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Toward Intervocality: Linklater, the Body, and Contemporary Feminist Theory

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Abstract:
This article inaugurates a conversation between the fields of voice training and contemporary feminist theories of the body. The article begins with a consideration of the development of Kristin Linklater's highly influential work *Freeing the Natural Voice*, and the significant advancements it represented in the field of voice. The article proceeds to a description of the field of contemporary feminist theories of the body, highlighting those insights and developments that either resonate most clearly with Linklater's work or represent promising avenues for the next evolution of voice training. Those theories share Linklater's rejection of Western dualism, but also cast doubt on any references to the natural (i.e., pre-political) body, including references to the natural voice. The article then argues that such evolution should take up more directly the relationality of the voice (what the article terms "intervocality"), an understanding of the body as ineluctably embedded within social and political dynamics, and a recognition of the profound influence of structural inequality on both vocality in general and vocal training in particular. The article concludes by gesturing toward a model of vocal generosity that may provide a framework for that next evolution.

Keywords: Kristin Linklater, voice training, feminist theory, embodiment, structural inequality, liberation, voice culture, voice studies

Introduction

We seek to inaugurate a conversation between two streams of thought/practice: one grounded in the professional practice of voice training and the other in the academic field of feminist philosophy. Although we expect this conversation ultimately to address a wide variety of questions, and a broad scope of practitioners and thinkers, here we are focused on deploying the conceptual tools of contemporary feminist philosophies of the body to illuminate Kristin Linklater's approach to vocal freedom and to shape the next evolution of that approach. While this article introduces contemporary feminist philosophies of the body to the field of voice training, subsequent pieces will reverse the direction of the introduction, and position voice work as a site of thought and practice that can help to address a remarkable gap in feminist philosophy

of the body, which has tackled a multitude of bodily phenomena (maternity, aging, bodily comportment), but has said virtually nothing about the bodily phenomenon of voice.[1]

The philosophical implications of Linklater's approach to vocal practice have been explored by phenomenologists, philosophers of mind, and others (McCance 2011). However, despite Linklater's clear commitment to empowering female voices, there has been no examination of the potential resonances and tensions between Linklater's work and the field of feminist philosophy.[2] It is our position that contemporary feminist philosophers of the body hold particular promise as interlocutors with Linklater's approach to vocal practice. While summarizing such a large and diverse field is beyond the scope of a single article, we present a few central ideas that we hope to be particularly useful.[3]

We begin by engaging with Linklater's highly influential work *Freeing the Natural Voice* (Linklater 1976, 2006) and the significant advancements it represented in the field of voice. We proceed to a brief description of the field of contemporary feminist theories of the body, highlighting those insights and developments that either resonate most clearly with Linklater's work or represent promising avenues for the next evolution of voice training. We then argue that such evolution should take up more directly the relationality of the voice ("intervocality"), an understanding of the body as ineluctably embedded within social and political dynamics, and a recognition of the profound influence of structural inequality on both vocality and vocal training. We conclude by gesturing toward a model of vocal generosity that may provide a framework for that next evolution.

Linklater and Freeing the Natural Voice

Linklater's *Freeing the Natural Voice* (*FNV*) is one of the most important and referenced methodologies for training the voice. Her approach is highly utilized in rigorous actor training

programs and workshops across the world for people interested in unshackling the voice from the hold of unconscious habitual patterns and psycho-physical tensions.[4]

Linklater studied under Iris Warren at London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts, from whom she learned an architecture of voice exercises for actors underpinned by psychological and physiological understandings of the voice. First published in 1976, *FNV* documents Linklater's further development of Warren's exercises, and constitutes the first comprehensive communication of the work in written form. A radical divergence from the more formal methods of the time, it has since become a leading textbook for voice in the field.

It is important to acknowledge that *FNV*–as a methodology, as well as a text–emerged from a particular socio-political-cultural context which brought with it particular notions of both *freedom* and *the natural* connected to the cultural movements of the 1960s and early 1970s in the US and Britain. To this end we will a paint a general picture of the period. Arthur Marwick (2011) writes the of the upheavals and shifts from this time, which included but were not limited to:

> "black civil rights; idealism, protest, and rebellion [...] the new feminism; gay liberation [...]; `the counter-culture'" that could be set in contrast with some "key features of the fifties, including: rigid social hierarchy; subordination of women to men and children to parents; repressed attitudes to sex; unquestioning respect for authority in the family, education, government, the law, and religion [...] a strict formalism in language, etiquette, and dress codes, [etc.]." (10)

Feminist psychologist Carol Gilligan describes the period as a "groundswell of opposition to the culture and psychology of militarism" wherein there was "a call for peace [...] joined by a call to free love" (Gilligan and Richards 2009, 258). Social ecologist Murray Bookchin identifies in the

anti-authoritarianism of the revolutionary movements of this time "the 'forms of freedom' that can give direction to a liberatory future," writing that "as nature achieves its highest self-expression in a free human community in harmony with the rest of the natural world [...] nature finally becomes 'free nature'" (De Leon 1994, 301). A resurgence of Romanticism, carrying with it the promise of "allowing human beings to 'feel at home' in a meaningful, free and natural world," (Gorodeisky 2016) unconstrained by the alienating and arbitrary powers of modernity, reached a critical height during this period, as a parallel mistrust of dominant institutions and government's ability to protect personal freedoms was on the rise.

The body itself emerges out of this period as a site of nostalgia, of a longing toward a time when bodies might have existed in a natural state, unconstrained by the rigidities of social norms and the invasive control of government and dominant mainstream culture. We can track this through the hippie movement's rejection of convention, which produced an emphasis on self-presentation and the body through "new modes of self-presentation, involving emancipation from the old canons of fashion, and a rejoicing in the natural attributes of the human body" (Marwick 2011, 26). The anti-racist civil rights movement engendered a rejection of European standards of beauty and a reclaiming of untreated hair, thus equating a move toward the natural with empowerment, agency, and identity. Carol King wrote (and Aretha Franklin sang) "You make me feel like a natural woman," and the uninhibited "cookbook" *The Joy of Sex* (1972), featuring realistically illustrated bodies, emphasized a reclaiming of the innocent, pre-lapsarian view on the body as natural.

Of course, the invocations of nature did not go entirely unchallenged. The women's liberation movement in the late 1960s included voices that railed against the invocation of biology as a justification for inequality and demanded that women be given the freedom to

control (rather than be determined by) their own bodies. In fact, Linklater's work seems deeply influenced by both the call for a return to nature and the call for greater bodily freedom and autonomy. She advocates for the liberation and development of the (metaphorically and materially) suppressed and restricted voice, the voice that has gone into hiding, to restore a voice that can express one's need and right to speak, a voice that is the authentic birthright of all human beings. Simultaneously psychological, political, physiological and philosophical, Linklater's work championed the reclamation of voices that have been shamed or scared or socialized into hiding, as exemplified by her co-founding (with Carol Gilligan) the Company of Women, which provided voice training workshops for women and early adolescent girls (Rousuck 1996).

The specific practical influences on Linklater voice work include discoveries about psychology, somatics, and the mechanics of the body that emerged from the early twentieth century, particularly the possibility of the re-education of the body through psycho-physical approaches such as Mabel Elsworth Todd's somatic work ("ideokinesis") and F.M. Alexander's discoveries about the forces of habit and the possibility of exercising choice in the "Use" of self (Gelb 1996). In the 1960s and 1970s, as Linklater established herself as a teacher and coach in US theatre and conservatory voice training, she was influenced by experiments in mind-body work, including Moshe Feldenkrais' method to improve body functioning through Awareness Through Movement as well as disciplines such as Rolfing, T'ai Chi, and Yoga.

In the US theatre and training settings, Linklater's work met American actors' needs at a time when the psychological, emotional, physical, and stylistic demands on them required more than antiquated traditional methods emphasizing external skills (elocution, ballet, e.g.) could provide. The psychologically-based naturalistic acting style that emphasized the creative use of

the inner self (in lieu of theatrical artifice) was finding many new iterations in the US at this time, and one could broadly trace its lineage to Konstantin Stanislavski who famously said, "all we ask is that an actor on the stage live in accordance with *natural* laws [...] to live as a *natural* human being" (Stanislavski 1949/1994, 288).

In developing a vocal practice to strip artifice from the voice, Linklater provides a framework for its reconditioning that involves becoming conscious of and breaking habitual patterns largely internalized by socialization in the modern world–a world shaped, inevitably, by standards, technologies, politics, suppressions, both personal and social: "to free the voice is to free the person…the natural voice is most perceptibly blocked and distorted by physical tension; it suffers equally from emotional blocks, intellectual blocks, aural blocks, and psychological blocks" (Linklater 2006, 8). These blocks, largely in the form of secondary impulses that have become habits (either conscious or unconscious), are also the result of societal conditioning we receive:

> much human behavior is unconsciously controlled by habits conditioned in childhood by arbitrary influences, such as parents (or lack of them), teachers, peers, [etc.] […] If we come to a point in our lives where we […] want to access the primitive sources of laughter, sorrow, anger, joy, we may find that the emotions themselves have been civilized or brutalized out of us. The nervous system impulses are blocked, rerouted, or crossed with countermanding impulses. (19-20)

To this end, both published editions of *Freeing the Natural Voice* (a revised and expanded edition was released in 2006) articulate a series of practices aimed at liberating the voice of the subject:

> The natural voice has two to three octaves of speaking notes capable of expressing the full gamut of human emotions and all the subtleties and nuances of

> thought. To release its potential we most dissolve the limitations imposed by twentieth-century upbringing and awaken the dormant power that brings breath into every cell of the body and restores largesse of expression and stature to the human-actor-being. (Linklater 1992, 7)

The effects of such limitations, claims Linklater, are significant: "tensions acquired through living in the world, and defenses, inhibitions and negative reactions to environment often diminish efficiency of natural voice to the point of distorted communication" (Linklater 2006, 7). Essential to the work of undoing those limitations is the "vital difference between what is 'natural' and what is 'familiar,'" connected to the objective of "a voice in direct contact with emotional impulse, shaped by intellect but not inhibited by it." She describes the natural voice as "transparent […] it reveals, not describes, inner impulses of emotion and thought, directly and spontaneously." Importantly, "the person is heard, not the person's voice." The interfering processes and factors to vocal freedom are the limits of "desire, talent, imagination, or life experiences" (8).

The later edition of *FNV* sustains the focus on these fundamental precepts and builds on them by adding an emphasis on the psycho-physical connections between imagery, sensation, and embodiment as well as a consideration of the receptive aspects of voice. The importance of breath and the voice's ability to receive shifts in imagery and thought both come to the fore, as well as the importance of relation: she describes a voice communicating the "inner world of the psyche to the outer world of attentive listeners" (8) through the emanations of sound, with some attention to the transmission of thought-feeling impulses to a listener through a sensing, alive body. "Invisible streams of energy" that is sound carry out to receptive bodies, bringing the speaker into the experience of being, paradoxically, two places at once – both onstage and in the auditorium (or with "the other") at the same time (9).

Elsewhere, Linklater (2010) writes of another important paradox in training for actors: that they must develop and train the voice to its potential in order “to forget about it, to sacrifice it—to let it be burned through by the heat of thoughts and feelings and moods and emotions.” It is not a matter of simply acquiring a skill, she writes: “Voice is identity. Your voice says, ‘I am.’” (43) Voice reveals not only the power and subtleties of shifting thought and feeling, but–through a mutually perceived “ring of truth”–authentic selfhood. This does not necessarily imply, as philosopher Adriana Cavarero asserts, that the voice references an irreducible existent, a pointer to a unique identity (Cavarero 2005): but that the voice can transparently “reveal the truth *about* its owner” (Linklater 2006, 25)–not only who they are (i.e. recognition), but the content and quality of their experience in the moment.

Beyond the need or desire to simply be heard, Linklater posits that the revelation of truth in performance (as in life) requires the voice to be plugged into the inner life of instinct and emotional impulses, so that it becomes the channel through which thought and feeling are accurately revealed. She describes a tension between the dualism of the raw materials of one’s inner life and a modern persona presented to the world: a Dionysian inner life (2018) ruled by sensual, sensory, and emotional aspects of human nature is contrasted with an outer expression often ruled by the Apollonian, the rational, ordered, self-disciplined, and often limiting aspects of experience that prevent the owner of the voice from being known (2006). She writes:

> 'Per' and 'sona'—through sound. My voice is exquisitely conditioned to a multiplicity of social prevarications. The question is: can I choose to drop my mask, my persona, and let my voice pick up the living impulses of who I am and what I care about in my intrinsic identity[...] Whose voice am I speaking with? A teacher's voice or my own?” (Linklater 2009b)

Increasingly Linklater's work has taken up current findings in neuroscience, particularly the ways in which the brain functions in speech (Damasio 1995, 1999). Rejecting Descartes's *cogito ergo sum* in favor of "I am, therefore, I think," (Linklater 2010, 43), she asserts that the body, the senses, and the emotions are all "vital to the intelligence of the whole self." In this spirit, Linklater seeks to reclaim the voice as a central site of the union of brain and body. Through the reconditioning of "the actors quartet" - voice, intellect, body, and emotion (2006), she looks to "reforge" the brain-body connection by navigating the interruptions and restrictions in the pathways through which they might connect, opening them up again, or creating new "expressways" through which thought, breath, and sound might travel.

Linklater's work is deeply rooted in the body, training the subject to identify and release specific tensions, develop an increased awareness of the felt-sensations of sound, and concentrate on the subtleties of causal thinking and powerful imagery that can lead to new freedoms of the voice, body, emotion and psyche. The work requires the subject to navigate through (not around) the resistances of habit in order to develop more possibilities, shifts, sensations, and releases of stored-up energies; it rejects a manipulative, muscular, and/or mechanical approach in favor of stimulating involuntary processes unimpeded by voluntary controls. It fundamentally shifts the experience of sound from the ear of the subject–who in earlier, more traditional methods may be listening to the quality of their sound in relationship to some prescribed aesthetic standard–to a felt-sensation of sound as energy moving in the body, wherein the pitch of sound becomes, in a very real sense, "frequency of thought." The radical notion that the voice does not simply live in the larynx–an instrument waiting to be "played by" the self–and that it *is* the very embodiment of self, connecting body, imagination, and emotion, is one of Linklater's most groundbreaking ideas. The approach also asks the subject to move the guiding "brain" of the self from the head

down to the body: in particular to the solar-plexus–as a transmitting and receiving nerve center that governs the diaphragm and breathing and connects to the experience of feelings. This privileging of impulses from the "gut brain" (or "second brain") over the "tyranny of the analytical brain" is a key premise in the work. Finally, the series of exercises itself is meticulous, deep, detailed, and requires a substantial commitment of time and attention, well beyond the requirements of many prior approaches to voice whose focus might have been more on the production of certain desirable sounds. Linklater's approach asks the subject to live in the moment-to-moment "means-whereby" (to borrow a phrase from Alexander Technique) the act of voicing occurs, thus rendering the voice work as a progression rather than a "technique." At one author's Designation Workshop in 2007, Linklater described the work of the voice through a geopolitical model: after freeing the "nation-state" of the voice from tyranny, it is not enough to leave it free but weak; it requires development and strengthening, increased capacity, flexibility, range, and nuance, and the facility to allow clear thought to translate ultimately into clear, fully-felt and embodied speech.

Contemporary Feminist Philosophies of the Body

From Mary Wollstonecraft's critique (1792/2004) of the patriarchal tyranny that imposed bodily weakness on women to Iris Marion Young's description (2005) of the social and political norms inscribed on the bodily habits of women, feminist philosophers have consistently focused on the body. This focus responds to (at least) two related insights: that dominant strains of Western philosophy have denigrated the philosophical relevance of the body while upholding male supremacy; and that the oppression of a wide spectrum of intersecting marginalized groups targeted (and constructed) specific bodies, forms of embodiment, and embodied norms. Feminist philosophy aims to develop insightful accounts of the structures of systemic inequality, which

includes interrogating how bodies are conceptualized, shaped, experienced, and perceived. In this section, we focus primarily on feminist theories of embodiment that have been developed from the mid-twentieth century to the present, although some of the themes discussed were present even before this time period. Although similar ideas have been explored in a variety of feminist disciplines and practices, we are highlighting here the arguments developed by those using explicitly philosophical methodologies and approaches. Moreover, rather than attempting a comprehensive summary of this wide-ranging field of scholarship, we center our discussion on those aspects that are particularly promising for engaging critically with Linklater's approach to vocal practice.

An obvious point of resonance between contemporary feminist theories of the body and Linklater's approach to vocal practice lies in their mutual rejection of a Western philosophical tradition that privileges ostensibly disembodied phenomena – the soul, the mind, thinking, objectivity, etc. – over phenomena associated with bodies (and bodies themselves). Contemporary feminist philosophers of the body generally agree that such dualism is not only philosophically dubious, but also damaging insofar as it perpetuates various forms of inequality (Grosz 1994; Gatens 1996; Bordo 1993). By associating the body with inferiority, and certain social groups (women, people of color, disabled people) with the body, dualistic philosophical theories participate in the social and political marginalization of those groups.

Some feminist philosophers, unsurprisingly, respond by insisting that women are no more or less associated with the body than men. Wollstonecraft, for example, argues that sexist philosophical theories and political structures take for granted that the genders are fundamentally different, and that women are therefore not eligible for the rights and responsibilities extended to men. She recommends the obvious remedy: stop treating women as if they were weak and

intellectually bereft, afford them access to all the goods provided to men, and allow their natural intellectual capacities to flourish. For the most part, however, contemporary feminist philosophers have responded to the tradition of dualism by rejecting it and establishing the body as philosophically and existentially significant. Rather than understanding matters of embodiment as regrettable facts of life that impede the progress of higher capacities or values, contemporary feminist theorists explore embodiment as a necessary element of human existence replete with philosophical, social, and political meaning. In so doing, we are arguing here that they develop conceptual tools well-suited to analyzing the embodied phenomenon of voice.

Related to the rejection of dualism is a theme that might provide possibilities for tension with Linklater's approach: a repudiation of both naturalism and the epistemological primacy of science. Feminist philosophers of the body tend to view with a high degree of skepticism any claims about the "natural," or prepolitical body (Fausto-Sterling 2000; Haraway 1991). References to what bodies are, or could be, absent the effects of social and cultural forces are suspect insofar as they deny the fact that no human body can come into existence without extensive social and political infrastructure. Adopting a nature/culture dichotomy in order to isolate what is "real" about the body (i.e., natural) from what is "artificial" (i.e., cultural) is to adopt a dualism as questionable and problematic as the mind/body divide (Grosz 2008). That such dualism can sometimes be marshalled to strategically counter pernicious effects of social structures isn't enough to redeem it, from a feminist perspective, given the ways in which references to the realm of nature have so often been marshalled to justify inequality.

The feminist rejection of scientism runs along similar lines but focuses more on the social and political nature of knowledge production. While contemporary feminist philosophers certainly don't reject the value of scientific knowledge about the biological body in certain

contexts, they do reject the assumption that such knowledge is necessarily more objective, reliable, and comprehensive than other forms of knowledge. Feminists epistemologists challenge the claim that scientific knowledge can be generated in a way that transcends its social, political, and historical context (Bleir 1984; Harding 1991; Tuana 2010), and note that the promise of apolitical, objective, value-neutral knowledge that grounds Western scientific methodologies is itself socially produced. Knowledge about the biological body generated by scientific discourses is thus seen as one kind of knowledge among many; it is frequently useful, but not by definition superior to knowledge gained in other ways.

This rejection of scientism is central to feminist phenomenology, a subfield marked by an attention to the lived body – the body as experienced by the living human subject, as opposed to the body-as-object studied by traditional Western forms of science – and the ways in which that lived body experiences the world in which it is embedded. While original forms of phenomenology (Husserl [1913/1963], Merleau-Ponty [1945/2012]) sought to reveal structures of lived experience universal to human beings, feminist phenomenologists criticized those allegedly gender-neutral descriptions for harboring sexist assumptions (Bartky 1990, Weiss 1999). Iris Marion Young (2005) described, for example, how gendered norms became instantiated in feminine bodily comportment, thus demonstrating that that Merleau-Ponty's description of the material world as open and welcoming to the projects of the embodied human being fails to account for the construction of female-identified bodies as inherently incapable. While phenomenology in its classical form was positioned as an epistemological challenge to scientism, and not a political challenge to structural inequality, feminist phenomenology has the explicit aim of articulating how bodily ways of being are implicated in sexism, racism, and other forms of inequality. Feminist phenomenology, then, can help us to understand both how the

material phenomenon of voice is experienced by the vocal subject, and how that phenomenon is shaped by social forces while remaining ineluctably embodied and material.

Indeed, it is crucial to recognize that the feminist rejection of naturalism and scientism, whether articulated by epistemologists or phenomenologists, does not constitute a rejection of the philosophical relevance of the materiality of the body (that is, the fact that the body is made up of matter, *stuff*). In fact, rejecting dualism frequently results in an emphasis on the social and ethical importance of the fact that bodies are material entities. How to conceptualize and understand the materiality of the body, however, remains an ongoing challenge, exemplified acutely by the disagreement between Luce Irigaray (1985, 1993) and Judith Butler (1990, 1993). Irigaray argues that the patriarchal obsession with the one, the unitary, and the universal has denied the untranscendable multiplicity found in the materiality of human bodies, while Butler argues that materiality, constructed as an unconstructed ground of knowledge, has played both a conceptual role in masking the constructed nature of the categories of sex and gender and a practical role in the production of sexed and gendered identities. As fundamental as the philosophical differences between these two thinkers are, their theories demonstrate the centrality of materiality to the field of contemporary feminist theories of the body. More recently, some feminist philosophers have suggested that the materiality explored by thinkers such as Irigaray and Butler is not even quite material enough; that is, such approaches do not sufficiently engage with the stuff of life, matter itself, but regress into a privileging of ideology or structure that remains essentially disembodied. Feminist contributions to the emerging school of thought termed "new materialism," for example, have sometimes moved away from the existentialist and phenomenological frameworks that can be found in Butler and/or Irigaray, in favor of a reanimation of the questions emerging from the traditional sciences (Grosz 2010), or

have recast the social project of citizenship around a materialist understanding of life itself (Braidotti 2010).

Another hallmark (albeit a contested one) of contemporary feminist theories of the body is the conceptual framework of intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991; Carastathis 2013; Collins and Bilge 2016), which illuminates how different forms of structural inequality are implicated in each other. Intersectional theorists point out that sexism takes substantially different forms depending on one's racial identity; for example, the focus on reproductive rights that marked the 1970s US women's movement (and/or its representation; see Silliman et al 2016) tended to focus on the right to prevent and terminate pregnancies, rights that were of particular interest to white, upper-class women. Critiques from women of color argued that focusing on such individual rights ignored the political interests of women of color (Roberts 1997), including protection from forced sterilization (Thomason 2013), safe and just environments within which to raise children, and effective prenatal care. By assuming that sexism primarily took the form of enforcing procreation on women, the movement failed to notice the ways in which sexism was raced, and thus mistakenly, and oppressively, represented the interests of white women as the interests of women per se. Similar patterns are found at different intersections: racism is sexed, just as sexism is raced; ableism takes different forms in different socioeconomic contexts; and one's race can have a significant impact on the social and political meanings of one's physical or cognitive impairment (Ben-Moshe and Magaña 2014). Exploring vocal (in)justice, then, will require a sustained focus on intersectional axes of oppression.

Together, the rejection of the natural body together and the recognition of intersectionality result in a focus on bodily multiplicity–a point that will be foundational in our approach to vocal (in)justice. While embodiment is a characteristic shared by all human beings,

different bodies are influenced and shaped by different potent and intersecting social forces. By privileging certain kinds of bodies – white, able-bodied, male, heterosexual, and so on – to the exclusion of others, philosophical traditions have not only perpetuated injustice and unnecessary suffering: they have also committed a category mistake of the highest order. Contemporary feminist philosophies of the body insist that living up to the promise of exploring humanity itself (a promise, we note, that both Western philosophy and Western theatre make) necessitates refocusing our attention toward the queer, disabled, economically underserved, racialized, sexualized, undocumented bodies, not as aberrations or exceptions to the rule, but as specific incarnations of the scope of human embodied possibilities.

Understanding embodiment in this way immediately raises questions about how to understand the individual body and its relation to social and political forces that shape, contextualize, and enable it. Given the profound influence of these forces, including systematic inequality, on bodily understandings, capacities, and forms, how are we to understand possibilities of resistance? How are we to conceptualize our experiences of the uniqueness of human beings, the fact that even in their relationality, individual human beings have distinct thoughts, perceptions, and modes of being? Does the profound influence of the social and political environment within which a body develops eradicate the possibility and value of autonomy?

Different thinkers have addressed these questions in different ways, and there is nothing close to a consensus on these matters. For the purposes of our discussion, however, it may be helpful to move forward with an understanding of uniqueness and individuality as *existential location*, as opposed to a more familiar Western view of uniqueness as an internal, disembodied essence. In other words, what distinguishes different individual human beings from each other is

not the nature of their own essential self – almost always framed as an other-than-material interiority, walled off from social influences, a "who" one is – but rather the fact that they are situated, in a bodily and material way, at an intersection of a multiplicity of forces that coalesce in a way that cannot be reproduced with complete verisimilitude for any other human being. We are naming this intersection as one's existential location, a term that emphasizes the "that-ness" of an individual's being–*that* they exist and act from a specific social position–as opposed to the "who-ness" of an ostensibly internal essence. However, readers should not associate such "that-ness" with mere materiality or objecthood as usually conceptualized within a Western metaphysics; while the notion of existential location is certainly grounded in a recognition of the role of embodiment, and specific bodily limitations and parameters, in identity, it rejects the association of materiality with passivity, inertness, or a deficiency of agency. While the coalescence of those forces is fine-grained enough to ensure that one's existential location could never be fully inhabited by another, other embodied beings are also being shaped and situated by those same forces, and so commonalities of experience are not only possible but certain. And even the uniqueness of location is irrevocably relational; I cannot understand the particularity of my situatedness without reference to other beings, as well as social and political structures.

However, this model of location cannot be endowed with a sense of static or constant nature. Embodied subjects are capable of both literal and existential movement, but such movement should be understood as having the potential for existential transformation as well. Developing different forms of relations can result in shifts in identity, transformations, new modes of being, and so on. Moreover, how these possibilities of mobility (both physical and existential) are lived need to be again framed by the relevance of social and political forces. María Lugones' (1987), notion of world-traveling has been central in developing philosophical

accounts of embodiment in a context of racial and sexual inequality, and is particularly apt for our purposes here.

Lugones' description of world-traveling is grounded in an expansive, dynamic understanding of what constitutes a world, an understanding, she emphasizes, that does not lend itself to a fixed, static definition (1987, 9). For Lugones, worlds are complex sites of meaning-making, replete with embodied individuals, physical infrastructure, historical meaning, and so on. As specific social, political, and material contexts, worlds include terms, patterns, and habits that may or may not transfer coherently to other worlds. Worlds construct subjective beings (sometimes without their awareness or knowledge), and the experience of traveling between worlds is, for individuals who find themselves "outside of the mainstream of, for example, the U.S. dominant construction or organization of life...a matter of necessity and survival" (11). Lugones insists that, due to the subject-constructing aspects of worlds, "travel" is not to be understood as the shifting between spaces of an individual being, but as the shifting of identity itself (11-12).

As Mariana Ortega (2016) points out, Lugones later described the shifting of identity required by world-traveling as "ontological pluralism" (Lugones 2003) to clarify how the world traveler animated different subjectivities in the movement between and among worlds. Ortega is, however, unconvinced by this model of ontological pluralism (for example, she notes that the traveling self can remember the different worlds they have inhabited, evidence that there is some form of persistent "I" that survives across different worlds). She suggests replacing Lugones' ontological pluralism with an existential pluralism, which entails understanding individual selves as multiplicitous, capable of and open to a wide variety of existential modalities (2016, 98). It is crucial to note, however, that both Lugones and Ortega reject a notion of the unified, self-

contained, decontextualized self as a "fiction trying to maintain itself by way of the logic of purity and as an exercise in domination" (103).

Understanding existential uniqueness as location raises as many questions as it answers, as the disagreement between Lugones and Ortega indicates. For the purposes of our discussion, however, it may serve as a way of thinking of the embodied self that emphasizes the inescapable, existential relevance of an individual's social, political, historical, etc., situation, while simultaneously recognizing that such embeddedness does not amount to either existential fungibility (one similarly situated person is not existentially or ontologically identical to another) or a nightmare of determinism.

In terms of thinking about the phenomenon of human voice, such a model affords us a way of thinking of the individual voice as multiple, embedded in and emanating from social and political contexts, and yet animating an existential uniqueness. To sum up: contemporary feminist theories of the body provide the conceptual tools to understand vocal particularity without: (1) understanding social categories or the process of socialization as necessarily contrary to that particularity; (2) underestimating or ignoring the crucial influence of structural inequality; or (3) referring to a "natural" voice, untouched by such socialization.

The Next Evolution: Toward an Ethical Ideal of Vocal Generosity

Our exploration of contemporary feminist philosophies of the body has helped us to develop several insights that we hope will contribute to the continuing evolution of vocal training. In this section, we address more directly and in more detail, both the complex relationship between the individual vocal practitioner and the social and political contexts within which that practitioner is embedded and the relationship between structural forms of inequality and identity.

With regard to the first point, we are struck by the strong focus on the individual practitioner in Linklater's approach, as well as the focus on socialization primarily as a repressive, controlling force. Together, these points of emphasis construct a model of freedom defined by an individual undoing of oppressive social norms and habits, a model that limits the scope of ethical analysis and rests on assumptions that now, given our engagement with the philosophical material summarized above, seem untenable.

We find ourselves wary of the claim that a natural, authentic, voice–however multi-faceted, flexible, and varied–exists underneath the accumulated effects of socialization, awaiting liberation. Such a claim implies that social forces are contrary to the existence or emergence of an authentic, truly expressive self, and that authentic selves somehow exist both prior to and in spite of effects of socialization. Social forces don't act on authentic selves as much as they create the conditions of possibility under which selves emerge in their particularity; in other words, both specific selves and social groups are constituted by complex interactions of social, material, and political forces. This is not to say that any one individual, or a particular social group, is entirely determined by such forces, or that such forces are impervious to the influence of human individuals or groups. But it is to say that it is impossible to understand a human self in isolation from social and political forces, and that to pit authenticity against socialization is questionable at best.

Foucault's theory of power, particularly as articulated in his earlier works (1973, 1977), substantially influences our approach. With regard to structural inequality, power has often been understood as an essentially repressive force, one that limits the capacities and opportunities of members of marginalized groups. When understood in this way, liberatory strategies focus on the eradication of power dynamics, or the undoing of their pernicious effects. There is no doubt that

viewing power in this way can illuminate important ethical wrongs, but Foucault's articulation of disciplinary power (1977) reminds us that power also works in a productive mode, by disciplining bodies in ways that create subjective capacities, skills, and desires. From this perspective, power takes the material body as its target as well as its mechanism, inculcating in muscles, capillaries, and nervous systems norms that align with systemic and structural inequalities. And so bodies disciplined in femininity do not have to remind themselves to sit in ways that take up small amounts of space, or to feel shame about menstruation and its effects. Instead, those disciplined bodies have developed habits and preferences such that those experiences are both seemingly natural and sometimes delightful, or at least welcome. To do the opposite – to proudly announce that one's period has begun, or to take up as much space as possible on a subway seat – would make one feel not only awkward, but less than oneself. Foucault's productive model of power does not deny its damaging influence–biopower functions to create the kinds of embodied subjects that keep the machinery of inequality moving more or less smoothly–but it does emphasize that power produces selves, rather than limiting or repressing them. Although Foucault is clear that power can be resisted, and that new habits can be adopted, and thus new subjectivities developed, it is not the case that power distorts an authentic or natural self.

Annette Schlichter (2014) adopts a poststructuralist approach to Linklater's work, influenced significantly by the later Foucault; although she ultimately argues that the embodied practice of Linklater's approach ends up undermining "its own ideology of the authentic self," she shares our concern regarding the invocation of the natural voice:

> voice work might exemplify exactly what can go wrong with a humanist understanding of voice and its utilization in the neoliberal marketplace, be it the resonances of

> phonocentrism in the identification of voice and self, or the problem of a pedagogy that, unaware of its own disciplinary function, promises liberation through authentic vocality. The function of a natural voice as a new form of cultural capital in the current marketplace of techniques of self-improvement might raise even more eyebrows (para. 4).

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We remain somewhat unconvinced by Schlichter's argument that the invocations of the natural voice can be readily and clearly separated from the specifics of the Linklater approach, its effects, and how those effects are both experienced and conceptualized by its practitioners. Perhaps more to our point here, however, is the need to recognize that the disciplinary effects of vocal acculturation render vocal habits more existentially salient than Linklater's written work, at least, recognizes. The process of undoing unwanted bodily habits and ways of being, even if the results of such a process are ultimately valued, is more complicated than the straightforward language of liberation implies, and it may involve experiences of existential loss. To transform vocal habits, particularly in an intentional, more or less profound fashion, is to call into question established modes of being and acting, and thus has the potential (again, to a greater or lesser degree, depending on context) to unsettle one's sense of identity, including one's relationships with individual others and communities–relationships that may well be central to a sense of self that is highly valued. In practice, Linklater's approach indeed acknowledges that the unconscious grip of habits formed can be rooted back to a social, emotional, or bodily need: such habits simply would not exist if at one time they did not serve the speaker. Freeing the voice from these habits is understood as the letting go of ways of being that have been neither superficial nor without value to those undertaking the process, but which have outlived their usefulness.

However, it is the arena of the freed and released voice, itself constituted by more desirable and conscious use, that demands particular attention as an existential site produced and shaped by many competing disciplinary forces.

Conceptualizing the individual as necessarily embedded in, inseparable from, and constituted by social and political forces is a crucial aspect of exploring anew the relationship between identity and structural inequalities. The assumption that the real, authentic self is constituted prior to forces of socialization encourages the belief that structural inequalities such as racism and sexism primarily serve to undermine the possibilities of and for authentic selves. It can also contribute to the assumption that the authentic self is unmarked by the very identity factors that such systematic inequalities rely on–and so the real self may be assumed to be not raced, not sexed, not defined by physical ability, and so on. Thinking with Linda Martín Alcoff (2005), however, we hold that social identities inextricably linked with systematic inequalities are nevertheless not reducible to them and are replete with existential meaning and value. Vocal ways of being serve to ground a person in a specific community, particularly if that community is politically marginalized, and therefore have both existential and political importance. Indeed, they may be worth protecting rather than discarding.

One of the central insights that we are taking from contemporary feminist philosophies of the body is the primacy of relations as opposed to the primacy of individual selves. We find convincing the claims that both the sheer existence of individual human beings and the particular identity and ways of being that an individual human being may instantiate are grounded necessarily in relation to others. Humans do not exist as much as they exist-with, and the tendency of Western philosophical theories to undervalue or ignore relationality aligns closely

with the rejection of the body and the marginalization of women, people of color, disabled persons, and many others.

Understanding relationality as prior to individuality does not amount to a denial of the uniqueness of individual persons. Rather, it entails recognizing that uniqueness always emerges from and is located within an untranscendable, inescapable field of relationality. And if this is so, then engaging with the ongoing development of a person's vocal capacity is a process embedded in a complex network of social relations, political forces, and historical specificity. Cognizant of a long history in both philosophy and theatre in which Western cultural practices and norms were falsely represented as universally and ideally human, we seek to highlight the ethical responsibilities inherent in the relationality of vocal training. In particular, we seek to explore how even calls for vocal liberation can unwittingly reinscribe patterns of inequality, particularly if those calls rely on models of the autonomous, independent self.

In terms of voice training, we are particularly suspicious of the recurring call–largely in mainstream television and radio, online and print journals, and the blogosphere,[5] as well as in some theatre training and performance practices–for female or queer-identified voices to abandon vocal fry, uptalk, and other vocal habits that (so the story goes) undermine the speaker's capacity to command respect.[6] Women in particular are encouraged to reject ways of speaking that have been part of their socialization as women "in a man's world" (Linklater 2006, 25) and to reclaim a stronger sense of their vocal self, with the promise that doing so will amount to being taken more seriously–with no attention paid to the possibility that losing a palpable expression of their gender identity might involve significant loss. Such exhortations not only reify the social and political desirability of the recognizably masculine "big and strong" voice; they also assume that the social meanings of vocal qualities are separable from the bodies from

which they emanate, as if it were the bare, disembodied vocal qualities that generate the desired effects. We suspect that the tendency to respond with respect to certain vocal qualities is a more complicated matter, one involving those vocal qualities *and* their relation to certain gendered forms of embodiment *and* a patriarchal social context. That is, distortions in communication here may be as much a function of "the hearer's own hopes, fears, and ideological inclinations" as anything else (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013, 105). To have women simply adopt masculine ways of speaking is no more likely to garner respect than a female politician's pantsuit. Even more acutely, we are concerned that such exhortations upholds a social and political tradition of viewing women's bodies–and therefore voices–as more appropriately open to critique, policing, and judgment.

What might the next evolution in vocal training look like, then? What would it mean to retain the many advances made by Linklater's approach–including its admirable emphasis on the materiality of the embodied voice, the recognition of the existential importance of the embodied voice, and the possibility of vocal transformation that enhances one's sense of self and ability to communicate with others–while simultaneously bringing to bear an emphasis on relationality and a deepened sense of the role of systematic injustice in the construction of identity?

To begin, the focus on the liberation of the individual voice needs to be more clearly and persistently situated within (and perhaps even replaced by a focus on) the context of *intervocality*. Just as contemporary feminist theories of the body have emphasized the crucial ways in which bodies are shaped, influenced, and ineluctably marked by social and political factors, so too does the embodied phenomenon of the human voice emerge within and from a complex set of relations and power dynamics, including the persistent perpetuation of systematic inequalities. Voice work must thus be understood as both occurring within the current context of

those inequalities – not separate from or untainted by their influence – and as heir to multiple intellectual and professional traditions inescapably affiliated with sexism, racism, transphobia, colonialism, ableism, and so on.

Quite aside from the question of the existence of the natural voice, understanding voice work as situated within systems of structural inequality also raises the question of the unequal distribution of the risks of challenging vocal norms among different social groups; members of dominant groups may well have access to more vocal freedom than members of marginalized groups, and much less to lose by enacting wider scopes of vocal practice. In addition, members of marginalized groups may have existentially and politically meaningful attachments to vocal patterns and habits that, while surely socially constructed, nevertheless ground them in beloved communities and serve to create vocal sites of political and social resistance to injustice. The relational construction of voices inside the spectrum of gender and sexuality can result in, for example, trans voices that serve as markers of political meaning, social identity, and personal authenticity whilst also deeply connecting to the concepts of liberation, agency and/or resistance.

Clearly, an ethics of vocal libertarianism – a kind of "you do you" approach to vocal work – will be entirely insufficient to the task of interrogating intervocality. Such an approach minimizes the centrality of relationality in vocal identity, as well as the complex ways in which systemic injustices have shaped vocal and aural practices, habits, and norms. Here we seek to push back on such vocal libertarianism by understanding voice(s) as ontologically intervocal, such that vocal identity is understood as one of many corporeal sites of the creation and production of various selves-in-relation to other spaces, forces, and (speaking/listening) selves. Our voices are both resolutely ours (often immediately recognizable as belonging to a specific individual, as Cavarero [2005] points out) and ineluctably marked and beholden to the other (a

factor that Cavarero's analysis omits). How and what we can sound out through our bodily cavities and bones and the air we swim in is shaped by the architecture we have inhabited, the particulate matter held by that air, the other vocal and aural beings we have encountered, the ways in which our sounds have been received and categorized and judged – and the ways in which we have received, categorized, and judged the vocalizations of others. And our voices do not merely externalize interior reality; as part of our embodied being, they are part and parcel of our ongoing material becoming, bringing into being new sensations, new possibilities, new ways of understanding and living.

What is needed is an ethical framework that values a multiplicity of vocal patterns and possibilities, pushes back against the ways in which vocal capacities are marshalled to reify and perpetuate various forms of systematic injustice, situates human voices as irreducibly emerging from a complex set of social and political relations, and conceptualizes the material, embodied phenomenon that is human-generated sound as replete with both existential and political meaning. We would like to offer as an opening gesture in developing such an ethical framework the concept of *vocal generosity*.

Here, we take as our starting point Rosalyn DiProse's notion of corporeal generosity (2002), which emphasizes that all human beings, precisely by virtue of their necessary embodiment, are always and already marked by corporal gifts. The giving and receiving of breath and blood are not the results of human freedom and agency, but their building blocks, and so the ontology of the human being is revealed as grounded in a state of untranscendable indebtedness. Establishing corporeal generosity as an ontological fact about embodied human beings, however, does not amount to an ethical mandate requiring any and all corporeal gifts; as embodied subjects develop in a context of intercorporeality, they develop both capacities and

preferences for specific corporeal gifts. Injustice, DiProse says, frequently takes the form of forcing the gift (compelling women to carry unwanted pregnancies, for example), as well as memorializing certain corporeal gifts while ignoring others.

Transferring DiProse's concept of corporeal generosity to the vocal realm would involve the recognition that vocal human beings only develop in a context of vocal and aural gift-giving and cannot be isolated from the vocal and aural gifts they have received and given. It could also ground a political and ethical analysis of which vocal and aural gifts have been marked as valuable, and which have been ignored. In addition, it provides a helpful model for understanding the complex intersection between the universal and the particular: while all voices have been engaged, by definition, in the exchange of vocal and aural gifts, the specific gifts they have received and given are necessarily particular. The richly sonorous in utero soundscape is always marked by particular vowels, consonants, rhythms, tones, and volumes; while each inhabitant of the womb hears and feels the sounds of heartbeats and rushing blood, even these sounds are shaped by the bodily habits and practices of the maternal body, which are in turn shaped by a social and political environment.

Vocal generosity, then, highlights the irreducible relationality of the voice, thus bringing to the fore the existential relevance of the in-betweenness of vocal relations: the voice is never merely an emanation, but always emerges in a social environment involving multiple vocal subjects who serve as both vocalizers and receivers. It also allows us to understand how vocal norms have intersected with structural inequalities to privilege certain vocal gifts (the development, say, of tones and rhythms associated with great oratory) while ignoring or vilifying others (constructing certain kinds of voices as deficient and in need of correction, say, or neglecting the role of maternal vocalizations in brain development, both before and after birth).

The framework of vocal generosity also generates new questions for the field of voice work, such as: how do the vocal gifts that have been engaged in the generation of certain kinds of voices affect what kinds of vocal gifts those voices are able or willing to give to others?

We also want to extend our understanding of vocal generosity in ways that go well beyond DiProse's concept of corporeal generosity. Acutely aware of the ways in which structural inequalities have served to funnel broad vocal capacities into overly narrow categories of vocal identity, we seek to use the idea of vocal generosity as a call for the development not only of a multitude of vocal patterns, styles, tones, etc., but for a deepened ability to receive that multiplicity in more consistently generous, open, and just ways. We are aware, for example, of the ways in which trans persons are punished for not adopting vocal patterns and habits that align with the sex they were assigned at birth or the gender binary in general; and of the ways in which voices that are marked by various forms of disability are disregarded, met with impatience, and socially marginalized; and of the ways in which white supremacy employs the politics and spatiality of sound to justify brutal acts of violence against bodies of color. A model of vocal generosity could frame these forms of vocal injustice as examples of failing to recognize and receive certain forms of vocal gifts, a failure which not only harms and marginalizes certain individuals, but it impoverishes our common understanding of the wide spectrum of vocal possibilities. That failure also, insofar as it establishes certain voices as acceptable/normal/ideal–as if they become so without complex practices of vocal recognition and nurturing–serves to mask human intervocality. In this way, the framework of vocal generosity both clarifies the harms of vocal injustice as imposed particularly on members of marginalized groups and identifies how such harms have a cumulatively negative effect on general understandings of the phenomenon of human intervocality.

Conclusion

As we look toward developing a new framework for vocal liberation and development–embracing the notions of intervocality and vocal generosity–we return to an awareness of breath, which Linklater describes as the "prima materia" (Linklater 2009a, 101): the foundational material of the voice is air itself. Luce Irigaray argues that Western metaphysics is overly "founded in the solid" (Irigaray 1999, 25), and calls for "the cultivation of breath as a way to conceive of the relationality of individuation and community, and sexual difference beyond logocentrism and patriarchy" (Górska 2016, 25 and Irigaray 1999). Breath lives in the in-between, at the places where margins are created and destroyed: that which is around the body moves into the body, merges and melds with the body, and is released from the body, carrying with it material from the body. It is both me and not-me. Linklater asserts that freedom of the breath has everything to do with "dissolving protective habits in the mind and the body" (Linklater 2009a, 104). Breath also *dissolves* the clearly demarcated borders of where bodies end and other spaces begin, as it "opens the horizon of what it means to be a human breathing subject beyond conventional boundaries of human embodiment" (Górska 2016, 43). This exchange is always political in nature: the air I breathe in (as well as the breath in my body) is contained, moved, framed by the architecture of resonant, constructed spaces (public, private, outdoors, indoors), and always marked by a multiplicity of meanings and disciplinary forces. My capacity to breathe, my right to breathe, and the quality of my breath are in a constant state of material becoming. My identity exists in relation to my surroundings, to the acoustic environment, wherein intelligibility and recognition and the possibilities for communication are continually re-created. Magadelena Górska writes:

> breathing [...] can inspire diverse analyses of relational natural and cultural, material and social scapes that are oxygenated across diverse spaces, times, geopolitical relations,

ecosystems [...] it becomes an enactment of movement and circulation within and across (human and nonhuman) bodies, spaces, species and culture. (30)

Linklater describes the breathing apparatus itself as an "image of a tapestry woven around the inner walls of the body" (Linklater 2009a, 107). She points out that "it can help to know that the root of the word 'text' (as in the text of a story) is the same as the root of the word 'tapestry': both words originate in the Latin 'tessere' which means 'to weave.'" She also suggests that "you can let the words (the stitches?) of your story be sewn into the fiber of your breathing and your voice will be filled with living pictures" (107). In this sense, Linklater here imagines the body and breath as textual and even in a sense, intertextual (Kristeva 1966/1986). The intertextuality of breath is then a site of production by many forces: the text (and texture) of our breathing is an interweaving and circulation of socio-cultural influences, images, material body, spaces, and shared air. The currently emerging field of "respiratory philosophy" (Berndston 2010) demonstrates a growing interest in the cultivation of breathing as "the gesture that re-unites what philosophy has split apart" (Hawke 2015). If it is true that that various worlds construct specifically situated subjective beings, we then experience the world through breath, think with and according to breath (Berndston 2010). As we look to contemporary philosophy to re-situate our experience of the ongoing processes of breath as the primary existential site of the production of our various selves (we breathe, and are breathed, *into being*), we can also see how philosophy can indeed look to the practices of breath in Linklater voice work, wherein thought and breath are intimately linked; and "inspiration" need not continue to hold a double meaning (neither only "a movement of the intellect" nor "the drawing of air into the lungs," but *both*) in consciously lived-out experience.

To borrow from Górska: we call upon a moment of "respite" (2016) in which the reader is invited to take a breath, a respiratory instant between the specifically located reading of text on this page and the expansion into new meanings beyond its bounded, printed form–a moment to redirect our attention to all of the axes of understanding, to become aware, and to breathe differently:

> Allow the breath to enter...let the breath drop in [...] feed in a sigh impulse and then let it release out...open inside for the breath to come in—then let it escape...
>
> We are getting out of the way, and beginning to see the way. (Linklater 2009a, 104)

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Notes

[1] The few exceptions include Cavarero (2005) Dunn and Jones (1997), and Malhotra and Rowe (2013)

[2] Schlichter 2014 provides a Foucauldian analysis of Linklater's approach that raises many of the concerns we raise below regarding the invocations of the "natural" voice, but it does not address the questions of identity and structural injustice that we focus on here, and doesn't draw explicitly on feminist philosophy.

[3] For a more comprehensive introduction to the field, see Lennon (2014).

[4] In full disclosure, it is important to acknowledge that co-author Hamel is writing from the perspective of praxis as well as theory: she is a Designated Linklater *Freeing the Natural Voice* teacher, and has been a practitioner, voice coach, and teacher of the work for about 15 years. That said, we are keenly aware that there is a challenge in the act of writing about Linklater's *Freeing the Natural Voice* approach to voice training, which is, first and foremost, experiential, and takes place *in situ*, between teacher and student(s). *FNV* as a written text is in a sense necessarily incomplete: it is a guidebook to introduce the reader to "experiential awarenesses" in the body to create shifts in the voice; and there is a wide gap between simply reading and thinking about the work and its practice as lived experience. The work is altogether set up to be "practice first, theory second." That said, this paper aims to address some of the fundamental philosophical assumptions that frame the work as a whole, which are asserted both in the text of

FNV as well as in the context of the work as taught in the classroom. In both the teaching practice as well as Linklater's written expression of the work the precision of "causal thought" and a student's understanding of the concepts of work are paramount; and we hold that there is value in examining those very concepts that lead to the felt-experience of the exercises. At the same time, we acknowledge also that the voice work often works in reverse, as it is clear from experience that a physical shift is equally likely to lead to a shift in thinking. This article aims, through the acting of writing about a practice ("thinking about the doing"–and acknowledging the inherent tension within this effort)–to challenge in part, perhaps ironically, an insistent mind/body dualism present in the approach, as well as to problematize the very concept of the "authentic self" behind the words that desires to speak: a self that is both assumed in and fundamental to its practice.

[5] The terms "uptalk" (upward inflection pattern) and "vocal fry" (also known as "creaky voice") feverishly entered the mainstream lexicon beginning roughly around 2013, initiating the so-called "war on female voices" (Marcotte 2015) during which author Naomi Wolf notably wrote an article exhorting young women to reclaim their power by rejecting these so-called "destructive" speech patterns (Wolf 2015); in the same year *This American Life* on NPR featured a remarkable segment responding to the vitriolic letters from listeners criticizing the speaking voices of their young female presenters (Glass 2015). Significant debate has taken place on the subject, including both criticism which points to the sexism and oppression inherent in policing women's voices (Gross 2015, Riley 2015), to the double-bind for the powerful female voice within a patriarchy (Thompson 2018), as well as the counter-suggestions that credit young female voices for being innovative, trendsetting, and full of linguistic ingenuity (Quenqua 2012; Arana 2013).

[6] In their extensive examinations of the gendering of language, Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet offer a useful recontextualization of the phenomenon of the questioning inflection pattern of "uptalk": suggesting that in lieu of the familiar suggestion that it is a merely a sign of insecurity or feigned weakness in (primarily) women's speech, that "the story is much more complex…[uptalk] can also be used to open up the conversational floor to other participants, to provide a space for others' contributions, and also to show aggression. And its gendering may have at least as much to do with how others interpret [it] as with differences in who produces [it]" (2013, 144).