrid embodiment of real voice and fantasmatic body, a virtual construction that might conjure the notion of a spiritual automaton, not (or not entirely) in Deleuze's sense of the term, but as a mechanical (directed) body that harbours the life of the spirit that speaks through it.

In an act of triple possession, therefore, the director takes on the voices of the voice-hearers and the responsibility for embodying these in actors (director > actor > contributor > AVH), and re-creates a past in which the spectral events will occur.[72] While our documentary subjects, when they eventually see the film, may experience a sense of the uncanny, the director too suffers a complex feeling of mourning, tempered perhaps with

[72] Nichols points out that 'the filmmaker is the one caught up in the sequence of images; it is his or her fantasy that these images embody' (2008: 77).

some gratification, when faced with the film. Having adopted the subjects' memories and imagined them for the screen, these imaginings then stand as memories against which, and in tandem with which, the filmic representation, as it is ultimately achieved, is experienced and judged.[73] The ghosts of other possible stagings lurk around the edges of the film. Added to this are the memories of the production, one's own life lived, irrepressibly revived as phantoms alongside the viewing of the film – a behind-the-scenes film, as it were, playing in parallel with the main attraction. The actors' real voices and characters form a palimpsest with the roles they perform (and indeed with the documentary subjects with whom, in an unguarded moment, the director can even confound them) and one's own participation, just out of frame, can still be recalled, glimpsed forever on the margins of the screen. Some of these feelings are quite normal when revisiting any work of representation that you've had a hand in creating, but creating re-enactments differs from staging fictional scenes. Taking on the memories of others brings with it an added responsibility to 'get it right' even though, given the vagaries of memory and the communication of it, there is of course no correct representation possible. In an ontological sense, and at the risk of *appearing* to contradict Bazin, 'every film is a fiction film' (Metz 1982: 44). Christian Metz is here referring to the illusory quality of the cinematic signifier but, in comparison with observational documentary practice, re-enactments appear to be, if I can say it in this way, more fictional; their 'reality' exists only to be recorded by the camera, not in itself. But of course the entirety of *Voices Apart* is a re-enactment – a re-creation of memories and imagined events, and of the interviews in which they were shared. Only the recorded voices have an indexical relation to reality.

[73] Metz's 'imaginary signifier' takes on a different significance in this case. The dream-screen reflects back, not only hallucinatory images that the spectator nevertheless believes in, like a wilful delusion, but also the reality behind those images, their creation. There is a triple movement here. As the director, what I'm watching has the cast of reality, so I believe in it, yet I know that it isn't real, so I disbelieve it. Yet again, it is in fact real because I was there at the making of it, even though it now carries the stamp of a dream. See Metz's *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier* (1982).

Conclusion: A fantastic documentary form?

The voices may be the one 'real' thing in *Voices Apart* but they too possess a spectral quality. When Michel Chion theorises the acousmêtre, the cinematic being that exists (off screen or hidden) in voice only, he places an emphasis on the moment of de-acousmatising, when the source (normally a human body) of the voice is revealed. This is usually a moment of significance and drama (eg, Norman's mother in *Psycho*, the Wizard in *The Wizard of Oz*), and accompanied by the character's loss of power, such as his or her apparent omniscience or omnipotence. However, Chion points out that 'what is constituted is not a full entity but a split being, audio-divided between voice and body, sound and image – thus revealing itself as something that can never be wholly complete or sewn up again' (Chion 2009: 474). Once viewers have witnessed the separation between voice and body, sound and image, the ghost of that experience haunts their subsequent perception of the unified being, as it stands as a testament to a sleight of hand: the placing of a voice in a body. In *Voices Apart* the owners of the documentary voices never manifest bodily; they remain acousmêtres. Yet because of their bond with bodies throughout the film, they also constitute split beings: voices forcibly attached to the wrong bodies, spectral but spacialised. This liminal existence projects them into the realm of the uncanny, similar to the contributor in our first film, *Remember, thou art clay*, who remains off screen throughout the film, yet whose voice is (acoustically) shaped by the spaces we see.

In *Voices Apart* the 'audio-division' or sound-image split is suggestive of the double mind of the voice-hearers. For the audience the voices both do and do not belong to the actors. Unlike the films of Eija-Liisa Ahtila (eg, *Me/We, Okay, Grey* [1993]) or Adie Russell's lipsynching experiments in which voices that patently do not belong to the bodies we see on screen are figuratively forced down their throats (male voices in female bodies for example) creating an unsettling Frankenstein effect, a practice that was for a time a

significant social media trend with the TikTok app,[74] our intention was to make the effect convincing enough to be entertained as reality so the audience would hesitate. This moment of hesitation, if we refer back to Todorov, not only breathes life into the fantastic, but also embodies a key aspect of delusional experience: for those who experience them hallucinations are reality – even if 'reality', as generally recognised, exists alongside them. Nerval's narrator, as quoted in the epigraph to this chapter, observes, 'I believe that the human imagination has never invented anything that is not true, whether in this world or in other worlds' (1999: 285). Competing realities co-exist. *Voices Apart* aims to suggest that different realities can exist for all of us, not just those who may have been pathologised, and that this dual perception might lead to spiritual insight, particularly in the case of the mind's attempt to cope with trauma.

In his conception of the fantastic Todorov emphasises the experience of ontological insecurity which both character and reader (viewer) undergo together, generally in this genre. He notes that psychosis provides an apt thematic vehicle for the fantastic: 'This principle engenders several fundamental themes: a special causality, pan-determinism; multiplication of the personality; collapse of the limit between subject and object; and lastly, the transformation of time and space' (1975: 120). With the fantasmatic Nichols limits his enquiry to the revivication of spectres of the past via re-enactments, the transformation of time and space. Both studies underline the uncanny effect of this breakdown of boundaries. With *Voices Apart* we have attempted to generate such an effect, extending beyond the realm of history and memory, typical of documentary re-enactments, to what normally resides in the domain of narrative fiction: challenging accepted notions of character and causation. Although viewers will ultimately determine whether or not we have

[74] See Patrik Sjöberg's essay on Adie Russell's films, 'The Fundamental Lie: Lip Synch, Dubbing, Ventriloquism and the Othering of Voice in Documentary Media' (2019). Employing Russell's routine of lipsynching to famous men, the American comedian Sarah Cooper achieved celebrity status on TikTok by lip synching to some of Donald Trump's most surprising public statements. Her performance of Trump's recommendation to ingest bleach went viral: https://twitter.com/sarahcpr/status/1253474772702429189

succeeded, our attempt hopefully sheds some light on the auditory possibilities available to documentary.

But our aim in making *Voices Apart* was not only to explore the formal aspects of documentary; we also wanted the film to send a message of hope. The final scene of the film, set in the studio, was designed to embody this message. It does more than dramatise the actors taking up and discarding their adopted voices; it engineers a meeting, by proxy, between the documentary subjects who in reality never met.[75] Interestingly, this was also the first time the three actors met despite our having already been in production for a protracted period of two months. We devised the character of the director in order to justify such a meeting, and the characters were directed to relate and react to one another in such a way as to make the encounter seem believable in spite of the fact that there is, naturally, no indication of this interaction in the testimonies. The contributors only interacted with the actual interviewer, my filmmaking partner Elvina. When Laurynas declares that he has dreamt his future for the next fifteen years and 'this recording is part of that dream', the director's response is a revoicing of the exact words originally used by Elvina. The shared glances among the characters and the expressions of interest and sympathetic understanding they exhibit toward one another (fig. 4.10) convey the strength of coming together with like-minded people to share one's experiences, the strength of a supportive community. This is one of the key therapeutic strategies promulgated by the Hearing Voices Network,[76] among other organisations, used to help voice-hearers come to terms with and reduce the persecutory aspect of their voices. While most of those afflicted with AVHs

[75] It would be fascinating to get the contributors' reactions to their representation by actors, but also to this meeting, which only exists through the artifice of cinema.

[76] Established in the Netherlands in 1987, and now with groups around the world, the Hearing Voices Network is also responsible for publishing three important books on voice-hearing: *Accepting Voices* (Romme & Escher 1993), *Making Sense of Voices* (Romme & Escher 2000) and *Living with Voices: 50 Stories of Recovery* (Romme et al. 2009).

never eliminate their voices, it is possible to find coping strategies, and even to befriend the voices. The studio scene is thus an analogue of a support group meeting.

Fig. 4.10 Voices Apart: Laurynas and Mantas connected by a look.

At five minutes long the scene makes up almost a third of the film, a measure of its importance. Thanks to the free-flowing nature of this 'meeting' we were able to incorporate disparate statements and reflections, including Laurynas' warning concerning the impact on mental wellbeing of uncontrolled levels of stress. Indeed, all three contributors had found ways to cope with their voices and were keen to pass on their insights. When we interviewed them in 2016 we couldn't have imagined that all three would go on to find fulfilment in their personal and professional lives. At the time of writing, Agnė is engaged to be married, Laurynas has completed a degree in fine art and had several solo exhibitions of his paintings, and Mantas has published a successful collection of short stories, is about to complete his acting training, has already performed the lead role in a feature film by one of Lithuania's most highly regarded directors, Sharunas Bartas, and even found time to get married and start a family. We would like to have included some of this information in the film, but unfortunately we were unable to secure the agreement of all participants. Be that as it may, I believe the film still conveys and embodies a feeling of optimism. At the end, when the actors resume their roles as themselves in the unscripted but rehearsed final exchange, the tone is kept light in an effort to normalise the characters' experiences. In

contrast to the pathologising and often negative portrayals of mental illness in mainstream fiction films, we aimed to provide a contrary view by showing psychosis from the point of view of those afflicted. As Laurynas eloquently observes: ‘From the inside psychosis is a spiritual journey. But when you see it from the outside it’s mental illness.’

Chapter Five: The Phenomenology of Possession

> [H]e who sees cannot possess the visible unless he is possessed by it, unless he is of it, unless, by principle, according to what is required by the articulation of the look with the things, he is one of the visibles, capable, by a singular reversal, of seeing them – he who is one of them.
>
> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible* (1968: 134-35)

Introduction

Todorov's suggestive observation, noted at the end of the previous chapter, that psychotic experience provides a self-evident framework for stories of the fantastic, is worth examining further, especially given the reliance of the fantastic on narrative strategies that contribute to a delusional atmosphere, such as the free-indirect style. Rather than elaborating Todorov's formalist perspective, however, taking a phenomenological approach permits further analysis of the role of the voice in performance practice and of the impact this can have both upon the psychological representation of characters in cinema and the ways in which audiences relate to these characters. Furthermore, a phenomenological perspective allows a consideration of the function of the voice, vocalised sounds, and breathing in everyday human experience. When Todorov speaks of psychotic experience involving the 'collapse of the limit between subject and object', the part played by the voice naturally comes to mind. In voice-hearing, an inner voice is perceived as coming from the outside which, like any aural or visual hallucination, transforms one's impression of the external world. But from a phenomenological perspective all perception is 'creative'. We project ourselves onto the world, inflecting its perceived aural, visual, material essence, while simultaneously allowing it to penetrate us through our senses. This entwined relationship between self and world is a product of our ability to take up positions outside ourselves using our imaginations (Keats' negative capability). Empathising with others – imagining ourselves in them – underpins our understanding not only of them but of ourselves. For Merleau-Ponty the formation of the self (for example, at Lacan's mirror stage) is not

achieved solely through a perceived separation from the world, but from a concomitant sense of connection with it. The limit between subject and object/other is thus always indeterminate and in flux.

In the chapter that follows I explore the relationship of body to mind, and of the self to the outside world, as they manifest through breathing, vocalised sounds and speech. I begin by looking at the actor's relationship to their character, and the audience's relationship to performance. An engagement with studies in performance practice underscores the fundamental importance of breathing in an actor's preparation, while an analysis of breathing patterns and vocalised sounds in my films, *Unburied* and *Voices Apart*, and of vocal mimicry in *Voices Apart*, reveals the importance of this stylistic feature as a means of achieving an audience's empathic engagement with character. I then move on to consider the role of the speech in my final film for this project, the short drama, *Rising* (2023), which eschews the subjectifying formal approaches taken in my previous films in an attempt to find out whether a delusional atmosphere can be created using an objectively oriented narration. And finally, with the aim of answering a question central to this investigation – how important is viewer identification with character in humanising alterity – I consider how breathing and voice might combine with different levels of narrative focalisation to generate a more accepting view of non-normative perception.

Sonorous Beings: Breath, Cry, Voice

> ADA: You should see a doctor about your talking, it's worse, what must it be like for Addie? . . .
> HENRY: I told you to tell her I was praying. [*Pause*.] Roaring prayers at God and his saints.
> ADA: It's very bad for the child. [*Pause*.] It's silly to say that it keeps you from hearing it, it doesn't keep you from hearing it, and even if it does you shouldn't be hearing it, there must be something wrong with your brain.
>
> Samuel Beckett, *Embers* (2006: 260)

In this extract from Samuel Beckett's 1959 radio play, *Embers*, Henry's wife Ada, who is possibly dead, upbraids him for his habit of constantly talking to himself in the time when

they were raising their daughter Addie. Most likely Addie is a grown woman now but Henry, who sits on a pebbly beach on his own, seems to conjure his past into being as he struggles to come to terms with his life. The 'it' that Ada refers to is the sound of the ocean that Henry ordinarily tries to drown out with a gramophone when he goes to the beach but happens to have forgotten today. His father drowned (or drowned himself) in the ocean – an act for which Henry feels guilty – and his body was never found. The trauma of his father's death haunts Henry and may be the cause of his aversion to the sound of the ocean, even though he is drawn to the water. But Henry doesn't just talk to himself; he talks to people who are physically absent – his father and Ada – and they (Ada at least) engage him in conversation. Perhaps there *is* 'something wrong with [his] brain', to use Ada's expression. As with other Beckett protagonists, he seems to experience aural and visual hallucinations. However, the audience of the radio play won't be able to determine whether Ada, when she appears to Henry, is actually present since we can only *hear* the story, and there are no sound effects (eg, footfall, clothes rustle) for her arrival or departure. The stage directions are explicit: '*No sound as she sits.*' Despite this, she slips a shawl under Henry to shield him from the cold. She appears soundlessly, like an ethereal being, at Henry's beckoning, yet seems to have a mind (and body?) of her own and leaves even as Henry begs her to stay.

The direct discourse of the radio play, less inflected by the narrational and stylistic means available to theatre and cinema, places an emphasis on the voice – its quality and performativity, but also its linguistic capability to conjure a diegetic world into imaginary existence. Sound effects provide assistance here, of course, and Beckett makes creative use of these. Periodically Henry calls out for sounds ('Hooves!') which are (sometimes) duly delivered. But the hooves and other sound effects are created and presented in a patently artificial manner. Henry even declares to his father, '[T]he sound is so strange, so unlike the sound of the sea, that if you didn't see what it was you wouldn't know what it was' (Beckett 2006: 253). This is a world in which the voice is preeminent. It conjures places and people

into being. It conveys action. It is the action. Even within the diegesis, it may be that Henry isn't actually at the seaside at all, but that everything takes place in his mind. Focused on memory, guilt and regret, the play describes a solipsistic haunting. By the final lines Henry is all alone with his voice, an outcome Ada had earlier warned him of:

> The time will come when no one will speak to you at all, not even complete strangers. [*Pause*.] You will be quite alone with your voice, there will be no other voice in the world but yours. [*Pause*.] Do you hear me? [*Pause*.]
>
> (Beckett 2006: 262)

The irony of Ada's speech is, of course, that Ada may be nothing more than an importunate voice in Henry's head. But its vocalisation by a separate actor is key to creating the delusional atmosphere. Is Ada's voice real or imaginary?[77] The free indirect speech act, which in cinema normally benefits from its counterpoint with the picture, here depends upon the absence of picture. In radio drama auditory verbal hallucinations can be represented orally without the same danger of clashing with another level of narration (eg, the camera) as we risk in cinema (for example, in *Shock Corridor*, discussed in Chapter 3.) Shifts in narrative point of view (from a non-focalised, or more objective, perspective to a focalised, more subjective, perspective, for example) can be executed with greater ease because, without an accompanying image, the radio play is less closely tied to naturalistic representation. *Embers* thus achieves the disorienting effect of the free indirect style through direct discourse. And in its equivocation as to whether or not Ada's voice is external to Henry, the play highlights that voice-hearing itself is, figuratively, a free-indirect state.

The radio play's foregrounding of the voice draws attention to the audience's own focus – even reliance – on the voice in dramatic performance. The voice carries much of the

[77] French theatre director Roger Blin, who staged the world premieres of *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame,* remarked that 'Beckett absolutely didn't want me to try to do *Embers* for the theatre because, when you listen, you don't know if Ada exists or not, whether she only exists in the imagination of the character Henry' ("Interview with Roger Blin by Joan Stevens", in Oppenheim 1997: 310).

meaning and emotion in a drama through speech and the manner in which it is delivered. We need only glance at the text of the vast majority of stage plays and screenplays to see the reliance on speech to convey the action and implications of a story. While the spoken word dominates our aural attention, vocalised sounds have the power to draw the audience into an intimate – because subjectively-oriented – relationship with the character or subject. Vocalised sounds, including laughing, crying, grunting, groaning and screaming, express the range of human emotion non-verbally. Broadly speaking, while we may respond to speech primarily cognitively, vocalised sounds are likely to evoke less a cognitive interpretation than a non-verbalised feeling. Indeed, the distinction can be compared to the difference between cognition and perception used to distinguish between the two narrational levels of internal focalisation discussed in Chapter 3. However, in examining the effect of vocalisation from the receiver's perspective, vocalised sounds (perception) rather than speech (cognition) seem to elicit a greater feeling of subjectivity, bypassing conscious, verbalised thought and directing our attention, not to a meaning formulated from a codified linguistic system, but the unique expressiveness of *this* human being at *this* moment. We thus focus not on the sense of the expression but on its vocal quality (tone, texture, shape) and what it tells us about the subjective experience of the person emitting the sound – at least in the first instance. And in attending to a dramatic performance we pay greater conscious attention to the texture of the voice and the shape of the gesture than we might ordinarily do in everyday life. In his *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound*, Don Ihde refers to this phenomenon as the 'dramaturgical voice' which 'amplifies the musical "effect" of speech' (2007: 167).

But the lifeblood of all vocalisations, both speech and sound, is breath. We inhale the energy and substance with which to vocalise so we may emit sound as we exhale. In an exchange with the outside world, air is taken inside ourselves, then returned to the world in an altered form, sometimes accompanied by a creative act of the voice. Our breathing itself, like our voice, is distinct. Its depth, frequency, rhythm and sonority depend not only

upon our physical being, but also our emotional state. The way we breathe reflects how we feel. Or, inversely, our feelings dictate our breathing and affect our voice. And, because we understand the conditions that give rise to our different states of being, in listening and watching another person breathing and vocalising we have the capacity to empathise, to internalise and reflect their emotion. In *The Visible and the Invisible*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty discusses this sonorous relationship between subjectivities, between bodies:

> [I]f I am close enough to the other who speaks to hear his breath and feel his effervescence and his fatigue, I almost witness, in him as in myself, the awesome birth of vociferation. As there is a reflexivity of the touch, of sight, and of the touch-vision system, there is a reflexivity of the movements of phonation and hearing; they have their sonorous inscription, the vociferations have in me their motor echo.
>
> (1968: 144)

Our understanding of another involves a reciprocal identification. Through a reflexive movement we identify in the other something within ourselves which gives their gesture meaning. Again – but in this case on a psychological rather than a physical level – the outside is brought within then returned, altered, back to the world. We internalise our perception of another and project back to them how their feeling makes us feel.

Breathing mixes outside and inside in a more obvious manner perhaps than perception, but hearing and seeing (the two senses directly engaged by cinema) also bring the outside in – though coloured by our mental projections. Perception is a creative act and it brings us into a relationship with the world and with other subjectivities. Our common humanity and our capacity for empathy help us to understand others. Merleau-Ponty elaborates in his *Phenomenology of Perception* :

> Communication or the understanding of gestures is achieved through the reciprocity between my intentions and the other person's gestures, and between my gestures and the intentions which can be read in the other person's behavior. Everything happens as if the other person's intention inhabited my body, or as if my intentions inhabited his body.
>
> (2012: 190-91)

Thus, in relation to a dramatic performance, '[t]he sense of the gestures is not given, but rather understood, which is to say taken up by an act of the spectator' (2012: 190).

Audience identification with a character relies upon this gestural recognition at least as much as it does the cinematic narrator's perspective on the action expressed through focalisation – an issue we will return to in the discussion of *Rising*. Meanwhile it is important to point out that vocal and physical gestures begin with the breath, a fact that trained actors are well aware of. Indeed, in an essay written in the 1930s, 'An Affective Athleticism', Antonin Artaud outlines the functional importance of breathing for actors, a means by which to evoke particular emotions:

> Thus an actor delves down into his personality by the whetted edge of his breathing. For breathing which maintains life allows us to climb its stages step by step. If an actor does not have a certain feeling, he can probe it again through breathing . . . . Breathing accompanies feeling, and the actor can penetrate this feeling through breathing . . .
>
> (2010: 96)

From the opposite perspective, an acoustic focus on breathing can draw the audience into a character's experience. Indeed, diverse films coax an intimate connection with a character's emotional state through dipping the ambient sound while introducing the character's closely-recorded breathing.

In Tarkovsky's *Mirror* (1975), for example, a flashback to the 1930s depicts the protagonist's mother Masha (Margarita Terekhova) dashing through the streets to the newspaper printing press where she works to verify whether she has made a typographical error involving Stalin's name – a punishable offence! Discrete sound effects accompany the slow-motion cinematography: a streetcar; footfall on pavement; a sudden downpour of rain; and, throughout, a close, dry acoustic representation of Terekhova's breathing. In spite of the camera's pursuit of her, the action feels remarkably intimate. We sense the character's urgency without yet understanding the dread that motivates it. Dramaturgically, the construction of the sequence invites us to empathise with Masha in advance of a scene in which her colleague Lisa unexpectedly criticises and belittles her.

Despite differences of genre, culture and the era of production, *Fish Tank* (Arnold 2009) employs a similar tactic. When Connor (Michael Fassbender) takes Mia (Katie Jarvis) onto

his back to piggyback her the ambient sounds fade, superseded by close-perspective breathing: his regular and full of exertion; hers higher pitched, but long and slow. The sound design underscores Mia's perception of the moment as intensely intimate and encourages the audience to sympathise with her feelings. In both examples, through a shift in aural perspective the film's narration moves – *in regard to the soundtrack* – from non-focalised to externally focalised which, although not strictly subjective (as, for example, the sound of a heartbeat can be), carries a strong feeling of subjectivity, similar to that of a close-up of a character's face. Interestingly, the movement to external focalisation brings the soundtrack into accord with the narrational level of the picture track, which in both cases is already externally focalised (ie, the main characters are singled out for our visual attention). But it is the audio close-up of the character's breathing*, even more than the visual focalisation*, that draws the viewer into the character's subjective experience.

Furthermore, once a film attunes the viewer to characters' breathing, its sonic quality can signal moment-to-moment changes of emotion and intention. Just as breath itself spans the internal-external divide, the perceiver's awareness of the external manifestation of another's breathing can lead to an understanding of the feelings bound up with the breath. In her handbook on Rudolph Laban's movement psychology, a publication aimed primarily at dancers and actors, former Laban assistant Jean Newlove discusses the effect of movement and emotion on breathing: 'Just as physical movement can interfere with any regular rhythm in breathing, so can the emotions, and for the same reason: that more oxygen is needed to cope with the situation' (Newlove & Dalby 2004: 166). She provides examples that we recognise from our own experience and relates them to Laban's 'basic efforts', the eight types of movement that we all enact in our daily lives and which contribute, though character and habit, to the expression of our personalities.[78] 'Any gesture that consists of a strong slash or thrust requires an intake of breath first which is

[78] The eight basic efforts are: pressing, flicking, wringing, dabbing, slashing, gliding, thrusting, floating.

exhaled with the gesture' (165). The basic efforts of slash (sudden, strong, flexible) and thrust (sudden, strong, direct) apply not only to physical movements, but can be used by actors in preparing for a dialogue scene, the physical gestures being internalised to inform the vocal delivery and to manifest in body language. Breathing lies at the origin of gesture.

From my own films, Severija Janušauskaitė's performance as Eglė in *Unburied* provides a clear example of how breathing prepares for, and signals, action. Believing her friend Kristina (Vilma Raubaitė) to be duplicitous, she aggressively confronts her in the kitchen. Eglė declares that her dead father attacked her in the night, something she knows intuitively Kristina won't believe. A sharp intake of breath precedes the accusatory statement which she thrusts at Kristina like a punch: 'He tried to rape me' (fig. 5.1). Kristina demurs ('That's enough'), her words also preceded by a quick intake of breath (this is a gloves-off

Fig. 5.1 Unburied: Eglė's sharp intake of breath prepares her for conflict.

argument, and she may be experiencing the flight-or-flight impulse). But without warning, and before Kristina even finishes her line, Eglė slaps her face (fig. 5.2). Kristina gasps at the

Fig. 5.2 Unburied: Vilma gasps with surprise at being slapped.

sudden contact. Newlove writes about the effect on breathing of just this kind of surprise:

> Unpleasant surprise, in the form of being given a fright, will cause a sharp intake of breath. For instance, if you were suddenly threatened by a mugger, after the sharp intake of breath you would probably hold it in a freeze while you wonder what to do, having taken in the maximum amount of oxygen. On the other hand, if the cause of the fright turns out to be a friend, as soon as you realise this you would exhale the breath with sheer relief.
>
> (Newlove & Dalby 2004:166)

In fact, unexpectedly, the slap was real. Without informing anyone, Severija decided that actual contact would make the moment more believable and so, circumventing our planned choreography, truly shocked Vilma. Vilma's gasp adds authenticity to the moment.

In his *Theory of the Film*, Béla Balázs points out the aesthetic and dramatic importance of breathing in cinema performance, not just as the foundation of gesture, but as what he refers to as a 'sound-gesture' in its own right:

> Then there is the sound connected with mere breathing, which we ourselves do not even perceive as intentional action, but merely as the acoustic aura of a human being, something like the scent of skin or hair. Herein lies a specific opportunity for the sound film.
>
> (Balázs 1952: 227)

Our atypical working method on *Voices Apart* confirmed Balázs' observation about the foundational importance of the sound-gesture. As discussed in Chapter 4, the breathing and vocal patterns of the contributors as captured in their recorded testimony formed the cornerstone of our actors' performances in *Voices Apart* – not just their expressions and

breathing but, when we required it of them, their bodily exertions – while the close acoustic focus on the breath and vocalised sounds provided authenticity to the moment. For example, in the studio scene at the end, Gintautė Rusteikaitė's performance of Agnė's final statement is choreographed around pauses, a large intake of breath, and a laugh:

> [*Pause.*] And [*Pause.*] I would be scared if one day I woke up and the voices were gone and I wouldn't be told what's going to happen. [*Deep intake of breath.*] I wouldn't know what to do. I know that I'm never on my own. [*Laughs.*] And I like that.

Gintautė uses the initial pauses to sit forward in a confessional manner. She links the inhalation of breath to an expression of surprise and disbelief (figs. 5.3 and 5.4), then sits


Figs. 5.3 & 5.4 Voices Apart: Gintautė with a long, two-stage intake of breath.

back in her chair as she allows the laugh to provide a release of tension (and breath). The close microphone perspective on Agnė's vocalisations (breathing and laughter) increases the intimacy of the scene and, I hope, draws in the audience to a moment of revelation – not just to the interviewer, but possibly to the contributor herself. In contrast to dramas and documentaries that don't rely on the lip-sync technique used in *Voices Apart*, our necessary focus on the contributors' speech patterns and vocalised sounds provided us with an additional tool to explore character. As Balázs remarks, the tone in which words are spoken is as important as the words themselves:

> the cadence, the emphasis, the timbre, the husky resonance, which are not intentional, not conscious. Vibrations of the voice may mean many things that are not included in the meaning of the word itself – it is a sort of accompaniment to the words, a verbal gesture.
>
> (Balázs 1952: 227)

Channelling the unique sound-gestures of the contributors into their own physical gestures, our actors were able to provide a nuanced and internally-focused performance with a

strong sense of authenticity.[79]

Building a performance from existing testimony recalls verbatim theatre (the practice of using documentary testimony as the basis for a play's text) but having actors lip-sync evokes a theatre rehearsal practice referred to as the *siffleuse* (French for whistler) which is designed to remove self-consciousness and promote an instinctual, uncensored performance. Clive Barker, who worked with renowned English theatre director Joan Littlewood (1914-2002), describes the practice as employed by Littlewood:

> Each actor is allocated a prompter who moves behind him or her, speaking the lines half a line before the actor as a conscious prompt. The actor is not only free to explore the situation, free of having to remember the lines, but learns the text in a functional, communicative manner in which it is delivered by the prompter, close to how the line should be spoken. The use of the siffleuse reinstates a process close to the interactive relationship of mind and speech, which is natural to us.
>
> (Barker 2000: 122)

While the process sounds anything but natural, it aims to achieve a functional performance 'devoid of conscious intention' by removing 'self-imposed and textual pressures which interfere with the action of the subconscious' (122). The similarities with the lip-synching method we used in *Voices Apart* are evident (although at the time I wasn't aware of the *siffleuse* method) and in our case I believe it did result in performances of great immediacy and believability.

Our actors had very different reactions to the process, however. When we spoke to them after the Lithuanian premiere of the film (January 2021), Sergėjus, who played Laurynas, admitted that at first he had felt 'robbed' and 'like a monkey' forced to mimic, which made it difficult for him to get into the role. During the shoot he was concerned that his performance would lack the sense of an inner life, and he worried about over-acting, particularly in relation to his mouth movements. Happily, however, he was very pleased with

[79] We were pleased by the reception of the film at the Vilnius International Short Film Festival in Lithuania where not only did the actors receive compliments for their performances, but many native speakers took the vocal performances to be the actors' own.

the end result. On the other hand, Pranciškus (who played Mantas) felt that the process allowed him to forget that he was performing, and therefore to perform more naturally. Gintautė concurred. Both Pranciškus and Gintautė remarked upon how they had unconsciously adopted their contributors' vocal mannerisms in real life after the conclusion of the shoot. In Gintautė's case, it was so pronounced that her acting teacher observed she wasn't herself and asked where she'd got these new mannerisms from! It seems that for both Gintautė and Pranciškus the lip-synching method fostered a deep identification with their characters. Undoubtedly part of this reaction can be attributed to the real-life nature of the testimony (and the form that it takes: a script, but also a vocal recording) which gives the dialogue a greater truth value than that of a typical screenplay, however insightful and true-to-life a script may be. But another aspect must be the 'monkey'-like repetition that, as with the *siffleuse* method, can free the actor from inhibitions or self-consciousness by by-passing conscious intention. That our actors' own voices would not be heard in the finished film (in contradistinction to the *siffleuse*), might also have given them a feeling of greater freedom. For while our actors did speak in their own voices during filming, delivering their lines in sync with the recorded testimony that was played for them on set, they knew that only the voices of the documentary subjects would be used in the finished film.

Perhaps significantly, Gintautė and Pranciškus were inexperienced actors. As noted in Chapter 4, at the time of the shoot Gintautė had only just begun her professional acting training while Pranciškus, who is a sound designer, had previously done only extra work. Sergėjus, on the other hand, had many years of professional experience on both stage and screen. Clive Barker notes that in Littlewood's Theatre Workshop '[w]illing novices were preferable to the conservatoire-trained actors' (121) on account of their greater openness. Perhaps, therefore, Gintautė and Pranciškus were more susceptible to the process, and more willing to be 'possessed' by their real-world characters, though all three actors did ultimately achieve a high degree of identification with their roles.

Realism and the Magical Event: The Short Film *Rising*

> Therefore, if philosophy is in harmony with the cinema, if thought and technical effort are heading in the same direction, it is because the philosopher and the moviemaker share a certain way of being, a certain view of the world which belongs to a generation. It offers us yet another chance to confirm that modes of thought correspond to technical methods and that, to use Goethe's phrase, 'What is inside is also outside.'
>
> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'The Film and the New Psychology' (1964: 59)

> [T]he body proper is a premonition of the other person, the *Einfühlung* [empathy] an echo of my incarnation, and . . . a flash of meaning makes them substitutable in the absolute presence of origins.
>
> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'The Philosopher and His Shadow' (1964: 175)

Todorov asserts that the fantastic 'lasts only as long as a certain hesitation' (1975: 40) – the time during which a spectator seriously entertains the validity of two mutually exclusive interpretations of diegetic events. 'The fantastic therefore leads a life full of dangers, and may evaporate at any moment' (40). In *Unburied*, either Eglė hallucinates her father or he really does return from the dead; yet the narrative aims to keep both readings in play. As already observed, what permits the evocation of the fantastic, and – importantly for the present exploration – the creation of a delusional atmosphere, is the mobilisation of a subjective point of view within a free indirect style. 'In stories of the fantastic, the narrator habitually says "I"' (Todorov 1975: 82). *Unburied* and *Voices Apart* depend for their effect upon the cinematic narrator aligning itself with the protagonists' subjective perspectives: the audience does, I hope, feel both an ontological insecurity and an empathy.

In reflecting on Hong Sang-soo's 2016 drama, *Yourself and Yours*, in Chapter 2, I asserted that although the film creates a delusional atmosphere, its objectively-oriented narration prevents audience empathy with the character who may be suffering from psychosis, and therefore it doesn't meet my requirements for a cinematic representation of psychosis. But I based this assessment on a film whose narrative focus is not squarely on the character who is possibly suffering from delusion, but shared with that of her former

lover. What if a similar narrative voice were employed but with the traumatised character as the focus?

With *Rising* I set out to challenge my previous assumption that a more subjectively focalised narration is required to elicit empathy for the protagonist. *Rising* tells a story with a similar central conceit to *Unburied* : a dead father returns to confront the daughter whom he has traumatised through his behaviour in life and with the event of his death. In contrast to the stylistic and narrative tropes of the horror and thriller genres employed in *Unburied*, and the overtly subjective devices of visual and auditory verbal hallucinations and dreams, with *Rising* we attempted studiously to maintain an everyday realism, exemplified by the matter-of-fact figuration of the father's return from the dead and the daughter's reaction to it. The first four scenes establish an ordinary suburban setting and suggest a coming-of-age drama about 17-year-old Cassie who objects to her mother's new partner and vies with her friend Melissa for the attention of their classmate, Martynas. In the fifth scene, which takes place in the garden shed where Cassie goes alone to fetch a spanner, she unexpectedly encounters her father, Jake. Although Cassie is taken aback at the sight of him, her reaction suggests puzzlement more than fear: 'Dad? What are you doing here?' For his part Jake behaves as though nothing out of the ordinary is happening: 'I came to see you'. Although there are signs that something is amiss – Jake's initial vacantness and vague uncertainty about how he got there; his incongruously formal yet ill-fitting attire; the suite of safety pins that make a tuck in the back of his suit jacket and may suggest Frankensteinian stitches – it isn't until he accuses Cassie of failing to attend his funeral that viewers will be confirmed in their suspicions. At this point ideally the audience will be speculating about Jake's metaphysical status – has he actually returned from the dead, or is he the imaginative projection of his distraught daughter? – and anticipating a resolution to the uncertainty. But the film's uninflected presentation of the encounter aims to ground the marvellous in the mundane. Rather than focusing on the father's threat or mystery, the narrative puts the emphasis of Jake's return on the awkward attempts of father and

daughter to make amends for their failed relationship. If, in its engagement with the supernatural thriller, *Unburied* stresses the fear and peril of psychotic experience, what are the implications of the representation of psychotic experience in *Rising,* given the film's venture into the realm of magic realism?

We didn't write the script for *Rising* with the notion of magic realism in mind, yet during our postproduction I happened to see Céline Sciamma's latest film, *Petite Maman* (2021), on its initial UK release and was struck firstly by how it typified a certain kind of magic realism, and secondly by the similarities of tone and subject matter with *Rising*. Modest in scope and scale, the stylistic and narrative simplicity of *Petite Maman* clarifies how magic realism may be distinguished from the genre which subsumes it: fantasy. While fantasy conjures the marvellous using cinematic devices designed to elevate narrative events from both mundane reality and our ordinary ways of perceiving, often setting these stories in imaginary worlds, magic realism of the sort that I describe here – that of *Petite Maman* and other recent representative films[80] – sets its stories in the historical world using a style unadorned and realistic. The magic in the stories emanates from the incongruity of impossible events taking place in our shared reality – someone returning from the dead, as in *Rising*, or travelling in time, as in *Petite Maman* – and not in the way that these events are portrayed by the narration or perceived by the characters. While physically impossible to occur in the objective world, the magical event can easily be imagined to be the manifestation of a character's inner desire, a cathexis on past trauma that magics a dead person to life or transports a character into the past – wish fulfilment that may play out in the fantasy of the protagonist's mind but remains formally undifferentiated from external reality by the film.

[80] For example, Ryūsuke Hamaguchi's 2016 short, *Heaven Is Still Far Away*, and Alice Rohrwacher's *Happy as Lazzaro* (2018), both of which feature characters who return from the dead in a matter-of-fact manner into mundane settings – although, as noted below, *Happy as Lazzaro*, does ultimately cross the line into the marvellous at a later point in the story.

Petite Maman tells the story of eight-year-old Nelly who, after the death of her maternal grandmother, is taken to her grandmother's house in the country where Nelly's mother grew up and where her parents intend to pack up the grandmother's belongings. But Nelly's mother is overcome with grief and departs early one morning without saying goodbye, leaving Nelly temporarily in her father's care. Later that day, while playing in the surrounding woods, Nelly encounters a girl her own age, Marion, who, it turns out, is actually Nelly's mother as a child – hence *petite maman*. The friendship that quickly grows between Nelly and Marion leads Nelly to express the sadness and guilt she feels about her adult mother's troubled and distant behaviour. The narrative suggests that the encounter is therapeutic for Nelly and, in a final twist, also for the grown-up Marion who returns to grandma's house at the end in an act of reconciliation.

In both *Petite Maman* and *Rising* the magical event is so seamlessly integrated into the real-world setting that, even if interpreted as the imaginative projection of a troubled protagonist, the characters' reaction to their trauma resists diagnostic separation from their psyche, as if this trauma were some kind of deforming psychological excrescence; rather, it appears to constitute an essential aspect of their personality. Prior to the evocation of magic the two films establish Nelly and Cassie as confident and outgoing characters, yet exceptional in the depth of their sensitivity and empathy for others. Nelly seems mature for her eight years. She socialises with elderly women in the hospital where her grandmother has just died, then, on the journey to her grandmother's house, solicitously feeds her mother childish snack food as she drives. In *Rising* we first meet Cassie as she roots around in the grassy verge for a bolt lost from her bicycle, in the process encountering a spattering of blood on the road which she assumes is from an animal struck by a car. She dips her finger into a congealed drop and examines it, imaging the animal. 'I hope it's still alive', she murmurs, partly to herself, partly to her friend Melissa whose response provides a foil to Cassie's unconscious eccentricity and situates the narrative firmly in the world of western middle-class suburban teenage experience: 'It's just an animal.' Nelly's caring and

concern for her grieving mother – playing mother to her mother – prepares the narrative and psychological ground for the spiriting into existence of her mother's younger self. But this groundwork is quite within the realm of the ordinary. The child appears neither distressed nor troubled. Cassie's urge to commune with a suffering creature through contact with its lifeblood, and her thoughtful contemplation of death, provide a window into her mental landscape but without, I hope, suggesting 'aberration'. Thus, in both films trauma is not treated 'traumatically' (as it is, for example, in *Unburied*) but as a component of the experience that forms character. The response of secondary characters reinforces this: Nelly's father meets and accepts the eight-year-old Marion, seeming to confirm her independent existence, while Cassie's mom, though she is clearly worried about Cassie, doesn't contradict her daughter's experience; indeed, she eventually supports her. In neither film is the protagonist's trauma pathologised.

Normalising the magical event by maintaining a 'straight' style and real-world setting further dissolves the boundary between inner and outer worlds, mind and matter. The inside is outside. Whereas stylistic devices, such as process shots, 'inhuman' viewing positions, and the representation of characters' dreams and hallucinations, like a musical score may help convey the nature of a character's experience, they also risk shifting the viewer away from the immediacy and reality of that experience. In literary terms these cinematic devices function in the order of a simile which acknowledges its own artifice, its imaginative construction, through its form. For example, the acoustic representation of an auditory verbal hallucination, as in *Unburied*, is an approximation of how an AVH might really 'sound', since the sound does not exist in physical reality, only in the experience of the person perceiving it. The audience recognises the effect as 'like' the experience of an AVH – a further remove from the actual experience. On the other hand, treating the event solely metaphorically, as in *Rising*, results in its being presented as the film viewer would perceive it in reality if they were in the (admittedly imaginary) scene. Jake's unlikely appearance in the shed would be, the film indicates, just this: a dead man, somehow

restored to life, sitting right here before us in his funeral attire, moving and talking, as Cassie perceives him. By presenting this magical event as of the same ontological order as, for example, Cassie's experiences with her friends, the film advocates for its actuality.

Unlike *Petite Maman*, however, *Rising* brackets the magical apparition; Jake remains out of view of the other characters throughout the narrative. If Martynas or Cassie's mom or partner were to enter the shed, would they encounter Jake? In order to maintain the possibility that Jake is indeed real, and not definitively Cassie's imaginative projection, we were compelled to limit the sighting of him to Cassie. If he were to appear to other characters, the film would enter the realm of the marvellous.[81] *Petite Maman* can allow Nelly's father to see Marion because to him Marion is a stranger: Nelly's newfound companion who lives nearby. The film is not obliged to resolve Marion's ontological status because no character has a reason to interrogate it.

Despite the objectively oriented narration, *Rising* tells a story wholly focused on Cassie's experience which the film, through its structure and style, invites the audience to empathise with. The composition, staging and narrative incident of the film's opening shots identify Cassie as the protagonist through external and perceptual focalisation, with all subsequent scenes, bar one,[82] formally organised around her actions and reactions (figs. 5.5 and 5.6). Cassie's movements drive the action, and the shift of her attention motivates numerous shots (figs. 5.7 and 5.8). And while no overtly subjective stylistic devices are used, the sound design and colour grade function, along with the spare musical score, to

[81] In *Happy As Lazzaro* the revenant Lazzaro is recognised by a group of characters which confirms, midway through the story, that we are no longer in the territory of the fantastic, but of the marvellous – a world in which people can genuinely return from the dead. In this interpretation, Lazzaro is a metaphysical phenomenon in an otherwise realistic world. Significantly, however, the film doesn't mobilise a subjective perspective, and the viewer is kept at a distance from Lazzaro's experience.

[82] Although the short second scene which introduces Cassie's mother and her new partner doesn't feature Cassie, Cassie's commentary on them, at first in voiceover within the scene itself, then in her conversation with Melissa in the following scene, frame and inflect it. Indeed, this scene functions as an illustration of Cassie's perspective on the relationship between her mom and partner, emphasising the latter's anti-Americanism and (from Cassie's point of view) chavvy behaviour.

express Cassie's emotional state and the collusion of the external world with her inner struggle. Small gusts of wind positioned on the soundtrack at key moments suggest the


Figs. 5.5 & 5.6 Rising: Cassie dominates the compositions.


Figs. 5.7 & 5.8 Rising: Cassie's point of view and shifting attention motivate cuts.

stirring of Cassie's emotion and the complicity of the environment in her suffering.[83] The wind rises when Cassie touches the blood in the opening scene and again when she first sees her father in the shed, emphasising and linking these two moments that raise the spectre and mystery of death – absence that suggests presence (blood as a synecdoche for the creature spilling it) and the presence that recalls absence (the father's fantasmatic return). In the second shed scene, as Cassie confronts the possibility of her father dying a second time, the wind intrudes louder, stronger, and colder, its unrealistic presence insisting on its psychic origin. And Cassie's voice reverberates more markedly and hollowly

[83] This recalls similar moments in a number of films, but two stand out for their subtle and effective use of trees rustling in the breeze to suggest the protagonist's inner turmoil, both from Eric Rohmer's *Comedies and Proverbs* series: *The Green Ray* (1986) and *My Girlfriend's Boyfriend* (1987).

than in the first shed scene, an audible indication of her sense of social and emotional isolation – the delayed onset of her arrested bereavement.

The progression of the colour grade also mirrors Cassie's journey away from comfort and community toward desolation – from afternoon to early evening, late summer to Baltic autumn, from the warm cast of yellow and orange light in the first part of the film to the cyan that cools the green trees crowding Cassie's flight at the end (figs. 5.9 and 5.10). The turning point in the shift from warm light to cool occurs in the party sequence. With Cassie's rejection by her friends, the guest's suspicion of her, and her mother's inability to offer succour, Cassie returns to the shed an outcast. And as the seasons figuratively change and the weather appears to get colder, again the wind blows, its susurration used selectively in the final sequence. On her bicycle at last, racing past her dead father who plods along the roadside, Cassie finds herself riding a tightrope between two worlds – both


Figs. 5.9 & 5.10 Rising: the colour grade marks Cassie's emotional change.

of which, from the perspective of the film's narration, are objectively contained within a single reality.

To return to the epigraphs of this section, Merleau-Ponty's particular phenomenological perspective emphasises the reversibility of perception in our encounters with the world. In seeing other subjects, we perceive them as objects but also, in a recognition of their own embodied experience, as subjects who perceive us as objects – and also as subjects: 'As soon as we see other seers . . . henceforth, through other eyes we are for ourselves fully visible' (1968: 143). This intertwining of subject and object in the acts of perception and

expression Merleau-Ponty called, in his final book – radically incomplete at the time of his premature death – the *chiasm*. In contrast to Lacan's notion of the mirror stage in which the otherness of those outside ourselves is emphasised, Merleau-Ponty sees the communication between 'seers' as empathetic, a collaboration in subjectivity. It is through our recognition of their shared humanity and subjecthood that we are able to understand them. We internalise their self-expression, even while our gaze 'clothes them with its own flesh' (1968: 131). We cannot help, in our embodied and always partial perception, projecting our inside outside – to cite Goethe again. The interaction between Cassie and Jake shows the gradual development of mutual understanding as the two face one another, each recognising the other's humanity while confronting their own failings as reflected back to them.

The primal, charged encounters between Cassie and Jake, and between Nelly and her 'little mother', may point to the sorts of psychoanalytic figurations of dysfunction which could very well arise in dreams. Each initial encounter takes place in a location significant to the protagonists' conception of their parents. In *Rising* Jake is associated with the shed where he has stored (or hidden!) meaningful objects – not only the 'something I wanted to give you', but also his hip flask. The presence of a desk and chair where he sits suggests he may well have spent a good deal of time there – a 'man cave'? In *Petite Maman* Nelly knows that as a child her mom built a fort in the forest (a 'girl cave'?) so it's logical that if she were to encounter her mother's younger self it would be in this forest where she goes in search of the fort. In these meaningful, intimate locations the person who preoccupies the protagonists appears to them – conjured from an interoceptive perception, a realist interpretation would assert. But in this psychological reading, the parent projected by the child is not imaginary; s/he is a product of the child's experience and memory. The actuality of the meaningful place calls forth memories and feelings that give rise to a perceptual experience, similar to that evoked by an aesthetic experience or creative process that inspires us to perceive the world differently, abstracted through thought: '"pure" ideality . . .

derives from the fundamental mystery of those notions "without equivalence," as Proust calls them, that lead their shadowy life in the night of the mind only because they have been divined at the junctures of the visible world' (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 152-3). Interestingly, in *Petite Maman* Nelly and little Marion role-play a scenario they devise together, their process of enactment metaphorically echoing Nelly's own psychodrama in conjuring the young Marion into being in the first place. For both Nelly and Cassie, then, what is inside is also outside: the 'magic' conjured from within projected onto the 'reality' of the world without. Confronting the (dis)embodied cause of their trauma, they engage in an imaginative *chiasm* – a gesture acknowledging that their own subjectivity is intertwined and imbricated with that of their absent parent – in an effort to understand them and, thus, themselves and their own suffering.

Perceiving Differently

> 'The landscape thinks itself in me,' he said, 'and I am its consciousness.'
>
> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Cézanne's Doubt' (1964: 17)

> GIULIANA: But what do people expect me to do with my eyes? What should I look at?
> CORRADO: You say, 'What should I look at?' I say, 'How should I live?' It's the same thing.
>
> Michelangelo Antonioni, *Red Desert* (1964)

Within the generic conventions of *Rising* the voice plays a wholly naturalistic role, in marked contrast to its uses in *Remember, thou art clay*, *Unburied* and *Voices Apart*. Apart from the 'pre-lapping' dialogue at the end of the second scene (a common device, of course, in much realist cinema), and the off-screen voices during the first shed scene, the voice doesn't direct or counterpoint the picture, nor does it function formally to deepen the subjectivity of character (as it would in the case of internally focalised dialogue such as inner speech or AVHs). The voice remains either non-focalised or externally focalised. In other words, only physically emitted voices are rendered. Indeed, in a further contrast to our first three films, the off-screen voices in the first shed scene function as indices not of

subjectivity, but of the ongoing existence of ordinary life outside the shed – a stark counterpoint to the fantastic encounter taking place within. The sound of the lawnmower, the birdsong, and the thud of the apple hitting the roof serve a similar purpose. The voice thus integrates into the fabric of everyday reality which the film attempts to convey through its performance and visual style, leaving the magical event itself to evoke the free-indirect.

As with Beckett's *Embers* then, *Rising* achieves its free indirect effect primarily through an interpersonal discourse, a conversation between two people, one of whom is (possibly) dead, coupled with the enduring uncertainty about the ontological status of the fantasmatic interlocutor. Much less stylistically marked and subjective than *American Psycho* or *Birdman,* discussed in Chapter 3, or indeed the films of David Lynch, the free-indirect style of *Rising* bears more similarity to the approach taken in the film extolled by Pasolini in his theorising of the free indirect point-of-view shot: *Red Desert* (Antonioni 1964). While Antonioni uses stylised production design (famously spray-painting grey the fruit in a street stall, as well as an entire stand of trees)[84] to colour the world according to the perception of the 'neurotic protagonist', Giuliana (Monica Vitti), the film's narration maintains a predominantly objective perspective in relation to the action. This world might appear the same way, the narration implies, to any of the other characters. Nevertheless, by virtue of Giuliana's narrative centrality and the fact that she is pathologised within the diegesis, the environment can be taken to be a reflection of her state of mind. To quote again from 'The "Cinema of Poetry"', cited in Chapter 1, Antonioni, according to Pasolini, 'looks at the world by immersing himself in his neurotic protagonist, re-animating the facts through her eyes' (Pasolini 2005: 179).

Might Giuliana thus be regarded as 'the landscape's consciousness' – as Cézanne describes himself in the epigraph to this section – her vision and anxiety not a sign of illness

[84] 'In *Red Desert* I had to change the very face of reality, the color of the water, the roads, the landscapes, I had to paint them literally. It wasn't easy.' Antonioni, quoted in Peter Brunette, *The Films of Michelangelo Antonioni* (1998: 91).

but rather a natural (human) reaction to an acute awareness of the anomie induced by industrialisation and its associated environmental contamination, just as Cézanne's paintings represent his wholehearted attempt to portray the world as he actually saw it? But as Merleau-Pointy points out, Cézanne's doubt about the quality of his work, which he once attributed to 'trouble with his eyes', and his friends' perception of him as a failure, may have resulted from a 'weakness' of character, his schizophrenia:

> In this sense to be schizoid and to be Cézanne come to the same thing. The meaning Cézanne gave to objects and faces in his paintings presented itself to him in the world as it appeared to him. Cézanne simply released this meaning: it was the objects and the faces themselves as he saw them which demanded to be painted, and Cézanne simply expressed what they wanted to say.
>
> (Merleau-Ponty 1964: 20-21)

For Cézanne there was a two-way communication between himself and objects in the world. The objects expressed themselves to him in their being and he communicated his perception of them through his paintings, which reveal the uniqueness of his vision – possibly a result of his 'illness'. According to Merleau-Ponty the so-called illness is not only a fundamental aspect of Cézanne's character, but also marks a variation in human perception and thus 'becomes a general possibility of human existence'. Psychotic perception and expression are responses to real (present or past) stimuli and thus represent genuine and legitimate human behaviour.

This empathic view of psychotic behaviour advocates an appreciation of the intrinsic nature and quality of the individual's communication and communion, both with others and the world, rather than identifying their behaviour as an expression of illness. It requires of a film viewer their imaginative projection into the experience of the character, establishing what Gallese and Guerra call an 'intersubjective link' (2020). So what approach must a film take if the director's objective is to elicit empathy in the viewer for the protagonist who perceives and expresses herself differently, and to what degree might this depend upon our *sympathetic* engagement with the character? Naturally the reception of any given

characterisation will differ according to era, culture and individual taste. But perhaps an initial judgement can be hazarded through comparing the protagonists of *Red Desert* and *Rising*. *Red Desert* figures a cold, unyielding, transactional and (literally) toxic world which can be taken, in part, as a representation of Giuliana's perception of it, while the objectively oriented narration,[85] coupled with Monica Vitti's performance, accentuates Giuliana's confusion, anxiety and near helplessness. So even while the representation of society and its devastation of the natural world encourages our condemnation in *sympathy* with Giuliana, the story, narrative voice and central performance promote a view of her as *objectively* neurotic, making empathic identification with the suffering protagonist challenging. By contrast, in *Rising* we attempted to create a positive representation of Cassie (by contemporary standards) by drawing her as active, independent and resourceful. A key strand of the plot features Cassie's ambition to fix her bike, in the pursuit of which she turns down an offer of help from her boyfriend in order to sort it out herself. During the first shed scene she stands up to her father's attempt to shame her for not attending his funeral. At the end she sets off to find some way of dealing with her grief – and possibly a growing awareness of her difference – on her own. I believe, therefore, that for a contemporary audience Cassie cuts a more sympathetic figure than Giuliana thanks to the characterisation and plot of *Rising*. However, the question of empathic engagement remains vexed.

While both films do maintain a sense of the free-indirect throughout, for different reasons neither film creates a delusional atmosphere in a deep and sustained way, thus missing an opportunity to generate embodied simulation in the audience (a neurobiological response mirroring that of the characters) and thereby to forge an intersubjective link. The narration of *Red Desert* places the viewer very much in the actual world, despite the

[85] The exception to this narrative voice (which is, of course, compatible with the free-indirect) is the visual representation of the story that Giuliana tells her son, which we may take to be her mental image of it.

exaggerated sound design (including electronic music), cinematography and production design of certain scenes. No events disorient us or make us seriously question the reality of what we witness. On the other hand, the narration of *Rising*, like that of *Petite Maman*, presents the single magical event as a fact within the diegesis, so after the initial moment of surprise it becomes an accepted feature of the film's world. The protagonists present not as deluded and suffering from hallucinations so much as possessing perception which penetrates beyond the ordinary (Cézanne's 'trouble with his eyes' as it were). Cassie, Nelly and Giuliana are all exceptional characters but, like Cézanne, they are not disoriented or uncertain about the truth of their experience; instead they seem to see beyond the surface of the world – with one caveat. In the final sequence of *Rising*, when Cassie passes her father on the road, our intention was to suggest that she might now be forever haunted by this apparition and – crucially – that she has herself just realised this. Perhaps in this final incident of the film the question of the ontological status of the father is raised for a second time, but this time also by Cassie. For some viewers, then, the film may appear to ask with its final images, does Cassie now consider herself to be mentally ill?

There is a chasm of difference, of course, between seeing and hearing differently that which expresses itself through its physical existence (Cézanne), and seeing and hearing manifestations or expressions from beyond the physical world (Cassie and Nelly). But the question for the perceiver remains the same in both cases: can I trust my perceptions? The concern thus shifts from questions of ontology to epistemology: how do I know what I know; are my beliefs about the world justifiable; can I trust my senses, my mind? Cézanne's doubt is shared to some degree by all of us since, as Vivian Sobchack recognises in her phenomenological account of cinema, *The Address of the Eye*, 'we all read against the grain, "see" against the grain, as our experience of the world differs from the experience of others who offer their vision to us' (1992: 307). *Red Desert*, *Petite Maman* and *Rising* ask their viewers to entertain and accept different ways of perceiving (and being in) the world. In this context we can return to the questions posed at the beginning of the chapter – how

important to achieving these ends is viewer identification with the protagonist, and what part does narrative focalisation play?

These two variables – narrative focalisation and viewer identification – might initially appear to have a positive correlation: the more subjectively-oriented the narration, *mutatis mutandis*, the greater the likely empathy the audience will feel toward the focalised character. However, the experiment in employing a different narrative voice for *Unburied* and for *Rising* suggests that not only is this unlikely to be a productive generalisation (or, in any event, the number and complexity of influencing variables make it impossible to determine), but the more important correlation is between the degree of narrative focalisation and that of delusional atmosphere – as Todorov discovered in his study of the fantastic. The greater subjectivity of *Unburied* contributes, I believe, to a greater ontological insecurity (an empathetic response) than *Rising*, even while Eglė is for many viewers likely to be a less sympathetic character than Cassie. It may indeed be the case that although a subjective focus within the free-indirect is necessary to create ontological insecurity, stylistic devices that convey psychological experiences subjectively (from the inside, as it were) tend to work against character identification – in part, at least, because the extremity of these characters' experiences make them challenging to relate to. *American Psycho* and *Lost Highway*, and the superhero sequence in *Birdman*, for example, create a sustained disorientation in the viewer originating in the protagonist's subjective experience, but without generating sympathy. This isn't always the case and must also depend to a degree upon the nature of the story and upon the personality of the viewer. Certainly, the less subjectively inflected magic-realist approach is not as disorienting as the extreme subjective and stylistically expressive renderings of psychotic experience in more fantastical films such as *Birdman*. Yet it may be that their characters are more sympathetic.

The protagonists of all four films made for this project – *Remember, thou art clay*, *Unburied*, *Voices Apart* and *Rising* – suffer from a haunting. Most of them by past trauma, but all of them by doubt about the nature of the real – a sense that their experience of the

present has a palimpsestic relationship to the past, to imagination, and even to the future – an existential haunting. In *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures*, Mark Fisher muses on Derrida's notion of hauntology from *Specters of Marx* (1993) and its application to psychoanalysis, what Derrida referred to as a 'science of ghosts'. As Fisher explains, hauntology explores the spectres that haunt us from both the past and future, the absences that co-exist in our split sense of presence:

> We can provisionally distinguish two directions in hauntology. The first refers to that which is (in actuality is) *no longer*, but which *remains* effective as a virtuality (the traumatic 'compulsion to repeat', a fatal pattern). The second sense of hauntology refers to that which (in actuality) has *not yet* happened, but which is *already* effective in the virtual (an attractor, an anticipation shaping current behaviour).
>
> (Fisher 2014: 19, emphasis in the original)

Unburied and *Rising* leave the viewer contemplating characters obsessively confronting past ghosts, but also bleakly looking ahead to inescapable future haunting as well as the prospect that their fantasmatic experiences will leave them not only bereft, but isolated. 'Haunting, then, can be construed as failed mourning. It is about refusing to give up the ghost or – and this can sometimes amount to the same thing – the refusal of the ghost to give up on us' (Fisher 2014: 22). To varying degrees, this is the fate of us all, though we each live it differently.

In *Embers*, Henry's state of isolation and (failed) mourning is relieved by three modes of human interaction: remembering past events; imagining fictional encounters (telling stories); and the here-and-now communion with the ghosts of his father and Ada, whom Henry takes to be real. Thus, all Henry's relations are fantasmic. In a cruel twist to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological account of the native empathy that exists in an encounter between two people, Beckett imagines the encounter with another as, solely, a confrontation with oneself. The play ends with Henry looking ahead disconsolately to an unending string of empty, undifferentiated days. In the final words of the play, Henry equates the isolation he foresees with silence: 'Saturday . . . nothing. Sunday . . . Sunday . .

. nothing all day. [Pause.] Nothing, all day nothing. [Pause.] All day all night nothing. [Pause.] Not a sound' (264). No voice: no communion. The conversation that Cassie seeks with her father resembles that between Henry and Ada. It may seem at times ordinary, even desultory, but it marks a desperate attempt at connection and, ultimately, at redemption, through mourning. Being illusory, however, it is perhaps doomed to fail. While *Embers* and *Rising* both hold out the possibility of healing through communion, the voice that might offer it is merely an Ovidian echo.

Conclusion

> 'A little later, a voice that I recognised right away – it was my own voice – began recounting a confusing and threatening story. Strangely, I wasn't surprised by this remarkable phenomenon. Quite the contrary. I followed the story with the greatest interest. While my voice recounted the story, I fell asleep.'
>
> *Histoires de Glace,* Raúl Ruiz (1988)

In the world, voice and the breath that supports it offer the opportunity of communion with ourselves and with others. Breathing, vocalising and listening stimulate us perceptually, cognitively, emotionally. However, the splitting of one's voice, as occurs in auditory verbal hallucinations, may result in an uncertainty about the origin of the voice and, possibly, a fractured relationship with oneself. When hallucinatory perception generates cognitive dissonance, it can contribute to dissociation, and even to the dissolution of the self. As Roger Caillois describes it in 'Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia', 'the body separates itself from thought, the individual breaks the boundary of his skin and occupies the other side of his senses' (1984: 30). The figure becomes ground – the personality assimilated into the space outside the body.

In cinema, breathing forms the bedrock of physical and vocal performance; it provides a pathway to the actor's embodiment of their character. When accentuated it can draw the audience into a sympathetic identification with the actor's invention. While Caillois focuses

on sight and space in his analysis of psychosis, the voice too has a profound dissociative power as Raúl Ruiz demonstrates in his 1988 film, *Histoires de Glace* (*Ice Stories*), quoted in the epigraph above. Like Caillois, Ruiz had a close affinity with surrealism and, thus, with the creative potential of irrational thought through the suppression of the ego. The movement toward depersonalisation described in *Histoires de Glace* accords with Merleau-Ponty's assessment of Cézanne's creative method, defined by the artist's unique manner of communing with the physical world, and provides insight into the experience of voice-hearing and the representations of psychosis in the films made for this project.

As a filmmaker, approaching psychosis from a phenomenological point of view encourages a sympathetic, embodied engagement. Seeing oneself in another, whom you mirror, and who reflects you back, suggests the dual narrative perspective of Todorov's fantastic and Pasolini's free-indirect style. Yet, as demonstrated by the different narrative focalisations of *Unburied* and *Rising*, even while working within these paradigms a great deal of scope remains for a director to control the degree of perceptual ambiguity and empathic engagement. While it might seem that the more subjective the film's narration, the more likely the audience will be to identify with the protagonist, the contrary approaches taken with *Unburied* and *Rising* show that this isn't the case.[86] And while some perceptual ambiguity is necessary to create a delusional atmosphere, this needn't be solely generated by subjective representations of characters' perceptions. Story events, as used in magic realism, can also prompt a paradigm shift in the audience's understanding of the story world, blurring the boundary between reality and fantasy – between, perhaps, voice and voices, speaking and being spoken.

[86] We also know this from experiments such as *Lady in the Lake* (Montgomery 1947) in which the subjective point-of-view shots used throughout the film resulted in the audience feeling estranged from, rather than identifying with, the protagonist. As with other devices designed to make the audience experience not only what a character perceives, but also how they do so, such subjective POV shots can be alienating, the device drawing attention to its own artifice.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

> Thus, no truth is more certain, no truth is more independent of all others and no truth is less in need of proof than this one: that everything there is for cognition (i.e. the whole world) is only an object in relation to a subject, an intuition of a beholder, is, in a word, representation.
>
> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* (2010: 23-24)

> What, art mad? A man may see how this world goes / with no eyes. Look with thine ears . . .
>
> William Shakespeare, *King Lear* (Act 4, Scene 6)

This project has explored the creative possibilities of the voice in cinema in the service of representing psychosis. Central to the enquiry has been the free indirect, both as a narrative voice or style of discourse and as a metaphor for an epistemology of perception. The four published film outputs present, broadly, three distinct applications of the free indirect and two opposing views of psychotic experience. *Remember, thou art clay*, in its sustained use of the acousmatic voice and imbrication of discrete temporal, spatial, and modal orders, offers the most radically incommensurate (to use Deleuze's term) sound-image relationship, calling to mind Eisenstein's notion of 'sensual thinking' or Lisa Blackman's 'bicameral mind' by placing the audience in the position of the (unseen) contributor whose voiced thoughts and implied vision only occasionally coincide. *Unburied* and *Voices Apart* periodically employ the voice subjectively to represent the protagonists' duality of perception. The fantasmatic voices the protagonists hear can be simultaneously embodied and disembodied. The narratives move into the free indirect when the ontological status of the seen and heard becomes uncertain. In *Voices Apart* the contributors' testimony often dictates the images we see, seeming to take over the film's narration from the cinematic narrator in a way akin to Rohmer's protagonists as conceptualised by Deleuze. Deleuze remarks, in a passage cited in Chapter 1, that the free indirect in Rohmer's cinema emerges through a discursive movement from indirect to direct. This abstruse notion implies that the free indirect, like narrative point of view in general, extends across a continuum, rather than occupying a defined position, and forms and dissipates

through a dynamic interaction of elements. To extrapolate further, story, narrative point of view, and style move and work in tandem – always together, yet sometimes linked in opposition. Thus *Rising*, which makes least use of free indirect devices and the creative possibilities of the voice, sets the fantastic story event of the return of the dead father against the predominately objective narrative point of view and realist style. The tension between these elements produces the free indirect.

Using Deleuze's figuration, the free indirect of *Rising* could be said to originate in the movement from direct to indirect discourse. The unadorned style and simple but marvelous story events interact to produce a narrative that seems, upon reflection, more diegetic than mimetic, more tale than tragedy. As observed above, *Voices Apart* moves in the opposite direction, from indirect to direct, weaving out of recounted stories a documentary reality that is almost too fantastic to be real.

And yet – does this account unduly simplify the complexity of the moment-to-moment formal interactions and corresponding audience response? Perhaps *Remember, thou art clay* provides an object lesson here. Its narrative seems to inhabit the free indirect throughout; whether its free-indirect defining movement is predominantly in one direction or the other depends upon what you take as its first principle, the physical space of the factory or the psychic space shaped by the contributor's discourse and the grain of her voice. Like the other films, then, though perhaps more obviously, *Remember, thou art clay* creates its free indirect through oscillation rather than one-way movement, though a judgement may be made regarding its ultimate orientation. The fluctuation thus describes the ambiguity of diegetic reality and functions to trigger the viewer's either-or uncertainty in the face of it.

As an epistemological metaphor, the free indirect figures this split perception of reality and the resulting ontological insecurity it causes the protagonists. With the exception of *Remember, thou art clay*, which doesn't feature an embodied protagonist, the films take one of two positions in relation to this experience, while also acknowledging the possibility

of different outcomes. The solipsistically oriented conclusions of *Unburied* and *Rising* (echoing those of Beckett's *The Unnamable* and *Embers*) present a pessimistic view of grappling with psychosis. How do you heal from profound trauma if it locks you in a conversation with yourself? Conversely, through a narrative sleight of hand – bringing the three contributors together to share their stories and commiserate – *Voices Apart* proposes a more optimistic course, one based on the therapeutic method advocated by the Hearing Voices Network: dialogue with others who share similar experiences as a means of gaining self-understanding and learning to live with one's voices.

But regardless of whether the films present the experience as predominantly positive or negative, all four highlight the primacy and subjectivity of perception in our engagement with, and understanding of, the world. They therefore make two key claims, one epistemological, the other ethical: we each experience the world in our own way and cannot truly know how others experience it, and our individual embodied experience bestows upon us the capability – if not the moral imperative – to imagine others' experience by extrapolating from our own. Despite their unique life experiences and perception, the participants in *Voices Apart* empathise with one another in an act of solidarity and moral support. In *Unburied* Eglė's friend Kristina tries to understand and to help her, and even when all looks lost sits next to her in a gesture of consolation, refusing to give up on her. The films aim to induce viewers to take up similar positions.

Were the films successful in creating empathetic engagement in audiences? Anecdotal evidence presents a mixed picture. As with the experience of any fictional representation of character, such engagement is necessarily momentary and dispersed. Instances of ontological insecurity, shared with Eglė of *Unburied* and the protagonists of *Voices Apart*, produce empathic responses, as do other cinematic elements such as the representation of touch (eg, Kristina's bathing of Eglė in *Unburied*), movement (eg, Cassie riding her bicycle at the end of *Rising*) and visual/aural point-of-view, but also close-ups of the protagonists' faces marked with emotion – all categories of representation that are known to trigger

mirror neuron responses in viewers generally. However, as discussed in the section 'Perceiving Differently' of Chapter 5 above, having sympathy with characters is also important, as it creates what Murray Smith describes as 'moral-emotional appeal' (2022: 269). Yet empathy and sympathy do not always work in tandem. A moment of empathic engagement may not translate to a sympathetic evaluation of a character overall, though ideally this would be the case, for (to quote Smith again), 'Orthodoxy holds that empathy is a core feature of a properly functioning moral psychology; without fellow feeling we cannot display the sensitivity towards others that morality demands' (269). Empathy provides us with the vicarious ('simulated') embodied experience necessary for intersubjectivity, and the caring and compassion for others to which this might contribute. Ultimately, given the number and complexity of variables to be measured, the success of our films' character portrayals must be said to rest with each viewer individually; a definitive assessment would not only be impossible, but presumptuous.[87]

Schopenhauer's theory of our embodied experience, which led to new schools of thought in western philosophy, including phenomenology, asserts that we perceive all the world only in its phenomenal presentation within our mind, and not in its reality. Our body is the sole object about which we have 'double cognition' – both as 'representation' (*Vorstellung*, also translated as 'presentation' or 'idea', and akin to 'imagination') and as thing-in-itself. Schopenhauer points out that 'only into this one object of perception [are we] allowed insight in two modes simultaneously' (2010: 128). Although this provides us, through analogy, with insight into others' experience, he is pessimistic about our ethical response, believing that we are driven primarily by our egoistic impulses. (Merleau-Ponty, working within Schopenhauer's phenomenological paradigm, is more optimistic about our capacity for empathy.) However, because we perceive everything outside ourselves

[87] For a comprehensive taxonomy of the cinematic elements contributing to film viewers' feelings of sympathy and empathy, see Murray Smith's *Engaging Characters: Fiction, Emotion, and the Cinema* (2022).

according to the ideas formed of it in our minds, our view of the world not only lacks objectivity but is akin to dreaming (Schopenhauer 2010: 38-40). The sense of the unreality of our perception that Schopenhauer conveys here (looking back to Plato) paves the way for epistemological and ontological doubt, but also for creativity – sensual thinking – and art, which Schopenhauer believes has the power to elevate us, temporarily at least, from our egoistic drives. Might the experience of cinema therefore help to foster such empathy?

As discussed in Chapter 2, Eisenstein's sensual thinking – pre-logical inner speech or 'embodied thinking', fed by the senses – is both a psychological activity and a formal feature of 'true' works of art. Eisenstein compares the mental process to atavistic or 'aberrant' conditions: infantalism, shamanism, religious ecstasy, hypnosis, drug-induced states, and schizophrenia. It permits us to glimpse the reality beyond multiplicity, Schopenhauer's life force or 'will', shared by all animate things – '*Tat tvam asi!*', as Schopenhauer quotes from the ancient Indian *Vedas*: 'You are that!' (2010: 401). Art can trigger this awareness through the stretching of formal and conceptual connections, fostering a dual awareness in the perceiver – exactly the approach, I have argued, necessary for the subjective representation of psychosis, and for encouraging an empathic understanding.

As I have attempted to demonstrate throughout this project, voice has a fundamental role to play in innovative cinematic expression thanks to its boundary-spanning nature as thought and speech, bodily index and incorporeal messenger, bearer of emotion and conveyor of linguistic meaning. The intersubjective nature of the voice as a formational psychic influence on selfhood, vehicle of interpersonal communication, and material personal attribute makes it an inexhaustible and flexible cinematic tool for transfiguring subjectivity to sound and image. The films produced for this project make a small contribution to the ongoing exploration of this field, but many innovative possibilities remain to be explored.

In the technical domain, with the advent of Dolby Atmos surround sound systems and the capacity to position sound precisely in the theatre auditorium and shape it three-dimensionally (not only horizontally – side-to-side and front-to-back – but vertically) voices can be located anywhere on-screen or off-screen and moved fluidly through the space of the auditorium. The voice from a speaking subject could subtly be detached from the subject's mouth to create a disorienting or uncanny effect, the spatial equivalent of being temporally out of sync. A speaking subject could be on screen and in sync, but spatially 'out of joint'. Hallucinated acousmatic voices could float dynamically through three-dimensional space. Home cinema speakers and headphones can now also reproduce these effects.

Formally, more work can be done with verbatim techniques in cinema. Having actors lip-sync to pre-recorded speech, as we did in *Voices Apart*, need not be limited to documentary re-enactment; it could be used in drama, not only for capturing the authenticity of speech patterns, but to generate a new kind of performance practice and alienation effect. A Brechtian performance might emphasise not only the actors' awareness of their psychological and physical distance from the characters they play, but also from the voice for which they provide a body. Character attitudes could be illuminated through mismatches of voice and body. For example, a dissembling character's voice could lack coherence with their body. Dubbing and ADR already achieves similar effects, albeit usually unintentionally. Fassbinder, a very Brechtian director, creates strong alienation effects with ADR. In *The Merchant of Four Seasons* (1971), for example, the vocal eruptions of laughter and yelling are out of all proportion to their visual equivalents in the more subdued performances the audio recordings are married to. Lip-syncing to pre-recorded speech would not only allow for creative opportunities in postproduction, as with ADR, but also in production.

The unique qualities of an individual's vocal apparatus can also be exploited for dramatic purposes. Balázs pointed out that every individual has their own 'acoustic aura'

recognisable, he claimed, from their breathing alone. If so, the aura must certainly become more apparent and more complex when breath gives life to vocalised sounds and speech. As noted in Chapter 5, the 'verbal gestures' Balázs identified – those often unconscious, material and expressive aspects of the voice (tone, timbre, cadence) that accompany speech – can be as important, or even more so, than the semantic message they convey. We reveal our transitory feelings and intentions, as well as abiding character traits, through unconscious gestures – not only verbal, of course, but physical as well. Laban referred to such unconscious bodily movements as 'shadow moves', which may naturally accompany speech. While Laban explored the field of movement psychology in detail, including its relationship to breathing, theoretical work remains to be done in the field of the verbal gesture. Barthes made some headway on this in his essay 'The Grain of the Voice', discussed in Chapter 2, and Chion has contributed in his significant body of work, but a systematic survey and analysis of the material qualities of the voice for performance purposes, similar to what Laban has done for movement, would be beneficial to directors, at the very least to raise awareness and understanding of its material aspects and expressive possibilities.

Susan Sontag's famous battle cry from the front lines of 1960s film criticism remains relevant today, not only to critics and theorists, but to film practitioners: 'What is important now is to recover our senses. We must learn to *see* more, to *hear* more, to *feel* more'. She insisted that we need to focus on *how* art is what it is, or even '*that it is what it is'* (2013: 14). From my point of view, I would narrow the focus of the exhortation with which she ends her essay, by substituting for 'art': 'we need an erotics of [the performative voice]'.

I would like to conclude this chapter by returning to the notion of sensual thinking. As a theorist-practitioner, Eisenstein applied his ideas not just to his aesthetic and philosophical preoccupations within a given film, but also to his manner of working. Sensual thinking cannot be embodied in a film simply through applying the formal qualities of dual unity that

Eisenstein identified as essential.[88] It must first be intuited and practiced by the filmmaker. As with artists in all disciplines, the filmmaker must in fact draw on a creative process that involves listening to the pre-logical inner speech that seems to speak without intentionality, and without a voice. As King Lear enjoins the blind Gloucester, so we too must see with our ears – in this case, our 'inner' ears.[89] The creative process requires an openness to the irrational and the impossible – many of the traits that, when out of balance, have come to define what society labels mental illness. We must attend to our dreams, chase associations, make metaphors. Making art can itself be akin to dreaming – not normally in the actual shooting of a film, of course, given the intense pressures of production, but in the overall process which bears a resemblance to the 'realizing fabrication' that Deleuze sees Rohmer's protagonists creating when they recount their life experiences, spinning them into tales. I will provide one recent example.

The story for *Rising* came to me in a dream, though not in the form that it now exists in the film. In the dream my paternal grandfather casually returned home from the dead one day to the surprise of *no one* in the family but me. The distress that I felt in the dream about the neglect my family showed him was, I realised only years later, late in the scripting process, the transference *within the dream* of my own guilt and regret over *choosing* to miss his funeral in real life – something I'd barely thought about since that time, decades ago. Now that dream exists in our shared reality – as a film, which is of course another sort of dream, one that can be projected publicly. For me, *Rising* bestows a disorienting solidity on my ephemeral private experiences. The film is, and is not, an accurate representation of the dream, just as my dream was, and was not, an accurate representation of the real experiences that led to its generation. Rational and irrational elements jostle together at

[88] Eisenstein's theory bears resemblance, of course, to Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian duality as set forth in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872).

[89] The import of Lear's speech to Gloucester is how one's perspective determines the significance of social structures and events.

every stage: life, dream, art, the experience of art. Because a film comes together through a myriad of choices, many of which, despite all the careful planning, are instinctive or unconscious or outside of one's complete control (however did we come up with this idea, or that strategy, or end up with this actor to play that part, and in this way?), so the end result, in spite of the real-world, goal-oriented pragmatism that drives a production, feels very much like a dream: something done by someone else, or perhaps by oneself, but in that divided dreamlike mind in which you watch yourself being yourself, behaving like someone else. Experience can be, as Schopenhauer describes, like an 'idea' – but not of an intellectual variety; instead, like Gloucester, we see (and hear) the world feelingly, with imagination, empathy and emotion. But also with reason.[90] Thus we are often of two minds.

The psychotic experience differs from normative experience in degree, not in kind.

[90] Eisenstein seems to have postulated the notion of 'sensual thinking', at least in part, to allow the incorporation of unreason into his intellectual cinema.

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Filmography

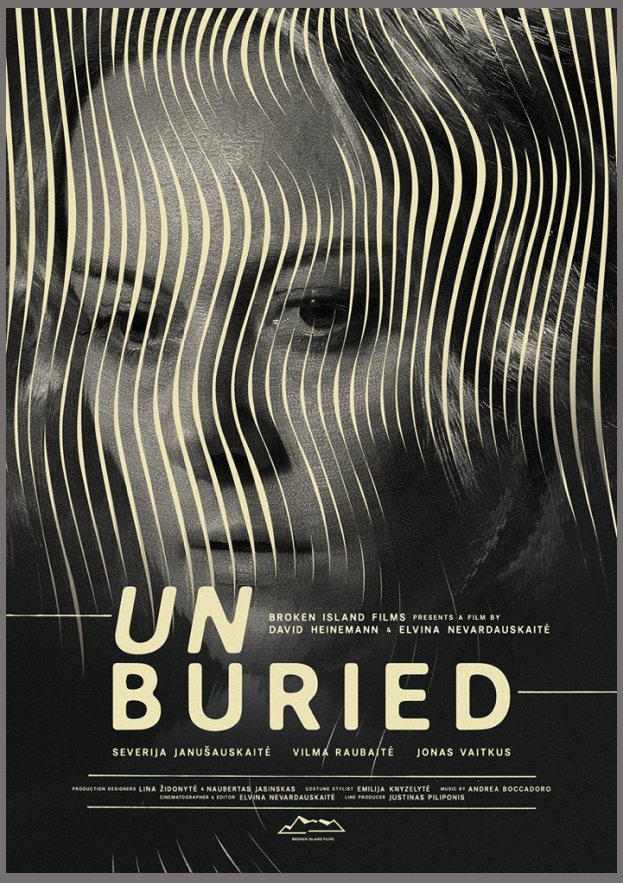
American Animals (Layton 2018)
American Psycho (Harron 2000)
Anomalisa (Kaufman & Johnson 2015)
The Arbor (Barnard 2010)
L'Avventura (Antonioni 1960)
The Babadook (Kent 2014)
Badlands (Malick 1973)
A Beautiful Mind (Howard 2001)
Birdman (Iñárittu 2014)
Blackmail (Hitchcock 1929)
Black Sun (Tarn 2005)
Black Swan (Aronofsky 2010)
Blue Jasmine (Allen 2013)
Buffy the Vampire Slayer, 'Normal Again', episode 17 of season 6 (Rosenthal 2002)
The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (Wiene 1920)
Capturing the Friedmans (Jarecki 2003)
Chile, Obstinate Memory (Guzman 1997)
Claire's Knee (Rohmer 1970)
Clean, Shaven (Kerrigan 1993)
Enter the Void (Noé 2009)
Fish Tank (Arnold 2009)
Gertrud (Dreyer 1964)
The Green Ray (Rohmer 1986)
Happy as Lazzaro (Rohrwacher 2018)
Harvey (Koster 1950)
Heaven Is Still Far Away (Hamaguchi 2016)
Hiroshima, Mon Amour (Resnais 1959)
Histoires de Glace (Ruiz 1988)
Hour of the Wolf (Bergman 1968)
The Imposter (Layton 2012)
India Song (Duras 1975)
Inland Empire (Lynch 2006)
Keane (Kerrigan 2004)
Lady in the Lake (Montgomery 1947)
Last Year at Marienbad (Resnais 1960)

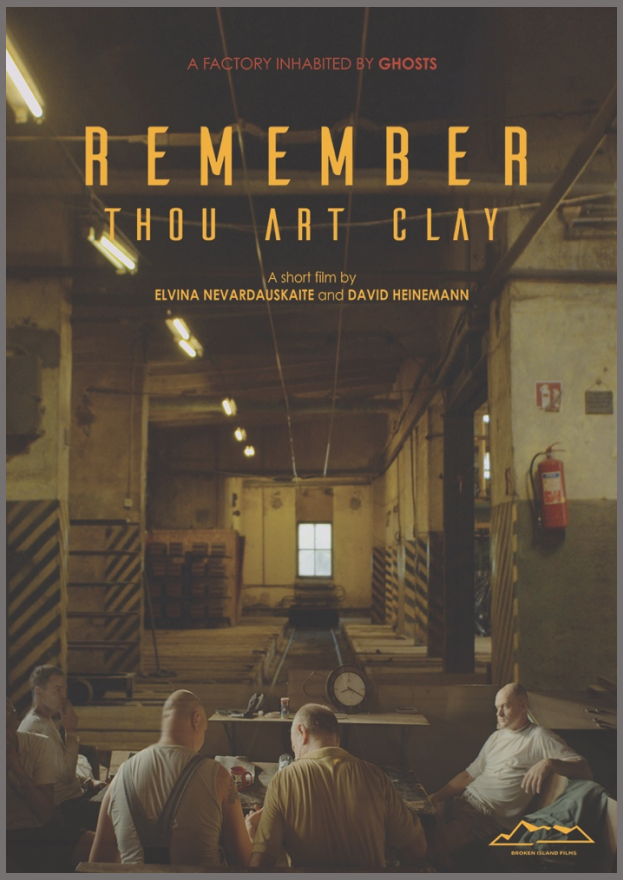
Life on Mars (Graham, Jordan and Pharoah, 2006-2007)
Little Dieter Needs to Fly (Herzog 1997)
Lost Highway (Lynch 1997)
The Machinist (Anderson 2004)
The Merchant of Four Seasons (Fassbinder 1971)
Mirror (Tarkovsky 1975)
Mr. Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter, Jr. (Morris 1999)
Mr. Robot (Esmail 2015—2019)
Mulholland Drive (Lynch 2001)
Muriel, or The Time of Return (Resnais 1963)
My Girlfriend's Boyfriend (Rohmer 1987)
The Nightmare (Akiz 2015)
Nosferatu (Murnau 1921)
Nostalghia (Tarkovsky 1983)
Notes on Blindness (Middleton and Spinney 2016)
Once Upon a Time in Anatolia (Ceylan 2011)
Ordet (Dreyer 1955)
Perceval (Rohmer 1978)
The Perfect Human (Leth 1968)
Persona (Bergman 1966)
Petite Maman (Sciamma 2021)
Proof (Madden 2005)
Psycho (Hitchcock 1960)
Red Desert (Antonioni 1964)
Repulsion (Polanski 1965)
Rosemary's Baby (Polanski 1968)
The Sacrifice (Tarkovsky 1986)
Scanners (Cronenberg 1981)
The Secret Lives of Dentists (Rudolph 2002)
Shock Corridor (Fuller 1963)
Shock Head Soul (Pummell 2011)
Shutter Island (Scorsese 2010)
The Silence (Bergman 1963)
The Snake Pit (Litvak 1948)
The Sound of Insects: Record of a Mummy (Liechti 2010)
Spellbound (Hitchcock 1945)

Split (Shyamalan 2016)
Stalker (Tarkovsky 1979)
Standard Operating Procedure (Morris 2008)
Stories We Tell (Polley 2012)
The Student of Prague (Rye 1913)
The Tenant (Polanski 1976)
That Obscure Object of Desire (Buñuel 1977)
The Thin Blue Line (Morris 1988)
The Three Faces of Eve (Johnson 1957)
Tongues Untied (Riggs 1989)
Twin Peaks: The Return (Lynch 2017)
Une simple histoire (Hanoun 1959)
Vampyr (Dreyer 1932)
Yourself and Yours (Hong Sang-soo 2016)
Wormwood (Morris 2017)

Appendices

Appendix 1: The Film Posters





Appendix 2: Script of *Unburied*

EGLE
(Working Title)

by

David Heinemann & Elvina Nevardauskaite

BROKEN ISLAND FILMS
david@brokenislandfilms.com
07 September 2017
FINAL DRAFT - LITHUANIAN DIALOGUE

1 EXT. VILNIUS ALLEYS - NIGHT 1

MONTAGE OF SHOTS

In the old town of Vilnius: shadowy alleys, ONE ALLEY narrow and cobbled with a long, gradual curve. Faint FOOTFALL.

A SECOND ALLEY with louder FOOTFALL.

A THIRD ALLEY, graffitied and littered with rubbish: SILENCE. Suddenly from an unseen passageway TWO FIGURES run out, cross the alley, then round the corner and disappear from sight.

2 INT. BEDROOM - MORNING 2

In a large, austere, wood-floored room, distant SOUNDS of SHOUTING, SCUFFLING and BREAKING GLASS reverberate. A THUD, then FEET FLEE across cobbles.

Lit by a sliver of dawn light seeping through a crack in her curtains EGLE, mid-thirties, wakes with a start, disoriented. She glances around, then turns on her bedside light and lies back in bed.

Faint FOOTFALL can be heard from the neighbours above her. Water pipes WHINE from somewhere in the walls. Egle's eye is drawn to the bedroom door: the tall, white double-doors are closed. To the left looms a dark wardrobe.

Through parted curtains, Egle stares out her window at the street below. She hears MURMURING voices, possibly from outside. The first bird SINGS.

She lights a cigarette and takes a puff, then hears the CREAKING of a floorboard behind her.

She glances over her shoulder toward the door and into the CAMERA. She listens intently.

3 INT. THEATRE CORRIDOR - DAY 3

By the windows in the corridor, KRISTINA, a brunette actress in her mid-thirties, stands with an unlit cigarette in her hand. She throws her head back and LAUGHS.

Beside her, Egle, the artistic director, raises an eyebrow.

KRISTINA
I can't believe you're dreaming about this guy.

Negaliu patikėt, kad tu dar ir sapnuoji jį.

EGLE
Not dreams.
Eik tu. Kokie ten sapnai.

KRISTINA
Nightmares!
Košmarai!

EGLE
He's burrowed into my head. And all this violence...
Jau neatsimenu kelintą dieną man kartojasi... Ir dar taip žiauriai.

Kristina waves it away.

KRISTINA
He's not worth it. And the play will be fine.
Nesuk sau galvos dėl jo. Pamatysi, viskas bus gerai su ta premjera.

Egle frowns.

EGLE
I'll go have a word with him now.
Einu pasikalbėt su juo.

Kristina nods and gestures to her cigarette.

KRISTINA
We're on a break.
Mums dabar pertrauka.

She looks closely at Egle who seems abstracted. She puts a hand on her arm.

KRISTINA (CONT'D)
I'll find you later.
Susimatysim vėliau.

Egle nods and heads toward the auditorium.

4 INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY 4

On stage the DIRECTOR, an intense elderly man, instructs a single actress dressed in 1940s clothing, the dark-haired, 11-year-old GERDA.

He adjusts her position with a large hand on her thin shoulder. She looks up at him with trusting eyes.

Egle enters the auditorium from a curtained door to the side, then stops and watches the rehearsal.

DIRECTOR
Your mother has just been dragged away by the riflemen.
Gerai, įsivaizduok, tavo mamą kątik suėmė kareiviai.

He gestures off stage.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
What's going to happen to her?
Tai kas jai dabar bus?

GERDA
Killed.
Mirs.

DIRECTOR
Yes. Shot. So what do you do?
Taip. Sušaudys. Tai ką tu tada turi daryt?

GERDA
Get her back!
Apginti ją!

DIRECTOR
Try.
Gerai, bandom.

Gerda half-heartedly tries to push past the Director, but she is held in his large hands like a trapped rabbit.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
No. You've got to really try! I'm a rifleman. Go!
Ne šitaip. Iš tikrųjų turi stengtis! Aš ją nušausiu, jei neišgelbėsi! Supranti? Iš naujo!

Gerda tries to wriggle free, but the Director easily overpowers her and pins her in place.

GERDA
Oi! Let me go.
Ei! Paleisk mane! Man skauda!

DIRECTOR
That's the spirit!
O, O! Šaunuolė!

He LAUGHS, but Gerda is upset.

Egle calls out from the auditorium.

EGLE
Where is everyone?
Kur visi kiti?

The Director takes in Egle for the first time.

DIRECTOR
They've just gone for lunch. Why?
Išėjo pavalgyt.

EGLE
Shouldn't Gerda be having lunch?
O Gerdai papietaut nereik?

The Director turns frosty.

DIRECTOR
She'll get it. What do you want?
Spės. Sakyk ko norėjai.

EGLE
(to Gerda)
Go get your lunch.
Gerda, eik pavalgyt prašau.

Gerda looks at the Director. He nods, tousles her hair, pats her, and sends her on her way.

EGLE (CONT'D)
I can't see how this is going to be ready on time.
Aš nemanau, kad jūs spėsit paruošt premjerą laiku.

DIRECTOR
(annoyed)
It is ready.
Viskas paruošta.

Egle's phone RINGS. She drops the call.

He stares at her calmly.

EGLE
I was just saying...
Tik norėjau pasakyt...

The Director turns away and retrieves his script. Egle hesitates.

Kristina sweeps into the auditorium from the door opposite Egle and addresses the Director and Egle both:

KRISTINA
(play-acting)
Where is my sweet suffering daughter? Her mommy has escaped and wants to make sure she eats her lunch!
Kur mano vargšė dukrytė? Mamytė ištrūko, kad pažiūrėtų ar ji pavalgius, ar pailsėjus.

EGLE
(dryly)
Her captor has just released her.
Gestapininkas ją kątik paleido.

She motions in the direction of Gerda's exit.

Kristina winks at Egle and walks over to the Director.

Egle returns the missed call to UNKNOWN NUMBER.

EGLE (CONT'D)
(on phone)
Hi. Sorry, I missed your call a moment ago.
Sveiki. Radau praleistą skambutį.

The Director greets Kristina theatrically, one eye on Egle.

DIRECTOR
My darling Kristina, I hope you've had your lunch?
Kristina, brangute. Ar pailsėjai?

Egle watches the Director with irritation.

EGLE
(on phone)
I don't know. Possibly. Does it have to be today?
Nežinau, gali būt. O būtinai šiandien?

Across the auditorium Kristina and the Director TALK and LAUGH together as they make their way out.

EGLE (CONT'D)
(on phone)
All right. I'll come.
Gerai, supratau. Būsiu.

Concerned, Egle ends the call and leaves by another door.

5 INT. MORGUE - DAY 5

Egle is ushered into a narrow corridor by the POLICEMAN carrying a clipboard filled with papers.

In the wall a dark window reflects Egle back at herself.

The Policeman makes a sign to someone on the other side of the glass, and the light inside the lab flickers on, gradually increasing in its fluorescent blue intensity.

The window looks into a large, unfurnished laboratory space with a drain in the floor. Positioned right beneath

the viewing window, a body covered by a white sheet lies on a gurney.

A LAB ASSISTANT steps toward the gurney and delicately draws the sheet down to the neck revealing Egle's dead FATHER, a filthy, unshaven homeless man in his early sixties.

The Lab Assistant steps back.

POLICEMAN
(indicating the corpse)
Homeless. We picked him up off the street.
Benamis. Radom gatvėj.

Egle stares, emotionless, at the corpse. Her attention is caught by the large purple swollen hand protruding from under the white sheet and dangling over the edge of the gurney. The fingernails are encrusted with dirt or maybe dried blood.

The Lab Assistant, following Egle's look, reaches over and tucks the arm under the sheet.

The Policeman eyes Egle.

EGLE
(without turning round)
It's my father.
Čia mano tėvas.

The Policeman raises an eyebrow.

POLICEMAN
When was the last time you saw him?
Kada paskutinį kartą jį matėt?

Egle considers.

EGLE
Eight years ago.
Gal prieš aštuonis metus.

The Policeman nods and looks away.

EGLE (CONT'D)
Why?
O ką?

Embarrassed, the Policeman doesn't reply. Instead he produces a dog-eared old photograph and hands it to Egle.

POLICEMAN
We found this on him.
Radom dar šitą pas jį.

Egle examines it: the picture depicts two 11-year-old

girls standing side by side, trees behind them. One of them is blonde, the other brunette. The blonde girl looks very like the young Egle. The face of the brunette is blurred and her hair a swish of motion as she turns away from the camera.

On the back a mobile number is scrawled in black ink.

Egle pales, unsettled.

She looks at the corpse. Her father's head has rolled to the side; his open eyes take her in, staring coldly.

Egle regards him more closely, trembling but not surprised. She glances up at the Lab Attendant.

The Lab Attendant smiles a crooked, knowing smile at her, as if he were the puppetmaster animating her father.

The Policeman shifts uncomfortably.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)
Shall we go?
Na ką, einam?

Egle nods, troubled.

The Policeman makes a sign to the Lab Attendant.

Egle heads for the door and the Policeman follows.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)
There are some forms to be filled in. Do you have your ID on you?
Jums dar reiktų keletą popierių užpildyt. Gal turit asmens dokumentą su savim?

The Lab Attendant pulls the sheet over the face of the father, which faces the ceiling as before, eyes closed, and wheels the gurney out of the room

6 EXT. CITY STREET - DAY 6

Egle strides purposefully down the street.

Passing a HOMELESS MAN slumped on the sidewalk MUTTERING and counting his rosary, she glances at him but carries on.

She takes out her mobile and calls Kristina.

EGLE
(on phone)
Kristina, hi.
Kristina, labas.
(a beat)

Fine. I'm going home now. I'll work from there.
Ne, viskas gerai. Galvoju eiti namo. Iš ten dirbčiau.
(a beat)
No no. Well, my father died.
Ne ne. Mano tėvas mirė.

Suddenly she hears a raspy male voice, right in her ear:

HOMELESS MAN (O.S.)
He'll be there tonight.
Šiandien jis pas tave ateis.

The Homeless Man is following right behind her.

Startled, Egle takes her phone away from her ear as she turns round to see the man.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)
Your locks won't keep him out.
Tavo jokios spynos jo nesulaikys.

EGLE
My father is dead.
Mano tėvas miręs.

HOMELESS MAN
Is he buried?
O palaidotas?

KRISTINA'S VOICE comes from the mobile. Disoriented, Egle glances at her phone, then brings it back to her ear.

When she turns back to the Homeless Man, he's gone. She tries in vain to pick him out from among the PASSERS BY.

Disoriented, she glances at her mobile from which Kristina's VOICE can be heard. She puts it to her ear.

EGLE
(on phone)
Sorry. Some lunatic just...
Atsiprašau. Čia kažkoks psichas...

She turns back to the Homeless Man, but he's gone. She tries in vain to pick him out from among the PASSERS BY.

EGLE (CONT'D)
(on phone)
No, I'm fine. Really.
Ne ne, viskas gerai. Tikrai.

Egle's eyes drift down to a large crack in the pavement.

EGLE (CONT'D)
(on phone)
Maybe you could you come over after

rehearsal?
Gal po repeticijos galėtum pas mane ateit?
(a beat)
Thanks.
Ačiū.

She hangs up and heads home.

7 INT. KITCHEN - DAY 7

Late afternoon. Egle enters the clean, meticulously organised kitchen and puts down her purse. She starts to take off her coat, then pauses: the room is silent apart from the gentle TICKING of a clock on the wall.

Egle observes the clock. Time seems to slow down.

Outside the kitchen window, the wind buffets the trees as if in slow motion.

Egle opens the window letting in a breath of wind and the sound of RUSTLING leaves. She feels the light on her face and relaxes. She turns round.

She takes out the contents of her coat pockets: keys, lip balm, phone, and the dog-eared photograph from the morgue.

She looks at the photo, examining the blurred face of the dark-haired girl.

She drapes her coat over a chair and leaves the room, photograph in hand.

8 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY 8

Egle goes to the bookcase, selects two photo albums, and puts them down on a small, cluttered desk.

She cracks open the old leather-bound album and turns a few pages featuring black-and-white photographs of old relatives enjoying a holiday at the lake: sand, swimsuits, a rowboat.

She passes to the newest album, containing colour photographs. There in the middle of the first page she turns to is a faded photo of two 11-year-old girls standing side by side facing the camera and smiling, freckled, into the sun. Beneath the photo, a caption: EGLE AND LINA.

Egle frowns. She turns the page: a photograph of a shadowy lake, the shades of green and black creating a monochrome look. The water is smooth, limpid. She is disturbed by it - a memory stirs. Who shot this? Did she?

She peers closer and hears the lake water RIPPLING, the WIND moving in the reeds. The light in the room grows faint.

Night falls while Egle remains bent over the photo album.

9 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 9

She turns back to the photo from the morgue. The girls are the same. At the bottom, scrawled in tiny faded handwriting over the image of Lina, Egle notices a telephone number.

She scrutinises the faint script, then takes out her mobile and dials.

A GIRL's voice answers:

GIRL (V.O.)
Egle?
Egle?

Egle drops the call and shudders.

She stares at the mobile wondering whether to call again when the MURMURING of a male voice drifts into the room.

Cautiously Egle gets to her feet and turns toward the bedroom door which is open a crack. A male voice continues to DRONE, possibly from within the bedroom.

Egle takes a tentative step toward the voice.

A KNOCK on the front door stops her. She turns round toward the front door.

Her MOBILE RINGS. She fears the person she just called is calling back, but takes out her mobile anyway: it's Kristina. She picks up and hears Kristina through the phone.

KRISTINA (V.O.)
Let me in!
Įleisk! Aš prie durų.

Egle drops the call and goes to the front door.

10 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT 10

Egle unlocks the three locks and opens the door.

Kristina steps inside and takes stock of Egle.

KRISTINA
How are you? I'm so sorry about your father. It -

Kaip tu? Labai užjaučiu dėl tėvo.

Egle SHUSHES her and closes the door.

EGLE
(whispering)
He's here.
Jis čia.

She gestures toward the bedroom.

KRISTINA
Your father?
Tavo tėvas?

Egle puts a finger to her lips.

EGLE
Shhh. He's been talking to someone about the most horrifying things.
Ššš. Jis ten šnekėjo su kažkuo visokias nesąmones apie mane. Kažkokias baisybes.

KRISTINA
Have you seen him?
Tu jį matei?

Egle shakes her head.

KRISTINA (CONT'D)
Let's have a look.
Ten? Einam, pažiūrėsim.

EGLE
Kristina, no.
Kristina, nereikia.

Kristina takes her hand and leads her down the hallway.

11 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT 11

Kristina gently pushes the door open and walks through the doorway into the room while Egle hovers on the threshold.

EGLE
Please don't -
Prašau, neik ten.

The room is tidy - everything in its place.

Kristina turns to Egle, questioning.

Slowly she opens one of the wardrobe doors while taking a half step back.

Inside there is nothing but neatly hung clothes. She casts a glance round the room.

KRISTINA
What was he saying?
Ką jisai sakė?

EGLE
He was talking about what he wants to do to me.
Pasakojo ką norėtų man padaryti.

KRISTINA
Who was he talking to?
Su kuo jis kalbėjo?

EGLE
I can't be sure.
Nežinau. Nesu tikra.

She listens to something. Faint FOOTFALL sounds from above.

KRISTINA
How have the neighbours been?
O kaip kaimynai tavo?

EGLE
Why do you ask?
Kodėl klausi?

KRISTINA
You'd had some trouble from them.
Kažkada sakei, kad triukšmauja.

Egle hears MURMURING from somewhere beyond the wall.

EGLE
You don't believe me.
Netiki manim.

KRISTINA
Why do you say that?
Kodėl tu taip sakai iškart?

EGLE
I can see it.
Matosi.

Kristina shakes her head.

EGLE (CONT'D)
Why have you come?
Kodėl tu čia išvis atėjai?

Kristina hesitates, unsure how to respond.

EGLE (CONT'D)
(coldly)
I've seen you with Norbertas talking behind my back.
Aš mačiau kaip tu man už nugaros su Norbertu šneki.

KRISTINA
About what? That's not true.
Apie ką? Egle, baik prašau.

EGLE
I saw you two laughing about me today. You're disgusting. You'd be happy if my father killed me. Maybe you'd take my place.
Mačiau kaip jūs šiandien iš manęs juokėtės. Šlykštu. Tu gal net ir laiminga būtum, jeigu mane tėvas užmuštų. Galėtum vietoj manęs dirbt.

KRISTINA
(calmly)
Egle.
Egle.

EGLE
I think you should go.
Gal tu jau eik.

She motions for Kristina to leave. Kristina comes toward her.

KRISTINA
It's not like that. Egle, please.
Bet taip tikrai nėra.

Egle ushers her out.

12 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT 12

Egle walks toward the front door.

EGLE
It's okay. I understand. You've got what you want from me. I see that now.
Viskas gerai, aš suprantu. Jau gavai ko norėjai iš manęs.

Kristina follows uncertainly behind.

Egle opens the door and stands aside for Kristina to pass.

EGLE (CONT'D)
I'll see you at the theatre.
Susitiksim teatre.

Kristina tries to take Egle's hand, but Egle pulls away.

KRISTINA
I'll come back tomorrow.
Aš pas tave rytoj ateisiu.

Egle directs her outside and shuts the door behind her.

She immediately turns back to survey the hallway.

13 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 13

Egle peers behind the sofa.

14 INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 14

Egle peers over the kitchen counter.

EGLE
Papa.
Tėveli.

She walks around island to look on the other side.

EGLE (CONT'D)
(angrily)
Papa!
Tėti!

She tears up, heads toward her bedroom.

15 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT 15

Egle stands in the doorway and surveys the room. Light from the living room spills in between the doors behind her.

Her gaze lands on the bed. The bed stands high off the floor. Something CREAKS beneath it.

She walks over to it, gets down on her knees and peers underneath.

EGLE
Papa?
Tėveli!

FADE TO BLACK.

16 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT 16

Egle lies in the bed, her face crushed into the pillow, her eyes tightly closed.

The SHADOW of a human form moves across her face and bed.

An occasional high-pitched SQUEAKING comes from the water pipes somewhere in the walls.

GERDA (V.O.)
Killed.
Mirs.

DIRECTOR (V.O.)
I'm a rifleman. Go!
Aš ją nušausiu, jei neišgelbėsi!
Supranti? Iš naujo!

A pained expression flickers across Egle's face. She rolls over in bed.

On the floor the light bulb of a toppled-over lamp lies shattered, shards scattered over the floor. The water pipe's SQUEAKING becomes the melancholy autumnal BIRDSONG of the countryside.

CUT TO:

17 EXT. LAKE - DAY - THE PAST 17

Late afternoon. The lake is calm. Occasional bursts of BIRDSONG punctuate the stillness.

Wind RUSTLES the reeds and the pine trees WHISPER.

A girl's voice calls out in increasing agitation.

YOUNG EGLE (V.O.)
Lina!
Lina!
(a beat)
Lina!!
Lina!!
(a beat)
LINA!!
LINA!!

FOOTFALL ON PEBBLES comes closer and closer.

Water LAPS at the shore of the secluded cove.

18 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY 18

The flat is strangely dark. The CAMERA explores the messy

room while we hear: a KNOCK on the front door. No answer. A second KNOCK. Kristina calls through the door.

KRISTINA (O.S.)
Egle, it's me, Kristina.
Egle, čia aš, Kristina.

Egle's mobile RINGS from somewhere in the room. The CAMERA finds the mobile as the CALL goes to message.

From outside, the SOUNDS of a set of keys JANGLING, then a key being inserted into the lock and turned.

The SOUND of Kristina opening and closing the DOOR and stepping into the hallway carrying a BAG OF GROCERIES.

KRISTINA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(calling out)
Egle?
Egle?

KRISTINA'S FOOTFALL moves toward the kitchen.

19 INT. KITCHEN - DAY 19

The blinds are closed. The room messy. Kristina puts down the grocery bags and opens the blinds. Light streams in.

KRISTINA
(calling out)
I brought you some food. I'll make dinner for us.
Paėmiau maisto. Galvoju vakarienę pagamisiu.

She starts to unpack the groceries.

Egle limps into the kitchen dressed only in a housecoat. She is unkempt and wild-eyed; there is blood on her hands and bare feet. One of her feet appears to be cut and bleeding.

Kristina stares at the dishevelled Egle in disbelief.

KRISTINA (CONT'D)
What happened? Let me look at your foot.
Kas atsitiko? Parodyk savo koją.

Egle waves away the questions and observes Kristina suspiciously.

EGLE
I found him after you left.
Radau jį, kai tu išėjai.

Kristina stares at her, stunned.

EGLE (CONT'D)
(flatly)
He tried to rape me.
Jis bandė mane išprievartaut.

KRISTINA
(frustrated)
Egle, that's enough.
Egle, viskas. Užteks.

Egle SLAPS Kristina hard across the face and glares at her.

Kristina puts her hand to her cheek, turns away.

EGLE
You know what he's like. You KNOW.
Tu žinai koks jis yra. Tu ŽINAI.

Kristina searches for a response. She turns back to Egle.

KRISTINA
Let's do what we used to. Come.
Darykim kaip seniau darydavom.
Ateik.

Egle looks into Kristina's face. Kristina takes her hand and leads her out of the kitchen.

20 INT. BATHROOM - DAY 20

In the steamy bathroom, Egle sits in the bath, head on her knees, arms holding her legs, eyes closed.

Sitting on the edge of the bath, Kristina washes away the shampoo from Egle's hair.

KRISTINA
I used to love it when you bathed me. You always took care of me when things were bad. You seemed so grown up.
Man visada patikdavo, kai tu mane prausdavai. Pasirūpindavai manim.
Atrodydavai tokia suaugus.

Egle looks up at her lovingly.

Kristina slides a strand of hair off Egle's cheek and tucks it behind her ear.

She squeezes a sponge and washes Egle's neck. The water TRICKLES down her back into the bath, the SOUND already transformed into lake water LAPPING.

21 EXT. LAKE - DAY - THE PAST 21

Twilight. On the surface of the lake, an oar cuts into the water and rises again trailing a stream of drops behind it.

The jetty in the cove recedes as the boat moves across the dark water of the lake.

FATHER (V.O.)
...selfish, cruel, unforgiving.
Savanaudė. Bejausmė. Melagė.

22 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT 22

In bed, Egle's eyes flicker open. The MURMURING of a conversation drifts into the room.

FATHER (O.S.)
It was entirely her fault.
Ji čia dėl visko kalta.

The voice becomes indistinct. Egle looks to the bedroom door, which is open a crack. The conversation dips to a MURMUR.

Egle sits up, listening intently.

KRISTINA (O.S.)
That's something Egle could never understand. She was always jealous. But it seems she's better now...
Šito Eglė niekad negalėjo suprasti. Ji visada buvo pavydi. Bet bent jau atrodo, kad dabar susitvarkė.

FATHER (O.S.)
Oh Lina, come on. She's worse than ever.
Eik tu, Lina. Jai taip blogai dar niekada nebuvo.

23 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 23

Kristina sits at the table, an empty teacup and a script in front of her. The room is gloomy, lit only from the streetlight, as though Kristina had been sitting since dusk and not bothered to get up.

A movement catches her eye and she looks up.

Egle stands in the doorway dressed in baggy sleepwear, beads of sweat on her forehead and a bandage on her bare foot.

KRISTINA
Hi. I didn't know you were awake. I was going to make us dinner.
Jau pabudai? Norėjau mums vakarienę padaryt.

She tries to gauge Egle's state of mind.

EGLE
I heard you talking to Father.
Aš girdėjau tave kalbant su tėvu.

KRISTINA
As you can see, I'm on my own.
Kaip matai, aš čia viena.

EGLE
He was here. Where is he hiding?
Bet jis čia buvo. Kur jis dabar? Paslėpei?

KRISTINA
How can he be hiding? He's dead. You said so yourself.
Kur galėjau jį paslėpt? Jo nebėra. Jis mirė. Pati taip sakei.

EGLE
Lina.
Lina.

KRISTINA
What?
Ką?

EGLE
I don't think it was him at the morgue.
O tu žinai, kad morge buvo ne jis?

Kristina stares at her in disbelief.

EGLE (CONT'D)
How does that make you feel? Papa's little darling.
Kaip jautiesi? Tėčio numylėtinė.

Kristina doesn't know what to say.

Egle walks into the darkness behind her.

EGLE (CONT'D)
Anyway, I'm not jealous any more. I'm glad you're here.
Bet aš nepavydžiu. Aš vistiek džiaugiuosi, kad tu čia.

Standing behind Kristina, she strokes her cheek and neck.

EGLE (CONT'D)
I like talking to you.
Aš džiaugiuosi, kad mes bendraujam, šnekamės.

Kristina's mind races, though she sits as still as a doll.

KRISTINA
When will you tell me what happened at the lake?
Kada papasakosi man kas nutiko prie ežero?

Egle steps away from Kristina, but stays behind her.

EGLE
Shall I tell you now?
Dabar nori, kad papasakočiau?

Kristina nods.

EGLE (CONT'D)
Summer was over. Not long before, Papa had brought you a lovely present from Kaunas. Remember?
Buvo ruduo. Gal rugsėjis, nebeprisimenu. Tėtis iš Kauno tau tokį suvenyrą parvežė. Tokį juokingą medalį ant kaklo. Atsimeni?

Kristina nods.

EGLE (CONT'D)
A locket.
Atsimenu.

She moves to the window.

EGLE (CONT'D)
You were lying at the end of the jetty. There was no one else around. You looked so pretty. Maybe the most beautiful girl in the world.
Tu gulėjai ant liepto krašto. Aplink nieko nebuvo. Atrodei taip gražiai. Turbūt buvai pati gražiausia mergaitė pasaulyje.

Egle pauses. Kristina turns, nods to Egle to carry on.

EGLE (CONT'D)
I had your locket and I threw it into the water. Well, I pretended to. It was actually a pebble, but you didn't know so you jumped in

after it.
Aš paėmiau tą medalį ir išmečiau jį į vandenį. Na, ištikrųjų apsimečiau, kad išmečiau. Iš tikrųjų ten akmuo buvo. O tu šokai paskui jį ieškot.

KRISTINA
And I kept searching and searching.
Ir aš jo negalėjau rasti.

EGLE
But of course you couldn't find it.
Kaip tu galėjai jį rasti.

KRISTINA
And you didn't stop me.
Bet tu manęs nesustabdei.

EGLE
You went under again.
Tu dar kartą panirai.

KRISTINA
And I didn't come up.
Ir nebeišnėriau.

EGLE
You were exhausted.
Tu buvai tokia išsękus, pavargus.

She looks over at Kristina, who stares at the table. She turns on a light, then goes to the table, sits down next to Kristina and takes her hand. She looks up into her face.

EGLE (CONT'D)
I don't know what I'd do without you. You're the best friend anyone could have.
Kaip gerai, kad aš tave turiu. Tu pati geriausia draugė kokią galima turėt.

KRISTINA
But that's not what happened.
Bet, Egle, taip kaip tu sakai, nebuvo.

She turns to Egle, tearful.

KRISTINA (CONT'D)
You weren't even there. Your father found Lina.
Tu ten net nebuvai. Tavo tėvas rado Liną.

Egle hesitates for a moment, as if listening for

something.

EGLE
I don't know anymore. Anyway, why don't you go. You need to prepare for tomorrow and get some rest.
Aš jau nebežinau kas buvo ir ko nebuvo. Tau reikia pailsėt. Pasiruošt rytojui. Gal šiąnakt grįžk namo.

She squeezes her hand and stands up.

EGLE (CONT'D)
I'll go to bed now.
Aš irgi pavargau. Eisiu miegoti. Labanakt.

Kristina nods, but stays seated. Egle leaves the room.

24 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT 24

Egle swings open the door to her bedroom and gasps to see her dead father lying on her bed in the same position as in the morgue, a hand sticking out from under the sheet.

She freezes in the doorway.

Her Father's still face is a morbid pale green.

Egle takes a tentative step into the room, peering closely. Her Father slowly turns his head to her and opens his eyes: they are clear and steely, a faint spark deep within.

FATHER
Egle.
Egle.

His VOICE is tired and slow. It seems to come, not from his mouth, but from the corner of the room behind him.

Egle looks at him sceptically.

FATHER (CONT'D)
What daughter would leave her father to rot in the street?
Kas per dukra paliktų tėvą nudvėsti gatvėje?

EGLE
What do you expect. You taught me.
O ko tu tikėjais? Iš tavęs išmokau.

FATHER
You wanted me to die, just as you did your sister.

Tu visada linkėjai man mirties.
Kaip ir savo sesei.

EGLE
No. You're a liar.
Nelinkėjau.

FATHER
Your mother never recovered from what you did. I was living with two madwomen. How could any man cope.
Po to ką tu padarei, tavo motina taip niekada ir neatsigavo. Aš gyvenau su dviem beprotėmis. Joks vyras su tuo nesitaikstytų.

He turns his head away and stares at the ceiling.

Tears well in Egle's eyes - frustration, confusion, guilt.

FATHER (CONT'D)
Anyway, I'm dead now. And like you, I'm glad.
Bet dabar vistiek nebesvarbu. Aš miręs. Kaip ir tu - džiaugiuosi.

He closes his eyes.

EGLE
No. Papa, stay.
Palauk. Tėveli. Pasilik.

She kneels and takes his dangling hand in hers.

EGLE (CONT'D)
Please, Papa.
Prašau, tėti.

But he is stone dead.

A CREAK of floorboards in the doorway makes Egle turn.

Kristina stands in the doorway, her coat on, keys in hand, observing Egle with dismay.

Like a trapped animal, Egle's eyes dart from Kristina to the hallway beyond, and into the CAMERA.

Kristina goes to Egle and kneels down beside her, facing the empty bed. She puts her arms around her. Tears roll down Egle's cheeks as she lets herself be held like a child.

FADE OUT.

Appendix 3: Script of *Voices Apart*

VOICES APART
Draft 12

A Documentary

by

David Heinemann &
Elvina Nevardauskaite

NB: All dialogue in this screenplay, apart from the opening lines of the final scene, which are marked, are taken from recorded oral testimony and lip-synched by actors. The documentary subjects are not seen. All speech is in Lithuanian.

Broken Island Films
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FADE IN:

1 EXT. VILNIUS OLD TOWN - DAY 1

DRIVING SHOTS from the outskirts of Vilnius.

SHOTS - fluid, indistinct, suggestive - of people moving through the parks and streets of Vilnius.

AGGIE (V.O.)
It all started really weird actually.... I started dreaming strange things. I started dreaming that I met him and some other people.

The sound of a TAP on a keyboard.

DIRECTOR (V.O.)
Aggie.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. HOUSING ESTATE - DAY 2

In MULTIPLE TELEPHOTO SLOW-MOTION SHOTS a diaphanous red scarf drifts downward, twisting, turning and somersaulting through the air in a sensuous slow-motion dance. Behind it a grey high-rise housing estate looms.

DIRECTOR (V.O.)
Leonardo.

A TAP on a keyboard.

LEONARDO (V.O.)
Many times I saw the virgin Mary or Christ. Christ is standing at the top of the basement, and I'm at the bottom, and blood is running down his legs, through the stairs, and I am drinking that blood.

The scarf crumples to the pavement in an elegant folded jumble.

Another TAP.

3 INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT 3

In the chaotic flashing lights and THUMPING MUSIC of a NIGHT CLUB, a drink is poured at the bar, money changes hands, banknotes are slid into the till.

DIRECTOR (V.O.)
Marius.

A TAP on a keyboard.

On the dance floor bodies gyrate to the beat under shards and spots of multicoloured light.

MARIUS (V.O.)
In the month before it happened I was working four jobs and sleeping for two or three hours. At that time my mother was ill, and she was the only supporter of the family. So I thought, well I'm young, I have energy. I can juggle four jobs. But it wasn't very healthy. And my psyche was weaker by nature, and that just ruined it completely.

Faces - blurred, indistinct, contorted - flash and disappear.

MARIUS (V.O.)
Then later I found out this lack of sleep is actually a knife that reaps everything.

A TAP on a keyboard.

CUT TO:

4 INT. STUDIO - DAY 4

A large room furnished with a desk, chair and lamp. On the desk is a laptop with an audio editing programme open.

The DIRECTOR, seated with his back to the CAMERA, opens a text programme and begins to TYPE, reading aloud as he goes.

Facing him are **three empty chairs** arranged in a semi-circle.

DIRECTOR
(to himself)
A small town in the Russian winter. Cold and white. Silence.

CUT TO:

5 EXT. THE TOWN OF PRIENAI - DAY/NIGHT 5

DRONE SHOTS of the outskirts of Prienai by day, covered in mid-winter snow.

SHOTS of the town by night, the sounds muted by heavy snow.

AGGIE (V.O.)
When I turned 14, my father died. He was in Russia traveling...

6 INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY 6

AGGIE, a petite woman with dark hair and eyes, sits on a sofa looking toward the CAMERA at an off-screen interviewer.

AGGIE
...and he went to bed, fell asleep and never woke up. As soon as he died I moved to England.

7 INT. LEONARDO'S LIVING ROOM - DAY 7

LEONARDO, a solid blond-haired working class man in his thirties, sits stiffly on a sofa leaning forward, looking straight into the CAMERA.

LEONARDO
I had some terrible experiences in the past. When my wife and child left me I thought that I was worthless. I thought that I was worthless and I wouldn't be able to find a place under the sun. I used to think I was a white crow and I didn't belong anywhere. I couldn't calm down so I wasn't able to sleep at night.

Agitated, Leonardo shifts in his seat.

8 INT. MARIUS' LIVING ROOM - DAY 8

MARIUS, a small dark-haired man in his mid-20s, sits looking into the CAMERA.

MARIUS
My father is in prison for murder and it feels like I have to protect myself, my home, my family. And I don't even know what from.
(MORE)

MARIUS (CONT'D)
Some kind of voice is telling me that he will come back soon. And some kind of paranoia begins and...

Marius looks away, listening. The sound of slow, heavy, distant FOOTFALL.

9 INT. MARIUS' HALLWAY - NIGHT 9

The FOOTFALL continues, but mysteriously it's now NIGHT.

Near the front door, Marius lies on his back, a large knife in his hand.

MARIUS
I remember one night my brother found me lying next to the door holding a knife.

A glint of streetlight from the window glances off the knife that he holds tightly to his chest.

He stares at the ceiling. The FOOTFALL grows louder.

MARIUS (CONT'D)
Meanwhile my family was sleeping. And those voices were telling me that the only way to protect my family was for me to kill them.

He turns to looks into the CAMERA, positioned on the level of the floor. The FOOTFALL stops.

MARIUS (CONT'D)
I remember this and I get goose bumps now, and I think God Almighty, if...
(a beat)
My family was sleeping and if I...

6 INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY 6

Aggie is sitting looking into the CAMERA.

AGGIE
I remember - I don't always pay attention to little things - but they tell me that I can't do certain things, or I have to do them. Some people would call it intuition, but I'm hearing it.

She thinks back.

AGGIE (CONT'D)
Sometimes I test them. What if I go there anyway? What's going to happen? And it always happens as they predict. For example, there was this incident in England.

10 EXT. AN EMPTY ROAD SOMEWHERE - DAY 10

On the verge of a quiet B road, a gust of wind bends the bushy weeds.

A Toyota Corolla whizzes past.

11 INT. AGGIE'S CAR - DAY 11

Shots of the road ahead from inside Aggie's Toyota Corolla.

Aggie drives, looking ahead and occasionally toward the passenger's seat and into the CAMERA.

AGGIE
I was driving. I was going to some class, driving in the car. A voice came and said that I can't go that way because I'll get into a car accident.

She pulls out a piece of paper from the dashboard and waves it toward the interviewer.

AGGIE (CONT'D)
So I wrote down what the voice told me. And I took that road anyway, just as a test. I was driving really carefully. Very carefully. At a crossroads I stopped at a stop sign.

She leans forward peering through the windscreen.

AGGIE (CONT'D)
I didn't even cross that white line.

12 EXT. JUNCTION - DAY 12

Her car comes slowly to a stop, just before the white line.

11 INT. AGGIE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 11

Aggie looks into the CAMERA.

AGGIE
And then a motorcyclist came and drove into me.

The car jolts with a CRASHING sound, followed by a THUMP: a leather-clad body hitting the tarmac.

Shocked (despite herself), Aggie jumps out of the car.

12 EXT. JUNCTION - CONTINUOUS 12

Aggie looks around.

A motorcycle is on the ground near the back of her car.

Further away she sees a MOTORCYCLIST picking himself up off the ground. He sees her and freezes.

Aggie stares at him.

AGGIE (V.O.)
Since this incident I fully trust what I'm told to do. I don't care if people think it's intuition, or that I'm crazy. I just know that I have to listen.

Seen from above the two form a tableau.

7 INT. LEONARDO'S LIVING ROOM - DAY 7

Leonardo is seated on the sofa.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
Do the voices tell you what to do?

LEONARDO
Well, sometimes they encourage me to do something with a knife. You take a knife to cut a slice of bread but instead you're being encouraged to use that knife in another way - to stab someone with that knife.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
Have you ever done anything like that because they told you to?

LEONARDO
You know there was one incident. My girlfriend fell in love with someone else. She was not well at that time. It got worse when she fell in love with someone. That's when euphoria begins. The level of dopamine increases, and she goes insane. Out of too much love.

As he recounts his story he looks over at the balcony. The CAMERA follows his look and PANS to reveal his GIRLFRIEND standing on the balcony with a MUG of tea, staring back at him. She is wearing a RED SCARF.

LEONARDO (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I entered the room and looked at the window. I said: "Jump, because I don't know any other way out. I don't know how to help you."

CUT TO:

Leonardo, now standing in the doorway. *

LEONARDO (CONT'D)
I told her to jump and went into another room. I believed she was going to jump, but I thought, maybe she won't. I wasn't sure if I wanted her to jump. I didn't know. I was lost myself. I wasn't well myself at that time.

He glances toward his Girlfriend, who remains OFF SCREEN.

LEONARDO (CONT'D)
But I didn't raise my hand against her. I was pouring some water at that moment in another room. When I came back, she was already jumping out the window. *

CUT TO:

Leonardo's Girlfriend climbs up on the balcony ledge. PAN * back to Leonardo still standing in the doorway but now with a * GLASS OF WATER in his hand. The water quivers in the glass. *

CUT TO:

Leonardo seated on the sofa again. *

LEONARDO (CONT'D)
She broke her spine in three places. So yeah ... and she got metal rods in her back... It's lucky that her legs stayed healthy. So this is what happened.

13 EXT. VILLAGE SHOP - DAY 13

MARIUS approaches a traditional Lithuanian village food store on a deserted street - deserted except for a burly BUILDER standing to the side of the shop door puffing on a cigarette and staring into the middle distance.

Marius is about to push on the door - but stops himself and turns to the CAMERA.

MARIUS
Once I went to a shop and I heard someone say to me: "There's a queue to get into the shop." So I turn to the person standing next to me and say...

He turns to the Builder.

MARIUS (CONT'D)
(to the Builder)
"I'm sorry, I didn't know there was a queue." He looks at me, surprised, and tells me...

The Builder turns to Marius, surprised.

BUILDER
(in Marius' voice)
"There's no queue."

Marius stares at him nonplussed.

MARIUS
So I say, "But you just told me." And he says:

BUILDER
(in Marius' voice)
"I didn't say anything."

The two men stare at each other in mutual suspicion.

MARIUS
Of course I scared him, so he started moving away.

The Builder starts to move away.

Marius watches him apprehensively.

MARIUS (CONT'D)
Then I got scared myself. I was thinking: Who could have said it?
(a beat)
And then I heard another voice. It seems they change according to the situation.

Baffled and scared, Marius listens to a voice we cannot hear.

He stands, torn between going into the shop and walking away.

6 INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY 6

Aggie sits on the sofa.

AGGIE
For me the most terrifying thing... The place where I feel very, very bad is especially my grandma's house. And...

She stands up, continuing to talk, and walks to the other side of the room.

AGGIE (CONT'D)
... and one of the reasons I feel bad is because she has a lot of photographs hanging. And photographs are evil. *

The wall opposite is covered with photographs.

Aggie inspects them. They depict people of a bygone era: middle-aged men and women staring stolidly into the camera; children playing; a mother holding a baby.

AGGIE (V.O.)
I look at a photo and I can tell if it's a good or bad person. I can feel whether that person is alive or dead.
(pause) *
And at my grandma's there are a lot of photographs and I look at them and I think: *

Aggie takes a photo off the wall and turns toward the camera while looking at it: * *

AGGIE
“Damn there are so many dead people and it seems like she isn’t letting them go.”

She puts the photograph down on the table, and begins taking other photographs off the wall and putting them on the table.

AGGIE (V.O.)
Our souls are in these bodies and we take photos of these bodies, and there’s some spirit in a human’s eyes for example. And everything stays in photographs. When someone dies you have to let them go. You shouldn’t keep photographs or anything else.

ANGLE ON: the picture frames, now stacked on the table.

Aggie begins taking the photographs out of the frames.

AGGIE (V.O.)
Because it’s difficult. It’s difficult when you have already left but you’re being dragged back.

ANGLE ON: Aggies making a pile of the photographs beside the pile of frames.

She carries the photographs to the fireplace where a fire burns:

AGGIE
I’ve heard it all from my father. And ... I think I heard it from my dad or some other voice. And I was told that I have to destroy all photographs. It’s no good ... no good for them.

She tosses the photographs into the fire.

AGGIE (CONT'D)
So I just burned everything.

On the photo wall empty picture frames hang and, like eyeless sockets, stare back at the camera.

14 INT. STUDIO - DAY 14

Aggie, Leonardo and Marius enter the studio together. The actors are not yet in character and, for the first time, speak in their own voices.

The Director stands, back to the CAMERA, to greet them.

DIRECTOR
Hello. Welcome.

AGGIE, MARIUS, LEONARDO
Hello.

The Director gestures to the seats.

DIRECTOR
Please take a seat.

MARIUS
Can we sit anywhere?

DIRECTOR
No, please, like this.

She gestures. *

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
Aggie here. Leonardo here. And Marius, you sit here.

They sit in a semi-circle on simple upright chairs.

Aggie looks toward the camera.

AGGIE
Are you filming already?

DIRECTOR
Yes.

Aggie nods.

LEONARDO
Oh. So how do we start?

DIRECTOR
(turning to Marius)
Marius can you begin when you're ready?

The director sits down at her desk, back to the CAMERA. *

She opens her laptop to reveal the audio editing programme. *
She TAPS the spacebar and the audio begins to play. *

Marius's voice begins:

MARIUS (V.O.)
For me the most memorable are whispers. They are very clear and it's for sure that it's not a child's voice.

The actor starts lip-synching to his lines, vocalising as he goes, so at first we hear two voices simultaneously. Gradually the actor's voice fades out:

MARIUS
(with actor's voice)
I would say it's a male voice ... and ... it's ... like ... it has an edge to it, like it's in a marble room - but it seems like they would adapt to the environment.

Leonardo cuts in with:

LEONARDO
Sometimes they say nothing at all - just watch you.

He glances around the room as if the fantasmatic beings might be observing him now.

Marius's voice, in a reverberant whisper, suddenly emanates from all sides of the space as he chants the disparaging refrain:

MARIUS
The more pain, the less of you. Give yourself more pain. So there will be less and less of you. When you're gone, you won't hear any of * this. You need more pain so there'll be less of you.

Marius' voice continues to repeat the words after he finishes speaking.

Marius, Aggie and Leonardo listen, looking at each other. *

Aggie sits forward.

AGGIE
The voice that I'm hearing feels familiar somehow.
(MORE)

AGGIE (CONT'D)
It reminds me of my father's voice, because my father is dead.
(a beat)
I would be scared if one day I woke up and the voices were gone. I wouldn't know what to do. I know that I'm never on my own. And I like that.

She LAUGHS.

Leonardo stares straight ahead, at nothing.

MARIUS
It seems like those voices are coming from outside, but of course if you were to think about it ... rationally ... it's impossible. They just can't exist.

He glances around.

MARIUS (CONT'D)
But when it's happening, I think a person is incapable of thinking rationally and understanding that an hallucination is an hallucination because he has already experienced it as reality.

Leonardo suddenly looks up.

LEONARDO *
The more destructive your * lifestyle, the less resistant you * become to stress. Sooner or later * your psyche is disrupted. If you * can't stop yourself it means that * there's something wrong. If you've * been living in a destructive way * then you'll become less and less * resistant to stress. *

The Director listens intently. *

LEONARDO (O.S.) (CONT'D) *
From the inside psychosis is a * spiritual journey; from the outside * it's a mental illness. *

The Director takes this in. *

LEONARDO (CONT'D) *
I could also tell you that I dreamt my future for the next 15 years.

He considers.

LEONARDO (CONT'D)
By the way, this recording is part of that dream.

DIRECTOR *
You mean you knew we were going to meet?

LEONARDO
Yes, I dreamt it. There's one never-ending déjà-vu, and I'm living it.

Marius turns to look into the camera:

MARIUS
F23.10
(a beat)
It means acute polymorphic psychotic disorder with symptoms of schizophrenia. This is the diagnosis they give you when they don't know what to say.

Leonardo and Aggie nod knowingly. *

The three voice-hearers sit in stillness and silence, thinking and listening.

FADE TO BLACK.

ON-SCREEN TEXT:

"In order to protect their privacy, the interviews with Aggie, Leonardo and Marius were not filmed; only their voices were recorded. For this production actors have represented them using their original oral testimony.

"Aggie, Leonardo and Marius are not their real names."

CREDITS ROLL.

OUT-TAKES SHOWING THE LIP-SYNCHING PROCESS, WITH THE ACTORS GETTING THEIR LINES WRONG, ACCOMPANY THE CREDITS.

Appendix 4: Script of *Rising*

RISING

Written by

David Heinemann
&
Elvina Nevardauskaitė

Pink revision: 12 September 2021

BROKEN ISLAND FILMS

FADE IN:

1 EXT. VILLAGE STREET - DAY 1

Early autumn. The fence of a front garden bears a street sign: PAUKŠČIŲ TAKO g.

An empty street on a peaceful Saturday afternoon.

A red bicycle lies on its side, the detached seat lying nearby.

MELISSA (O.S.)
You'll never find it.

The green verge of a street. A female hand enters frame and sifts through the grass.

CASSIE (O.S.)
Yes I will.

Hands part a thicket of weeds, revealing a small metal object.

MELISSA (O.S.)
We've gotta get going. *

Fingers gather up the small nut threaded on a broken bolt. *

CASSIE (O.S.) *
Guess what? *

17-year-old CASSIE, dressed in denim dungarees and an oversized plaid flannel shirt, smiles mischievously, her back to Melissa. *
She unscrews the nut from the bolt. *

MELISSA, Cassie's 17-year-old friend, sits on her bike. *

MELISSA
You've found it. Good. Let's go.

Cassie spots some drops of blood on the edge of the road. *

CASSIE
Oh -

She peers closer: the blood leads away into the verge. *

CASSIE (CONT'D)
I think an animal was hit here. *

Fascinated, she touches the blood. Her BREATHING quickens. *

MELISSA
(oblivious) *
Really? Poor thing.

CASSIE *
I hope it's still alive. *

MELISSA
It's just an animal.

She cranks her bike into motion.

Cassie goes over to her bike.

CASSIE
(mimicking)
"It's just an animal." Heartless.

She laughs, picks up her seat and bike and makes off.

2 EXT. BACK GARDEN - DAY 2

THOR the family dog, half Estonian Hound, half mystery breed, charges past the hydrangeas that crowd the large shed, the door of which hangs open.

3 EXT. SIDE GARDEN - DAY 3

AISTĖ, Cassie's middle-aged mother, emerges from the house onto the patio carrying two garden chairs and heads for the table on the lawn.

She smiles lovingly at her partner, Tomas, as she passes him and puts the chairs next to the table.

TOMAS, early 40s, a strapping tradesman, low on style and already stiffening with age, is bent beneath the table fiddling with a broken table leg. He curses to himself.

TOMAS
Iš kur čia stalas šitas? Iš Amerikos gal?
[Where is this from? America?]

AISTĖ
(good naturedly)
Oi tik nereikia. [Don't you start.]

As Aistė returns to the house, Thor leaps around her excitedly.

Tomas straightens up knocking his head on the table. He releases his hold on the table and it promptly topples over.

He lumbers after Aistė, rubbing the top of his head.

4 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY 4

On a quiet street near her home Cassie pushes her bicycle. Melissa rides slowly alongside, weaving back and forth.

MELISSA
So is he living with you now?

CASSIE
Practically.

MELISSA
Is it that bad?

CASSIE
It's worse.
(a beat)
Honestly! It was better having a dad who was never around.

MELISSA
You're right. Your mom should just spend the rest of her life on her own.

CASSIE
What's wrong with that?

MELISSA
(taken aback)
You wouldn't happen to have trust issues would you?

CASSIE
Yes I would! I don't trust my Mom's choices.

Melissa wobbles to a stop and gets off her bike. The two girls walk their bikes side by side.

MELISSA
Anyway, are you coming tonight or not?

CASSIE
I can't. Mom wants me to be at this party thing. *

MELISSA
Just tell her you're going out with me.

CASSIE
I don't know.

She retreats into her thoughts.

5 EXT. FRONT GARDEN - DAY 5

MARTYNAS (17), Cassie's handsome, cool classmate, sits next to his skateboard on the stone wall beside Cassie's house. He's expertly rolling a cigarette in his lap.

On the street behind him, Cassie and Melissa wheel their bikes toward Cassie's house. Martynas hears them coming.

MARTYNAS
Hey, did you see my messages?

MELISSA
Yeah, sorry. We got held up.

Melissa walks past Martynas and leans her bike against the wall.

Martynas gives Cassie a hug, his hand straying under her top.

She laughs and glances around self-consciously.

MARTYNAS
Are you coming then?

MELISSA
She says she doesn't want to.

CASSIE
No I didn't.
(to Martynas)
I said I can't.

MELISSA
Same thing.

MARTYNAS
Is it?
(to Cassie)
You should come you know.

CASSIE
I'd have to ask to my mom.

Cassie pulls the seat off her bike and holds it up.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
And fix my seat.

MARTYNAS
Do you need a hand?

CASSIE
That's all right. I got it.

She hands her bike to Martynas.

MARTYNAS
Okay. We'll wait for you here.

She smiles and dashes off down the side of the house to the back garden, bicycle seat in hand.

Melissa raises an eyebrow. Martynas lights his cigarette.

6 EXT. BACK GARDEN - DAY 6

Cassie rounds the side of the shed, bicycle seat in hand, swings open the door and steps inside.

7 INT. GARDEN SHED - CONTINUOUS 7

Cassie darts to the corner of the shed nearest her and digs around in an overflowing tin of metallic fasteners. To her amazement she finds a bolt straight away. She fits the nut to it: presto!

Suddenly something catches her attention and she straightens up.

She looks across the shed and sees JAKE, middle-aged, haggard and gaunt, sitting at a workbench, his back to her, unmoving. His formal, disheveled, black suit/white shirt combo was clearly meant for a different occasion.

She freezes, but when he doesn't sense her presence:

CASSIE
Dad?

Jake slowly turns to her. He is abstracted, a bit blank, as if he just woke up.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

She is so stunned that the colour drains from her face.

JAKE
I came to see you.

CASSIE
But how?

Jake ponders this. He shrugs.

JAKE
I don't know.

He looks at her quizzically.

CASSIE
Why me?

JAKE
What do you mean?

CASSIE
You said you'd come to see *me*.

JAKE
That's right.

He turns away and gets up to look into a box on the workbench. Nearby a child's bike stands amongst the stuff.

As he bends forward, the back of his suit jacket pulls tight. The jacket is a size too big, but tight at the back. Sensing that something isn't right Jake reaches a hand behind him.

JAKE (CONT'D)
There's something wrong here.

Cassie stares at the clearly exposed tuck.

Before she can say anything, an apple hits the roof of the shed with a THUNK. Cassie jumps.

MARTYNAS (V.O.)
(yelling)
Come on! Hurry the fuck up!

Cassie's mother, Aistė, yells out from the house:

AISTĖ (V.O.)
Vaikai, ką jūs ten mėtot? [*Hey you kids! Stop that!*]

MARTYNAS (V.O.)
Oi, atsiprašau, mes Keisės laukiam. [*Sorry! We're waiting for Cassie.*]

AISTĖ (V.O.)
Martynai? Neatpažinau tavęs! [*Martynas? I didn't recognise you!*]

Jake stares at Cassie as they both listen to the clamour.

JAKE
So how's mom?

CASSIE
Not too good, naturally.

In the background, voices continue to drift in:

AISTĖ (V.O.)
Jūs vaikai pavalgę? Nenorit prie mūsų prisijungt? Kepsim dešreles. [*You kids hungry? Wanna stay for the barbecue?*]

She LAUGHS.

JAKE
She sounds...

CASSIE
She's with Tomas now.

Jake looks at her in confusion.

JAKE
What do you mean, “she’s with Tomas now”? What Tomas?

CASSIE
You know, *Tomas*. The builder guy. He came to re-do the bathroom. It was all mouldy.

JAKE
Shit, that moron? *I* was going to do the bathroom.
(muttering)
I mean how long have I been gone?

He searches under the workbench for something, knocking things over in the process, and pulls out a mickey of whiskey. He twists off the cap and sniffs the contents.

Cassie glares disapprovingly at the whiskey bottle.

Jake registers this then takes a swig and wipes his mouth.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Why weren’t you at my funeral?

CASSIE
I was.

JAKE
No you weren’t.
(a beat)
How do you think that made me feel?

Cassie is dumbfounded but defiant.

CASSIE
Well I’m sorry. I didn’t think you’d care.

He takes another swig and screws the cap on.

JAKE
I can’t believe how selfish you are. Of course I fucking cared! You’re my daughter.

Cassie’s face falls.

Jake screws up his eyes, wishing away what he just said.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Shit!

He grapples with his collar which suddenly feels tight. But something’s not right. He fishes out a cardboard collar and stares at it, perplexed, before tossing it aside.

JAKE (CONT'D)
I was looking for something.

He casts around.

JAKE (CONT'D)
I’m sure it was here.

CASSIE
What?

JAKE
Damn!

CASSIE
Well what is it?

JAKE
I can’t remember.

He thinks.

Cassis shuffles her feet and looks at her bicycle seat.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Something I wanted to give you.

He sits back down, defeated.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Leave it. Forget it.

He looks around, fretful, still can’t see what he’s looking for, then notices the wedding ring on his finger.

JAKE (CONT'D)
You know what?

With difficulty he twists the ring off, gets to his feet again.

JAKE (CONT'D)
I want you to have this.

He holds it out to Cassie. She demurs.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Here.

He leans forward and tucks it into the front pocket of her overalls.

From outside, a sudden COMMOTION. Distant MUFFLED VOICES filter into the shed.

MARTYNAS (V.O.)
Gal alaus galima?
[*Can I have a beer?*]

AISTĖ (V.O.) *
O tau jau leidžiama? *
[Are you allowed?] *

MARTYNAS (V.O.) *
Nu vieną tai tikrai manau. *
[Sure, I can have one I think.] *

AISTĖ (V.O.) *
Gerai jau gerai. [Okay, okay.] *

Cassie glances toward the door, suddenly feeling awkward. Jake * notices the bicycle seat in her hand.

JAKE
What's up with the bicycle seat?

CASSIE
Oh. I have to fix it. This bolt.

She holds it out for him to see.

JAKE
That's a screw. No you're right - it's a bolt. There's gotta be a wrench around here.

He rummages around.

JAKE (CONT'D)
This place is a dump. I was gonna tidy it up.

CASSIE
Isn't that one there?

She points to a crescent wrench near Jake.

JAKE
Oh yeah. That's the one.

He hands it to her. She fiddles with it, checks that it fits the * bolt.

CASSIE
Where are you going to stay?

He frowns. He hasn't thought about it.

Cassie observes him. There's no obvious solution.

JAKE
I guess I'll come with you.

CASSIE
I'm not sure that's a good idea.

Jake shifts.

JAKE
No.

CASSIE
Will you be here later?

He shrugs.

Cassie nods. She holds up the bicycle seat in a gesture of farewell, then steps outside the shed.

She sticks her head back inside.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Dad, do you want me to close this?

JAKE
Yeah, I guess.

She nods again and swings the door shut.

8 EXT. BACK GARDEN - CONTINUOUS 8

Cassie GRUNTS as she struggles to shut the door.

CASSIE
This damned door!

TOMAS (O.S.)
Ne, ne, ne. Tu turi pakelti pirma.
[*No, no, no. You have to LIFT it.*]

Tomas strides up to the shed door breathing heavily. *

TOMAS (CONT'D)
Duok parodysiu. Leisk man.
[*Here. Let me.*]

He lifts the door and SLAMS it shut.

TOMAS (CONT'D)
Aš nesuprantu, kodėl blet niekas šitų durų nesutvarkė.
[*I don't know why no one ever sorted out this fucking door.*]

CASSIE
Mano tėtis planavo sutaisyt.
[*My dad was planning to fix it.*]

TOMAS
Jo, planavo. Tavęs mama laukia. Ateisi? [*Yeah right. Your mom's waiting for you. Are you coming?*]

Tomas walks away from the shed with Cassie lagging behind. She touches the pocket holding the wedding ring and glances back at the shed.

As she passes the patio she sees Aistė and Tomas talking together at the grill.

Suddenly cheesy POP MUSIC starts playing from a portable stereo.

9 EXT. SIDE GARDEN - DAY 9

A garden party is taking place. GUESTS of Tomas and Aistė are gathered on the lawn. Everyone TALKS animatedly, drinks in hand, over the bubbly POP MUSIC which bathes them in frivolity.

In a corner of the garden Martynas and Melissa stand together. She offers him her glass of wine to taste. He takes a sip, then turns and spots Cassie.

She holds up the wrench, as if to say, *I got it*. He gives her the thumbs up.

Cassie sits down at the table, puts the wrench on the ground and props the bicycle seat against Tomas' makeshift table leg: a length of wooden broom stick.

She starts stuffing herself with whatever she can reach. It's messy and unbecoming. Over her shoulder the shed looms in the lengthening shadows at the bottom of the garden.

LAURA, Aistė's friend, watches Cassie with a look of complicity.

Aistė, carrying two bowls of food, appears suddenly beside Cassie.

AISTĖ
Gal gali dabar nevalgyt, aš noriu sutvarkyt viską pirmiausia, gerai?
[*Can't you wait? I'm still trying to get things set up.*]

Cassie sizes her up.

CASSIE
(flatly, while chewing)
I just saw dad.

Aistė peers at her daughter. She sits.

AISTĖ
Cassie.

CASSIE
What?

AISTĖ
(changing her tone)
What did he come for?

Cassie sizes up her mom and remains silent.

AISTĖ (CONT'D)
Hmn?

CASSIE
Forget it.

Aistė reaches out a hand to her. Cassie pulls away.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
I said forget it. I was only joking. Jeez!

AISTĖ
Come on and help me.

She makes for the house, gesturing for Cassie to follow.

Cassie stops chewing and stares into the middle distance.

Around her the PARTY continues to pick up pace.

Abruptly she grabs two cans of Coke and a bowl of crisps and heads for the shed.

10 EXT. BACK GARDEN - DAY 10

Cassie arrives at the shed and catches her breath. From the window in the shed door her image stares back at her, inscrutable.

Awkwardly juggling the provisions, she opens the door and steps inside. *

11 INT. GARDEN SHED - CONTINUOUS 11

Cassie spots Jake on his chair with his back to the door. His upper body is draped over the workbench, his head resting on the surface, encircled by his arms. He is motionless. *

Cassie watches him closely. Is he breathing? She wrinkles her nose at the pungent odour. She hadn’t noticed this before. *

CASSIE
Dad, I’m back.

His head is turned away from her. He doesn’t react.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
I brought you something to eat.

Tentatively she puts the provisions on the worktop next to him.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Dad?

Jake stirs and groggily sits up. His eyes are bloodshot.

He looks like death but Cassie's eyes light up and she exhales with relief.

She surveys the scene afresh and CHUCKLES. The bowl of crips suddenly seems ridiculous, as if she were feeding a dog!

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Come eat with us.

Jake is listless. He levels his gaze at Cassie.

JAKE
I can't.

Cassie's smile drops.

CASSIE
Why? You wanted to come before.

JAKE
You know why.

He turns away and bows his head.

JAKE (CONT'D)
I've got this ringing in my ears.

And for a moment we do indeed hear a faint RINGING sound.

Cassie stares at the back of his head with trepidation, aware of a strange change in the atmosphere: her world has fallen completely SILENT as if time had stopped. Only her BREATHING is audible.

The clutter scattered around the shed seems imbued with presence.

She looks again at Jake. She reaches out a hand and gingerly touches his shoulder. Her fingers tremble to recoil, but she holds them in place. The faint RINGING rises, then falls away.

Jake is entirely still now.

Cassie turns on her heel and dashes out, leaving the door ajar.

12 EXT. SIDE GARDEN - DAY 12

Looking harried and haunted, Cassie strides over to the table where guests are now gathered CHATTING and MUNCHING. *

She stops short when she sees Aistė standing and laughing with Laura. Aistė notices Cassie's agitation. * *

AISTĖ *
(gently) *
Your friends just left. *

Cassie digests this. *

CASSIE *
I need to go. *

AISTĖ *
Sure. *

She bends down to collect the bicycle seat and wrench, and hands them to a surprised Cassie. *

Cassie takes them and leaves. Aistė turns back to her guests. *

13 EXT. FRONT GARDEN - DUSK - MONTAGE OF SHOTS 13

Hands tighten the nut on the seat stay of Cassie's bicycle.

Cassie furrows her brow in concentration.

A foot steps on a pedal and cranks the bicycle into motion.

As her bike moves forward Cassie turns from her house to look at the road ahead. *

14 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DUSK 14 *

Cassie passes a pedestrian on her left walking in the same direction. She turns and recognises Jake in his funeral clothes. He stares stolidly ahead as he trudges on wearily. *

She faces forward again and carries on riding. *

CUT TO BLACK. *

TITLE: RISING *

OVER CREDTIS: *

The spokes of the wheels, hurtling down the road, split and scatter the final rays of sunlight. An optical illusion spins the wheels in both directions at once.

At once exhilarated and distraught, Cassie peddles furiously.

At first we hear only a tinnitus-like RINGING underscoring ragged BREATHING. Gradually the metronomic sound of her bicycle's SPINNING WHEELS joins with her breath, and the RINGING transforms into something like MUSIC. *

FADE OUT. *

Appendix 5: Written Communication from Psychologist Aurelija Auškalnytė[91]

Initial correspondence:

“hello, it's great that you got in touch. I myself work in the organization Mental Health Perspectives and we closely cooperate practically with all the organizations working in that field in Lithuania. The problem is that only certain people with such difficulties (users) gather or participate in the activities of organizations in Lithuania (for example: Viltis organization). These are people whose mental health difficulties often develop into serious social problems and they get more out of that participation, for example food. They're not the kind of people you need from what I've come across, they wouldn't just tell you their story and so on. Besides, not many people are inclined to talk about these things from a personal perspective... Lithuania... In any case, I will ask my colleagues tomorrow, maybe they know someone who could agree. In general, I would be happy to consult or participate in some other way, if you see my involvement as meaningful, because the project sounds really interesting and is extremely close to me (both as a psychologist, and as a person interested in cinema, and as a human rights activist who desperately wants such topics would be revealed sensitively, deeply and with attention to these people). Perhaps what help we could provide as an organization...”

“hello, I'm thinking about answering your letter. and in the meantime he pointed me to one person who might be able to relate his experience. Since I don't know him either, I think you'd better write to him right away. You can mention that it was directed by Milda Norvaisaitė”

Correspondence after our face-to-face meeting:

“hello, Elvina. Thanks to you and David for an interesting conversation yesterday. Today I received the number of this [*name and telephone redacted*]. He agreed to talk, but through maybe three mediators. He's thirty-something, paranoid, has a lot of interesting hallucinations, but plus or minus he's clinging to life and self-reflective. When calling, it should be said that the contacts were received from Rastis (referred to as "RASTIS"). It's as if he was told that Rasties director Rūta would call, so if he mentions it, he can say that for the sake of simplicity, you called right away, because you can clearly explain everything and how.”

“While chatting with the director of that Rastis, she told me that during various events they just organize a game of listening to voices. sit two people down to talk, and a few more behind them "play" voices, commenting on the behavior of the alleged psychotic and the conversation itself, and otherwise just being voices. they say, even experienced psychiatrists, no matter how hard they try, can't last long and start fighting with the voices.”

[91] All punctuation (including the ellipses) is Aurelija’s. Her messages are reproduced here in their entirety.