# Vocal Commentary Documentary Style Principles and Examples of Voices Used

## Introduction

Documentaries use voices to inspire, explain, reveal, provide evidence, and to express feelings about certain actions and events that belong to a certain period to the viewers. In addition, different documentary styles and era follow particular principles that can be easily realized through the use of various voices. The current paper discusses how vocal commentary principles can be understood through use of voices, and the specific voices illustrated in the “The Negro Soldier, 1944”.

## How Vocal Commentary Principles can be Discerned by Listening Closely to its Use of Voices

The vocal commentary is the classical documentary of the periods 1930s and 1940s and has been linked with a voice of God. By listening closely to its use of voice that is interpreted as basically unpresentable in human form, the documentary style principles of authoritative narration, persuasion rhetoric, and complete mastery and awareness outside the spatial and temporary boundaries are clearly recognized. In addition, the employment of voices provides a metaphorical use of words for imagining the authoritative, persuasive and mastery capability of the documentary’s events and period of action. Therefore, the voice facilitates the formal creation of a documentary with non-fiction elements. To distinguish the style from others of the ancient era, voice over commentary is perceived to be forceful and homogenous as the voices are normally individual or casual, fragmentary or self-interrogating, and multiple or split.

## Example of Voices Used in the Documentary

Individual voices from a Negro soldier leader of the War department are clearly evident throughout the documentary. The use of voice is demonstrated by the Negro soldier who acts as a preacher and delivers sermon to the army in a church congregation. The individual voice is used to stimulate the vocal commentary principle of authority in order to convince the Black Americans to sign up in the army and fight in World War II . Particularly, the soldier’s voice appears concise and restrained to the concept of inclusion and tolerance of the Blacks in the American army. The personality voice of authority conveys responsiveness, and even reference towards the American Army during the World War 11. According to Wolfe, in a vocal commentary, the narrator adopts a power to speak the reality, and to express ideas through a verbal description in order to enlighten the viewers. This demonstrates the powerful use of individual voices to explain and disclose ideas and knowledge of the Negro soldiers’ experiences and their demands to the audience. Besides, the film illustrates that the vocal commentary employs voices that are passionate and identifiable, in order to encourage reaction from both the documentary characters and the viewers. Most importantly, the use of the individual voices in the documentary involves speaking patterns among a group of characters capable of mimicking their voices.

Nichols clarifies that direct address voice of documentary is supposedly authoritative but the narrator appears off-screen regularly. In most parts of the film, the voice of the Negro pastor is successfully interchanged with visuals. The direct voices from the characters of the documentary portray the reality of events and actions and is associated with immediacy and impression in describing untampered occurrences in the lives of specific people. In particular, through the use of direct voices, individual characters are captured while in action.

## Conclusion

Following the use of individual and direct voices in the vocal commentary documentary “The Negro Soldier, 1944”, this style adheres to the principle of authoritative, persuasive narration, and complete mastery and knowledge. Moreover, the leading principle the vocal commentary employs is authoritative through use of both individual and direct voices in order to target the Black Americans who were supposed to join the Army during the World War 11. The authoritative principle of the vocal documentaries also function as drives of certain actions and events. Through the direct voices that interrelate with the visuals when the characters’ voice is off screen, the narrator tries to persuade the character of the importance of joining the American army, as well as influences and encourages the viewers to attain knowledge of the black’s involved in the World War 11.

Unlike other documentary producers, the makers of the vocal commentary documentary were able to bring into light the historical and social occurrences of the World War 11 through the use of individual and direct voices. Considering the vocals in which the documentaries where demonstrated, the makers display the vocal possibilities from the characters and the interaction between the visual elements and voice.

## Bibliography

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