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ROUTLEDGE

The Routledge Companion to Voice and Identity

Edited by Amy Skjerseth, Freya Jarman, and Naomi André

"*The Routledge Companion to Voice and Identity* explores the interstices between the normativity of singing conventions, showing that they are more extensive and composite than expected. It extends the field of voice studies, opening to the voices that still 'feel out of place' and are struggling to be heard and recognized, with a broad focus on the transitional processes of becoming. The chapters offer a kaleidoscopic array of positional research, primarily rooted in personal experience, reaching from traditional forms of vocality such as contratenors to trans-nonbinary singers questioning the link between identity and voice and opening spaces of negotiation in questions of gender and race. Additionally, the book broadens its scope beyond singing voices to include aspects such as geographical dislocation in film voice, various expressions of citizenship, and perspectives on disability. The multifarious perspectives articulated in *The Routledge Companion to Voice and Identity* substantially contribute to redefining, broadening, and mobilizing what we take for granted in matters of voice."

—**Michaela Garda**,
Professor for Music Aesthetics and Sociology at the University of Pavia, Department of Musicology and Cultural Heritage in Cremona

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THE ROUTLEDGE COMPANION TO VOICE AND IDENTITY

This collection pushes the boundaries of studies and practices of voice—not only past essential, transcendental, and universal notions of voicing, but also to understudied arenas of voice and identity, especially in race, disability, aging, geographical, Indigenous, trans, and other contexts.

The authors and editors understand the voice as existing both in and across contexts. Case studies oscillate between local and global phenomena to ground voicing in temporal, geographical, and political scales. From South African opera singers to Brazilian countertenors, gender-affirming trans voice care to spectrographic and documentary forms of representing voice, and Indigenous film dubbing to embodied performances of American Sign Language, this collection opens up disciplinarily and epistemologically bound topics to ask how vocality works in a multitude of ways for producing meanings around culture and identity. Moreover, this collection engages and emerges from a broad range of academic ranks, artistic practices, geographies, and identities, and engages interviews, multimedia exhibitions, and more. The contributors situate each act of voicing in its place, time, and connections to questions of power, agency, and advocacy.

This book is for scholars and practitioners of voice and voice studies and those interested in the structural—and fluid—aspects of identity. The authors address both historical and cutting-edge issues, imbricating vocality in identity.

Amy Skjerseth is Assistant Professor of Popular Music at the University of California, Riverside. Her scholarship focuses on intersections of music, media, material culture, and technology.

Freya Jarman is Reader in Music at the University of Liverpool. Freya's publications include work on the musical workings of camp, a monograph on *Queer Voices* (2011), and a chapter on lip-syncing scenes in films.

Naomi André is the David G. Frey Distinguished Professor in the Department of Music at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is Professor Emerita at the University of Michigan.

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For the voices who raised and shaped us so that we may amplify others, and for the voices that go unheard.

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Jennifer Anyan's interdisciplinary practice uses a broad range of tactile, audio, and visual methods to playfully investigate the activity and affect of fashioning the body. Using the practice as a starting point, Anyan's writing explores how fashioning affects and corresponds to roles, expectations, and experiences of the self in the world. Jennifer Anyan is Associate Professor of the Art of Fashion and Dean of the School of Fashion and Creative Industries Management at Arts University Bournemouth. (www.jenniferanyan.com)

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Catherine Provenzano's research focuses on voice, instrumentality, labor, and technology as they intersect class, race, and gender in US popular culture. Currently she is writing a monograph entitled *Emotional Signals: A Cultural History and Ethnography of Pitch Correction Softwares*

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PREFACE

On Language, Place, and the Time In Which This Volume was Compiled

Amy Skjerseth, Freya Jarman, and Naomi André

Like any piece of scholarship, this collection is a product of a particular moment in time and culture, and it forms part of the very slow conversation that we call research. As such, it is important to acknowledge the structures of power and privilege that inform, enable, and in other ways shape the material that follows. Such an acknowledgment is relevant to any scholarly endeavor, but its relevance is perhaps especially obvious given that the scholarship contained here pertains to questions of identity.

We wish to start, therefore, by acknowledging the histories of the lands and institutions where the research here was conducted. The authors whose work is compiled here live and work in a wide range of geographical and cultural contexts, across a variety of positions of social power; at the same time, there were other voices whose work we were unable to include for reasons that have to do with power, privilege, and the lack thereof. The conditions of much contemporary academic labor have been facilitated by long histories of colonization and the continued occupation of unceded land. We acknowledge that much of the land on which this work was undertaken was traditionally stewarded by Indigenous bearers of culture. Modern academic institutions may also rest on histories of enslavement. Profits from the transatlantic trade of enslaved Black people funded some of the buildings in which we work; the physical labor of enslaved people was used to build some of our campus structures.[1] As the editors of this volume, we recognize that the present text is no exception; we acknowledge our debt to the enslaved people whose bodies were violently exploited in the service of Western economic development, and we remember those who did not survive the Middle Passage.

The cultural circumstances within which the authors worked will inevitably shift, and you—the reader of this volume—will be reading into the past. We are writing into our future—how far, we can't possibly know, but the use and representation of language is a dynamic process, and we have only the language and context of our present. After 2020, many news agencies and publications began to capitalize Black (and similarly Brown, Indigenous, and so on) to signify race and culture. For some, also capitalizing white has been seen as a way to recognize whiteness as a racial identity, where leaving it uncapitalized fails to mark it appropriately as an identity, "implicitly affirm[ing] Whiteness as the standard and norm" (Mack and Palfrey 2020). For other readers, though, capitalizing white references a period in history that signaled white pride and nationalism as acts of dominance and supremacy, and the capitalization of white was resisted by the same logic that encouraged the capitalization of Black. In this collection, and after a lot of conversation in which

we have all recognized our own different positions in relation to the question, we have taken the editorial decision not to capitalize white when used in the sense of race and culture. While we recognize the use and value of capitalization in marking whiteness as a racial category, the capitalization is also too thoroughly entwined with white supremacy. Ultimately, there is no perfect solution; all we can do is offer you our thought process. In doing so, we echo projects such as Trinh T. Minh-Ha's "speaking nearby" (Minh-Ha and Chen 1992) and Saidiya Hartman's "Venus in Two Acts" (2008). Hartman's engagement with spectral and speculative registers entwines with the subjects and objects of voice and identity studies—threads on which we will pull in the Introduction.

Saidiya Hartman writes in "Venus in Two Acts," pages three and four:

> How can narrative embody life in words and at the same time respect what we cannot know? How does one listen for the groans and cries, the undecipherable songs, the crackle of fire in the cane fields, the laments for the dead, and the shouts of victory, and then assign words to all of it? Is it possible to construct a story from "the locus of impossible speech" or resurrect lives from the ruins? Can beauty provide an antidote to dishonor, and love a way to "exhume buried cries" and reanimate the dead?
>
> Or is narration its own gift and its own end, that is, all that is realizable when overcoming the past and redeeming the dead are not? And what do stories afford anyway? A way of living in the world in the aftermath of catastrophe and devastation? A home in the world for the mutilated and violated self? For whom—for us or for them?
>
> […] As I understand it, a history of the present strives to illuminate the intimacy of our experience with the lives of the dead, to write our now as it is interrupted by this past, and to imagine a free state, not as the time before captivity or slavery, but rather as the anticipated future of this writing.

Note

1 The Department of Music at the University of Liverpool is part of the School of the Arts, whose administrative divisions are housed at 19–23 Abercromby Square. Number 19 was built by South Carolinian cotton merchant Charles K. Prioleau, and evidence of his support for the slavery on which his trade rested is to be found all over the building. See Hidden Liverpool 2021. Prioleau was a keen supporter of the Confederacy, and there is some evidence that 19 Abercromby Square was something of an unofficial embassy for the Confederacy in Liverpool. See LDHI n.d. The Department of Music at the University of California, Riverside, is on the native lands of the Cahuilla, Tongva, Luiseño, and Serrano peoples. The University of North Carolina is on the native lands of the Occaneechi, Shakori, Eno, and Sissipahaw peoples. North Carolina has also been home to many Indigenous peoples, including the nations and tribes of Bear River/Bay River, Cape Fear, Catawba, Chowanoke, Coree/Coranine, Creek, Croatan, Eno, Hatteras, Keyauwee, Machapunga, Moratoc, Natchez, Neusiok, Pamlico, Shakori, Sara/Cheraw, Sissipahaw, Sugeree, Wateree, Weapemeoc, Woccon, Yadkin, and Yeopim. Moreover, the institution of UNC Chapel Hill was built by enslaved Africans and their enslaved descendants (see Newhall 2018), and admitted Black students only after 1955. The history of Black students and faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is documented through "The Carolina Story: A Virtual Museum of University History" in multiple online exhibits. Information about "American Indians," "Jewish Life at Carolina," "The Asian American Student Experience," "Women and Coeducation," "Reconstruction," Slavery and the University," "African Americans and Integration," and a range of other topics is also included at https://museum.unc.edu/intro. Through these exhibits we learn that the first Black students at UNC Chapel Hill were admitted in the Law School; four were admitted in 1951. Medical students entered in 1955, the first Black undergraduate in 1955, and the first Black professor joined the faculty in 1966. https://museum.unc.edu/exhibits/show/segregation/solomon-pool--1832-1901-

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1
INTRODUCTION

Amy Skjerseth, Freya Jarman, and Naomi André

This is not your typical introduction to an edited volume. Instead, it is one that has grown out of a conversation amongst the three editors: we wanted to provide a layering of voices that spoke to our positionalities as well as our connections to voice as an object, process, and field. To do so, we edited a transcript of a conversation we had on Zoom, across three time zones, with three distinct voices, and coming out of three distinct experiences.

We believe that voice is a dynamic force that has power; we are grounded in beliefs that provide capacious spaces for voicing. There is a kaleidoscopic angle to investing in voice, as we do in this collection, and the ways it holds and creates meaning. We believe that voice exists as an object to be analyzed (the "thingness" as a noun), as an action (moving as a verb), and within a broader context for expressing positionality and experience.

Here, we have in mind a number of texts that we share as reference points, including the following:

- Jacques Lacan's (1977, 339) Graph of Desire, in which the voice is a material remnant, left over in the process of subject formation; also Mladen Dolar's development of Lacan's notion that the voice is an exemplary case of the *objet a*, the object-cause of desire (Dolar 2006);[1]
- Nina Sun Eidsheim (2012) on the voice as dynamically constructed, co-created by vocalizer and listener;
- Katherine Meizel (2019) on multivocality, on voice as both corporeal and social, both individual and cultural;
- Steven Connor (2004) on the voice as a product of physical processes, a "straining of the air";[2]
- Kara Keeling (2019) on the voice as errantry, after Édouard Glissant.

For many in this collection, voice becomes a space that articulates what is considered home—though, of course, a mutable and movable definition of home. In another strand, voice exists and comes into being as it is articulated through a variety of media: as live and acoustic, as gestured and signed, and as mediated through technology. As the gathering of voices represented in this

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collection resonates together, our conversation below provides a theater-in-the-round for sounding out multiple dimensions of voice and voicing.

In what follows, there are moments when we're talking about voice in a meta way with *our* voices. The challenge with the introduction—and much of what we grapple with as voice scholars—is that we are representing voice on a page, which doesn't encapsulate its form. To ground some of voice's ephemerality, then, we include both personal and voice studies perspectives. We start with the idea of what voice means to us, how we each understand the idea of voice, and what our relationships are with voice—how we got into it. Our conversation began in real time (coordinated across time zones) across geographical space in three locations.

September 10, 2024
07:30 PST California, US
10:30 EST North Carolina, US
15:30 BST Liverpool, UK

Freya: I guess I got into voice studies through Barthes's "Grain of the Voice" essay, which I read as a Master's student. That was the foundational piece that completely switched me on to this way of thinking about voice as a material sound, as a sounding object, and the kind of the *grit* in between the things that we think of voice as doing. Barthes also helped me think about the idea of voice as a borderland between an individual and community, perhaps an individual and some sort of relationship.

I think I got there partly because I was so interested in the uniqueness of voice in relation to individuals and the idea of morphing into some other thing, or sort of taking on another voice. I'd always wanted to be an impersonator when I was a kid. I wanted to work on *Spitting Image*[3] and do the voices for this political satire. I've always found impersonations so fascinating because of this idea of the uniqueness of the voice—at once a sort of sole identity but also the capacity to shift that so-called sole identity around.[4] That really spoke to me because my family moved around so much when I was a kid. I found that my accent was always slightly developing in conversation with these new places that I would move to.

So I've thought of my accent as being quite porous and malleable and, I guess in a funny kind of way, sort of code-switchy in terms of moving across geographic location, class, and so on. At first, I'm a country kid in rural Somerset, then I'm an Oxford public school girl, and the shifts continued. I was really trying to fit in by using my voice in different ways. I hadn't really thought about that malleability until I was thinking about all these issues through Barthes.

Naomi: Everything you're saying about that Barthes essay resonates so strongly for me. That was such a pivotal essay for me, along with his "Death of the Author" essay. I was introduced to them both in college and now think of them as a pair of companion essays since they have provided a helpful foundation for much of my thinking about voice, music, and interpretation. At first, I remember being very mad at these essays, the language and way they delivered knowledge, because I found them so hard to understand! They were my initial entry into critical theory through a poststructuralist lens. I struggled with the way they destabilized the relationships between the voice, author, listener, and meaning. But then once I began to let go of knowing exactly what was being said at every given moment, and I allowed meaning to evolve over multiple readings, everything felt new and exciting. It was a little frightening, but very exhilarating. It was the first time I was reading language that was morphing and twisting in and around itself.

I love rereading these essays, and it's always challenging and invigorating to teach these works, which I do every so often. I find "Death of the Author" to be so helpful in empowering students to think about how to read a text and think about how knowledge about the author (or creative artist, in terms of the performing arts) can shape, and limit, our understanding of that text. It opens a space for the reader to have their own relationship with the text and its origins (from the author and specific historical contexts), and then think about how the text still creates meaning in the present.

That set the groundwork for my reading of "The Grain of the Voice." To be honest, it's an essay I still feel like I'm unfolding for new meanings. I think of it as a space of possibility for thinking about and opening up questions: what is voice, what is its materiality, and what does it mean metaphorically to have a voice? How do we talk about what a voice *is* and actually encompasses? How do we represent the sounding voice and the whole *geno* song and *pheno* song and the interpretive elements, versus the diction in the tongue?

> In "The Grain of the Voice" (1977) Barthes's use of *geno-song* and *pheno-song* can be understood in multiple ways. One way is as an adaptation of the scientific discussion of an organism's genetic makeup (genotype) and its observable characteristics (phenotype). In applying these ideas to voice, one can think of the *pheno-song* as a way to discuss elements of interpretation (articulation, accent, dynamics, etc.). A helpful, yet still elusive, construction for *geno-song* is the materiality of voice and the sound it produces. Just as in scientific discussions of genotype and phenotype, there are overlapping areas that are not always clear-cut between the two categories, *geno-song* and *pheno-song,* and this provides an especially fertile space for possibility. Also useful in understanding these elusive categories is Jonathan Dunsby's close reading of the "grain" of Charles Panzéra's voice as an attempt to pin down the grain in a way that Barthes does not (2009).

Or, you know, those provocative statements about language in the mouth, and when he talks about Wanda Landowska and the pads of the fingers on the keyboard. To me, this is one of the most intellectually exciting spaces: taking something you cannot see and trying to capture it. You can't capture it in a butterfly net or under a glass, because voice doesn't work that way. But it's so central to who we are, and yet almost impossible to pinpoint. I feel it's a primary thing that connects all of us: no matter what age, no matter what place you come from, or education level—everybody has a nuanced embodied connection to voice. Everything we're talking about with the voice is as a borderland and as individual; the voice as something that creates space, but also provides community; a uniqueness, this capacity that it's ourself, but then it changes just as we change.

On a more personal level, I really started as a singer because my mother is a singer. Officially, I first took piano lessons, but I was not a happy pianist; I've always felt that singing revealed my true voice. My mother studied at the Juilliard School and was a high coloratura soprano. It turns out that her voice studio at Juilliard wasn't a really good space for her vocally. Her teacher was trying to take my mother's very high, agile voice and turn it into a much heavier voice. There was also the death of her father after her second year, and her mother did not think that being a singer in the 1960s was a good career for a young woman. My mother didn't graduate, but she stayed in New York City, sang in multiple places (choirs, churches, as a soloist), and continued to study privately for years. She also had other jobs; singing was not her main way of making money, yet it remained an important part of her. After I was born, I grew up always hearing my mother sing

and stories about her studying with "Maestro," her teacher after Juilliard. I still have a bunch of her opera scores that she marked up: Donizetti's Lucia, Mozart's Susanna, Verdi's Violetta, so many heroines. I also have her *Carmen* score (the part of Frasquita is underlined), among many others.

When my mother was pregnant with me, I was told that she was singing all the time. And when I was younger, she would always make songs out of everything, you know, like a special driving-in-the-car song for where we were heading. One of my favorites was "We are going, going to grandma's house." As I remember the song and try to put it in musical notation now, I realize that it was quite a simple song harmonically with a melody that oscillated between the tonic and a drop down to the dominant.[5] Part of the great fun was that the text was bouncy—it had a duple meter in the first measure (2+2: "**We** are **go-**ing") and then a bar with an additive beat (2+1–**2**–3: "**go**-ing to **grand**ma's house"). These first measures were like a few steps and a little skip; a tight fit, but it worked as a recurring chorus. The rest of the lines rarely scanned easily at all, and we would take turns making up uneven phrases that would somehow be formed into a crooked little stanza "(1) we are going to grandma's house in Croton-on-the-Hudson. (2) We are driving along route 9A. (3) We are driving along in the car!" Chorus (or coda): "**We** are **go**-ing, **go**-ing to **grand**ma's house!"

> The ephemeral nature of the song itself meant it ultimately evaded attempts at a meaningful transcription. Listening now to Naomi's re-creation of the chorus during our call, there is a strong sense of a recurring ditty, one whose simplicity makes it both easy to catch on in a group setting and also flexible enough to be subjected to all kinds of rhythmic distortion as necessary for new improvised lyrics.

I remember these little songs, very simple, yet always performed and delivered with energy and a sense of communion. The car would be transformed into a great space for vocal pleasure. It was time together (as a single mother, she was frequently working) and we'd also sing rounds, little canons, of songs she would teach me. These included Bible verses, a sweet one about friendship ("Make new friends, but keep the old; one is silver, and the other gold"), and my favorite, the "Carol of the Bells."[6] I grew up in a space all about singing and, moreover, with a mother who had a trained (and really high gorgeous coloratura) voice and loved to sing. For me such a freely soaring, playful, and unrestrained voice was the norm. It was almost a Lacanian thing, with the sound of my mother's voice shaping an original set of experiences. So, as a Black woman, when people look at me askance and ask, "How did *you* get into opera? Why are *you* in opera studies?" I'm like, "I came out of the womb surrounded by an operatic voice. I grew up listening to an operatic voice." Though my mother didn't sing much opera when I was younger, she sang in churches. I've lived through many *Messiahs* over the years. I sang in the choir because I'm an only child and there were no babysitters. From my earliest memories I've always had a voice surrounding me.

I love what voice means metaphorically, as well as this idea of there being a real physicality to a singing voice. I adore singing, but I sing for fun (it's not my job). I'm very fortunate that for my vocation I get to do something that I really love, thinking about the voice as well as working with singers and opera companies in a scholarly capacity. Being a singer helps me understand the mechanics, such as a vocal range and tessitura, and shapes how I feel while I'm reading treatises, you know, going back to Pier Francesco Tosi, Giovanni Battista Mancini, and all those writings from the 18th and 19th centuries. My being a singer adds structure to how I hear and decipher the singing voice, the sound of the voice, and its grain. If I can sort of hijack the term a little bit, for me the "grain of the voice" is being born out of a singer's body and hearing that voice growing up.

I've sort of internalized it: yes, I sing, and I love having sound come out of my body, but I also love being around singers and thinking about voices. The grain, for me, simultaneously has an internal and external component; it's both a physical thing and a mental process.

Amy: Like both of you, I read the "Grain" essay as a nascent voice scholar, and it connected me back to my early impressions of voice. My mom also sings, and voice was my first instrument. My mom had me in choir from an early age, and she, like Naomi's mom, had songs for everything—songs to accompany every activity or geographical feature. The Mississippi River had a song every time we went over the bridge between Iowa and Illinois, which was a lot, because we lived in the Quad Cities. It was a spelling song that went, "M-I….S-S-I-, S-S-I, P-P-I…" (Figure 1.1) I think it's a real song.

> I've since discovered that the song exists, going back to 1916, but my mom's melody was very different.

I remember listening with her to the radio, going with her to concerts, and then finding my own kind of voice—metaphorically, in terms of the instruments that I went on to play, including violin, saxophone, and oboe. I had a roundabout journey with music and scholarship. I went to a conservatory for oboe performance. And in the middle of it, I had several new physical symptoms. I figured out halfway through the degree that I have a spinal cord disease and wondered how sustainable it would be to play, because oboe, to put it simply, involves so much back pressure. At that crossroads, I had to find a new physical way of playing, which for oboe very much involves connecting the breath and the body. A lot of oboists think about singing when they think about putting air through their instruments, shaping notes, and so on. While thinking of my first instrument, voice, did help me a lot with the physical restrictions I encountered with the oboe, I ultimately couldn't surmount them. But around that time, I found voice studies, which put me on the path to a PhD.

In my Master's program, where I took classes in media and cultural studies, I saw the films of Yoko Ono and was captivated by her soundtracks. Infamously, Ono has a voice that is described by critics as grating, hard to listen to, and very off-putting to a lot of people: but that reception

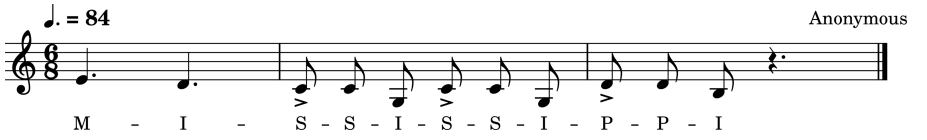

Figure 1.1 Transcription of my mom's "M-I….S-S-I-, S-S-I, P-P-I…" song

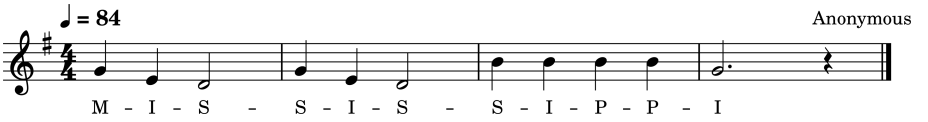

Figure 1.2 Transcription of Another "M-I-S-S-I-S-S-I, P-P-I…" Song

is racialized and feminized.[7] Ono makes these characteristics of voice and identity malleable in her performances and incredibly creative multimedia practices. Her voice and output and critical reception must be contextualized through embodiment—both Ono's embodied artistry and aural stereotypes of femininity and race. This intersection of voice studies and embodied identity, studied by so many voice scholars, has pushed voice studies beyond more psychoanalytic approaches,[8] and that conversation was very much active when I entered the field of voice studies.[9] The material turn in voice studies paralleled my own embodied orientation to the voice through my practices as a musician, as well as my scholarly orientations.

For example, Freya characterized voice as the grit between things. The metaphor of "voice as grit" reminds me of Mary Douglas, an anthropologist who talks about dirt as matter out of place.[10] This speaks to my and critics' engagement with Yoko Ono's voice—Ono was disparagingly described by Beatles fans in particular with several racist and misogynist slurs, but her art also pushed on social attitudes about the voice of a woman of color and a feminized voice that is pushed to extremes of gender and bounds of traditional femininity. This is the voice as grit: both something described by critics as noise, nuisance, as well as a voice that transcends boundaries and categories, reminiscent of Jennifer Stoever's *The Sonic Color Line*.[11] Ono's voice pushes matter out of place, physiologically, politically, performatively, and creatively, and we know a lot of vocalists in the tradition of mid-century modernism engage with the voice as matter out of place, embodied (such as Cathy Berberian, Joan La Barbara, and more). These practices really got me into thinking about voice, because my relationship to my own voice was that it always had to be in place, impeccably, according to my upbringing in a Midwestern conservative Christian family. Not to generalize at all, but some aspects of this upbringing come with a sense that your voice has to be in place. It has to be small. It has to be feminized. It might be understood. But it has to be quiet. Not to sound like America Ferrera's soliloquy in *Barbie* (dir. Greta Gerwig, 2023) now, but this was a strand of Western society that meant that voices were culturally conditioned in a certain way, as we know all voices are. As a teenager I started to think, "What place does my voice occupy? What has it been made or compelled or forced to occupy?" Similarly, Western art music traditions often endeavor to put sound in place. While there is a great amount of flexibility and freedom that you can try to practice in your own artistry, there are also strictures in place to play repertoire a certain way, or perform with a group in a certain way: there are only so many degrees which you can step outside those bounds.

Freya: Absolutely. It's so interesting to me that you've gone to Yoko Ono as this kind of "matter out of place," having had this voice history of your own—the small, quiet, Midwestern imperative. It seems like a counterpart to where I got into voice studies, which was reading Barthes next to listening to The Carpenters. I'd been told my entire life that The Carpenters were too schmaltzy and I guess too *in place*. On the other hand, my own voice is always just too loud. I have these non-specific memories of always getting told to be quiet or to use my indoor voice. And I don't think I have an indoor voice; I think I was born without one! So, I'm always kind of "too loud." And then I was reading Barthes next to Karen Carpenter, who's very square, who has a very *neat* voice, and I wondered if her voice even had any "grain," but of course it's about the careful *management* of the grain.

It's interesting how we've gotten to these places in our discussion of voice studies when we started with our individual relationship to our own voice in the many chapters of our experience. We can all trace our place in the voice studies conversation as starting in the history of being surrounded by voice, and having voices be part of our own personal journey in both material and also kind of psychological ways.

Naomi: Yes, I think I understand the rubric you're talking about with voice and upbringing. Like you both were saying, there is an issue of having a small voice or being told to have a small voice. I also experienced this in my upbringing, given that my mother had a big resonant voice, which introduced me to the idea that a woman could be loud and take up space. When I teach and give presentations, I can channel that persona of being big, even though for so much of my career it's not like everybody was like, "Yes, be big. Go out there, Naomi, do it." Physically, I'm not a teeny person; I've never felt like I could just be a little blushing violet and sneak in. Yet in the larger context of academia, and musicology specifically, I've frequently been relegated to the margins and have felt the pressure to be smaller or hide. There continues to be a tension between having something to say and being told to "stay in my place" and be quiet. Whether intended or not, I've encountered many, many people who question my right to add my ideas into larger conversations. For me, having a voice is an ongoing process; my experience has taught me that I continually have to earn my place and prove myself.

In the ways we are talking about voice, it's not just the placement, representation, and identity at play, but also the presence of the size and amplitude of voice. This encompasses the right for certain voices to be allowed to exist. In this collection of essays, we are really upping the volume, the amplitude, on voices in a myriad of different ways.

Amy: Right, these are essays purposefully out of place with trying to pin down a voice, which has been a theme in voice scholarship.
Naomi: I think that's a real strength. Here, we're saying there's a space for all of this "out of place" stuff on voice, beyond analyses of the voice as an object or, more specifically, as a musical object. In this volume, we include voices that long have been heard as being "out of place."
Freya: Yes—in a sense, I think it has to do with the nature of voice studies, whatever that means. One of the questions I'm thinking about as we were talking is, what really is voice studies as a field.

Voice Studies as a Field?

Freya: You know, we've talked a lot about what voice can mean in terms of material and physical and also metaphorical and in relation to identities, by thinking about our own identities. So, then what? What would you say that the field of voice studies looks like, or whether it is even a field, and how this collection sits in relation to it?
Amy: I think of voice studies like a magnet; it's a magnetic field. For example, take the case of including breath as part of voice studies: we might hesitate to include it at first because it sounds opposite from what voicing is. But it's the very thing that makes voicing possible, a constituent part. So voice studies is what magnetizes an array of different fields under the banner of voice.
Another way to answer the question of whether voice studies is a field is to ask, could we think of a Department of Voice Studies coming into being?
Naomi: That sounds very much like singing, but then adds on more. I want to imagine a Department of Voice Studies and I love thinking about it as not being staffed exclusively by singers but including others who also care about how voices work and make meaning.
Amy: It's true, it would be more likely that courses or certificate programs would be named voice studies, right? But then, there's always more overlap than what universities tend to name—a university is a space of proliferation and cross-pollination. For example, when I got to UC Riverside in 2024 and was speaking with one of my new colleagues, Dana Kaufman, she said she had proposed a "Voice and Identity" course to offer in our music department. The overlap between her accepted course title and our volume was too much of a coincidence not to have her contribute to the collection.

We know that voice lives in so many of our practices. Voice is a method. Voice can also be an object. It's ever dynamic. I'm having trouble putting the language of "field" to it.

Freya: Voice studies is such a wide range of things, as Amy says: it necessarily brings in so many other fields. It is a physiological thing and therefore there is a science of voice in a way that organologists discuss instruments, but not quite the same. Because it's always necessary to ask in voice studies: is it a singing voice? Is it a spoken voice? Is it a solo voice? Is it a collective voice? Is it a physical voice? Is it a metaphorical voice? Is it a human voice? Is it a live voice, a recorded voice? A domestic voice? Could it even be the absence of voice? What about the breath, the bits in between voicing?
Naomi: Yes, this idea of the breath is a theme we keep circulating. The breath is so central to the type of singing and voice studies training I have had. I love how "breath" is becoming a big thing in our conversation and more broadly. Breath is emerging as a connecting theme. Yet I don't want to posit "breath" as the opposite of "voice."
Freya: No, it's not the opposite at all.
Amy: Agreed. A good metaphor from music/technology studies is radio waves, which carry a signal on a transmission of sound. Breath is the very vehicle that voice travels on and, importantly, no sound can start or stop with a breath. I recently wrote this piece about Sasha Velour, for a volume called *Errant Voices* edited by Martha Feldman, Bonnie Gordon, and Kara Keeling.[12] Velour is a drag artist whose lip-sync performances play a lot with silence, but also draw attention to the fact that silence, not just voice, is contingent on the breath.

When someone takes a breath, we don't know what's going to happen—we don't know what's going to be voiced, but there's always breath there. And certainly the COVID-19 pandemic has put breath very forward in our minds. In media studies as well as literary theory, a lot of publications are circulating about breath as a vehicle for effect and emotion, such as Jean-Thomas Tremblay's *Breathing Aesthetics*; earlier, of course, in voice studies, we have books like Ashon T. Crawley's *Blackpentecostal Breath*.[13] In the past several years, we have had the pandemic's very literal focus on breath, as well as catching our breath from transnational crises, and the phrase "I can't breathe" echoing out from the Black Lives Matter movement. In the context we are in currently and in recent years, the breath is seeing a resurgence and is of huge importance as a place for voice scholars to continue to explore, whether scientifically or metaphorically.

Naomi: The breath is like another space of possibility: it's silence, but it's not silence. It supports and undergirds all classical singing, possibly, most singing. It's all about the body, through the diaphragm, and the breath. Access to the breath is what gets you going and can express trauma. It feeds into our very being.
Freya: You know, voice is so ubiquitous that its study encompasses all of these—and they're often overlapping in a "single" voice. A voice is unique to an individual and yet it is an absolute mediator between the individual and society, right? Or, the individual and the cultural; the personal and the cultural. And so, of course voice studies is going to bring in all of these overlapping fields, because voice overlaps them.

Categorizing Voice in Its Overlaps

Amy: What we always wished for in the volume's table of contents was to have layers and overlaps—not strict, bounded sections per se. There are pieces in one section that could have very easily gone in another section. Each piece that begins and ends a section, for example, is meant to bridge both sections. These overlaps are like a hallmark of the way voice studies works: fields

that are always overlapping and layering. I wonder if we can't pin down voice studies as "a field" because there's no possible way to bound this field.

Sections in the Table of Contents

"Authenticities and Archetypes"
"Queering Voicing"
"Technovocalities"
"(Dis)locations"
"Voicing Citizenship"
"Containing, Confining, and Curating Voices"
"Language, Ability, and Hearing Codes / Hearing Voice"

I think that has to do with why I (as a fairly visual thinker) can't quite picture voice studies as a field, because that's such a spatial image but one that's ultimately two-dimensional. The way folks are thinking about voice studies in this volume and beyond has many more dimensions: each case in voice studies has deep history, and questions about where a voice is going now; there are also competing layers of abstractness and concreteness, and errancy and ephemerality, at the same time that there are limits and boundaries to a voice and acts of voicing. When we were approaching how to organize this collection, we immediately wanted to think beyond the linear page. And then we decided to write our introduction on Zoom from a transcript of this conversation. Writing is often taught as a linear process—first you think, then you write, then you revise—but we know from the experience of writing that it's always swings and roundabouts, it goes in circles; the thinking happens during the writing and often the revision does, too.

Naomi: What this collection is doing, it's not just writing about voice scholarship, but we're representing voice scholarship as well as advancing it. We're also assessing the field and we're making a place for those who previously have not been included; this collection is saying "here we are." It makes perfect sense that we can't just write a narrative of that. We have to somehow put things into text boxes as well as traditional paragraphs; we get to play with how the voice can be graphically captured.
Freya: Yeah, I think it has to. This introduction has to be nonstandard as a format because of the nature of the subject matter, absolutely.
Amy: I would say too, as one thing I've kept bringing up in our previous conversations about the volume is: the one field-defining thing of voice studies is that it changes. How do we take a snapshot of voice studies? How do we present the current of what it is now, of what our thinking is now, and of what our contributors are thinking now?
Naomi: It's not static.
Freya: Yep.
Amy: I think it's finding ways to layer and finding ways to have the conversation jump off the page. I love when introductions help the reader get a sense of the author talking to you, anticipating your rebuttals, and anticipating where your knowledge needs to be augmented. We didn't want to just write this conversation in one voice, as enforced homophony. We wanted to be insistently polyphonic.

Naomi: Right! In a co-edited volume on voice and identity we need to double down on the fact that we have three voices in this introduction and multitudes of voices (writing and being cited) in the work of our contributors with their chapters. Along with more experienced scholars, we are also bringing together and celebrating the "big voices" who might, for the first time, be finding a place to soar and experiencing their full amplitude.
Amy: Yes, it's an introduction where we need to honor our differences and where we come from.
Freya: Absolutely. It speaks not just to us as three different people with different backgrounds and different writing voices, but also to so much of the remit of the collection is about voice and identity. To smooth over those differences in our identities would be against that jurisdiction. We have to start from the premise that, you know, as humanities scholars we are not objective. My wife introduced me to this great summary of that in her doctoral thesis[14]—Andy Medhurst writing that "objectivity is a heterosexual conspiracy"[15]: it's about the myth of scientific objectivity, the idea that one can sort of stand above something and go, "I, as the scholar, am not in this research; here is the way that this thing is right." And instead as humanities scholars we're always thinking of the overlaps of thought, that I might see it one way and you see it a different way, and there's validity in both. Not just that, but the really interesting stuff is in the overlap and the conversation. We all bring that experience. We just have to acknowledge these overlaps in thinking and subjectivity precisely because the collection is about voice and identity. In this volume, and in voice studies, we are not able to uphold the fiction of scholarly objectivity.
Naomi: Oh, I like that voice doesn't let you hold on to fictions in the same way as the claim to objectivity or authenticity. In voice studies there's an attempt to have a thoughtful voice, and, to do so, we've got to leave open the spaces of subjectivity. We want to acknowledge that voice studies often deal in polyphony and non-objectivity. Not in a snide way, not with cynicism, but with sort of an optimism.

Amy, when you first mentioned something about the collection being a snapshot of voice studies at this current moment, I was also thinking, we want it to last as a souvenir that brings this moment into the future as a witness to the past.

Amy: Exactly. So how can you make a photograph that has staying power—how long can this conversation last?
Naomi: Yes, yes, I like that image of the snapshot. It almost felt like, well, this is just only a moment in time that's disposable, but it's not. It's an exquisite moment in time.
Freya: Exactly. That's the thing—that a snapshot *is* a moment in time, but that's different from it being disposable, right? Because we've all had snapshots stuck up on the wall. You want that moment in time *for* that moment in time. It's a precious moment in time, but you have to acknowledge that it is only a moment in time.

One thing I always say to my students is, OK, you can read, read whatever scholarship. But, don't imagine that these people have written some absolute truth. Because you know, I can set some piece of writing by Naomi, for instance, and I know what it's like to sit at the dinner table with you and chat about your family. Or, if you assign a piece of mine, I could be in the pub at that moment making stupid jokes with my mates. We're all human and scholarship is just a very slow-moving conversation. In any given moment, you read a bunch of other work and you say what you think about it. And then somebody else goes, "Yeah, but what about this?" Because it is just an exchange of snapshots in time, but it doesn't mean they're not worth anything after a new one lands, or that they're untouchable in any way either. You just have to acknowledge and maybe even steer into the snapshotness of it.

Naomi: Precisely! Our introduction is doing many things at once. It's all three of our voices.

Holding something together, magnifying all these other voices. We're turning up a volume and amplitude on our contributors to say, here are a bunch of new things, new experiences that cohere

around voice studies. Of course, these conversations relate very much to everything else that came before them, but there's something new that shows what the snapshot of a study is like right now in this time and place.

Snapshots can create a collage effect that brings together different locations, people, and landscapes. And the immediacy connects the viewer to the image. I love bell hooks when she talks about feminism being for everyone and writing in a voice that anybody can read.[16] As we put our own writing voices into this, we welcome people in and employ different rhetorical strategies within the introduction. We have some parts that are theoretically dense. We have incorporated songs ("We are going to Grandma's House" and the "Mississippi Song"). We can even have poetic text. We can address the reader and invite them in with warmth:

You, standing on this planet, have a voice.
Your experience and presence
are connected to
what is happening in this volume.

Freya: We are engaged with, listen to, and celebrate these different types of vocal iterations. In fact, I don't know how you can be a voice scholar and not do that, right? Because it's about people, and scholarship so often gets theoretical or highfalutin' or whatever. And we start sort of talking into our own little echo chambers.

You know, I think all of our experiences really speak to something about the madness, if I can use that word, of voice studies as a field: it is not a single kind of field and that's why this collection has a lot of variation. We are missing hard science per se—we've got some consideration of spectrograms as ways of capturing what the voice looks like. But there were no laryngoscopes harmed in the creation of this collection.

Amy: Ha! But we've all been exposed to experiences of being scientific or material practitioners because we reflect critically on our own experiences of voicing. And the title is indicative of this: it's "voice *and* identity." It signals how much voice studies is always additive, and very often simultaneous. Voice studies is a theater-in-the-round, staging different issues that reverberate off of multifaceted cases and audiences and, at any moment, given all of its dimensions, what is onstage can shift.

To close out this introduction, we return to the starting point of our conversation, namely "The Grain of the Voice," in which Roland Barthes writes on the inevitable impossibility of language to grapple with the fullness of voicing:

> How, then, does language manage when it has to interpret music? Alas, it seems, very badly. If one looks at the normal practice of music criticism (or, which is often the same thing, of conversations 'on' music), it can readily be seen that a work (or its performance) is only ever translated into the poorest of linguistic categories: the adjective. Music, by natural bent, is that which at once receives an adjective. The adjective is inevitable: this music is this, this execution is that. No doubt the moment we turn an art into a subject (for an article, for a conversation) there is nothing left but to give it predicates; in the case of music, however, such predication unfailingly takes the most facile and trivial form, that of the epithet. Naturally, this epithet, to which we are constantly led by weakness or fascination (little parlour game: talk about a piece of music without using a single adjective), has an economic function: the

predicate is always the bulwark with which the subject's imaginary protects itself from the loss which threatens it (1977, 179).

The chapters that follow are a collective attempt to capture the unreachable fullness of music in language, as if trying to see the whole cylinder in Figure 1.3.

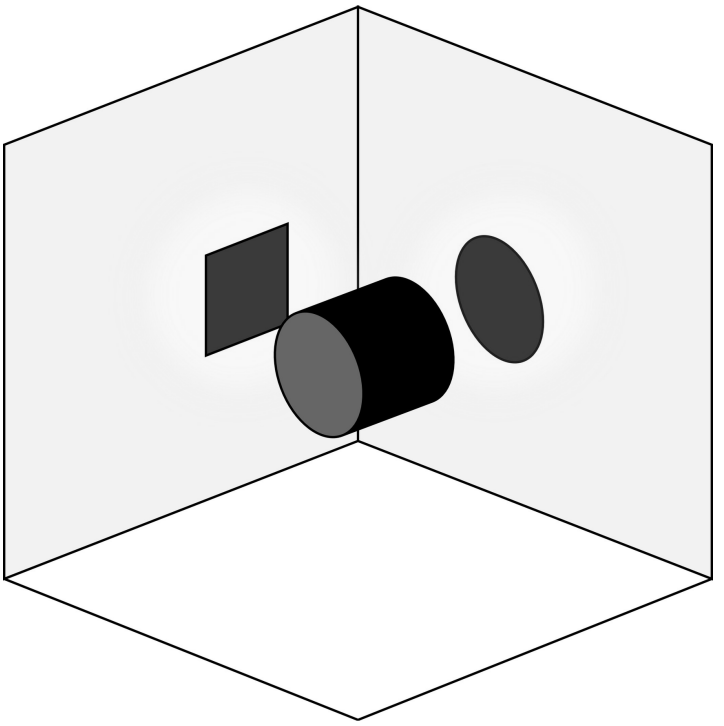

Figure 1.3 The same object casts different shadows from different light sources; both are true, but neither captures the full object.

Notes

1 See also Eidelsztein 2009, especially Chapters 2 and 4.
2 See also Connor 2000.
3 A British late-night comedy television show from the 1980s using puppet caricatures of high-profile public figures.
4 On voice and uniqueness; see, for example, Cavarero 2005.
5 Such simple harmony is common in nursery rhymes and other "children's songs" in Western music, and the melodic oscillation between scale degrees 1 (tonic) and 5 (dominant) works well in such a context. By way of illustration for those to whom "scale degrees" mean little include the first line of "London's Burning" (from 5 to 1); and the last line of "Frère Jacques" / "I Hear Thunder" (1–5–1).
6 "Make New Friends, but keep the old" has been attributed to Welsh composer Joseph Parry (1841–1903), and has been passed down as a folk song that was popular in the mid-twentieth century and is still sung today. "Carol of the Bells" derives from the Ukrainian New Year's song ("Shchedryk" by Mykola

Leontovych, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carol_of_the_Bells) and has become a popular Christmas carol in the US after it was introduced in the early 1920s.

7 A growing number of authors have identified racist and gendered criticism of Ono, including Levitz 2005; Cohen 2022.

8 See: Koestenbaum 1993; Brooks 2010; Eidsheim 2015; Feldman 2015; Meizel 2020; Sterne 2021; Gordon 2024.

9 Such as Martha Feldman's and Judith Zeitlin's *Voice as Something More* 2015 conference, with many of those speakers published in a volume of the same name (Feldman and Zeitlin 2019).

10 Douglas 1966.

11 Stoever 2016.

12 Forthcoming, based on the *Errant Voices: Performances Beyond Measure* conference co-organized by Martha Feldman, Bonnie Gordon, and Kara Keeling. University of Chicago, April 29–30, 2022.

13 Tremblay 2022; Crawley 2016.

14 Cloud 2024.

15 Medhurst 2008, 81.

16 hooks 2000.

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PART I

Authenticities and Archetypes

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2

FASHIONED VOICE

Playing with Identity in the Radiant Field

Jennifer Anyan and Yvon Bonenfant

What We Did

This chapter designs an encounter between voice and fashion, intended for public interaction. Both artists had worked in contexts where the personal values, identities, stories, and histories of publics or participants informed their work. Drawing from the ways fashion styles the imagination of, for, and with embodiment of identity, and in dialogue with Bonenfant's concepts regarding vocality, Anyan worked to design a trench coat that would act as a test prototype. The goal was to invent a trench coat that would "style": add a playful layer of chosen, shaped identity, to the wearer's voice, while also providing a visual and haptic metaphor for that styling.

Inspired by our work with shy publics, who might want to appear neither strikingly fashioned to the eye nor strikingly voice-bearing to the ear, our ambition was to develop a coat that anyone could put on, mumble into, and then hear their own voice come back as near-operatic in scale: that is to say, taking up space, staging the wearer in a theatrical, high-status, yet exaggeratedly dramatic manner, and also feel fashioned by the garment in question. As such, the space where the fabrication of one's own vocal identity, and the space of the fabrication of one's garmented self-image, could be conjoined for interactive audiences. The audience-user's self could become operatic in scale. To return to Wacquant's work, and particularly his six "S" conceptions of agent: symbolic, sentient, suffering, skilled, sedimented, and situated (2015, 3), in our design process we give primacy to the concept that our wearer is all these things, an active feeling agent and cognizant of those feelings. Our initial fantasies were that algorithms would process the captured voice in a way that would ensure it would respond in "real time" to the design qualities of the garment, while remaining clearly identifiable as "one's own voice" to the wearer. We worked, as artist-researchers can, from a goal of an ultimate artistic fantasy where we might fill entire buildings with different garments that might shape voices in different ways, allowing the wearers to experience themselves on exteroceptive, proprioceptive and interoceptive levels, in progressively and comparatively transformed ways. We had to start with a prototype garment to see whether this could be made to work. While "choosing fashion" is a particularly familiar activity for many in the middle classes, for those who can afford regular clothing purchases and exercise choice around which styles are bought, the idea that our *voices* might be choosable, malleable, and fashion-able is less familiar. Our overarching ambition was to create a space where the wearer of these garments

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would hear their own styled-by-a-garment voices. They would then be invited by the experience to become more conscious of how voices and clothing and bodies are styled. The experience would then invite them into a playfulness regarding their options for styling their voices and bodies in ways that might open up other possibilities for understanding their vocal and corporeal identities, beyond those they might normally engage with. The familiar vehicle that might become the interface for this would be the act of trying on clothing. This article explores our first experiments with fashioning the voice through a test garment.

Indeed, in this chapter, we ask ourselves: how might we use artistic experience to invite participant-audiences to unfix their notions of self, in order to open up possibilities to imagine themselves anew through fashioning their voices through linking the shape and style of the voice with the fashioned garment? This is territory ripe for exploration by artists: fashion may provide us with a key to doing so, among ourselves and with participatory publics.

Introjection 1 self: a moment in the coat. I place the coat on myself. I had thought it would feel tight, and uncomfortable, but its thick and almost flannel finished cotton slides on like a breathable light fur. I look at myself tightening the belt in the wall-length mirror, and I do experience a kind of trench coat fantasy. The huge collar—whether up or folded down—allows me to imagine myself cinematically: I become larger than life, a character in my own drama; I am Bogart or Bacall. I wander to the microphone and make a short sound into it. The sound reverberates, rebounds, and echoes: it is my voice. The person live-processing the sound gives it a sense of space with cathedral-sized reverb; it grows, and I try moving, adjusting the belt. My own voice resounds outward from the sound system: I do a short, elegant dance, and I listen to my voice bend, twist, expand, contract.

From Voice and Identity to Fashion

Contemporary cultural discourse frames our identities within flows of concepts about and around the self, rather than as any sort of fixed definitional space. Indeed, our perceptions of ourselves, and others' perceptions of us, intertwine in complex perceptual—and sensory—choreographies, to design and develop these ever-evolving senses of self. Our current understandings of identity thus explore the notion of the self as complex, intersectional, and multiply layered. These approaches tend to be constructivist: we perceive ourselves as making, fabricating, and, indeed, fashioning our identities from a combination of our biological selves (whatever that may mean, given how profoundly culture seems to influence genetic expression), from the cultural value systems that surround us, and from our own sense of agency to negotiate our place in the world. At this turning point in our media cultures, the recent communication strategies opened up by various social media platforms engender whole new outlets for the performance of visual and audiophonic representations of our identities, and of our "selves." These move beyond our quotidian circles to audiences that can become, when such media goes "viral," or when they are linked with celebrity and fandom, "mass" in scope.

In this project, we thus draw from a case study in research-creation (practice-inclusive research in the arts) to take the reader on a journey into what we feel is a novel and productive way to explore the intersection between identity construction, personal agency *over* one's identity construction, and the experience of our own voices. We conjoin theories of vocality with an unusual but exciting bedfellow: fashion studies. To take you on this journey, we now explore a range of concepts that help us to delineate the specific theorizations that underpin our understandings of the relationship between the sensory self, imagination, and one's sense of vocal identity. We then explore the ways that fashion studies might theorize the relationship between clothing, styling, and

the whole self (including voice), and we especially focus on how one can engage fantasy to imagine and reinvent self-identity. Taking the reader on a journey through our prototyping process for a "garment that might speak in, and shape, the wearer's voice," we present the reader with some initial assertions regarding how, and why, bringing vocality and self-fashioning together—through clothed fashion—might open up possibilities for the imagination of the user/wearer of one's voice-garment. Our concept of the "radiant field layer" and some triangulations decant from this. Finally, we assert that this space where voice and fashion come together might be purposed to heighten the sense of agency to play with and reinvent identity that each individual artistic participant has over both their vocality and their clothed and fashioned body.

Introjection 2: She is giggling; she is dancing. She flicks the collar up in the mirror and says: "what else?" and begins to swing the thick, flared skirt of the garment left and right. Her knees bend and sway with her hips. In her case, it is very much this sense of spiraling that emerges; she loves spiraling the skirt of the garment and hearing her own voice grow, shrink, and re-pitch as she moves. She runs back and forth, so quickly, to the microphone, to feed the coat with more of her sound. "Ah," she says, "I will take you away; I will take you away; I will take you away; …"

Vocal Ruminations

The conceptional, ideational, and corporeal space of the human voice has several intriguing characteristics when it comes to the performance and perception of individual identities. We know that people link what they perceive as the sound of their own voice with a sense of self that is powerfully anchored. While cultural studies expert Connor (2000) used a phenomenology of ventriloquism to demonstrate how much we associate voices with specific bodies and identities, Adriana Cavarero's (2005) concepts of voice and of vocality underscored how the voice-beneath-text—the embodied, vibrational voice—engages with the flux of relationship with all of the nuance and meaning of the lived body, in order to account for the "excess" of meaning that any embodied voice transmits beyond lexical language. Cavarero's feminist construction of the voice—not only as medium of interpersonal communication, but also as an epistemological locus of knowledge-creation—insists that vocality negotiates relationships in a way that written language cannot: in all its glorious malleability, distanced from the hard, masculinist, fixed meanings created by the written word. Emotions, biophysical states, and the corporeal flux of continual biophysical change, reflected in vocal expression, are key components of her conception of vocal relationship. Jarman (2011) advanced a ground-breaking concept that described the appeal of certain vocal practices to queer listeners as practices of making vocal "flaws" virtuosic—and that this virtuosity appeals to queer identity in these voices in that they celebrate the "imperfect" in interesting ways.

This suggests that the aesthetic value systems that underpin listening to the voice, and the act of the identification of the self within a community, might be deeply intertwined. Eidsheim's (2015a, 2015b; Eidsheim et al. 2014) focus on the vibrational and therefore material nature of the human voice—on the voice that is haptic and not merely auditory—asserts that the voice reaches out and touches us with a series of vibrational realities that interact with the very stuff of our bodies, implying that we feel, and not just hear, each other's voices, and respond to them on the wider haptic plane. Indeed, Eidsheim's extended argument in this work links vocality with a kind of intersensory, whole-body perception that suggests that it engages with the *politics* of identity on the register of the felt and not merely the heard/acoustic plane. Bonenfant's own work (2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2018a, 2018b) has explored this notion of the haptic or tactile voice, and how it might construct relationship (2010), help bodies and identities of queer difference find each other (2010,

2018b), and invite us into exploring difference across categories of identity (2018b). In particular, Bonenfant (2018b) explored then recent studies in the "hard science" of voice production and perception (especially the metastudy of studies by Kreiman and Sidtis (2011) to assert that much of what we assume we perceive regarding the identity categories of others in voice is actually *imagined* by us: we in part invent, or fashion, our perceptions. In a related vein, and building on work in sound studies by Jennifer Stoever (2016), Eidsheim's (2019) treatment of voice and racialization shows how we construct notions that we "hear" as markers of race in the singing voice; yet, that there is nothing truly hearable in biological voice quality that might be a marker of a racial identity. Taken together, the work of these authors asserts that the voice, because it is made of vibration, has powerful material qualities, and that we hear and feel these qualities. These writings, in their emphasis on vibrational vocality, assert that our imaginations construct much of what we think we hear when we attempt to identify to whom (a specific person), and to what identity categories (age, gender, sex, race, sexuality, ethnicity, body size, etc.) any given voice belongs. These writings also underscore the relationality of voice—what Thomaidis (2017) calls the "in-between" of the voice—that the voice is a phenomenon that is neither produced by one person nor perceived by the other, but that is co-created in the space that they knit together between and with one another.

In this context, Bonenfant's article *Your Voice Is Hair* (2018b), argues that we might think of the impressions we emit through voice as impressions we style—like our hair. Our hair (as long as we have any) has roots in our biology and, literally, roots in the skin of our scalp, and then radiates outward from us. We then shape, color, decorate, and otherwise style our pellicular emanations in ways that we feel represent us, if we have the agency to do so. Bonenfant contextualized this assertion in a particular way. Voice scientists Kreiman and Sidtis (2011) posited a theory and model of the construction of vocal identity perception that implies that humans "fix" their notion vocal identity, in the sense that they fix a given voice to a particular individual—quickly upon first hearing and sensing a voice. Their model asserts that within the first few seconds of perceiving a voice, we seem to map our perception of that voice onto a specific person, and we remember, to a greater or lesser degree, that sound as emanating from that specific person for long periods.

At the same time, however, we know that humans are not particularly good at linking specific modalities of the human voice to what we consider to be identity *categories*: we tend to think that we hear race (a construct in and of itself) and sexuality within vocal production, but we are not able to identify these categories of persons accurately when we are asked to do so from voice alone; yet, we tend to be convinced that we *can* do so. Our agency to project a "style" is thus mitigated by the fixed qualities with which others might be perceiving us. For Bonenfant, the collaboration with Anyan we describe here is thus part of a strand of work that attempts to create an environment that allows people to explore the unfixing of the vocal self and imagine other types of identity, body, and vocal sensation in order that the audience member experience heightened agency around the construction of their voice's perceived identity.

Our participatory artwork prototype aimed to help participants taste the beginnings of a capacity to unfix notions of the vocal self and create spaces of play with them. Anyan's fashion studies approach, however, informed our understanding of this process in a novel and more sophisticated manner, and, above all, links the unfixing of the voice with the fantastical self-imagination of the participant, including on the visual register, thus conjoining voice, vibration, and body with visual self-image through fashion. Perhaps we might say that within the in-between space that Thomaidis asserts is where we co-construct voice, the space of fashion studies opens up possibilities to understand how we *co-style* that very in-between experience: where the person projecting identity and the perceptions and the witness of that projection dance the voice into relational meaning together in a new way, bringing that way to some form of consciousness.

Introjection 3: Earlier in the process: before we bring the prototype coat to test audiences, we assemble a group of advisors to try on, and comment on, the project of the self-amplifying coat. Initially, they are puzzled. They listen patiently, feed back to us on various ideas, challenge us to think more widely and more broadly about the concept. Their facial expressions are intense but always with a little suggestion of being puzzled as they listen. Finally, we bring out the prototype coat to this group. The puzzlement melts away from the faces, as people see the garment. There is something about this highly styled design and its visuals that make the concept make sense. They seem to see that the cut, shape, and style of a garment might be like the cut, shape, and style of the sound of our voices. Sound is so abstract, even vocal sound: our vocabulary to discuss sound itself is so impoverished. But somehow, the arrival of a carefully cut garment makes the idea of voice-styling make sense … and they ask to, even itch to, try it on. One after the other, they put it on and it becomes an extension of them, a style that is of their body and on their body but not their actual body: a tool for reaching into the air around them, into a kind of layered projection of the self into space.

The Coat, and the How of the Coat: Test Audiences Engaging with Our Offer

In order to help us assess perceived audience experience from a more neutral, outside eye perspective, we worked with Mary Paterson, a professional arts evaluator, to narrate the experience of wearing the *Fashioning the Voice* prototype trench coat:

Figure 2.1 Cotton gabardine trench coat prototype, with microphone
Photographs: Anyan and Bonenfant.

Figure 2.2 Detail of the circuit board hidden within the cuff of the coat
Photographs: Anyan and Bonenfant.

Even if you've never worn a trench coat before, you can't help but bring a library of images and expectations to the encounter. Even so, this trench coat is a little different.

It slips on as easily as any other, brushing past your skin and reminding you of the movie star or the model or the love interest you last saw wearing one. But as your hand moves through the sleeve you hear a noise—the hiss of wind on water? The crackle of electricity through wires? And then another. This time it's your own sound that surprises you: you hear yourself gasp or laugh. And when your other arm slips into the other sleeve, your sound comes alive again. You swing your shoulders casually left to right and release a fanfare of familiar and unfamiliar noises.

This coat is recording and amplifying the sounds you make as you move, and mixing them with some of its own. You start to dance, you start to laugh, you start to play (Paterson 2020).

To prepare for our test day, we focused on developing a series of garment prototypes in the form of a set of trench coats animated by a range of sensors that use gyroscopic sensors, stretch sensors, an accelerometer to detect speed of movement, light sensors (for example, under the collar, so that the sensor would detect collar changes, and degree of heat radiating from the user's body, to produce data). Originally, a microphone in the collar of the coat captured the wearer's spoken voice; sensors perceived the body's movements in reaction to the coat, and then coding converted this data to shape the characteristics of the voice.

We later moved to external microphone systems, because on-body microphones required a degree of conscious control of sound-making that was complicating for the wearer. A more distant microphone permitted the wearer to have total voluntary control over which vocal sounds they wanted to play with, rather than accidentally incorporating sounds from the clothing itself.

Figure 2.3 Side view of trench coat with full skirt and dipped hem
Photographs: Anyan and Bonenfant.

Figure 2.4 Back view of trench coat
Photographs: Anyan and Bonenfant.

The Trench Coat Design and Features

There is an accelerometer sensor in the right tip of the hem to detect swooshing-speed; the skirt of the coat is, very full, almost in a "new look" style: an excessive amount of fabric that is not usual for a trench coat. The tip of the hem is cut into a slight point, the hem dipping toward the floor before the row of brass-toned buttons begin. This exaggerated volume and cut of the coat's skirt means that the wearer not only feels the weight of the coat and the volume of fabric around their legs, enhancing their somatic perception of the coat, but they can also choose to create a large arc of movement through the air as they spin, twirl, and wrap the coat around themselves. Even walking creates a movement, a sway, as the weight of the fabric creates some friction that the body can perceive. Through manipulating the data generated through the accelerometer in the hem of the trench coat, we can create sound arc ranges that change pitch. The sheer volume of fabric and the movement possible means this range can be dramatic or subtle.

The pockets of the trench coat are lined with a smart textile that generates data as the fabric is stretched. After a period of experimentation with the type of pocket and the position of the pocket on the coat, we created deep patch pockets that encourage the wearer to plunge their fists into the cavity: as they push down seeking comfort in the way the material strains against the gesture, the coat responds; there is an audio and physical push-pull of gesture and sound response. The gesture of pushing one's hands into their pockets can be highly emotive, it can be defensive or protective (from cold or emotion). In exploring the affective possibilities of this gesture to the vocal we create space for connecting the interoceptive and the exteroceptive – feeling – gesture – sensation – sound – self.

Inside the sleeves of the trench coat, we have created hidden thick wool cuffs that sit inside the outer gaberdine and silk lining and fit tightly around the wearer's wrist, almost like a medical monitor would, so that the accelerometer sits flat against the inside of the wearer's wrist about an inch back from the base of the palm. The effort it takes the wearer to push their hands through the unusually tight cuffs might be the first indication that this isn't an ordinary trench coat. The thick woolen cuffs keep this set of accelerometer sensors in position: disc-shaped, they sensitively map the twists, turns of the hands, as well as the big and small movements of the arms. The lift of the arms as the wearer adjusts the collar, the gesture of tightening the belt, and the exuberant swinging arms as they walk, march, dance. Alternatively, slowly the arms cross in restraint, chill, or protection.

A light sensor in the back of the collar may be the simplest of the sensors in terms of the range of data it captures, but the results are stark. The wearer lifts the generous collar (again, the proportions are exaggerated in comparison to most "classic" trench coats), creating a dramatic silhouette, reminiscent of Bogart or Bacall, protecting themselves against the chill of the wind or unfriendly eyes (the wearer might imagine or remember) and the light floods into the sensor immediately creating the opportunity for a dramatic shift in the soundscape.

Voice, Identity, Control, and the Perception of Self

The following assertions by Crow, Mersbergen, and Payne both summarize our contentions so far and link these to the *sense* of self that might relate one to one's vocality:

> The human voice is undoubtedly linked to an individual's sense of self. Voices are, by nature, idiosyncratic representations of individuals. Individuals possess anatomical, physiological, and psychological characteristics that are unique to them, which contribute to vocal output, and, thus, they establish the voice as a salient marker of their individuality. The voice is not only a means by which to deliver language through speech production, but also a means to signal paralinguistic information such as prosody, emotional expressiveness, and self-identifying characteristics to the listener, such as age, gender, ethnicity, geographical identity, and health status. Voices are also malleable and can be actively modulated by an individual depending on mood, social context, physical environment, and characteristics of the conversational partner. Given this close connection between the voice and the self, impairment, or alteration of one will undoubtedly influence the other. For example, damage to the vocal system could potentially alter an individual's sense of self. While the effects of voice on areas such as emotion, social interaction, and quality of life have been widely investigated, the extent to which the voice and the sense of self are integrated remains largely unknown.
>
> *(Crow, Mersbergen, and Payne 2021, 323, citing studies Schneider 1999; Abel, Mead, and Morris 2006; Scott and McGettigan 2016; Bickford, Coveney, and Baker 2013; Costa and Matias 2015; Van Mersbergen and Delany 2014).*

Given the above, how best, in fact, might we understand how the *act* of vocal identity construction, via this self-focused in-between, might actually work on the canvas provided by this project? We might explore assertions drawn from Eidsheim's work (2019) regarding the social, interpersonal, and technical dynamics used to construct race in the singing voice. Eidsheim contends that the voice has a material nature due to its vibratory qualities, and since the voice is perceived on both the auditory and the haptic planes (2019, drawing from Eidsheim 2014),

- That the "[v]oice is not innate; it is cultural" in the sense that whatever might be biological voice, its shaping by languages spoken, cultural value systems, and "techniques" of production means that is much more than personal in nature (Eidsheim 2019, 178)
- That the "[v]oice is not singular; it is collective" in the sense that our social realm constructs voices as social actors of exchange and the construction of embodied value systems (2019, 178).
- "Voice's source is not the singer, it is the listener" (2019, 178) in that it is largely the listener who constructs an idea of what the voice is doing at any given time, even if the singer is doing the same through listening, responding, and attempting to consciously shape their vocal emanations.
- "[T]hat a voice's character is not based on innate or essential biological or material qualities but that a particular vocal timbre is the result of a body's enculturation through training" (2019, 178).

And finally

- That singers, and by extension, voice artists, both listen to themselves from within their bodies, and attune their vocal production through negotiating how they wish the trained self to appear in acoustic space (2019, 179–80).

In addition to the preceding, we might consider how individuals shape and develop a sense of *ownership* of vocal identity and of their own vocal production (given how socially constructed the perception of vocal vibration can be). We might draw from Tsakiris's (2017) composite study of studies surveying recent work in experimental psychology regarding the relationship of sensation and perception to the impression that we "own" our bodies and of who "we" are in the construction of self-identity. Tsakiris traces a flow of perception and cognition from body to identity to the sense of others, within his notion of the multisensory basis of the self: "[t]he self is a multimodal, hierarchical construct containing both low-level, bodily representations as well as higher level attitudes and beliefs," he asserts (605). Within this, he reviews and delineates two core conceptual parameters through which our sensory notions contribute to the cognition that defines that very self.

- One is *exteroception*, or the visual perception of tactile stimulation with which one identifies, which has been shown to contribute to whether and how we construct our sense of ownership over our bodies. Citing a range of literatures that explore the "rubber hand illusion"—the fact that most of us start to experience the caress of a rubber hand we view as if it were a caress of our own bodies after a period of exposure—Tsarkis demonstrates that "the brain produces the experience of the body [… because of…] a three-way interaction between vision, touch, and proprioception: vision of tactile stimulation on the rubber hand captures the tactile sensation on the participant's own hand [… resulting in a perception of the body …] in which self-awareness is highly malleable" (Tsakiris 2017, 599). Exteroception may thus be the perceptual mechanism that allows the wearer of our design to have a haptic, a tactile, relationship with the object, where the vocality, the tactility of the fabric, and the visuality of the experience combine to give an impression of a reconfigures sort of body for the wearer.
- The other is *interoception*, or "the body-to-brain axis of sensations originating from the internal body and its visceral organs that signal their physiological state […] that arise within four systems: the cardiovascular, respiratory, gastrointestinal, and urogenital" (599)

> and then these generate sensations, which we use to construct understandings of self. And Tsakiris points out that "psychological research into interoceptive awareness has focused mainly on cardiac awareness because of the known role that heart-brain interactions between the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems play in emotion processing" (Tsakiris 2017, 599–600).

Tsarikis argues that a model is needed that can bridge the malleable (and possibly more socially oriented) model of exteroception and the very personal and physical experience of interoception, in terms of how our minds construct and make sense of "self" and "other." Here, experimental psychology's evidence intersects with our cultural studies model of the voice that blurs the vocal self into a social frame.

In this context, it is fascinating to consider further the arguments made by Crow, Mersbergen, and Payne (2021) in their study on vocal congruence. "Vocal congruence is the extent to which one's voice is in alignment, or congruent, with one's sense of self," they claim (324). "Body awareness is closely linked to self-identity and this body awareness is linked to the constructs of interception (accuracy, confidence, and awareness) and the multisensory integration that occurs with exteroception" (324), they continue. In this study of 50 persons, preliminary findings that showed that people with more developed acute and accurate *interoceptive* perception scored significantly higher in vocal congruence—the sense that their voice, when heard, is a clear part of who they believe themselves to be (324 e15)—than people with less well-developed interoception.

Taken together, the assertions of Eidsheim (2019), Tsarkiris (2017), and Crow, Mersbergen, and Payne (2021) provide us with an interesting frame for understanding how we construct a sense of self-identity with, from, and within our voice, and they are the stage against which the enhanced and playful malleability provided by our prototype experience might function. Exteroception and interoception dance together within a social frame, within which we—the techniqued producers of our own vocalities—feel our interoceptive sensations and develop felt vibratory identities that are congruent with the kinesthetic sense we make from our vocal vibrations. Our intersensory coat might expand this sense.

Introjection 4: This one converts the scene into 100% play. The moment the voicing coat goes on, he begins to leap and stride and dance in the space. Saccadic rhythms emerge. He pauses, playing with visual and physical silence. He suddenly bounds off and with each bounce his voices bound too. He stops, dances, twirls, twirls again, looks in the mirror, laughs.

Clothing, Perception, Identity

Identification of a voice to a perceived individual is quickly "fixed" by the listener, it might seem. We also, upon seeing someone for the first time, will typically make judgments in under one second about their class, social grouping, economic status, and even intelligence based on their fashioned corporeal identity, their clothes, hair, use of cosmetics, etc. (Mair 2018) and, similarly, these judgments are often flawed and come from a place of subjective imagination. However, in the last 30 years, building on Merleau-Ponty's assertion of embodiment beginning with sensation and that this is where perception occurs (1962, 240), sociologists working in the field of fashion studies (Ruggerone 2017) or allied fields of body and culture (Wacquant 2015) have begun to further investigate how our sense of self is developed in response to affect, or what Eidsheim might call the "felt" plane. Ruggerone argues that within sociological and cultural studies research, the feelings that we experience "*about* and *in"* (2017, 573) our clothes have been overlooked. Indeed,