

**Political Voice as Embodied Performance: young
women, politics and engagement.**

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This thesis is dedicated to the voices: my participants.

ABSTRACT

In this thesis I argue that a focus on the embodied voice can be used as a tool of political intervention. Specifically focusing on how young women engage politically, I explore to what extent voice training can help young women notice the relationship between physiological tensions in their voice and repressive social and political structures. Furthermore, I argue that voice training can support young women in creating political performances that resist these repressions. I identify that in both practices that engage young women in the political and in much applied theatre work the embodied voice is largely unconsidered. Instead these fields focus on voice in its metaphoric sense. I demonstrate the term 'political voice' must also consider the way the voice can be repressed or liberated physiologically. This is a theorisation of political voice drawing together the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu with the practices of voice technique. I designed and delivered a series of workshops with young women combining technique, drama exercises and political discussion, from which I draw several conclusions relevant to how we practice voice with young women. Firstly, voice training can be used to help young women understand the concept of habitus. This is important as I argue this is a process of political 'noticing', where young women can see that any perceived deficiencies in their voices are not the result of personal failure, but because of the ways in which the social has structured their voice. Secondly, voice training can help young people articulate these repressions and furthermore use the voice to vocalise against these repressions. This was clear in how aspects of the tensionless voice that my participants discovered through training manifested in how they represented political engagement in their devised performances. Accordingly, I argue that voice training is an act of political intervention.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NCS National Citizenship Service

TIE Theatre in Education

DIE Drama in Education

INTRODUCTION

Chiara Guidi describes the voice in performance as 'making the entire body emerge from the mouth' (Castellucci, Guidi and Kelleher 115). Through the act of voicing the entire body is present. In this thesis I present the idea of the body being captured in the voice, not just in the sense of presence, but in a sociological sense: how are specific social bodies present in the voice? I use theatre and performance as the tool to explore this question.

This thesis is a practice-led research project investigating how and whether an embodied and material approach to voice fosters political engagement with young women. I undertook a series of practical drama workshops with groups of young women across the north of England where we combined political discussion with voice technique and theatre exercises to produce short vocal performances. I used these workshops to explore political voice through the ensemble to demonstrate whether there is a link between collective voice and political engagement. I specifically adopted the practices of voice coaches Kristen Linklater and Patsy Rodenburg, working with my participants on the basics of voice technique. In this thesis I will argue that practices of voice training can be used in theatre workshops as a method to engage the voice politically and produce political performance.

i. Research Questions and Rationale

This thesis has been produced in response to the following research questions:

1. How does an embodied approach to voice allow us to explore the political engagement of young women?
2. How can we use practice to interrogate the idea of how habitus relates to voice?

3. What is the political effect of engaging in voice training with those who are often silenced in broader society, specifically young women?
4. How does engaging in collective and ensemble voice manifest political voice?

Accordingly, my primary research question was:

What is the political efficacy of the intervention of voice training and does this training contribute to young women's political engagement?

These questions were important to me in a political context of growing uncertainty, where traditional structures of how people engage in politics are fractured and fluctuating, combined with a general common-sense that young people are “apathetic” towards politics. Cohen outlines the shift in the labour market through the 20th Century resulting in a change of how young people first experience the political. As the labour market has become increasingly de-industrialised and young people are more likely to find work in service and communication industries than in a factory, work-place organisation has declined. Rather than families and communities organised round a specific workplace, a pit or a factory for instance, young people in the 21st Century find employment opportunities more dispersed and precarious. Cohen argues that this has disrupted working class youth from getting a political education by unionisation in their workplace. Instead, becoming interested in politics is something that young people find in their private lives and accordingly is more related to their identity choices than their place in the labour movement (Cohen 261). Instead of dismissing young people as apathetic to politics because of a disinclination towards its traditional sites, a new formulation of understanding how young people participate *differently* is needed. Critics such as Kimberlee (2002), Vromen (2003), Harris and Wyn (2009) and Bennett (2012) have discussed the ways in which youth political engagement has moved from traditional sites to a politics of the ‘everyday’. In this thesis I argue that everyday politics is not separate from structures of power in

society and instead look to how different forms of political engagement can contest established politics rather than operate simultaneously.

This political context is related to what Couldry describes as a crisis of voice, where many experience a denial of their voice mattering in the contemporary political and economic sphere (Couldry 1). In this sense, I present voice as the conceptual framework for investigating young women's political engagement. This emerges alongside a renewed interest in the voice in political theory, sociolinguistics and philosophy (Connor 2000; Cavarero 2005; Dolar 2006; Couldry 2010) which has been met by increased scholarly attention in theatre and performance studies (Kimbrough 2011; Inchley 2015; Thomaidis and Macpherson 2015; Thomaidis 2017). This thesis contributes to what these scholars have outlined as a need for a critical language to address the question of voice in the discourses of theatre studies by offering a theorisation of the voice as something material and embodied. I furthermore address the absence of the material voice in the theory and practice of applied and community theatre. Inchley describes how playwrighting is often connected to 'finding voice' but what voice *is*, is rarely interrogated (Inchley 38). Similarly, 'finding' or 'giving' voice is often described as one of the benefits of applied theatre without a full understanding of what we mean by it. Accordingly, voice is frequently used as a metaphor for representation where it is equated to opinion, or it is used as a symbol of having agency. In this understanding of voice, we can too easily forget that the participants in an applied theatre workshop already have a voice and accordingly voice should not be the goal of the project. In this thesis I challenge the concept of political voice as figurative or symbolic and instead argue that we should begin with the physiological voice. Through Bourdieu's concept of habitus, I argue that the physiological or embodied voice can be a site of political engagement and resistance.

My interest in this research grows out of a concern as both a scholar and a theatre practitioner in the political efficacy of applied theatre practice. I am particularly interested in the role of training and technique in community work and the political and ethical questions this raises. Working as a playwright and director in community settings has made me consider the question of voice in terms of the community's contribution to a performance. I have often found the responses to this question frustrating and limiting: an assumption, for example that the playtext is domineering because it prevents community voice, or that the director in an applied theatre workshop must consider how much their voice is preventing the voices of the participants. I believe these responses misunderstand how power and politics operate in the subject's daily life as it implies that the relationship between the practitioner and the participant is the only operation of power in a rehearsal. Missing is an understanding of how broader structural power marks every moment of our lives, right down to our bodies and our voices. I believe this is the significant power struggle in any space, whether in a rehearsal for a play or any everyday activity: how our body reproduces our own repression. My interest in the voice therefore has come from addressing this issue of power in applied practice. Specifically focusing on voice training perhaps is a provocative way to counteract the above assumption. Voice training for some critics epitomises the opportunity for the practitioner to be culturally domineering, where practices of voice technique retrain the voice as if it has been afflicted by the subject's culture (Looser 2005; Ginther 2015; Thomaidis 2017). On the contrary to this perspective, I have written this thesis to argue that applying technique, whether that be the use of a specific performer training, the particular craft of a director, or the solo-authored playtext, is not the force that silences the voices of participants. Rather, this technique is a tool that the practitioner and participant negotiate and craft together to help resist and contest broader structural systems of oppression.

ii. Terminology

As already evidenced, I am working with several complicated and contestable terms that need further unpacking. Voice itself, as Dolar writes, cannot be pinned down to one clear definition (Dolar 15). In reviewing the many ways in which voice is used and understood across disciplines, I present an argument for defining voice as something physiological, embodied and material. By this, I mean that voice is something produced by the body and accordingly any analysis of the voice is inextricably linked to the body that produced it. I understand the body as a social body: a body that is marked and imprinted by the social, cultural and economic. In this sense, I am working from an understanding that the social, cultural and economic can be *heard* in the voice and furthermore it is these factors that determine whether or not a voice *is* heard.

Politics is another term that needs to be more specifically defined. In this thesis I want to explore the voice in relation to a definition of politics as *contestation*. Differing from an understanding of political voice as debate, dialogue and opinion, I explore how voice can enact *dissensus*. This is a definition, following Rancière, where politics happens when the part who are normally excluded from the political structures contest their exclusion. Politics in this understanding is the moment of voice from those who are normally silenced. This assertion is an act of contestation against the regular structures of social operation, what Rancière calls the distribution of the sensible (Rancière, *Disagreement* 17). This meant that I also sought a definition of political engagement that is different to the regular markers of engagement such as voting or discussion. Political engagement therefore defines broader acts of resistance against existing power structures that determine who has the capacity for political voice. These acts of resistance are acts that in some way disrupt or undermine the distribution of the sensible. Thompson, for instance, writes how the theatre workshop,

through its very occurrence, begins to disrupt notions of who is allowed to speak and who is allowed to participate (Thompson, *Affects* 183). In this thesis I argue that the disruption of habitus (of the voice) is a moment of political engagement by contesting how one regularly produces the voice.

As the concept of 'political efficacy' is central to my research questions, it also needs further unpacking. In political science, political efficacy can refer to the relationship that citizens have to the political process: the extent to which the individual feels like they can impact the political (Craig and Maggiotto 85). In this sense, political efficacy has two components: the effectiveness of the citizen's political action and the responsiveness of the political system. In this research I am interested in the former: whether the citizen *feels* like they can have an impact. This definition meets a definition of 'performance efficacy' provided by Kershaw, which evaluates how theatre practitioners try to *change* the future actions of their audiences and the broader structures of the audience's communities and cultures (Kershaw, *Politics* 1). Here change is the determination of efficacy: can performance change action? Drawing these two definitions together, the political efficacy of my project I understand as the extent to which voice practice can change the actions of participants' so that they feel like their actions can impact political processes. It is important to note that I believe that small, detailed changes can also count as efficacious: my intervention did not intend to cause large-scale political change, but to begin to make clear the ways in which voice training can influence the subject's relationship to the political. In this sense, the measuring of whether voice training is politically efficacious was analysed through habitus (which I define fully in chapters 3 and 5): can training change the subject's habitus?

The term performance in this thesis encompasses both how it is understood culturally and sociologically. Carlson defines performance as either a display of skill; a

recognized and culturally coded behaviour; or the success of an activity (Carlson 72). I understand voice as embodied performance in one sense as a culturally coded behaviour, i.e. the ways in which the subject performs their voice as the regular, expected behaviour designated by existing social structures. This behaviour is produced and experienced by the body. But voice as embodied performance could also be related to skill or success. This could mean the ways in which young women think they have to perform their voice to be taken seriously, for example in the political sphere, for personal success. Or, as I present in my research, it could be the practice of skill that can transform the body from the regular, culturally coded behaviour. I investigate voice training as this skill that could help young women perform their voice differently. Theatrical performance is used as a tool to platform this performance.

iii. Research Scope

This research is an exploration of voice in relation to habitus and how theatre and performance can be utilised to investigate this relationship with young women. This research is not therefore a survey of whether young women are engaged in politics or what their political opinion or concerns are. Neither am I aiming to represent my young women's voices, though they are present in the writing. Instead I am exploring how the young women relate to a specific form of practice, voice training, and as a result I draw conclusions about the political efficacy of this practice. In this sense, this research is practice-led, not practice-based. I am using practice as a method of research, rather than presenting my practice as the outcome of research. Finally, my research draws on a relatively small sample of young people. Not having the time or resources to work with enough participants to draw any conclusions about young women in general, I decided to work with small groups to have the ability to produce very detailed, personal analysis. This furthermore supports my research aim of

focusing on the efficacy of the practice, rather than the representation of my participants.

iv. Chapter Breakdown

The first three chapters of my thesis form the literature review and methodology and the subsequent four chapters are empirical analysis. Chapter 1 interrogates the concept of voice, drawing on discourses of philosophy, linguistics, political theory and sociology to chart the many ways in which voice is framed and defined. From this chapter I outline my definition of voice as a material, embodied phenomenon. Chapter 2 maps the theoretical discussion of young people's engagement in the voice and the political, exploring the political ideology of "communication skills", the relationship between voice and agency, and the debates surrounding whether young people are "apathetic" about politics. This chapter draws a correlation between young people's access to voice and how they are expected to engage in politics, arguing that creating a practice with young people should begin with the material voice. Chapter 3 focuses on my research methodology, outlining how voice is conceived in applied theatre as a rationale for my own practice before discussing my methodological approach, describing my workshops in detail. Chapter 4 begins the analysis of my practice, where I look at some of the broader questions that emerged, arguing that voice training provided my participants with the vocabulary to contest their political position. Chapter 5 is framed around habitus and through detailed analysis of four of my participant's voices, I discuss to what extent the intervention of voice training is a political intervention through effecting the participant's habitus. Chapter 6 focuses on gender and how the female voice is conceived as different to the male. This chapter argues against the 'different but equal' perspective that has emerged in feminist linguistics and uses examples from my practice to demonstrate the importance for women to engage in voice training to contest the ways in which they are vocally

subordinate. The final chapter, Chapter 7, explores the question of collective voice. I argue that through comparing the theatrical ensemble to the political concept of the crowd, there was an inherent political engagement in my participants operating as a collective voice.

The thesis is accompanied by an audio CD of recordings from my practice. The reader may wish to listen to this accompaniment alongside parts of my analysis, which is indicated in the text by the track number in square brackets, i.e. [TRACK 1].

Kristen Linklater's voice method was heavily influenced by work of Iris Warren. In describing Warren's work, Linklater tells this anecdote:

Legend has it that at some time in the 1930s Iris was asked by a Freudian analyst if she could assist a patient of his who was unable to speak about his traumatic experiences. Iris got him to relax, breathe deeply, and feel the sound of his voice in his body. He immediately began crying, and with the flood of tears came a flood of words. That emotion had freed his voice (Linklater, *Traditions* 1).

This represented a breakthrough in voice training, which Linklater describes as moving from focusing on the voice as a musical instrument to a human instrument. My research aims to develop this further. The emotional freedom that the patient in the anecdote experienced is reminiscent of the experiences of some of my participants. But rather than this freedom being associated with psychology and emotion, in my practice it was a freedom from social stratification that had marked their voices, a political freedom. The voice is a human instrument, a social instrument and a political instrument.

CHAPTER ONE:

AN INTRODUCTION TO VOICE

Voice, as Mladen Dolar writes, cannot be pinned down (Dolar 15). Voice is utterance; it is expression; it exists in sonorous form. It exists in the individual, in conversation, in rhetoric. It exists in the collective, in the voice of the people, and in the symbolic 'x' in a polling station. It is the signifier, a structural system of sounds, phonemes; sound towards meaning. Voice can be metaphoric, can be finding voice or giving voice or having a voice; and it can be performative; voice not just as saying, but voice also as doing. And as well it is the literal production of voice, of breath interrupted, the actual feeling of producing sound. Voice is many things, with many different definitions across many different disciplines. This chapter will begin a review of voice to bring these various conceptions together, investigating whether we can come to any concrete definition. The attempt to define it will bring up a political question for voice: can it be pinned down or must voice continue to be elusive, and is perhaps this elusiveness part of its political potential? Perhaps by moving away from understanding voice as something generalized to a particular discursive position we can begin to counteract some of the ways voice is repressed and expected to behave. That is, considering voice as something that cannot be pinned down can lead to an understanding that voice does not have to be subservient to the signifier, to language. Accordingly, the politics of voice in this research is more concerned with the capacity to speak and be heard than the politics of what is said. More specifically, this research investigates the capacity of young women to vocalize and be heard when engaging in political matters.

My investigation endeavours to unpack what a 'political voice' is. This emerges out of a rejection of political voice as a wholly symbolic concept. By this, I mean a rejection

of one's voice only being used to describe or represent one's political opinion, for example the equation of voting and voice. Here the voice is reduced to signification: ignored are all the non-linguistic aspects of voice that contribute to both how voice sounds and how voice is heard and received in the political sphere. Accordingly, exploring political voice in this thesis is concerned with the bodies that produce voice: the voice as an embodied entity and therefore constituted in space and time, a body that affects and is affected by the world that creates it. My political point of enquiry then is less about the political opinions or political duties that get bracketed as a person's voice, but rather the politics that are inhered in the voice itself, in what encourages or what prevents its sonic expression.

The embodied voice must be understood as something material and tangible. Rather than just the carrier of something cognitive, the voice is also something we experience bodily. Voice therefore is something we feel. A repressed voice, for instance, is not just a cognitive feeling of misrecognition, but something that is felt in the body, for example, in certain muscular tensions. The feeling of expressing something clearly is not just feeling like you put your ideas across, but a certain clarity that is felt physiologically. I define political voice therefore as how political and sociological phenomena make some voices feel repressed in certain times and spaces and some voices feel free and expressive. This thesis is concerned with how this manifests in the body. My primary interest, therefore, is whether political engagement can be related to how the voice feels.

The construction of this understanding of political voice comes from a reading of Bourdieu's concept of habitus. Habitus is a term that describes a set of dispositions, ways of behaving, that a subject enacts. These behaviours arise from their sociological position. How the subject acts in any situation is determined by an interplay between their past experiences, their sociological or cultural position and the

context in which they find themselves. Habitus is a deeply ingrained bodily hexis that not only affects our cognitive decisions, but also the way we walk, talk, move, sit etc., where the entire body is marked by the sociological, cultural and economic structures that have shaped us. In this research I explore habitus in relation to voice, specifically alongside the practice of voice training in which the voice is considered an embodied phenomenon, where the production of voice corresponds to a series of sociologically and culturally formed habits that have marked the subject.

This thesis is also focused on performance. Voice therefore will be examined according to the two-fold nature of this term: both how voice is used in theatre and other performance-based modes, as well as performance in a broader sense, that is, how we perform ourselves. This means performing voice, following Goffman, in sociological terms, where performance is part of our everyday life. Voice as performance is how we understand our utterances to say and do more than the content of speech: that voice does, sometimes beyond the intentions of the subject. Following this, daily performance is something that can be disrupted. This is following the idea from Judith Butler (2004) that the re-contextualising and repeating of behaviour that is considered natural and habitual within a theatrical context can begin to expose and undermine it as performative. Accordingly, the 'performance of voice' can be a conscious, theatrical performance that deliberately aims to disrupt and undermine the activities of voice that are presumed everyday or natural. Performance contexts allow an experimentation with vocalisation in imagined spaces, where the body can perform itself differently, experiencing the voice differently. In this thesis, through performance, I investigate how figurative or symbolic notions of political voice (the voice as carrier of political content) interact with the politics of the physiological voice (how politics manifest in voice production).

This chapter will largely focus on different readings of voice, combining linguistics, philosophy and political theory. This review of voice will lead to political questions about the embodied voice which I will take into the second chapter where I begin to interrogate the more specific point of inquiry of this thesis: young women and political engagement.

1.1 Voice and Language

Speech, according to Aristotle, is what sets humans apart from other animals as political creatures. Voice without speech expresses pain and pleasure, but the human can articulate beyond this, designating the advantageous and the harmful, and therefore 'it is the special property of man [sic] in distinction from the other animals that he alone has perception of good and bad and right and wrong and the other moral qualities' (Aristotle 1.1253a). This distinction creates a classification between the linguistic and non-linguistic voice, one civilised and the other animalistic. The animal voice is pre-linguistic, pre-signification: simply sound without meaning. The requisite for voice to convey meaning and therefore to communicate politics is speech. But, as Dolar observes, though the pre-linguistic and post-linguistic voice are not speech, they still carry meaning. A speechless voice might also produce sounds that are post-linguistic, such as laughter. This is because the non-linguistic voice, though it appears to be external to the linguistic structure, still hits the core of such structure (Dolar 28). Furthermore, voice as articulation of political meaning or understanding is not reducible to speech, and nor is speech its necessary component. Aristotle's statement begins my exploration of how to define voice as political, particularly by examining the distinctions between voice and language. Kimbrough argues that the terms voice, speech and language are often used interchangeably in 20th Century philosophy yet it is important to state that they are not synonymous. Whereas language in modern usage refers to the system of meaning shared by a community, voice is associated

with style and expression. In modern philosophy, language and speech are attached to meaning and therefore take precedence over vocalized sound (Kimbrough 6). This leaves an 'auditory dimension' missing from certain types of linguistic philosophy (Kimbrough 18). In this section I explore how the 'linguistic turn' of philosophy of the 20th Century leaves behind the voice, and furthermore dispute the idea that a political voice is determined by speech, the voice as signifier, and instead demonstrate that the politics of voice can also be a matter of the body, a corporal voice.

1.1.1 Structuralism and Post-structuralism

The linguistic understanding of voice according to schools of structuralism and post-structuralism is what Kimbrough describes as the linguistic turn in the 20th Century, where language becomes the focus for understanding how meaning is created and shared (Kimbrough 1). Structuralism, the linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure, propagates language as a self-contained system. This system is 'both a social product of the faculty of speech and a collection of necessary conventions that have been adopted by a social body to permit individuals to exercise that faculty' (Saussure 9). Saussure argues that it is only through the system of language that speech can have any meaning, differentiating between parole, the individual acts of speech, and langue, the whole system of differences established by the community that allows acts of parole to have meaning. This is because the self-contained system of langue, or language, is based on the differences between individual speech acts: these speech acts only make sense in relation to what they are not. Language is a system of signs consisting of the 'signifier' (a word, a sound, graphic equivalent etc.) and a 'signified' (what it means or indicates). These signs have no meaning in and of themselves, they only have meaning through their difference to other signs. It is not the signifier's inherent meaning that is important, but rather the meaning understood through difference: a functional meaning rather than immanent. What the voice

produces, for Saussure, is only meaningful through this system. The sounds we make do not have intrinsic meaning, rather their meaning is simply in their difference to other sounds, understood through *langue*.

Roman Jakobson continued to develop this as the theory of phonology, a study concerned with the systematic organization of sounds, or rather how sounds function within a structural system. Departing from phonetics, a study only concerned with the physical production of sound, phonology is concerned with meaning: from sound to meaning, sound as the linguistic sign. Instead of examining the phonic substance in abstraction to its function, Jakobson argues our primary consideration is that we speak to be heard, and we want to be heard to be understood. It is phonic differentiation, 'the capacity of sounds to differentiate words according to their meanings' (Jakobson 27) that allows for understanding. Structuralism is a system of understanding that is not concerned with what the signs say, but rather how they relate to each other: a 'deep' meaning constituted by structure rather than content. Roland Barthes demonstrated how meaning is produced through language, rather than language reflecting meaning. It was in this sense that Barthes disputed the 'authorial voice' (famously known as 'death of the author'), as any text is a multi-dimensional space in which many different writings and meanings exist. The 'voice' of the author is contestable: a text is not their voice recapturing or representing the past but exists in the present. We can never know which voice is speaking to us in a literary text, because 'writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin' (Barthes qtd Burke 21).

What becomes apparent in this analysis is that meaning can be found in an infinite number of signifiers rather than one specific and absolute. Furthermore, there is no strict distinction to what a signifier is and what is a signified. If you look up a word in a dictionary you will simply find more signifiers. This system is circular, a constant

play between signifiers and signifieds. To read and understand a sentence is an accumulation of meaning, or rather, meaning is suspended through the process of a complex interplay of different signs, each never fully meaningful in and of itself, but dependent on the context around it. In this sense, there is no original meaning of a sign; we simply encounter it in different situations. This observation describes post-structuralism, the argument that language is much more complex and less stable than structuralism defines.

Jacques Derrida argues that no one meaning is ever fully present in a sign, multiple things are going on that cannot be reduced to something absolute: there is no true, deep structure. Accordingly, in expressing ourselves, we too are never fully present as our meaning is always dispersed. For the structuralists, the voice was the point from which we could experience our own presence, through its immediate relationship with the consciousness, as opposed to writing, where our thoughts are mediated, externalised from our being. The voice is ephemeral, and so disappears with our thought, whereas writing commits to materiality, and is therefore separated from presence. Derrida disputes this 'logocentrism' of the structuralist movement, which he claims has plagued Western philosophy. This is an objection to the idea of a 'deep structure' that corresponds to deeper patterns of mind; that the text is an explanation to structures of human thought and culture. Derrida takes apart Saussure's proposition that the spoken word is a complete unit of thought and meaning, of signifier and signified, and that accordingly, writing is a representation of this "thought-sound" (Derrida 31). This presents writing as external to language, which therefore creates an "internal system" of language. Derrida argues that this returns Saussure's argument to a metaphysical epistemological view of language, where his exteriorising of writing protects and restores 'the internal system of language in the purity of its concept' against the any potential contamination of that system (Derrida 34). Derrida argues that in this reading voice becomes a metaphor of authenticity, truth and

presence, in opposition to secondary, exteriorised writing. The voice's 'presence' reaffirms its relationship to truth, preventing linguistics from approaching the question of writing.

Accordingly, Derrida argues that we must see writing as prior to speech to deconstruct this metaphysical hold. We cannot see writing as simply a representation of voice. Representation 'mingles with what it represents', to the extent that writing and speaking are simultaneous (Derrida 36). In this complex relationship, the point of origin is ungraspable, where the representer is constantly re-represented. Writing therefore, can be understood in Derrida's term *différance*: to both defer and to differ. One can never fully grasp a sign's meaning in just the sign itself. Rather meaning is found through deferring to other signs. This understanding is simultaneously grasped out of the way in which the signs also differ. Meaning is constantly therefore deferred or suspended to other signs, which disrupts ideas of authenticity or an origin. *Différance* allows us to conceive of writing without teleology: without presence or absence, history or cause (Burke 119).

What structuralism and post-structuralism contribute to this research is an understanding of a complex relationship between language and meaning, where language is not simply the representation of meaning, but part of its production. *Différance* demonstrates how no meaning is inherent within a word, which allows us to conceive of the ways in which language, voice and speech are inextricably related to politics and power. If meaning is produced through language, and no meaning is ever fixed, then interpretation is always contingent, and this contingency makes meaning always an issue of power. That is, some meanings are more likely to be accepted than others. Kimbrough describes post-structuralism as differing from structuralism in its focus on the effects the dominance of language has on people (Kimbrough 208). This raises a question that needs clarifying: is the way that

language produces meaning limited to a self-contained system or it is shaped by cultural, social and economic forces? In this sense, where does language's dominance come from? And what is the relationship between structure and the non-linguistic voice? Dolar discusses how the voice, if we consider the 'non-voice' that is pre- or post-linguistic, in one sense cannot be part of linguistic analysis. But at the same time, it is not apart from these structures; it is still part of meaning even if it is untamed by structure (Dolar 32). How do we understand voice as part of meaning and structure without it being reduced to linguistics? Moreover, is the space it occupies outside of linguistic structures something to be considered politically?

1.1.2 Language and sociological difference

Language as a self-contained system ignores a dimension of the politics of voice that determines who has the right to speak and whose voices in society are heard. Pierre Bourdieu, in criticising structuralism's failure to account for the social functioning and construction of language introduces a political and economic analysis of language which argues not only that the linguistic structure is intertwined with the social structure, but that by proscribing a linguistic structure, the *langue*, as a kind of official way of understanding, Saussure is also establishing a dominant or authoritative language:

To speak of the language, without further specification, as linguists do, is tacitly to accept the official definition of the official language of a political unit. This language is the one which, within the territorial limits of that unit, imposes itself on the whole population as the only legitimate language (Bourdieu, *Language* 45).

Further than this, Bourdieu discusses how this imposed language reveals the social structures that both implement and perpetuate its usage. The dominant language is used both politically and economically, by both the state and the market, as a way of

continuing its own authority. Accordingly, all 'linguistic practices are measured against the legitimate practices, i.e. the practices of those who are dominant' (Bourdieu, *Language* 53). This is Bourdieu's key distinction from Saussure: differences in linguistic practices are not in abstraction, but in sociological differences. A structural sociology of language 'must take as its object the relationship between the structured systems of sociologically pertinent linguistic differences and the equally structured systems of social differences' (Bourdieu, *Language* 54). Nick Couldry argues for the political need for citizens to feel that their voices matter to resist neoliberal society. Couldry demonstrates how voice is always embodied and accordingly something intersubjective and relational. Voice's value therefore is determined by other bodies, and spaces for voice 'are therefore inherently spaces of power' (Couldry 130). In this sense, voices only count if the bodies that produced them 'matter'. In neoliberal society, we have created spaces where only certain voices matter at the expense of other voices.

This sociological perspective demands that we think of the agents behind the acts of speech. Derrida's argument suggests that the voice is no more than speech, dismissing any concept of voice prior to signification. The dismissal of the speechless voice implies a teleology that was present in Aristotle's before-mentioned statement, where voice is merely the means, and speech the meaning. The voice of a person who chooses not to, or is forbidden from speaking, is still a voice that exists and has meaning. Dolar argues instead for a dismissal of any kind of teleology: voice is not 'some remnant of a previous precultural state, or of some happy primordial fusion when we were not yet plagued by language and its calamities; rather, it is the product of logos itself, sustaining and troubling it at the same time' (Dolar 108-107). In the linguistic analysis of structuralism and post-structuralism, although voice is instrumental to meaning, it is at the same time betrayed by it, where the meaning

becomes the focus of the listener over the voice. Voice makes meaning-through-utterance possible but disappears in such meaning. Dolar's solution to this problem is a dichotomy of the voice and the signifier, a kind of voice that cannot be pinned down, 'where we could maintain that it is the non-linguistic, the extralinguistic element which enables speech phenomena, but cannot itself be discerned by linguistics' (Dolar 15). It is in this sense I would like to consider the political efficacy of an ungraspable, elusive voice that is not locked within a structural system of signifier and signified. If we understand linguistic stratification as a sociological or political concern, then perhaps the voice as prior to signification could be a starting point for challenging this dominant linguistic order.

1.2 Voice and Body

In this research I am defining the voice as political by deciphering it from its purely linguistic meaning, as voice cannot be solely reduced to this. Accordingly, I am interested in voice as political in its material rather than symbolic form. Dunn and Jones discuss how the concept of voice as a metaphor for political agency and the reclamation of experience in feminist discourse has become entirely pervasive, if not intrinsic to such discussion. However, consequently, we forget 'the concrete physical dimensions of the female voice upon which this metaphor was based' and furthermore forget how the literal, audible voice has been used both for women's empowerment and silencing (Dunn and Jones 1). The abstraction of the voice from something material to something conceptual, they argue, perhaps comes from an association of femininity with voice and with embodiment. Masculinity is associated with reason, and accordingly the semantic is privileged over the vocal and the bodily. In this privileging, the voice is increasingly abstracted, reduced to a symbolic category, a vessel for potential meaning (L. Fisher 87). In response to this, Dunn and Jones introduce the term 'vocality' as preferable to voice to avoid this problem of conflation between voice

and speech, allowing for a broader definition which encompasses all vocal manifestations, and furthermore to push for a focus on the non-verbal.

Dunn and Jones are referencing an aspect of voice that cannot be captured within structural linguistics: the 'genotext' in Kristeva's terms, or the 'grain of the voice' in Barthes. Barthes describes the grain of the voice as the encounter between language and voice, the something that you hear before or beyond the meaning of words, 'something which is directly the cantor's body, brought to your ears in one and the same movement from deep down in the cavities, the muscles, the membranes, the cartilages' (Barthes, *Image* 181). Similarly, Kristeva distinguishes between the genotext and the phenotext. Whereas the phenotext is a type of language that strives to communicate, the genotext is a process of articulation that is non-linguistic, and yet underpins language. (Kristeva 1984).

The (re)materialization of voice becomes politically significant in the consideration of who is speaking. The relationship between the signifier and signified may be arbitrary, but the subject speaking, choosing words and being listened to is not. There is simply more to voice than a signifying chain and this excess is where the political can be found. Separating voice from speech, Dolar presents voice as its non-signifying remainder. Whereas speech, constructed through signifiers that make meaning through absence (through what they are not), voice embodies presence. This is important because outside of linguistic analysis voice is a lot more than the literal conveying of meaning, and furthermore there is sociological meaning that can be found underneath the structures of speech. Derrida's criticism of logocentrism forgets the individual breath that makes speech possible, the breath of a person perhaps whose voice is not prioritised over writing, whose voice is never prioritised, who is often kept silent. Adriana Cavarero argues against Derrida's logocentrism by describing voice's relegation to insignificance throughout philosophy. This is related

to a devaluing of uniqueness as the defining feature of voice is its uniqueness, identifying the uniqueness of the one who uses it. Even if the words are the same, the voice is always different to other voices: when 'the human voice vibrates, there is someone in flesh and bone who emits it' (Cavarero 4). The main relegation of voice in philosophy is because speech finds it home in thought, or rather that speech is the expression, the audible sign, of a mental signified. The voice accordingly is generalized as the emission of this signifier, with the vocal uniqueness ignored. If voice is generalized it becomes the phonetic components of language within the structure of signification, phonology, as discussed earlier. Voice understood through the perspective of linguistics becomes 'the general sphere of sonorous articulations where what is not heard is, paradoxically, the uniqueness of sound' (Cavarero 10). Mikhail Karikis argues similarly, stating the need to unite a voice with a body:

It is disconcerting to conceptualize human speech without taking into account the body that produces it; such thinking undervalues the embodied "who" that speech emanates from, and keeps only the semantic aspect of the voice. It implies a logocentric way of thinking, which undermines all those vocal sounds we produce that are not destined to language, asserting the hegemony of the disembodied transcendent sign (Karikis 79).

In capitalist society, the body as producer or consumer is always secondary to transcendent values, mainly the values of the market or capital, and the disembodied voice reflects this. Instead, Karikis focuses on the ways in which the body produces 'nonsense' or extra-lingual vocal sounds as an act or force of resistance to existing structures, including language.

In response to this relegation of voice, Cavarero suggests a theoretical reversal, where we understand speech from the perspective of voice rather than language. This reversal, the prioritising of the sonorous over the linguistic is not a focus on pure sound, but 'the relational uniqueness of a vocal emission that, far from contradicting it, announces and brings to its destination the specifically human fact of speech' (Cavarero 15). This perspective will allow us to understand, to hear, the relationality

between unique voices that can be understood through sonority itself. Through a plurality of voices, before meaning, we can understand relationality in the mere act of singular voices communicating.

1.2.1 Voice and Performativity

This begins to frame the act of voicing as a potential political act. Utterance itself does something, the subject acts through vocalization. Bourdieu demonstrates how the system of social difference and the structures of language act and impact upon each other. Social difference is reproduced or re-translated into the structures of language.

At the same time, this system is perpetuated through the usage of language:

To speak is to appropriate one or other of the expressive styles already constituted in and through usage and objectively marked by their position in a hierarchy of styles which expresses the hierarchy of corresponding social groups (Bourdieu, *Language* 54).

The repetition of certain modes of speaking, through usage establishes those ways of speaking as the correct way to speak. Further than this, the establishment of the correct language perpetuates and confirms its position by it simultaneously repressing other ways of speaking. This manifests as normal, natural and correct when it is in fact performative. In this sense, we can understand the speaking and political voice as performative: to speak is both to express something and to do something. This understanding of language has its origins in J. L. Austin's performative utterances. Here language acts; it not only describes phenomena but simultaneously brings them about. Austin's example of "I do" in a marriage ceremony is a good illustration: these words do not just describe people as married but bring the marriage into being. It is the act of vocalizing these words, rather than the couple writing them, that makes the words an act. Accordingly, it is the presence and uniqueness of voice that binds the ceremony: the sense that something has been performed rather than just described. Voice's presence legitimizes performance at

the same time as the performance of speaking legitimizes the utterance. Kimbrough describes how Austin restores the voice as the essential agent through 'resisting the structural relativity of sound and sense by positioning the voice as necessary for the execution of the speech act' (Kimbrough 169). The voice is necessary for the speech act to act.

This is furthermore apparent in Bourdieu's criticism of Austin, where he argues that Austin's analysis of performative utterances is purely linguistic. The power of performative words, what makes words act, is not inherent in the word itself, but rather related to the authority of the person who speaks. For Bourdieu, these utterances instead represent the existing power and social relations, the power of words 'is nothing other than the delegated power of the spokesperson' and their speech is 'no more than a testimony... of the guarantee of delegation which is vested in him' (Bourdieu, *Language* 107). Austin's error is to look for language's efficacy within itself. Instead, Bourdieu argues that language is merely a representation and symbolisation of authority. Whose voice, and in what context, is a necessary component of its performance. This, however, does not negate the performativity of language, but rather necessarily locates performativity as political: performativity as language perpetuating existing political authority. The authorised spokesperson is only able to make words act 'because his speech concentrates within it the accumulated symbolic capital of the group which has delegated him and of which he is the authorized representative' (Bourdieu, *Language* 110-111). Likewise, a performative utterance 'is destined to fail each time that it is not pronounced by a person who has the 'power' to pronounce it' (Bourdieu, *Language* 111). In this sense, the performative utterance continues to validate these authority structures: it is only legitimated by the legitimate authority.

1.2.2 Gender and Performance

Vocal performativity's relationship to authority can be understood further through the writings of Judith Butler. Butler's conception of gender performativity is that gender is constructed out of a series of repeated acts within a highly regulatory framework. These acts are so heavily repeated that over time they appear habitual and natural, they appear as something we are rather than something we do (Butler, *Gender* 45). This is because performativity is something perpetual: identities are created again and again, these acts both confirming and continuing the perception that gender is something natural to us. So, it is not so much that we are born female, which leads to us to do feminine things, but rather, our identity as female is created out of gendered acts that pre-exist and already determine us, signified by the performative utterance of "It's a girl!" We may conceive of male and female voices, of gendered ways of communicating or talking. For instance, Deborah Tannen outlines how men speak competitively, preserving status and hierarchical order, whereas women, generally, speak cooperatively, with the aim to maintain relationships and establish connections (Tannen 77). She discusses how the male orientation equips him for the public sphere, whereas the female way equips her for the private. However, Tannen's distinction perpetuates a social divide, where women are more likely to stay at home and not be heard, their voice only useful for family, friend or care settings, whereas men are encouraged to vocally dominate the public sphere. Butler would dispute that either of these dispositions were natural to either gender, but rather the repeated act of speaking in the public/private sphere, or even the divide between the spheres itself, is performative.

This is a key point when discussing how to approach the issue that certain ways of speaking are discredited, such as 'feminine' or 'adolescent'. A tendency within

feminist linguistics is to promote female speaking patterns as equal but simply different to men's. Deborah Cameron criticises this approach, arguing that it presupposes that men and women come into dialogue symmetrically. This kind of linguistic relativism can easily become reactionary, as it supposes that the inequality between these two styles comes from the suppression of difference, rather than a social suppression that brought about these acts in the first place. Cameron argues that it is important to acknowledge the social practices behind linguistic style:

In other words, if I talk like a woman this is not just the inevitable outcome of the fact that I am a woman; it is one way I have of becoming a woman, producing myself as one (Cameron, *Rethinking* 43).

The matter of depreciating the gender differences between male and female voices is not the harmful aspect of the gendered voice. Rather, my female voice is 'at once a re-enactment and re-experiencing of a set of meanings already socially established' as well as the 'ritualized form of their legitimation' (Butler, *Bodily* 114). If a woman enters a board room, and consciously adopts an aggressive, "male" tone, we may feel that she is having to "perform" and is somehow then betraying her feminine authenticity. But if a woman enters a board room and uses her authentic female "cooperative" voice she is also performing, as this cooperative voice is the effect of the performance of repeated acts that over time appear as authentic. For Butler, the key is exposing the groundlessness of all grounds: we cannot escape this regulatory framework, but we can at least reveal it as such.

One way that this exposition can happen is through the re-contextualising of performative acts into contexts in which they are made conscious and revealed as performative. For instance, Butler uses the example of drag and parody, arguing that rather than assuming drag reinforces gender stereotypes, it instead parodies any notion of original gender. By placing gender acts on the stage, by imitating these acts

in a conscious way, 'drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself – as well as its contingency' (Butler, *Bodily* 112). The theatrical structures that surround the act of drag is the first step in uncovering gender also as performance, as we see it undermined in its very repetition. Female-to-male drag, Butler asserts, can be particularly subversive, as it disrupts any notion that dominant masculinity is fixed, but too is just the product of repeated acts. The performance space as a place where we can expose performativity is perhaps also a place for examining too how the voice is performatively constructed.

The position of the body within the framework of performativity is also significant. Butler argues that the body is not a blank canvas on which culture inscribes, but rather bodies are already marked and contribute to any inscription:

we should not treat the body as a kind of slate or surface on which cultural meanings are imposed. The body is that which embodies and enacts certain kinds of social meanings (Butler and Reddy 118).

The body gives material substance to social norms. It is in this sense that the voice as embodied is both part of and enactor of a discursive framework. Rather than understanding voice through purely linguistic structures, it is an aspect of a broad performative framework where the body and therefore the voice contributes to social inscription.

The relationship between the voice and the body has been given significance by feminist scholars. For instance, Cixous writes how a woman's body 'must be heard' (Cixous 880). Here Cixous draws a connection between the desires and drives of the repressed female body and the desire and drives of a woman prevented from writing and speaking. Accordingly, there is an inextricable link between a woman's voice and

her body, and the body will always be present in the voice or vice versa. It must be noted, however, as critics such as Showalter have observed, that insisting that women's writing (or *écriture féminine*) and creativity are fundamentally linked to the body could replicate the very ways in which women have been oppressed because of their body (Showalter 189). There is a dangerous essentialism in such a focus on the difference of women's bodies that could easily be used to further exclude women. Accordingly, Cixous' argument could be read as a way of essentialising women's writing. However, instead of dismissing the connection she makes between the voice and the body, I wanted to explore whether this precise link could be a way of challenging and changing any essentialised ideas of the female voice. Instead of this link designating that women's voices are a certain way because of the body (e.g. emotional rather than rational) or because of their bodies (e.g. quiet or gentle), it provides grounds for change through the body. The body and voice can perform in multiple ways, but it will always remain female in *essence*. In other words, the female voice can resist certain performative designations but remain female.

Accordingly, the body itself is the site and stage of resistance, the site of exposition, undermining and undoing performative vocal acts. The undermining of the performance of voice is a significant political aim, as, following Bourdieu, if the 'doing' that political speech commits is the repression of other voices that do not fit into this performance, then the voices of some are used as action to bring about and perpetuate the silence of other voices. This is the politics of voice that I am examining: how the performance of voice continuously silences voices.

1.3 Voice and Crowds

As well as the ways that the individual voice can resist, this thesis will also explore the concept of the collective voice. Considering the voice in its embodied sense, my investigation into its collectivity focuses on the idea of the crowd, which, following Canetti, describes how when multiple people gather in space, they act as if they are one body (Canetti 16). My research explored to what extent the collective voice, comprised of multiple individual voices, becomes one voice and what the political implications of sounding as if it were one voice are. I investigate whether the voice of the crowd can support voices that are usually not heard to make themselves audible.

Another perspective on Aristotle's distinction comes from Jacques Rancière. He argues that before the logos that 'deals with the useful and the harmful, there is the logos that orders and bestows the right to order' (Rancière, *Disagreement* 16). This creates an order that draws a divide between two groups of people: 'those that one sees and those that one does not see, those who have a logos – memorial speech, an account to be kept up – and those who have no logos, those who really speak and those whose voice merely mimics the articulate voice to express pleasure and pain' (Rancière, *Disagreement* 22). Those who have no logos Rancière calls the part with no part. But there is a contradiction here from which Rancière draws two conclusions. If the superior being orders the inferior being through logos, for this order to be maintained both beings must understand each other: there must be a common language. This firstly means that the ability to understand language is not the same as having the right to use it, or the right to be heard: a 'slave is the one who has the capacity to understand a logos without having the capacity for the logos' (Rancière, *Disagreement* 17). But at the same time, this contradiction means that there is an equality between the superior and inferior: an equality in understanding language.

This for Rancière is a presupposition of equality that exists amongst all beings, and it is upon this equality that he wishes to place politics. From this he argues that the emergence of politics can only come from the part with no part asserting and expressing this presupposition of their equality.

The assertion of the demos could be an example of collective voice. Politics often valorises the voice of the individual; a voice of rational principle as opposed to the unruly and unreasonable masses. However, critics such as Jodi Dean have described this as a fixation on individuation that prevents collectivity. Against the idea that the individual is fundamental to politics, Dean argues that we focus on crowd. Whether a crowd is a reasoned gathering, or an angry mob is immaterial: a crowd 'forces the possibility of the intrusion of the people into politics' (Dean, *Crowds* 8). Like Rancière, Dean argues that the crowd itself does not have its own particular politics, the point is that a crowd is an opportunity for politics, in the sense that it allows people into a political process. When phrases such as the 'people's voice' are loosely used to describe democratic practices like voting, justifying the will of the present government, the crowd is a concrete opposition against this justification. The very gathering of people demonstrates dissent against this will. Furthermore, in the crowd the people's voice is a present voice, rather than a symbolic notion.

I define collective voice as different to dialogue or forms of communicative rationality. Communicative rationality, as discussed by Habermas, is a form of reasoning where interlocutors, through discussion, come to consensus. Reaching consensus depends on the participants having a level of mutual recognition towards each other, where they consider each other equals in rational speech (Russell and Montin 543). Communicative action's orientation is understanding and agreement, where actors

pursue their goals 'on the condition of an agreement – one that already exists or one to be negotiated' (Habermas 134). Understanding and agreement is found communicatively, through dialogue. However, as Russell and Montin identify, the reasons why this process can fail, or interlocutors can end up disagreeing with each other can be put down to a matter of not understanding each other. This means that speakers in positions of authority can exclude their subordinates by arguing that any tension is just a failure of understanding (Russell and Montin 545). They argue, following Rancière, that if disagreement is framed as a communicative incompetence then some speakers can be deemed incapable of entering discussion on the basis of their disagreement. This contributes to what Rancière calls the distribution of the sensible, an order in which some people are deemed authoritative to talk about certain matters and others are not. Rancière argues that speakers must do more than test the validity of their claims to enter political discourse: they must challenge the order of the distribution of the sensible. It is from this idea that the importance of dissensus and disagreement is clear.

Rather than defining the collective voice by reaching consensus, we can understand it as a plurality of voices united through dissensus. Cavarero's concept of the unique voice is always in relation to a plurality of voices, where to voice is always to address another. In a different reading of Aristotle's man as political animal, or *zoon politikon*, Cavarero instead argues that we can interpret this as man of the polis, as an animal that must exist and cannot be without others. In this sense, she interprets logos as political not because of language's intrinsic communicability, but rather, 'man is political because he perceives and speaks of things that belong, per se, to the political community' (Cavarero 185). Here language is intrinsically relational, rather than individual. Furthermore, the politics of the crowd suggests how this can be taken

further than relationality, to considering multiple voices as one voice. It is this act of coming together as one voice that can instigate dissensus.

1.4 Conclusions

Dolar's suggestion that voice cannot be pinned down seems in contradiction with the notion of the material voice. Voice as elusive does not match with voice as physical manifestation. But the material voice is not something fixed. Like the ephemerality of performance, as Peggy Phelan describes, the voice materializes, but in utterance disappears. Moving away from the fixation on the content of performance, Phelan argues that we should instead think about performance as disappearance and from this, political questions arise. In this disappearance is a resistance to the relentless acquisitive drive of capitalism, in the creation of something that cannot be held onto and possessed (Phelan 294).

Though this research is not concerned with commodity culture as Phelan was when envisaging this form of resistant performance, the idea of resistance in something that cannot be grasped is important. In the face of capitalism's current form, neoliberal individualism, resistance comes in the acknowledgement that voice does not have to be fixed in accordance with its social or cultural status. Nor does contingency come from performing a myth of individualism or authenticity. Rather, the voice can perform differently, and its effective different performance comes in the relationality of voices performing differently together.

The various theories of voice that I have discussed in this chapter have provided a framework of the material and embodied voice that is the focus of my research. As the thesis progresses, I relate this definition of voice to youth politics and community

theatre, the two contexts in which my research was placed in between. I then go on to explore the material voice through my own practice, identifying a different way to conceive of political voice in these fields and proposing a new mode of practice. The non-linguistic voice remains central to this thesis, not simply in a rejection of language, but in an analysis that examines how the voice sounds and feels, rather than just the content of speech.

CHAPTER TWO: VOICE AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people aren't apathetic about politics. But exactly how politics manifests in their lives is increasingly unclear. Politics in its traditional form, or as a class-based concept, is no longer clear in the structures of young people's lives, in their communities, families or workplaces, resulting in a situation where they tend seek it in less traditional places. Many critics have argued that young people are relocating politics to the 'everyday'. In this chapter I will argue something slightly different: that this shift in where politics is found does not make politics ordinary, or part of the everyday, but rather the opposite: it is rare for young people to feel engaged in it. Through the concept of agency, I will explore young people's potentiality to feel engaged in politics in a time of political fragmentation and how this is regulated by existing political structures. How does a feeling of political engagement manifest alongside a political system that discourages meaningful participation to the majority? If agency is a requisite for political participation, to what extent do young people have agency in relation to mainstream political systems? This chapter will explore how voice is caught up with agency and, by untangling the ways in which young people come to politics through the terminology of voice, I will examine whether voice is a useful concept to increase political engagement or participation. Furthermore, I will interrogate the theory that politics is already present in young people's lives, perhaps in places where they already consider themselves to have agency and discuss whether this can translate into the formal political sphere.

An annual survey commissioned by the Young Women's Trust in 2016 found that young people in Britain today are living in what the trust have named suspended adulthood. They found that a significant number of young people felt like their life has

been put on hold due to financial, work and housing problems. 48% of young people interviewed said that they had put off having children, for instance, until they felt like they could afford it. Similarly, 43% of young people still lived with their parents or guardians, and 24% have had to move back in with their parents due to financial pressure. The survey demonstrates that young people are highly anxious about their future, 51% in fact, which has risen from 39% just the previous year, and that there is considerable concern about job security or getting enough hours in work to keep themselves afloat. Where young people turn to express these concerns has become a deeply personalized, private matter, with only 31% saying they would turn to a trade union for advice, as opposed to 80% talking to a friend, 77% talking to a partner, and 74% looking on the internet.

This chapter will explore how changes in work places, labour markets and communities due to rapid de-industrialisation in the latter part of the 20th century relate to how young people experience and vocalize the political. How do young people navigate an increasingly individualized society, where the question of what is a citizen, or what is being political are less clear? Furthermore, the concept of voice is so often presented as the answer to these questions, with 'having a voice' being held up of the utmost importance for young people to participate effectively in society. Yet at the same time young people regularly face a repression of voice. Accordingly, how does the performance of voice, that so often silences voices, relate to both young people's engagement and disengagement from politics? And when the voice in its symbolic conception is so heavily associated with political agency, how does this agency interact with the embodied voice?

2.1 Voice as Skill

The decline of manufacturing and traditional industry in Britain in latter part of the 20th Century, and consequently a move towards the so called immaterial and affective labour of service and information industries has meant a shift in the labour market, predominantly affecting young people and their relationship to work. Young people are much more likely to be employed in retail, leisure and hospitality, which tend to be lower waged occupations. Yet these industries still demand of their potential employees high levels of certain 'skills'; 'soft skills' like communication, making these skills the chief issue in tackling youth unemployment (Sissons and Jones 24). This precedent is even higher for women: a report from 2013 found a rising employment in women against a rising unemployment of men possibly correlating to the growth of the service industry in relation to the decline of manufacturing (Office for National Statistics, 2013). The report also found that care, leisure, administration and secretarial as well as sales and customer service industries are all dominated by women.

2.1.1 Enterprise Culture and Communication Skills

Phil Cohen argues that the establishment of 'Enterprise Culture' within the educational system has been one of the lasting legacies of the Thatcher administration. In accordance with the changing labour market, this Conservative government won the ideological battle of convincing the general public of the importance of new vocationalism: the need for schools to equip students with skills for work. Education, too long associated with a liberal agenda, should instead be based on meritocratic values which means if young people are aspirational enough they can learn the skills needed to ensure themselves a good job. Useful knowledge became skills for employment, 'not insights that help you combine with others to build a better world' (Cohen 280). Cohen argues that this ideology appealed to a large

amount of working class people in its anti-elitist rhetoric, implying equal access to all to skills that lead to future prosperity. This was part of a broader social shift regarding how knowledge and skills are learnt and passed on, following the shift from industrial to post-industrial Capitalism.

Teaching skills for employment became a crucial tactic in instilling the values of enterprise culture within the young working class. This was a positive tactic, empowering young people as individual agents. Personal agency was accordingly an ingratiation with the values of individualism, possible alongside the gradual disintegration of industrial society. Skills are no longer passed down as what Cohen calls an inheritance as they were in industrial society, but part of an individual's own responsibility to acquire. In contrast, knowledge and skills in industrial working-class culture, he writes, were passed down in accordance to a kind of patriarchal system, where young people would learn like apprentices from their elders. This was broader than the skills just for work and included a political education through an oral history of shop-floor struggles. Following de-industrialisation, however, school has replaced workplace inheritance, becoming the place to equip the next generation of employees. Skill is no longer associated with one specific job, but rather skills are something the individual possesses to make themselves as employable as possible for as many jobs as possible. Young people learn 'transferable skills' that could be applied to a multitude of professions, the more skills they possess the more 'flexible' they are. This, as Cohen writes, makes the development of skills a personal process abstracted from the actual act of labouring:

The trainee is inducted into methods of learning which focus not on the social relations of production, but on the formation of 'correct' personal attitudes and interpersonal competences... For the aim is to teach youth trainees how to sell themselves to customers, clients or employers, by learning specific techniques of self-presentation (Cohen 289-290).

What is meant to be a class relation, your relationship to labour, that is, the selling of your labour, is presented as its opposite: 'a position of individual mastery' (Cohen 290). The subject's agency is developed out of obtaining the correct skills to improve their personal situation.

Jon McKenzie similarly outlines this shift in how workplaces are organized based on what he calls Performance Management. No longer organized in a top-down way, like a factory line, instead the workplace emphasizes horizontality: empowering and giving responsibility to the workers. In this line of thinking, employees achieve their own goals through an emphasis on 'the intuitive as well as the rational, the creative as well as the scientific' (McKenzie 66-67). In this situation the creative fulfilment of the individual becomes part of the creative fulfilment of the company. This appropriation of human expressivity by the workplace leads to the performance of such 'skills' being measured in terms of work efficiency: that is, the 'maximising of outputs and minimizing inputs' (McKenzie 82). Deborah Cameron outlines how the subject's creativity cannot be shaped unconditionally in enterprise culture, but that which is framed as creativity and autonomy must correspond correctly with the will of the company. This shaping is a difficult task and to achieve it 'the company must endeavour to create a culture in which its goals and values are both made apparent to the workforce and presented in a way that encourages positive identification with them' (Cameron, *Talk* 15). For this culture, the language of internal communication within the company is important, with linguistic change being central to cultural change:

New values, practices and implicit expectations are signalled by the adoption of new ways of talking – new genres like the mission statement, new speech events like the QT meeting and the appraisal interview, new terminologies which encode important concepts... But language use is also regulated – often even more intensively – at the interface between the organization and the outside world, which is to say, in interactions with clients, customers, users and suppliers (Cameron, *Talk* 16).

This is where enterprise culture meets young people's experiences of voice and communication. In a labour market composed of service labour 'customer care' becomes the important phrase, meaning that communication and voice become key transferable skills. Communication is not 'just something workers are expected to do, but something they are expected to be, or become, 'good at' (Cameron, *Talk* 17-18). Critics alongside Cameron, such as Thurlow (2001 and 2003) and Drury et al (1998) have described how the preoccupation of institutions with communication as a 'key skill' has produced a curriculum that teaches an occupational, transactional approach to communication, to be analysed as a series of component parts that can be 'learned as a skill in relative isolation from particular contexts' (Drury et al 178). Cameron describes how a commonplace 'social activity' has been transformed into a 'technical skill', inventing its own 'experts' and jargon (Cameron, *Talk* 2). This anatomizing of broad concepts into teachable skills that one can be good or bad at, creates a standardization of what good/effective communication is, determined institutionally, which if performed correctly is said to lead to educational and potentially economic success. This, as Cohen writes, also rewards self-mastery, where our public voice is congratulated if it performs correctly, despite the thoughts or feelings of the private voice. This kind of training of the voice transforms the subject into a flexible individual who can adapt alongside the changing demands of the market.

Furthermore, this perpetuates and confirms a world-view of a certain good way of communicating, opposed to the clumsiness of bad communicators, often characterized as adolescents (Thurlow, 'Teenagers' 51). The teaching of these skills continues the 'myth of adolescence' which is partly constituted by 'their apparent ignorance (i.e., lack of skill or awareness) of ("good") communication' (Thurlow, 'Teenagers' 52). Teaching young people communications skills that are concerned with an imitation of the dominant 'correct' voice is an action that reconfirms the very

social structures that taught it. In other words, communication skills are less about speaking as the capacity to be understood, but about whether one has the capacity to produce sentences that are listened to or deemed acceptable. Bourdieu describes this competence as linguistic capital and argues that by emphasizing the linguistic structure over the social to construct a 'common' language, 'the linguist proceeds as if the capacity to speak, which is virtually universal, could be identified with the socially conditioned way of realizing this natural capacity, which presents as many variants as there are social conditions of acquisition' (Bourdieu, *Language* 54-55).

In opposition to this transactional approach to communication, Thurlow's research into young people's own conceptions of what communication is broadly complies with a view of communication as interactional. He describes how young people see communication as identity forming and peer-relationship building, and that through communication young people 'develop an increasingly complex sense of Self, a sense of Other and a sense of the social world in which they live' (Thurlow, 'Talkin' 213). This implies a tension between the transactional view of communication as skill and their own interactional concept where communication is embedded in and intertwined with their everyday lives and sense of self. In Thurlow's research, when asked to describe what good communication is young people spoke about instrumental, formalistic aspects, discussing the importance of clarity of message. However, when asked to give actual examples, 'the precedence of relationship over message was reasserted' (Thurlow, 'Talkin' 225). This suggests a gap between the description of 'good' communication and the experience of it. Arguably this is not because young people do not experience 'good' communication, but that when prescribing to the term 'good', their response is in line with what they have been taught as being good communication: the institutionally determined idea of 'good'. This did not match their own experience of what they actually consider good communication.

2.1.2 The Oracy Movement

There have been various initiatives throughout the latter half of the 20th Century aiming to tackle transactional approaches to education. One of these initiatives, oracy, is the articulation of voice as embodied learning. The Oracy Movement was a programme taken up by several schools in the 70s and 80s. It was a pedagogical approach that placed talk at the centre of learning, originating out of a critique of classrooms where children were treated like 'passive consumers of knowledge' rather than active learners (Maclure 3). Barnes emphasizes the importance we place on talking alongside our need to express ourselves in relation to the world: 'in our everyday lives what we say, like what we write, comes out of our commitments to people, to activities, to purposes, to the ongoing projects and relationships that constitute the texture of our lives' (Barnes 46). Oracy was a belief that the best learning takes place through discussion, and furthermore, students are simultaneously increasing their ability to discuss and reason collectively.

There is a gendered element to this discussion. As linguistic feminists argue, the kind of talk that is acceptable in the traditional classroom is competitive, teacher-led, requiring the pupil to raise their hand and get selected to speak. This, they say, seems to favour boys over girls, with boys both more likely to raise their hands, more likely to be chosen by the teacher, and accordingly 'through such patterns of interaction, boys might be acquiring the sorts of competitive speaking skills that are necessary for participation in many formal contexts' (Swann and Graddol 137). Swann and Graddol argue instead for initiatives like oracy, where pupils can learn through small group discussion. They describe it as a process of feminisation of classroom talk, where conversations are built collaboratively rather than hierarchically. This allows for greater equality between speakers and makes the classroom a more democratic place (Swann and Graddol 141). Lyn Mikel-Brown argues that typical descriptions of

young women in classrooms are of compliance, politeness and silence, yet under this image there is anger, annoyance and frustration (Mikel-Brown 155). This frustration is with a compliance to invisibility and silence, which are symptomatic of idealized notions of femininity that girls are expected to emulate. In this sense, the regular authoritative classroom helps construct and perpetuate this idealization.

Despite its progressive origins, writing in 1988, Barnes identifies how the skills and competencies gained through oracy programmes were becoming identical to 'aspects of pre-vocational programmes which are recommended by government-sponsored bodies' (Barnes 50). In its liberal values of endeavouring to enhance the pupil's competence in dealing with life issues, the oracy programme was appropriated by new vocationalism to correspond to the ideological shift of emphasis from external control to internal self-discipline. This, Barnes writes, highlights the danger of oracy simply using speech to teach language skills, rather than 'speech as acting upon the world' (Barnes 52). Learning through talk is not a matter of skills for employment, but of 'understanding the world in all its complexity and variety and knowing how to influence it' (Barnes 52). Oracy, for Barnes, should not be abstracted from pupils' real-life experience and should instead engage with the significant aspects of their social and physical world, through speech. It is not about improving the young person's speech skills, but rather, allowing young people to engage with the world orally. Similarly, Swann and Graddol discuss that the aim of equality and democracy can quickly become consensus and consent, depending on the context and in whose interest such collaborative talk is generated. Within the private sphere, participants can engage in collaborative conversation where they can challenge each other or disagree. However, in institutional settings, such as the workplace, or indeed, a classroom, this is not so much the case:

individuals must learn to suppress their own feelings and misgivings and support others; it is an arrangement in which everyone may have their say,

but not their way – which is often decided according to power relations that are not overtly displayed (Swann and Graddol 144).

Collaborative talk can perpetuate existing power relations. Whilst there is something positive in valuing women's conventional pattern of talk, for instance, this does not necessarily undermine underlying inequalities that cause men and women to conventionally have different communication styles. As Cameron acknowledges, the valorisation of difference makes a supposition that inequality comes purely from not valuing the different talk rather than the systems of dominance that produced such talk (Cameron, 'Rethinking' 40). This of course does not mean an entire dismissal of the oracy project, but rather a recognition that too quickly, in certain contexts, progressive measures can simply repeat, or in some instances, contribute to the very repressions they are trying to alleviate. This raises a fundamental question about how young people's agency is conceptualised. When agency is so quickly associated with ideas of self-mastery in terms of new vocationalism or meritocracy, is there a definition of agency that instead leads to resisting such systems of neoliberal value, challenging systems that force young people's voices into competition with each other? Instead, in the spirit of the idealism of oracy, can we conceive a practice of agency and self-mastery, through the voice, that is interested in both resisting such neoliberal values, and furthermore endeavours to act upon the world to imagine and change these structures?

There have been recent developments to the teaching of speaking and communication skills in schools since the General Election in 2010. In 2010, the Conservative Party came into government in coalition with the Liberal Democrats and Michael Gove was appointed Secretary of State for Education. Gove has been described as one of the most 'divisive' education ministers, bringing in changes to how schools are managed through the wide-spread transformation of schools into academies (Bousted). The change of comprehensive schools into academies

(initiated by New Labour) severed links between the school and the local authority, and now many schools are funded by central government but are ran independently by charitable bodies called academy trusts. Much of the criticism of academies state that this has led to the schools being run like businesses, and teaching unions have described the process as a form of privatisation of education (Coughlan).

Alongside these structural changes, there have been considerable changes to the National Curriculum during the course of the Conservative government, promoting an ideologically different understanding of education than New Labour, endorsing more traditional approaches to learning that focus on knowledge and academic rigour over creativity and experience. For instance, in 2016 the Speaking and Listening component of GCSE English was no longer part of the main assessment. This has meant that teachers cannot prioritise speaking and listening skills:

Teachers are compelled to prioritise performance in assessment areas that 'count' towards school results, so speaking and listening has had to take a backseat to other curriculum components. This leaves us in a situation in which oracy – arguably the bread and butter of many professions – no longer 'counts' towards our schools' results, while outside of the classroom it matters just as much as ever to our pupils (Barker)

This elimination of speaking and listening as something that teachers should assess demonstrates a preference for traditional academic learning over more practice-based classroom practices. In 2017, School Standards Minister Nick Gibb argued for a return to a more 'knowledge-based' curriculum and classroom environment. This was a call for something 'teacher-centred' rather than 'pupil-centred', rejecting more experiential, skills-based learning in favour of pedagogic practices where the teacher focuses on the passing on of knowledge (Gibb). Accordingly, the curriculum is moving even further away from embodied practices like oracy. Under New Labour, 'speaking and listening' was perhaps an appropriation of the pedagogy of oracy for a skills agenda of learning how to speak for vocational ends. Under the current Conservative administration, speaking and the voice has become practically absent from most

young people's education. This lack of experiential and participatory learning, especially with regards to the voice, has implications for young people's political engagement, as I will discuss in the next two sections.

2.2 Voice, Agency and Engagement

I will now investigate an agency in voice that is not concerned with the vocational and productive value of individuals, but rather places political engagement as the focus, conceiving voice not as reified speech, but as the locus of agency. Voice in the political sphere is generally associated with ideas of agency: with being heard, or with being part of society rather than excluded. Many programmes, projects or initiatives designed to encourage young people to be active socially or politically refer to the voice as symbolising agency. This is not just the act of speaking, but a broader figurative understanding of voice as political engagement: being heard in society, getting your voice heard, making your voice count etc. Perhaps then this symbolic notion of voice moves beyond the specific skills of communicating correctly, to wider questions of why and how young people participate, or do not participate, in politics.

2.2.1 Agency and Habitus

Rather than a conception of agency that is an end in itself - the acquisition of skills to possess a sense of self determination or mastery - in this research I am assuming that subjects already have agency. However, this agency is always in relation to social structure: the two concepts as tandem forces that push against and complement each other. This is a theorisation of agency through Bourdieu's idea of habitus: subjects operate according to a tension between the internalisation of the external, and the externalisation of the internal. Rather than seeing agency and structure as an

either/or, habitus demonstrates that the two act upon each other. Habitus is the subject's embodied practice that explains both how the body acts and acts upon the social world, but also how the social world acts upon the body, the 'cognitive structures which social agents implement in their practical knowledge of the social world are internalized, 'embodied' social structures' (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 468). Habitus is both the psychological decisions we make and the ways we speak, walk, think and feel. We are subject to social constraints, as well as social constraints are constructed out of our social behaviour. Bourdieu writes how subjects act within a 'field', a space of particular rules, conventions or values. The field is a social space where certain social rules operate that a subject either has a "feel" for or feels out of place. Our habitus, then, is how we react to this field, our bodily and mental dispositions that make us interpret and respond to the social world in a certain way (Powell172).

Bourdieu asserts that habitus does not necessarily determine outcome, but rather the outcome is constructed in the interaction between habitus and field. In this interaction, there is always a margin of freedom, a gap between field and habitus. In this sense habitus is generative, there is a potential for new dispositions to emerge. The subject has some agency to act and make decisions. These decisions, most of the time, however, are limited by the kind of choices made available within the bodily habitus, which usually makes agents with particular backgrounds and a particular habitus more-or-less act in certain ways in certain fields, producing a common-sense world (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 468). This, however, is significantly not fixed or pre-determined; rather there is a margin of possibility for habitus to shift, re-invent or respond differently:

The range of possibilities inscribed in habitus can be envisaged as a continuum. At one end habitus can be replicated through encountering a field that reproduces its dispositions. At the other end of the continuum habitus can be transformed through a process that either raises or lowers an individual's expectations. Implicit in the concept is the possibility of a social trajectory

which enabled conditions of living that are very different from initial ones (Reay, 'They Employ' 357).

Habitus therefore is a way of understanding how the subject's agency, the everyday actions and decisions they make, is constructed out of an embodiment of the social world in which they are brought up, habitus as a 'structured and structuring structure' (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 171). Usually, this agency will be restricted by background and by the social group the person belongs to, meaning that for the most part their actions are reproductive instead of transformative (Reay, 'They Employ' 357). Yet, there is always a potential for agency to push back against structure, through transforming the bodily habitus.

Political engagement is dependent on the subject's capacity to manoeuvre within the structures: the power and force of their own agency. It is not useful to think of political engagement ending with agency, agency as an achievement, but political engagement is an enactment of what agency we have, to try and shift, undermine or disrupt structure. Accordingly, I propose a consideration of voice as synonymous to agency: voice is not a goal, (we all already have a voice) but the extent to which this voice is enriched or diminished by structure is the political question. How we conceive of voice then is essential to the question of maximising agency's power in its relationship to structure.

2.2.2 Voice and Voting

Voting is one of the primary political acts that is associated with voice: it is how we both exercise our civic duty, as well as express our political opinion. Yet, there is a general common-sense that young people are not interested in parliamentary politics and therefore are often described as 'apathetic' or disengaged. However, in the context of an increasingly personalised politics critics argue that voting has become

more complex than these two aspects. This explains young people's perceived rejection of parliamentary politics without having to simplistically put it down to political apathy. Statistics of recent national elections in Britain (apart from the 2017 General Election, which I will discuss later) imply a rejection of mainstream politics by young people. In Britain there has been a general trend of a low youth turn out in general elections. In the 2015 general election, Ipsos MORI estimated only 43% of 18-24-year olds voted (compared to 78% of 75+). This was a marginal decrease from 2010, estimated at 44%. In 2001 the estimation of turn out rate for 18-24-year olds was at just 38%, down from 68% in 1997 (Henn, Weinstein and Wring 168). Research conducted prior to the 2015 election continues to suggest young people's disengagement from mainstream politics: in Survation's poll of Sky News, only 8% of young people felt engaged in politics, with 42% saying they would not try to make their concerns and beliefs heard, and 44% saying they have tried to make themselves heard but no one listened to them (Makinson 2014). In Demos and vInspired's report six months before the election, 7% of young people said they were engaged in politics, and 46% said that they were not engaged. The willingness to align oneself with a political party has dropped from 42% in 2011, to 24% in 2013, and only one quarter of 16-24-year olds said they knew the name of their constituency party and local MP (Birdwell, Cadywould and Reynolds 27).

Critics argue that this disengagement cannot be reduced to political apathy, rather there are various contextual factors that have changed the nature of what it means to vote and how voting relates to political engagement. Lance Bennett argues that party loyalty has faded as a value-based politics oriented around personal identification has grown, with individuation as the primary social goal, particularly in younger generations (Bennett, 'Personalization' 22). What it means to vote, and why people vote accordingly has shifted. Bennett identifies this shift as from the dutiful citizen to the actualizing citizen. Whereas the dutiful citizen enacts politics through a

relationship and identification with an institution, such as a political party or a union, the actualizing citizen does not feel this same duty, and instead is concerned with issues that are connected to lifestyle and personal expression (Bennett, Wells and Rank 106). Bennett argues that the younger generation have shifted to actualizing citizens and therefore are less interested in traditional, dutiful political acts such as voting.

The framework of the dutiful vs actualizing citizen demonstrates that it is possible for young people to not be politically apathetic regardless of their voting tendencies. On the contrary, much research suggests that young people are deeply concerned about social issues. Young people express being highly troubled by unemployment, unaffordable living costs and the widening gap between rich and poor. A report by Ipsos MORI, interviewing 11-16-year olds attending state schools in England and Wales in 2014 demonstrated that young people were optimistic about the future, but acutely aware of the economic and political problems they are facing and about to face:

Living as a young person today in Britain is very different to what life was like for any other generation. With the cost of living extremely high, jobs being scarce and being on brink of another potential recession, young people from an early age are already feeling the strains of later life (Young Person, aged 16 qtd Ipsos MORI 11).

Ipsos MORI describe how current teenagers have already faced six years (at time of report) of economic uncertainty before reaching adulthood and therefore are aware of prospective financial problems. Fear of economic insecurity comes in contradiction with neoliberal rhetoric of achievement and success. The research finds that 84% of this group agree with the statement that it does not matter what background you are from, anyone can succeed if you try hard enough. At the same time, less than two fifths of this group expect life to be better for their generation than their parents (this compares to 70% of the 'Baby Boomers' generation). The research also shows that

the older young people get, the less optimistic they feel about the future. There is a tension here between young people's fear of the future, and whose responsibility it is to secure their future. This tension may also manifest in the rejection of government and the state as the locus of political change.

Henn, Weinstein and Wring (2002), Vromen (2003), Harris and Wyn (2009) and Keating, Benton and Kerr (2011) discuss how a disinclination to vote or take part in other activities associated with mainstream, traditional politics, are less to do with an apathy towards the political or social in general, and more to do with a rejection of that system of politics. Young people's concerns with political matters essentially lie 'beyond the boundaries of how politics is conventionally understood' (Henn, Weinstein and Wring 168). This activity is not noted in mainstream narratives about young people's political activity, because these activities are not accepted or are discounted from such narratives. Furthermore, young people themselves do not regard these activities as political and are more likely to define politics as what happens in parliament than their older contemporaries (Henn, Weinstein and Wring 169). It would be consistent, then, for young people to already reject politics as something not for them, rather than appropriate politics as something they can make for them.

Scholars have discussed whether this disinterest or rejection of mainstream politics is something specific to young people (life-cycle), or something specific to this generation of young people (generational). The life-cycle theory argues that people have different levels of political engagement at different points of their life, starting relatively low, and peaking at middle-age (Henn, Weinstein and Wring 170). However, generational theorists argue there is something specific to this generation of young people (post 1990) that has made the gap between the older and younger generations wider than ever before. Richard H. Kimberlee (2002) outlines four potential

explanations for so-called apathy: youth focused (specific to the individual young person, like apathy, or something characteristic to them such as their social background); politics focused (failure of the parliamentary and political system, that it is outdated and young people cannot engage with it, for example); alternative value (young people are interested in a different kind of politics, such as single issue campaigns like the environment); and also generational (this generation of young people are experiencing unique circumstances that make them different to previous generations).

Yet in recent times these patterns of low turn-out have been upset, with increased youth participation in the most recent national elections. The Scottish Referendum in 2014, Jeremy Corbyn's election in both 2015 and 2016, the EU Referendum in 2016 and the 2017 General Election all resulted in reports of higher youth participation. In the Scottish Referendum, where significantly 16 and 17-year olds were allowed to vote, 75% of under 18s turned-out (Democratic Audit UK). Similarly, in the EU referendum, it is estimated 64% of 18-24-year olds voted (Helm n.p). The result of the 2017 General Election brought a reappearance of the term 'youthquake', referring to the dramatic increase in the Labour party's vote share, particularly in inner city constituencies and university towns. An exit poll produced by the NME put the voter turn-out for 18-24-year olds at 53% claiming a 12-point increase from 2015 (L. Britton n.p). Similarly, Ipsos MORI estimated a 16-point increase in youth turn-out from 2015 (Skinner and Mortimore n.p). However, the British Election Study has produced a report disputing this 'youthquake'. It claims that there is no evidence that there was a substantial change to the youth turn-out and though most young people voted Labour, this does not mean that Labour's increase necessarily means an increase in turn-out of young people (Prosser et al n.p).

However, Sloam, Ehsan and Henn argue that labelling the “youthquake” as a myth because of a lack of specific evidence with regards to voter turn-out takes a narrow view of what counts as political engagement. They state that even if the youth turn-out did not increase there are still evident signs of youth political engagement through the other ways that young people shaped the political landscape such as the increased support for the Labour Party and youth activism within the election campaign (Sloam, Ehsan and Henn 6). Their research indicates that support for the Labour Party was largest in young women and young voters from a lower socio-economic background. They argue that the dismissal of the “youthquake” takes a reductionist view of youth participation and furthermore fuels the myth that young people are apathetic about politics (Sloam, Ehsan and Henn 8).

The British Election Study report argues that the existing literature on why young people participate less in elections, the ‘life-cycle’ arguments or arguments about this generation of young people as specifically disengaged, show that it is unlikely that participation would change dramatically between 2015 and 2017. They argue that the political climate has not shifted dramatically enough in these two years to alter the age/turnout relationship. Yet, if we expect changes to be more gradual, or even if we expect young people not to vote at this age despite showing an interest in political or social matters, this means that we should not rely on voter turn-out data alone to determine young people’s level of engagement. Following Sloam, Ehan and Henn, there could still be a shift in political culture amongst young people without a huge voting increase. In this sense then, I will consider where instead we might find instances of engagement beyond the ballot box.

2.3 Everyday Politics

It is consistent in the literature that young people do reject mainstream politics as outdated and inaccessible, suggesting that there is a specific problem with our parliamentary system and how it integrates younger generations. Politicians are viewed as complacent, out of touch, or not willing to listen to young people's concerns meaning the system seems irrelevant and uninteresting. Politics is not 'aimed at young people' and subsequently has 'little meaning for them' (Henn, Weinstein and Wring 175). The political field, the established conventions and values of a particular social structure, is not a field in which most young people have a 'feel for the game', meaning that in terms of habitus, they would feel out of place. Diane Reay writes that although habitus in one sense can be adaptive and subjects can develop a feel for the game when in new and unfamiliar fields, this environment may also lead to 'repression, sublimation and defensive responses' (Reay, 'Bourdieu with feelings' 20). Accordingly, a person's habitus may lead to a rejection, rather than an attempt to grasp, certain rules and conventions that they do not understand or recognize.

Yet this does not mean a rejection of politics as a whole. The British Electoral Study brings into doubt a dramatic surge of interest towards parliamentary politics in young people in 2017. Yet subsequent literature demonstrates that the recent feelings of increased youth participation in politics cannot simply be dismissed through statistical evidence: the situation is more complicated than whether or not young people turned out to vote. The general decrease in voter turn-out amongst young people suggests a generational rejection of electoral politics, but recent research argues that this rejection is not a rejection of politics entirely. This implies a divide between "formal" politics and what has been called "everyday". Vromen suggests that we must extend our definition of what constitutes political engagement to understand how young people participate politically:

The challenge being formulated is that participation need not only be recognised when young people conform to society's expectations. In this approach, it is necessary to stress a version of 'active citizenship' which is inclusive of the interdependence in social and political participation experiences, and not restricted to activity that maintains the institutionalised status quo (Vromen 82).

In a different definition of what counts as political engagement, political acts could be individual or collective acts that are primarily concerned with effecting and shaping society towards the world we want to live in (Vromen 83). In this definition, the everyday political experience is what determines young people's experience of the political. These activities in Vromen's research range from anything between discussing workplace issues to donating to charity to joining a sports group. In a similar vein, Harris and Wyn argue that young people's politics has relocated to the local, where 'microterritories of friendship groups, family relations, school, neighbourhood and local government are emerging as key sites for fostering young people's political participation' (Harris and Wyn 329-330). It is in these sites, Harris and Wyn argue, that young people are more likely to talk about politics and learn about political and social issues. They suggest that political issues are more significant for young people when interpreted through local experiences, where they already have a feel for the game. Furthermore, their findings consolidate the point that there is a gap between 'young people's participation in formal politics and their engagement in political discussions and civic education in everyday life' (Harris and Wyn 335). Kimberlee also discusses how young people reject mainstream politics in favour of single issue, often personalised politics such as identity politics, because they are more concerned with lifestyle and value orientations. This is furthermore described in Bennett's actualizing citizen, where 'individuals increasingly code their personal politics through personal lifestyle values' (Bennett, 'Personalization' 22). The personal choices of the individual, where political opinion permeates lifestyle through one's consumer choices (the clothes one wears, the food one buys) becomes political expression.

Why is it that this generation of young people are more interested in localised, everyday and individualised political activity? Kimberlee examines whether this generation is qualitatively different to those before it. The journey from childhood to adulthood, to a person with adult status with the responsibilities that come with it such as voting, has become complicated in a world of de-industrialization and a changing labour market. Young people stay in full time education for longer than ever before as moving straight from education to work is more complex. This has seen a delay to many acts considered 'adult', such as marriage, perhaps suggesting that young people do not feel as engaged in society as adults. Fragmentation of the traditional labour market leads to broader fragmentation in terms of social identity. Kimberlee argues that the traditional places where political identity would come from: community, family, class, religion etc., are less clear, making it harder to form collective identities. In this sense, it becomes harder to associate yourself with a clear political ideology in the traditional sense:

These certainties used to be seen as vital to ensure that young people develop a partisan attachment to a political party, particularly for young people from the working class where their political identity was 'transmitted as an oral tradition within entire communities' (Kimberlee 95).

Politics is, arguably, no longer part of the average person's habitus. Accordingly, young people must look to other non-traditional sites to engage politically, meaning that they construct social and political identities in locations where 'politics and political parties are absent' (Kimberlee 95). Cohen argues that working class adolescent's separation from politics is 'structural'; a disintegration of an oral political culture 'which once transmitted a version of socialism as a legacy of common sense and customary belief from one working-class generation to the next' (Cohen 253). He describes how a politics of 'inheritance' has disappeared in post-industrial societies, where previously political knowledge would be passed down and learnt alongside labour, 'held in trust by one generation for the next' (Cohen 254). Politics, instead,

becomes a matter of private and individual consumption. He demonstrates this through how young people identify with class: instead of one's position to labour, class has become an identity, marked through clothes, cultural choices etc. The labour movement, Cohen suggests, was not able to keep up with this shift and consequently political rebellion has found itself in new areas of struggle outside of class or party ideology, in favour of a personal politics (Cohen 261).

The individual engages in politics on their own terms in a highly individualized but broad, expansive social network of other individuals. Collective political action is more like 'large-scale personalized politics', which are 'less like conventional social movements with leaders, organizations, and collective identity' but rather 'individualized collective action where large numbers of people join in loosely coordinated activities centred on more personal emotional identifications and rationales' (Bennett, *Personalization* 26). There are positives in this shift, such as moving away from the patriarchal and provincial nature of politics as inheritance, where learning about politics depends on your immediate family, industrial and local circumstances. Instead, a personalized politics takes place in a much broader social network. However, I believe new problems emerge, where participation in this kind of politics requires identifying and belonging to this social network in the first place. This often requires a certain degree of cultural capital: identification as a specific kind of young person, an activist. Being an activist is not necessarily about enacting politics, but rather a series of lifestyle choices that identifies you as political. Activists already have a feel for the game of politics and have internalized these practices into their embodied practices, emboldened by a cultural and economic capital that prevents the risk that comes with political association. For those outside of this network, activism is not something present in their regular life, but rather something unusual and eccentric, reserved for spaces such as University campuses, that can only be assimilated through similar lifestyle choices. As Jodi Dean writes, the 'celebration of

autonomous individuality prevents us from foregrounding our commonality and organizing ourselves politically' (Dean, *Crowds* 4).

Therefore, the departure from traditional politics to political engagement in the everyday is not simply a rejection of 'boring' politics but is a consequence of traditional politics ceasing to be present in the everyday. The destruction of communities around industrial workplaces, the fragmentation of the labour movement alongside an increasingly neoliberal individualised society, has resulted in a severing of class politics from normal life, taking with it the traditional ways working-class teenagers would be introduced to these ideas. The 2017 "youthquake" perhaps refers not so much to an increased voter turn-out, but an increased presence of politics in the ordinary lives of young people. The Labour Party campaign redefined how to reach young people, with mainstream politics becoming more present on social media and in the popular cultural sphere at music festivals or football matches, for instance.

2.4 Voice and Citizenship

In this section I will investigate some of the alternative ways to voting and engaging in parliamentary politics where young people can experience the political. These practices engage young people in politics both formally and in the 'everyday' sense, both teaching children about political systems at the same time as trying to embed politics into the subject's everyday life through the concept of citizenship.

2.4.1 Citizenship in the Classroom

Citizenship Education aimed to introduce young people to politics, society and voice. Established on the National Curriculum in 2002, it was taught to children between the ages of 11-16. The National Curriculum stated that citizenship education's purpose was to teach young people how to play an active part in society. It specifically gave

them knowledge about governments, how democracy operates, law, as well as teaching skills to allow young people to explore political and social issues critically.

The government listed the following aims of citizenship education for young people to:

- i) acquire a sound knowledge and understanding of how the United Kingdom is governed, its political system and how citizens participate actively in its democratic systems of government
- ii) develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the role of law and the justice system in our society and how laws are shaped and enforced
- iii) develop an interest in, and commitment to, participation in volunteering as well as other forms of responsible activity, that they will take with them into adulthood
- iv) are equipped with the skills to think critically and debate political questions, to enable them to manage their money on a day-to-day basis, and plan for future financial needs (Department for Education, 2013).

Presently schools take a varied approach to Citizenship Education where how much they engage the students in these specific learning aims varies from institution. Various organisations exist to help support schools with Citizenship or to argue its importance on the curriculum. Young Citizens, officially registered as The Citizenship Foundation but rebranded in 2018 to appeal directly to young people, aims to help 'young people understand society's democratic structures, and the rights and responsibilities of its citizens' (Young Citizens 2018). They clarify this as giving young people an education in the political, legal and economic structures of 'adult' society. As a properly functioning democratic society depends on an active citizenship, Citizenship Education attempts to provide the knowledge and skills of such participation to allow young people to contribute despite their social or economic background:

So we help them [young people] engage in the debates and in the decision-making processes that affect their futures – from the ramifications of Brexit and global economics, to our national and local electoral systems and beyond (Young Citizens 2018).

Engaging in debate here is the starting point to engaging in the processes that affect young people's futures. It is implied that these processes are electoral. Knowledge and understanding of legal and political systems is emphasised as the way young

people can gain agency over their lives and futures or make a positive change in society. Accordingly, they believe that what they have termed 'active citizenship' should be part of an education system.

What is the scope within a classroom environment, with consideration to past initiatives like oracy, for the development of political voice? Is political engagement beyond learning about the electoral system possible in a classroom? As beforementioned, the recent changes to the curriculum and classroom practices from the Coalition and Conservative government has cut more skills-based pedagogies from the national curriculum. This is an ideological approach that prioritises the passing on of knowledge from the teacher over student-led learning from experience and practical engagement. This is symbolised in skills like speaking and listening no longer being part of the student's assessment. In this sense, contextually the classroom is becoming less of a place of active participation by the student and more of a place practicing traditional ways of learning. This comes into contradiction with how some scholars have conceived of how students can engage in a political education in the classroom. Campbell makes a case for a connection between political knowledge and political engagement. Courses that deal with civic education through discussion give students the opportunity 'to wrestle with political and social issues' from which 'they glean knowledge about the political process' (Campbell, 'Voice' 440). This is a deeper knowledge about principles and practice, rather than just the mechanisms of politics, which are gained through the act of doing politics: of debating and discussing. As opposed to oracy, broadly concerned with finding mutual conclusions (Swann and Graddol 138), Campbell makes the case for open debate not just as an acquisition of knowledge, but a move away from the safety of consensus. Through becoming used to conflict within the classroom, students can dispute the widely-held assumption of a broad consensus in society, which in turn allows the students to feel more able to participate in politics and political discussion:

In such classrooms, young people learn to appreciate that conflict is an essential element of politics. Engaging in substantive discussion of social issues enables adolescents to see the difficulties intrinsic to democratic governance, and that contestation is the lifeblood of a healthy democracy (Campbell, 'Voice' 441).

This engagement and understanding, Campbell argues, is part of the formation of civic identity, that is, adolescents envisioning themselves as active participants in the political process. Campbell's research demonstrates that it is not the amount of political discussion in a classroom but the nature of such discussion, i.e., an openness to conflict. This active participation allows for an embodied participation in politics, allowing young people to experience what political agency might feel like.

Joseph A. Diorio argues that there is an unresolved (or even unacknowledged) tension in citizenship studies in schools, between the liberal and the democratic tradition. Following Chantal Mouffe, he argues how the democratic tradition, where the majority makes decisions and of which participation is a fundamental component, is confined within the parameters of the principles of the liberal tradition. Within the liberal tradition, the rule of law and the sovereignty of the individual are held up as universal principles, transcendent of political activity, which determine how the majority can participate. Because this tension is not confronted, Diorio argues that many citizenship educators fall into a position where they assert the importance of regulatory authority over democratic politics (Diorio 504). On the other hand, if educators prioritise the participation of students as sovereign, where they have the capacity to contest the rules, 'then the liberal/democratic divide collapses into a single, democratic domain within which principles can be contested as political issues' (Diorio 504).

Departing from discussion as consensus to something contestable demonstrates how anything in politics, including your own agency or right to participate, is always about

power and resistance. However, in Britain for instance, Citizenship Education was not just created to encourage political participation, but also to improve civic cooperation, and discourage things like anti-social behaviour. David Blunkett, then Secretary of State for Education, described a need for society to come together to work out “common beliefs” (Diorio 505). Accordingly, Citizenship Education becomes less about political contestation, but instead an act of assimilation, eradicating any antagonistic beliefs to a common ground based around principles that cannot be challenged. These principles include the existing parliamentary system or vague notions of ‘anti-social behaviour’. Cohen argues that through encouraging young people’s participation in the parliamentary process, Citizenship Education also rules out and implies as ‘politically illiterate, undemocratic or immature many of the key practices of popular struggle within the working-class community’ (Cohen 266). Accordingly, this reinforces a ‘moral’ divide between young people who engage ‘correctly’ in politics, and those who engage incorrectly, through things like protests or riots. This is an approach to politics not as debate, conflict and discussion, but instead teaching pre-established beliefs about how society is run, under the auspices of championing common ground and diversity, which young people must adhere to if they want to partake in politics at all. Diorio argues that the presentation of political participation as sanitized, friendly debate, without any risk, means that students are prevented from confronting and debating issues they care about:

If students engage in political debate about these questions, they may be fighting for their own personal well-being, and they may confront antagonistic views expressed by their peers. These conflicts often cannot be resolved by appealing to principle because what these principles are and how they should be applied are often part of the political controversy (Diorio 506-507).

This also means that teaching young people to engage in politics means preparing them for conflict and possible defeat. With agency comes risk. The discussion itself determines what it agrees on, rather than operating on pre-established universal principles, meaning that it is the discussion that makes political issues meaningful.

Diorio argues that political agency can only come from classroom discussion if it is accepted that conflict, risk and defeat are possibilities.

The definitions of what constitutes young people's political engagement then varies from the very informal, the practices of "everyday" politics outlined by Vromen, to formal democratic procedures. Campbell and Diorio's definitions argue that engagement is not about knowledge but about how young people enter discussion, prioritising the idea of the ability to contest as the definition of political agency. I believe that an understanding of engagement should encompass more formal political acts without being reducible to these acts. Rather, engaging in the formal political sphere is a product of the more informal: a shift in culture in which politics is re-embedded in young people's everyday that leads to more specific traditional political activity. This political activity does not have to be in line with the institutions that teach it, but rather could also encompass a disagreement with these systems. In the next section I will discuss an example that attempts to embed formal politics in more informal activity. This example however I argue leads to undermining young people's political engagement rather than encouraging it.

2.4.2 National Citizenship Service

The National Citizenship Service (NCS) is a programme for 15 to 17-year olds outside of the school curriculum. Piloted in 2009, the programme was officially established by the Coalition government in 2010. Management of the organisation was taken over by an independent social enterprise in 2013. It is a project for young people to gain experience of citizenship outside of school, with schools focusing on more traditional academic learning. For two to three weeks the young people undertake various 'fun' activities that contribute to building life and employment skills, as well as undertake a community contribution task. This community contribution task is a piece of social

action decided and enacted by the young people that could foster feelings of social injustice and political engagement. A 2014 report commissioned by the NCS and Demos that undertook surveys with 1000 teenagers and 500 teachers across the United Kingdom demonstrates young people's interest in social engagement. This report too contradicts many of the negative stereotypes, particularly confounded by the media, of this current generation ("Generation C") as lazy, apathetic, narcissistic and feckless. It describes, like the before mentioned literature, that teenagers today care a lot about social issues: 80% of young people stated that they think they care more than the previous generation. Significantly, teenagers are more interested in social action than what they deem to be 'politics': they are more interested in 'bottom-up social action and social enterprise over top-down politics' (Birdwell and Bani 13-14). This point is two-fold. Firstly, that the young people interviewed could be more interested in social engagement than politics because of a certain view of what politics is:

Very few pupils knew how to describe what the concept 'politics' meant. Politics was often described as 'government' or 'how the country is run', or students mentioned specific politicians like 'David Cameron' (Birdwell and Bani 55).

The teenager's disinterest in politics was specifically regarding mainstream party politics and was largely attributed to not understanding enough about it. Furthermore, there was a view that engaging in parliamentary politics wouldn't make a difference in their lives. In contrast, social action such as volunteering or charity work was a tangible activity that young people could easily be involved in and see positive differences (Birdwell and Bani 18). Secondly, this point also highlights the before mentioned move towards emphasis on individual responsibility and the actualizing citizen. In this report, the authors describe the teenagers' own sense of responsibility and civic duty, that it is not the government's role to make a difference, but theirs.

The young people in this report see mainstream politics as an ineffective, top-down institution that they are not part of and instead value grass-roots activity that they can engage with as a way of both acting upon the world and expressing their voice. The contradiction, however, is that these kinds of issues and values favoured as 'social' over 'political' precisely are political - political, for example in Rancière's sense of the 'power of the people with nothing, the speech of those who should not be speaking' to call into question the ways in which society is distributed (Rancière, 'Introducing Disagreement' 5). Rancière argues that for too long politics has been defined in organizational and technological terms, and instead we should consider that politics rarely happens. What he defines as politics is the disruption of the established mechanisms of power which can only happen through the expression of the presupposition of equality, the presupposition that both paradoxically maintains the order, at the same time as demonstrating its contingency (Rancière *Disagreement* 17).

Though perhaps it is not the role of NCS to encourage anti-state political disruption, there is a problem in redefining the political as the social. NCS can train young people in programmes of social action that may provide many skills or systems of support. However, this cannot be considered a replacement of the political in the sense that NCS's report tries to argue that young people prefer social action to the political. The report tries to argue that to be interested in politics young people must be interested in top-down politics and if they are not, then their interest is more in line with social action. Yet social action alternatively could be defined as political engagement. Instead, in the report's recommendation politicians are asked to give greater recognition 'to the mechanisms that young people use to express their voice' to bridge the gap between social action and traditional politics (Birdwell and Bani 26). Social action here is an optional stepping stone towards mainstream politics, rather than a

different form of politics. As a result, young people can only engage with mainstream politics in the formal pre-decided ways.

Accordingly, perpetuating the myth that young people are apathetic can discourage political engagement. Redefining political interest as social action at best does not consider the broader ways that young people can engage with the political that should be encouraged and supported. At worst, apathy becomes a convenient way to divert young people's political angers and concerns towards things like 'social action' where through voluntary and charitable acts, young people try and make up for the way that governments have failed. Young people's apathy and rejection of politics is entirely compatible with neoliberal politics, as instead of asking why young people are less able to participate either through democratic procedures or forms of protest and collective action, the apathy myth supports the idea that young people's engagement has relocated to liberal, individualised and politically ineffectual sites that formal politics just does not understand. Instead of attempting to identify the ways in which young people have rejected formal politics we should look to how young people are choosing to engage with the political and how that relates to the more formal systems. Furthermore, the 2017 General Election and the loosely termed movement of 'Corbynism' demonstrates how mainstream politics can manifest in young people's everyday. Perhaps young people appear in traditional politics in those moments when, following Rancière, people appear.

2.5 Voice and Dissensus

In this section I will explore how the voice can be the focus for how we understand young people engaging in a politics of resistance. This is questioning whether there is a way to practice voice that engages young people in the political without reducing it to skills learning or knowledge accumulation. Part of the problem, Stephen Coleman

points out, is an uncritical understanding of what voice is. Without understanding this, voice will always already be determined by the performatively accepted modes of speaking. Voice and expression should be a key part of any citizenship curriculum, not as the uncritical teaching of the skills needed to speak effectively in public, but rather as a 'pedagogical intervention in relation to the production of civic expression, with a view to avoiding the injuries of disrespect associated with certain forms of public enunciation' (Coleman, 'Speaking' 410). In a similar way to its predecessor, oracy, citizenship runs the risk of teaching established skills to be learnt correctly, focusing on 'the application of existing expressive capacities rather than the problematics of communicative inequality' (Coleman, 'Speaking' 415). Coleman instead advocates:

The nurturing of citizens capable of giving substance to norms of democratic equality entails sensitive attention to 'voice', not merely in the metaphorical sense that the term has come to be used by democratic theorists... but also in the embodied sense of actual, vibrating, breath-filled voices working in and upon a social environment (Coleman, 'Speaking' 414).

This I believe points towards an interrelated harmfulness that exists between voice as skill and the voice as a symbol of political engagement. We can think of this problem through the question of agency, where agency is considered as something we can 'give', rather than something that already exists in a power relation to structure. When we talk about helping young people find their voice in society in this context (the symbolic voice), too immediately finding this voice is associated with the skills agenda, that is, by learning about the correct way to talk about politics. This is not learning about the voice as an embodied instrument, but rather voice is reified into a set of communication skills that can bolster the individual's performance efficacy. This symbolic voice is 'given' to them, through pre-decided ideas of how to have a political voice, with platforms provided by organisations such as NCS that are entirely compatible with the existing political system. But, like agency, pupils already have a voice: this is not the reason why they are not heard, nor should we think that

the receiving of voice from educators or practitioners will combat vocal inequality. The platforms for voice in this representational sense separates voice from the body that utters. It pretends that the platform itself is equalising and democratic: that from this platform all voices are equal; equally represented and equally listened to. Detaching voice from body overlooks vocal inequality that exists precisely because of the specific body that speaks. The voice of a young, working-class woman is not silenced because she has failed to find the right platform for her voice. On an equal platform with an older middle-class male, it is quite likely she will still be victim to some sort of silencing. The platform itself is not the place of equality or inequality, rather the social positioning of the body that stands on it is. Through considering voice in relation to habitus and how it navigates the relationship between structure and agency, there is perhaps a way to combat this vocal inequality through understanding 'finding voice' not as a symbolic matter, but as physiological and of the body, and communication skills not about the content of speech, but through understanding how voice feels.

Rancière's idea of disruption of the sensible is one way to conceive how bodies can resist. The sensible is the existing order; it concerns 'the ways in which who we might be, how we might create our own political lives, are hidden from us by our experience of the world' (May 48). As before mentioned, for Rancière, politics happens when the part that has no part interrupts the existing order through an expression of the presupposition of their equality. This is what democratic politics is, where the emphasis is on the group he calls the demos, the people, the part with no part. The disruption of the sensible by the demos is a moment of dissensus. Importantly, dissensus is not just intervention or some kind of discussion (Rancière rejects Habermas' communicative action, where action comes from mutual political discussion): for Rancière politics manifests people, not speech. Politics is about dissensus, not consensus, as politics only arises out of the tension and conflict between those who have a part and those who do not.

This definition of politics was the starting point for theorising a voice practice with young people towards political engagement. Through focusing on the voice as something embodied and not just about the content of speech, I wanted to explore whether politics appears through the act of vocalizing: the vocalization of those who are usually prevented voice. By combining this with Bourdieu's habitus, I aimed to investigate whether a break in habitus, through the voice, could be an example of disrupting the sensible fabric. Accordingly, my research explored whether the relationship between voice and performance could become a site where politics happens. James Thompson argues in *Performance Affects* that theatre practice need not be a catalyst towards political action but can already be political in and of itself simply through it taking place. This is because, following Rancière, the way that forms of applied theatre practice, be they public or private, 'precisely because of the place of the participants in any distribution', are 'already engaged politically' (Thompson, *Affects* 175). Thompson is arguing that the engagement of the part that has no part, simply acting in a way they are not supposed to act, is already political. Thompson gives the example of youth theatre, where a group of young refugees were taking part in a theatre project at the Royal Exchange in Manchester. Thompson describes how these young people were not meant to be there: 'as young people in the Royal Exchange, as children on a stage and as refugees in the UK' (Thompson, *Affects* 183). This, he describes, disturbed all sorts of layers of the sensible: the feeling, momentarily, that they belonged somewhere that they did not belong, for Thompson, is an affect (not effect) of performance that, momentarily, disrupts.

The contingency of performance creates the space to act out presuppositions of equality. The distance that is produced between the real and nearly real on stage, Peter Hallward argues, threatens the given order of things, in the same way that

Rancière describes how politics is about performing or playing with the gap between where the demos exist and where they do not. Like theatre, politics establishes an artificial, contingent sphere that questions the 'real' order. But further than this, the idea of contingency of performance, both the performance of equality and theatrical performance, brings forth a sense of 'the moment':

Politics has no "proper" place nor does it possess any "natural" subjects... Political demonstrations are thus always of the moment and their subjects are always precarious and provisional (Rancière qtd Hallward 119).

Moments of politics, like performance, disappear after their utterance. It is the moment that is political, not its consequences. This is important if we return to our original focus of enquiry: the voice prior to signification. The voice too disappears. But perhaps the expression, the moment, or the feeling of the voice could manifest politics. This feeling of voice is a break of habitus, a moment where agency pushes back against structure. By applying habitus to this moment of breaking the sensible fabric, there is a potentiality, following Thompson, for affect to lead to effect. Political efficacy arises gradually out of participants acting and behaving differently than structure insists they behave, and as habitus and field are interdependent on each other, there is a potential that a change in habitus could result in a change in the field.

Young people, as the voice that has no voice in mainstream politics, perhaps make their mark then in making their voice heard. But this is not making their voice heard in some symbolic context, such as voting, but the actual physical vocalization that makes politics appear. As Frances Harding writes:

It need not primarily or solely be the meaning of the words which renders the spoken word effective; it is also the making of sound and who is making the sound (Harding 184).

Who is making the sound and in what form becomes the political matter over correcting the content of speech. It is the form of the embodied voice, perhaps then, that could make the political talk of young people, political.

2.6 Conclusions

Young people aren't apathetic about politics. This chapter has addressed the myth of youth apathy and recounted different ways theorists have tried to explain young people's lack of participation in the formal political sphere. In conclusion, I want to argue that if we are exploring how young people's agency can push back against the forces of structure, the embodied voice should be the point of our investigation. This is voice understood as physiological, as something of the body, material, as something that can be both repressed and resistant. What having a political voice actually is, is obscured within the realms of the symbolic or undermined in an approach obsessed with learning the skills of political speech. I wish to reclarify voice instead as something that young people feel rather than aspire to. If we think of voice as bodies - bodies that are repressed and structured by various political/sociological things that affect the voice - undoing these effects and engaging the voice in a different way could be political in and of itself. At the same time, engaging the voice in a different way could be used simultaneously for explicitly political vocal acts. Here the embodied voice behaves politically both in form and content.

In the first chapter I established the significance of the embodied voice as my point of research. In this chapter I discovered how traditional political engagement has disappeared from the normalcy of everyday life and work, and instead politics manifests itself individually. Here politics is at the risk of being an eccentricity, an identity quirk of certain groups of people with the existing social and cultural capital to make it their "thing". The re-establishment of politics as a point of normalcy in people's lives must consider political activity as something relational, as between people. Here, I think, is where theatre becomes the significant form in which we can unite the embodied voice with the idea of "everyday politics". Theatre not only places

a focus on the voice as embodied, but significantly, always places bodies in relation to other bodies. Politics can cease to be a matter of individual opinion, and become something negotiated with others, through theatrical exploration. In the next chapter I will investigate different theatre practices of voice, and following this, unite the principle findings from all three introductory chapters, a methodological approach based on the material voice.

CHAPTER THREE: VOICE AND METHODS

There has been a growing academic interest in the voice in recent years (Thomaidis and Macpherson 4) in fields ranging from philosophy and psychoanalysis to politics and sociolinguistics (Connor 2000; Cavarero 2005; Dolar 2006; Couldry 2010). Theatre and performance studies, despite the relative under-theorising of the voice as a concept in its own right has also seen an increase of scholarly interest in the voice, with increased publications in this specific area (Kimbrough 2011; Inchley 2015; Thomaidis and Macpherson 2015; Thomaidis 2017) as well as the establishment of a number of related degree programmes and modules in the UK (Thomaidis and Macpherson 4). Inchley describes how voice is rarely at the centre of scholarly practice in drama and performance largely because of its position as a complex, interdisciplinary phenomena, loaded with significant questions about expression, identity and representation (Inchley 1). Furthermore, Kimbrough argues that theatre and performance, as a discipline, has yet 'to create a critical language adequate to address the voice' (Kimbrough 2). With these questions regarding expression, identity and representation fundamental to applied and community theatre, the relative absence of a theorisation of voice in this discourse is even more apparent. Comparable to Inchley's argument in relation to contemporary playwriting, the practice of 'finding the voice' is commonly used, but rarely examined and interrogated (Inchley 38). In applied and community theories and practices, voice is often cited, but its definition is generally assumed, limiting it to a mainly metaphoric understanding relating to representation. Like the field of youth politics, as outlined in Chapter 2, applied theatre practices of voice largely replicate the symbolic notion of voice as an opportunity for a specific, usually under-represented, group to represent

their stories, opinions or concerns. This provokes the question of why in a discipline that is inherently embodied, the voice is rarely explored in its material, bodily form.

This chapter outlines the methodology of my research. Firstly, I interrogate existing practice in applied and community theatre that is concerned with the voice, particularly in youth theatre contexts. I identified a relative absence of literature examining the material voice. From this absence, I construct the rationale for my own research practice that explored the material voice in youth contexts. Drawing on practices of voice that begin with the body, rather than the symbolic, I have created a research methodology for developing embodied voice training in the context of the speaker's habitus. This chapter will demonstrate the need for voice training as a methodological approach to explore the concept of political voice: that voice training is a tool to reveal how the political manifests in the voice, and furthermore could be a tool of political resistance. After discussing the existing practices from which my approach has developed, I will address the specific methodology of my project, followed by a review of challenges and ethical concerns.

3.1 Voice in the Theatre

Voice is of course intrinsic to theatre practice, with text and sound as two of the most important components of any production. Even in theatre without text the voice is significant, and furthermore in non-vocal performances, such as physical theatre, the voice is present in its absence, or voice is conceived of through the piece's physical language. Voice in theatre, as in political discourse, can be understood in a metaphoric sense. The "voice" of playwrights and directors, for instance, refer to their artistic vision, or in applied and community practices theatre can be a platform for voice. Thomaidis, articulating voice as a problem for theatre and performance studies, describes the many meanings that voice has in this diverse field:

From speaking poetic text to the professional techniques required for belting out musical theatre solos, and from the role of voice in theatre in community settings to voice-over acting and the amateur or everyday voices used as material for verbatim practices, voice and performance intersect in multiple and diverse ways (Thomaidis *Theatre & 8*).

Thomaidis argues that the scarcity of theorising about the voice itself in the key scholarly periodicals of theatre and performance studies is part of a trajectory towards the rejection of the text and theatre being bound to the text. This trajectory emerged in the 20th Century alongside periods of modernism and post-modernism in art, literature and philosophy, with theatre makers moving beyond the structures of traditional play texts and the authority of the playwright to new practices of non-textual and physical performance (Kimbrough 18). Voice, though key to those practices, is caught in between and accordingly much study of voice has been left to specific fields of voice studies, largely linked to voice training, speech and singing rather than theatre criticism. This is more related to the study of voice in the theatre in its technical and pedagogical sense, how it is produced anatomically and how it is trained and looked after than its conceptual role within theatre and performance studies. In this section I broadly address some ways voice is discussed in theatre practice, looking at professional and community settings, and how these examples influenced my own planning of voice practice. Discussing both its presence and absence in theatre and performance criticism, I conclude that I had to look to voice in its most technical form, voice training, to create a practice of the material, embodied voice.

3.1.1 Applied and Community Theatre Contexts

In general, the voice as a physical instrument is commonly practiced in professional theatre contexts, either in voice training for the conventional actor or in more avant-garde performance practice. The practice developed in this research however was aimed at non-professional theatre makers, and therefore is situated in the field of applied and community theatre, where theatre is taken out of the regular performance institutions, and instead is practiced with non-actors, usually for more social than

aesthetic or commercial ends. Much of the literature regarding applied and community theatre does not discuss a specific voice practice that is connected to a bodily apparatus, but rather engages with voice in a symbolic way. For instance, Innes, Moss and Smigiel (2001), in discussing the voice of students in drama classrooms, understand voice as the opinions of children. Similarly, Plastow (2007) discusses the use of performance with Eritrean school children to help the children grow in confidence to voice their opinions. Like the way voice is understood in educational and youth contexts, voice in applied theatre is largely related to representation and narrative. Theatre becomes the platform for expressing one's voice and this expression is largely related to the telling of one's story or the giving of one's opinion. Furthermore, voice in applied theatre is often a question of ethical practice; that is, the relationship between the participant's voice and the role of the practitioner, or the outcomes of the project.

Applied theatre is an umbrella term that encompasses many different practices, forms and agendas in a variety of places and locations. Those who use the term attempt to collectivise practice rather than profess their own ideological principles. In this sense, it is impossible to try and generalize about all practice, but rather drawing conclusions about the work largely comes from an examination of its prominent discourse and literature. And whilst this literature in the most part professes a flexibility in approach, there are several consistencies in what is considered correct ethical practice that I believe are premised on a certain political framework. The danger in professing too strongly that applied theatre is a term that collectivises practice rather than something that is loaded with ideological assumptions is that these principles become givens, rather than things that are politically contestable. For example, most applied theatre practice tends to be socially engaged, with some concern for development or transformation. Accordingly, there is an at least implication of the political (with a small

p) in most applied theatre practice in its engagement with issues of power and a tendency to work with communities that are marginalized.

Therefore, the concept of the voice is crucial to this practice in the sense that applied theatre practitioners are often working with groups of people who have consistently been silenced in society. Yet despite the potentiality to explore the voice materially, much applied theatre discussed in the literature resigns itself to voice as purely representational: the telling of one's story (individually or as a community). The vocal is quite often entirely removed from this process of narrativization, with theatre's capacity for physical rather than sonic expression prioritised as good practice. Prendergast and Saxon describe one general characteristic of the practice as relying less on words, with 'more exploration of movement and image as theatre language' (Prendergast and Saxon 11). The general rejection of linguistic structures is because they prevent participation of those with low literacy or limited language skills, or indeed language barriers between participants, which puts an emphasis on physicality as a universal language that transcends such structures.

This tendency perhaps grows out of the work of Augusto Boal, often considered one of the forefathers of applied theatre practice. Boal's work originated in peasant communities in Brazil with very low literacy, and consequently he developed a practice of image-based theatre. Boal's practice largely focuses on the liberation of the body from the physical repression and alienation that work imparts upon it. Furthermore, Boal's practice places high emphasis on bodily engagement, where participants don't just discuss solutions to their oppressions, but actively enter the performance space and enact the solution. This preferences liberation, or at least rehearsing liberation through an embodied and physical experience rather than discussion. Boal includes the voice in his embodied training. Yet, much subsequent practice that draws from Boal does not engage with the voice in this way. Rather the

voice is analysed as synonymous to speaking and discussion. It is often the act of dialogue and discussion between participants, or between participants and the audience, that is discussed. In this analysis, the embodied voice is often left behind. I will discuss some examples of this in the next section, through the perspective of theatre practices specifically working with young people.

3.1.2 Youth Theatre and Voice

Under the umbrella heading of applied theatre we may place the various practices that specifically create theatre for or with young people. Though not all theatre involving young people would be categorised as applied theatre, perhaps because it takes place in a school or youth theatre practices that are more vocational than being concerned with social purpose, applied theatre's close relationship to theatre and drama in education (TIE and DIE respectively) and other forms of educative theatre, means that there are crossovers in practices and values. There are several strands of theatre with young people, such as TIE, an initially radical scheme of touring theatre around schools to promote discussion of certain issues with young people, or youth theatre projects where theatre is created by young people. Across these many different strands voice is considered key to the practice, either in the importance of discussion and debate in education, as an indicator of young people's participation, or as performance as a platform for young people's voices. Voice and representation are significant issues for theatre with young people. Inchley writes how much of the general stigmatisation that faces contemporary youth is captured in the voice. For instance, young people's voice as audibly deviant from "proper" English is often held up as representing general moral and social deterioration, youth voices are synonymous with crime, anti-social behaviour and the like (Inchley 102). Participatory youth practices could be a response to and a rejection of this stigmatisation. In this section I will discuss some examples of theatre practice created for, with and by young people.

Theatre in Education (TIE) was a specific movement, beginning in the 1960s that took theatre into schools as a tool of learning. TIE is a form that 'seeks to harness the techniques and imaginative potency of theatre in the service of education' (Jackson and Vine 5). It aims to use theatre to provoke discussion and debate about an issue and learning is fostered through this debate. Significantly, TIE is seen as part of the British 'alternative theatre' scene, implying the political and social nature of the form. Jackson and Vine argue that this is because participation is inherent to TIE. The students are often caught up in the middle of the action, which places them at the centre of their own learning. This challenges students at the same time as simultaneously communicating 'that they are sufficiently intelligent and sensitive... to think and act autonomously to find their own solutions' (Jackson and Vine 6). David Pammenter argues that much of the early TIE work provided powerful resistance to 'monological, disempowering and coercive educational and cultural practices' (Pammenter 89), through offering an alternative kind of pedagogy:

On all fronts, individuals – children/audience members, teachers, theatre artists – were empowered to ask questions, exercise choices and make new, often subversive, meanings that had previously been denied to them. All of this ran counter to the philosophy of centralised, top-down, curriculum-centred, outcomes-driven and funder-controlled projects that had previously dominated education and the arts (Pammenter 90).

TIE, as a form that allowed dialogue between the pupils, teachers and theatre artists created a different kind of anti-hierarchical pedagogic space. This, Wendy Lement argues, made TIE a catalyst for civic dialogue. She argues that participatory theatre can be used to encourage collective reasoning, support students to articulate their thoughts and opinions, and promote critical thinking (Lement 269). TIE, she writes, is democratic by nature as it provokes students to listen, discuss and then take a side. This is significant in encouraging students to have face-to-face conversations about how to solve problems in society beyond the classroom (Lement 285). TIE demonstrates how participatory theatre can help encourage discussion and debate.

This is premised on a pedagogy of participation, where being physically involved in something increases engagement. Here practice and discussion are not two separate parts of a workshop but are dependent on each other.

Gallagher and Rodricks discuss how theatre pedagogy in the classroom has helped students break out of pre-defined race and gender roles, allowing them to speak through multiple voices. In a project with a group of high school children in Canada, verbatim theatre (a style of performance where the words spoken are lifted directly word-for-word from a person's experience) was used to discuss the student's experiences of race and gender. In the performance each pupil's story would be spoken by another pupil. Gallagher and Rodricks argue that as a result the pupils could consider experiences different to their own, demonstrating how 'we are players in each other's lives' (Gallagher and Rodricks 127). Speaking the words of another here became a way of speaking another voice, a reactive and reflective device that allowed the students both to 'break out of prescribed and limiting social roles' as well as consider their role as constantly in relation to others (Gallagher and Rodricks 127). This project demonstrates no necessary link between voice's resistance to social discrimination and the speaking of one's own story or opinions. Rather, multiple voices helped amplify experience, creating solidarity between the pupils even if they had not personally experienced some of the issues.

Vettraino, Linds and Jindal-Snape discuss a project that demonstrates the positive effects of using embodied practices, developed through applied theatre techniques, for well-being and self-esteem with indigenous youth in Canada. The authors argue that through applied theatre techniques, the young people could find a 'non-verbal voice' through the body: an embodied voice (Vettraino, Linds and Snape 79). They discuss the advantages of the participants articulating themselves through the body rather than speech, which they believe helped develop youth leadership, healthy

decision making and improved self-image (Vettraino, Linds and Snape 88). Yet, interestingly, this non-verbal embodied voice had no connection to the sonorous voice. The exercises that the authors describe were entirely physical drama games or devising practices like image theatre. In this sense, the embodied voice in this practice was a physical but silent manifestation of voice. The voice was a metaphor for communication and as a result the actual voice was left behind.

These examples demonstrate the extent to which the voice remains representational in applied and youth theatre practices. Theatre practitioner Max Hafler's *Teaching Voice* is a rare example of a discourse that provides guidance on how to work with young people's voices as a part of their bodily apparatus. In Hafler's practice, the voice is a material component of making theatre, rather than the end-product of the process. He describes voice as a potential instrument of empowerment for young people, but also concedes that voice training is challenging. Hafler outlines some of these challenges as: time, the nature of youth theatre sessions just being for a couple of hours a week; age, where the practitioner must adapt voice training to meet the age of their participants; and focus, where if approached too quickly or at the wrong moment, voice work might put young people off (Hafler 4-5). Accordingly, Hafler presents a series of exercises that aim to meet the young people where they are (Hafler 4), considering the various inhibitions and tensions that exist in a group of teenagers. His practice draws together the work of Michael Chekhov (a theatre director concerned with the actor's imagination) and voice technique based fundamentally on breathing. Using the body, imagination and movement, he argues, is one way of stopping voice work seem tedious or repetitive, and furthermore removing the connotations of elocution training attached to voice work.

Beginning his training with breathing, Hafler draws on forms from yoga and qigong (related to t'ai chi) to associate breathing processes with muscular relaxation. He sets

out a primary “core” session (Hafler 29-60), which moves through different forms of breathing and relaxation techniques, and eventually comes to small touches of sound. His session then looks at voice awareness, diction and resonance, employing exercises that engage the voice with strong movements, with the young people working as a group. For example, the participants stand in a circle, and one participant makes a sound and a movement, which everyone in the group copies. The final part of this core session moves onto the text, which he argues gives a sense of purpose to the whole session.

Hafler’s practice demonstrates the importance on focusing on the voice as an instrument that can be trained when we want to explore how performance can be used to support young people find their voice in its more representational sense. Halfer argues that training is essential to any wider or social purpose of youth theatre as it is a physical instrument of empowerment (Halfer 2). In my practice, I began from the principle of starting with voice as material, rather than as being the young people’s opinions. The young people’s opinions were relevant, and discussion was a large part of the practice, however this was interwoven around exercises that focused on the material voice. This was because my practice was less concerned with the voice as representation and more concerned with the material effects of voice.

3.2 Voice and representation/recognition

Voice is typically used as a term symbolising the individual or community’s capacity to give an account of itself, and accordingly give recognition and representation to that construction. A large focus in the literature of applied theatre presents voice as a way to construct and represent a community’s narrative, where ‘constructing narratives of the self is both an ethical and creative process’ (Nicholson 65). This implies a political and ideological position that representation is a political end in itself.

In other words, performance's political purpose is the reconstruction of an individual's or community's narrative, asking questions about whose stories have been told and whose stories have been accepted as truth (Nicholson 63). Yet in some discourses, this principle is abstracted from the broader political challenge to the wider social and economic structures that dominate how narratives about communities are constructed, to the micro political relationship within the workshop. On discussing ethical practice, Prendergast and Saxton offer the following advice for the potential practitioner:

Equally, the group and the individuals within that group may be governed by different views from you (and from each other) of what is important and valuable. You need always to be aware not only of those standards but what the implications of living within those standards mean (Prendergast and Saxon 193).

This is strong ethical advice, in one sense, but pervasive is what James Thompson describes as applied theatre working with a community's 'constructed accounts of itself' based on the perspective that there is 'no account, story or description that is anything more than an incomplete interpretation' (Thompson, *Applied 2*). Here voice becomes a metaphor for how an individual or community represents themselves. Voice's political aim is entirely caught up in how the practitioner and workshop enables this representation. Jonathan Neelands criticises this position as putting a community's account out of the reach of criticism. This is problematic, as within any account there may be other competing struggles or oppressions, conscious or unconscious. This position, he argues, is premised entirely on a politics of recognition, as opposed to a politics of redistribution, in the braid theorised by Nancy Fraser. In this braid, the struggle for recognition is the struggle for recognizing the value of cultural identities that are usually marginalized or devalued. However, the problem here is that recognition is seen as a political goal, which can only result in the celebration of cultural difference. What is not considered, are the socio-economic and political structures that cause the misrecognition in the first place. Tackling these

problems is a politics of redistribution (Fraser, 'Redistribution' 73). Symbolising voice as a question of community or individual representation presents political efficacy as merely being the recognition of those voices, regardless of what those voices are saying or how they sound. This, as Neelands writes, 'displaces the challenge to the social injustices and economic inequalities that are integral to misrecognition' (Neelands 311), or in our case, to silencing of voice.

This contributes to a consistently present theme in the applied theatre practice: the idea of voice as an ethical question between the contribution of the practitioner and the contribution of the participants to a project. Sheila Preston outlines a tension between voice and authority and states that the generally 'preferred' position of the applied theatre practitioner is about creating the right conditions for participants to be able to speak, rather than speaking for them. Nicholson writes how the practitioner must commit themselves to an openness that recognizes that their role is not to give voice, but 'to create spaces and places that enable the participant's voices to be heard' (Nicholson 163). The problem here is when the implication of how these conditions are created is premised on where the practitioner positions themselves: that is, in the balance between leading the work or moving to a place where the work is self-led by participants. For instance, in a symposium discussing the concept of power in socially engaged art (Uncommon Ground, 2018), one panellist described how the artist in relation to the participant must focus on the redistribution of power. Yet this understanding of power was entirely caught up in the process of making art. The capacity for voice following this understanding is based on how much 'authority' the practitioner assumes and has nothing to do with the actual capacity for voice, both in terms of broader social injustice and in terms of their own physical ability. Instead, Preston argues that we need to have awareness of the ideological positions already operating in someone's self-representation, which is not in relation to the practitioner but to broader society. This presents a dilemma between 'protecting people's right to

speaking or not speaking in private or public with the urgent need to challenge society and its marginalizing hegemonies' (Preston 68). Only considering how power prevents voice in the rehearsal room limits the political efficacy of the project, resigning it to the relationship between the practitioner and the participant, rather than considering the ways in which both practitioner and participant come together to challenge broader power structures. Considering habitus, and the idea that agency and structure are in tandem with each other, by just acknowledging the practitioner's position, the participant's voice is not pushing back against social structure but is pushing back against the practitioner in the room. This misrecognizes where disempowerment comes from.

That some voices are heard, and some are not is not just about misrecognition: the idea that some voices are different and vocal liberation comes from those differences being recognized as equally valid. Rather, this vocal inequality is the result of a socially and economically inscribed harmfulness that diminishes, represses and restricts the voice. Failure to acknowledge this in the favour of a politics of recognition falls into the fallacy of an 'authentic voice' that needs to be validated. Rather, this research is interested in whether the voice can be re-performed and changed and whether this different performance has a different effect on the structures that initially repressed it. This is similar to Nicholson's idea of reconstructing narratives, but with a material aim that does not just see voice as a matter of misrecognition. The reconstruction of narrative does not lead to voice: voice is not merely a symbolic goal of the workshop. Rather, voice is a bodily apparatus that we can use as resistance to varying degrees of both misrecognition and redistributive injustice. In the next section I look to how practices of embodiment that are found in some applied and community practice in a physical sense can also be found in voice training. I will argue that through the lens of habitus, we can identify voice as something that can resist materially alongside ideas of representation: recognition and redistribution.

3.3 Voice Training and the Body

The dominance of the outsider/insider way of thinking I believe breeds a culture within applied theatre that is anti-training. Terrified to impose certain cultural standards upon those considered as an 'other' cultural group, practitioners stay clear of anything that is considered authoritative, didactic or prestigious. Accordingly, the teaching of craft is seen as a cultural imposition of power. Yet, by looking at practices that are concerned with the body, we can see how the re-training of the body can be an act of resistance rather than restriction.

3.3.1 Boal and embodiment

I want to suggest that a rejection of training is a misreading of Boal, who in both *Theatre of the Oppressed* and *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* is largely concerned with the training of bodies:

Therefore, to control the means of theatrical production, man must, first of all, control his own body, know his own body, in order to be capable of making it more expressive (Boal, *Oppressed* 102).

Boal describes a 'muscular alienation' that is imposed on the body from work. Whatever the work or social status, the roles that people must perform imposes on the body a 'mask' of behaviour (Boal, *Oppressed* 103-104). The first exercises that Boal sets out in his practice aim to undo this muscular alienation:

That is, to take them apart, to study and analyse them. Not to weaken or destroy them, but to raise them to the level of consciousness. So that each worker, each peasant understands, sees, and feels to what point his body is governed by his work (Boal, *Oppressed* 104).

The exercises and games outlined in both manuals aim to give the actor a better recognition and knowledge of her body, a physical reflection on the self, a way of seeing how the body has been manipulated for work, and instead find a way to do

things differently. Significantly, Boal includes the respiratory and the vocal in his categories of muscular movements:

Because of their mechanisation, we breathe badly. Inside our lungs there are huge expanses of impure air which is not renewed. We use only a tiny part of our lungs' capacity (Boal, *Games* 109).

Boal's exercises focus on learning to breathe differently. The actor is required to experience breathing in different formations, for instance, lying on the floor or leaning against a wall. Here the actor learns to breathe deeper and with more control. Boal also lists more imaginative games, such as 'Explosion' where after trying to breathe in as much air as possible, the actor suddenly expels it violently in one go through the mouth. Boal's exercises move from breathing to vocalisation, training voice control, breath capacity and power. Using individual, pair and group exercises, the games allow the actors to begin feeling different qualities in their voices and breathing that contribute to re-experiencing the senses. This is part of a 'reharmonisation' of the body against the way the world has dampened our senses (Boal, *Games* 49).

Boal's approach acknowledges the way in which our experiences mark our bodies. James Thompson proposes we should also think about how applied theatre practice can mark bodies:

different forms of human interaction simultaneously affect and are mutually dependent upon the way we have embodied (mentally and physically) past experience... We are marked; but these contours go beyond our bodies to bind us to wider, shifting networks (Thompson, *Applied* 52).

In this sense we must acknowledge that every time we engage in a workshop we may affect each other, not just mentally, but also physically: applied theatre can gently, or faintly, mark (Thompson, *Applied* 53). In the drama workshop these actions are etched into us and become part of the myriad of actions that we reproduce in our everyday performance. The actions that constitute us which Thompson calls action matter, are always reproduced actions, there are no neutral, natural actions to us, but always copies, and in this sense, action is performance:

In the beginning there was reproduction... In the beginning there was training, a copying and only later did it become to rephrase Schechner, 'one with our body'. Once carved into us, we claim it as our own. We assume it is our 'behaviour' (Thompson, *Applied* 55).

A theatre workshop or performance training does not therefore meet a neutralised body, it meets a body that already performs. The political voice, therefore, is about revealing, questioning and resisting the marks that harm and silence.

This can be explored further in an example of practice that places the body at the forefront of resistance. To justify using dance technique as a method of working with street children (the Adugna project, Ethiopia), Royston Muldoom describes how empowerment was embedded in passing on training:

When you work with others with low self-esteem they only take the space they think they are worth. They can't stretch or raise their heads. Through controlled pleasurable experience they can extend and take space. They are unlikely to go back. Dance affects their idea of self and place in the world. Passing that on is paramount (Muldoom qtd Plastow, 'Dance' 134).

This quote describes how learning dance technique can begin to undo, change and empower the way bodies place themselves in the world. Rather than dictating to these children that they have the right to take space, and from that knowledge the physical action comes, this approach started from the physical, from embodied knowledge. By instead starting with the body, by learning how to stretch and raise one's head, one can learn how to take back space, counteracting forces that commanded that you keep your head down. Plastow describes how the participants felt like a different version of themselves after taking part in the dance project. The participants articulate a sense of shedding a previous embodiment 'associated with ill-health, violence, poverty and misery' to then emerge feeling 'like God' (Plastow, 'Dance' 142). Training allowed the participants to perform a different version of themselves, one that was not marked by their economic position, but rather the participants taking space despite their position. When training is accused of deleting cultural experience, for example Thomaidis argues that there is a potential 'incompatibility' of voice training

working across cultures or with 'diverse' students (Thomaidis *Theatre & 53*), this criticism ignores that some experiences are harmful and continue the subject's oppression. Instead, training can help the subject not simply delete the way experience has marked their body but defy these marks.

3.3.2 Voice training

Accordingly, professional voice work became the technique and training to underpin this practice of revelation, which I theorise could simultaneously be a practice of resistance. Voice training, deriving from actor training, is a practice that is rarely taught outside of drama schools and conservatories, apart from additional courses that use this training in the self-help industry. In this sense, it is unusual to find it taught outside of professional contexts. The primary voice practitioners that I based my practice on were Kristen Linklater and Patsy Rodenburg. Linklater technique aims to unite the actor with what she calls the 'natural voice'. The natural voice is not to be confused with our normal (or 'habitual') voice, nor is it a regressive idea of a primordial voice: it is also not concerned with correctness. Rather, training towards the natural voice is based on two assumptions: that any voice can express all the complexities, subtleties and qualities of our experiences; and that 'the tensions acquired through living in this world, as well as defences, inhibitions and negative reactions to environmental influences, often diminish the efficiency of the natural voice to the point of distorted communication' (Linklater, *Freeing 7*). Linklater technique therefore aims to eradicate any distinction between the intellect and the body when it comes to voice: blocks to the voice that may seem psychological or intellectual can be approached through freeing physical tensions. Tensions are what arise from the before mentioned second assumption: these are inhibitions, defences and negative reactions from one's environment that have a physical effect on the body. This physical effect will equally affect the voice.

Patsy Rodenburg discusses a similar idea in what she calls the habitual voice. Rodenburg argues that the right to speak has been taken away from many of us, through a combination of habits and judgments meaning that we are denied voice either by ourselves or by others. How a voice sounds determines whether the person is worth listening to and certain 'cultivated' voices have taken the right to speak for themselves, and themselves only:

They have overstepped the right and taken it as their prerogative. They were born, educated and live with the right and will not tolerate any voice that is different from theirs. In our society they have hegemony over the sound of us all (Rodenburg 6).

Accordingly, those who are not from a background that automatically has the right to speak suffer a kind of vocal repression: a series of bad habits and blocking of voice brought about by sociological and cultural structures. This is the habitual voice: 'a voice encrusted with restrictive tendencies that only awareness and exercise can undo and counteract' (Rodenburg 19), a voice that exists through vocal repression that manifests as natural. Rodenburg's practical direction opens the kind of voice work that is usually only undertaken by actors or singers to the general reader, allowing the right to speak to 'anyone who breathes and communicates sound in the world' (Rodenburg viii).

A third primary voice teacher is Cicely Berry. Berry argues like Rodenburg that there is a democratic deficiency in the imbalance of people's ability to speak and use their voice confidently. The need for good speakers, she argues, will counterbalance the dominance of 'management jargon' that operates on minimal communication. To combat this, a good speaker 'can present his/her argument in a way that stimulates both the mind and the imagination of the listener' which will make her audience 'want to discuss, want to talk, want to communicate' (Berry 5). This, she argues, is fundamental to the future of democracy. Berry associates having strong, positive feelings with moments of clear communication or articulation: through articulation you

feel in charge of yourself. However, she says that this feeling, for most of us, is very rare. She outlines four broad influences that prevent people from being able to fully articulate themselves out loud: the personal (our inner voice), the social (our backgrounds, habits and relations to others), the public (the public expectation of speaking) and the practical (the limitations of our vocal equipment). It is through working on the last influence, our physical voice, by which we can affect and limit the influence of the other three.

There is a consistency between these three 'main' Western vocal practitioners of undertaking training towards recapturing some kind of 'natural' or 'free' voice, a freedom from vocal repressions, and an un-doing of the weight of the world on the voice. Critics of Berry, Linklater and Rodenburg have identified this idea as problematic, either because of a kind of universalisation of voice, or because the idea of 'natural' they argue implies fetishization of a primordial voice that never really existed. Sarah Werner criticises this voice practice from a historical feminist perspective, arguing that the training towards a more 'innocent' voice 'is a naturalization of the past when we were more in touch with our emotions and closer to the very origins of language' (Werner 250). Specifically, talking about how the practitioners approach the Shakespeare text, Werner claims that the attempt to try and find a free and natural voice through which the language can articulate itself without restriction, does not consider the historical problems of the past that are written into this language. Werner is particularly concerned with the feminist actor, who, in this approach to text, is not allowed to challenge the misogyny of the day that is clear in the structures of Shakespeare's text.

The naturalization of language, Werner explains, ignores the harmful social structures that produce it, and furthermore the quest towards a natural voice creates a new system of rules and laws that the pupil must obey. The emphasis 'on individuals and

common humanity distances the actor from any type of political action' (Werner 250), both naturalizing the social order in Shakespeare texts, as well as placing 'responsibility for repression squarely within the realm of the psychological' (Knowles 107). Richard Paul Knowles states that the manuals and accordingly practices of Berry, Linklater and Rodenburg do not recognize themselves as cultural productions that operate ideologically like anyone else. This ideology operates most strongly in the construction of the 'free' and 'natural', which implies a universality that distracts from the social and historical. Werner and Knowles both dispute the focus of the training on the individual and the self, as this psychological approach ultimately ignores the political and social in the text. It prioritises notions of self-empowerment and self-expression 'as if these are unaffected by culture' (F. Kennedy 87), and furthermore advocates a kind of universalised 'human truth' which by attempting to transcend cultural conditioning, 'allows for the effacement of cultural and other kinds of difference' (Knowles 103). According to these critics, the work of Berry, Linklater and Rodenburg creates a series of binary oppositions where the individual and universal is prioritised over the social and historical; emotionality over intellect; and orality over the written word; all of which work to stop politicized readings of texts. Knowles argues that despite any radical tendency in Rodenburg's work that recognizes how the social and external restrict vocal freedom, 'it is clear that in her view it is the actor's mind, body, and habits – not society – that must change for liberation to be achieved' (Knowles 109).

Berry, Linklater and Rodenburg have responded to Werner's criticisms. Though recognizing language and text as a discursive medium that may represent harmful things, the three voice practitioners' main response is that it is through freeing the voice the subject can begin to confront these problems:

Words hurt, cost, are ugly and violent: but it is my belief that when we reach the point of articulating our dilemmas – it is then we become free to take action (Berry, Linklater and Rodenburg 48).

They argue that the teaching of voice is not a form of manipulation, but an access to power, or rather, challenging power. Berry states how the voice is the only power we have to convey thought, and as challenging and redefining thought must be our primary concern, the voice will always be politically motivated (Berry, Linklater and Rodenburg 49). Jane Boston cites the disagreement between Werner and the voice practitioners as a mis-communication between theory and practice. She describes how the language of academia is often inadequate to describe the nuance of voice practice, and often the language of voice practice in academic contexts appears shallow (Boston 248). Although one can find an essentialising tension in the voice practice writing, particularly Linklater's ideas of 'truth', Boston argues that this is an academic misreading based on an assumption that essentialism is always equated with de-politicization.

Furthermore, much of the criticism from both Werner and Knowles misunderstands the practitioners' aims by focusing mainly on the text and the text's socio-political role. Boston argues that Werner misses the 'subtextual social critique' by purely focuses on text over practice, and accordingly misses 'the more interesting and subtle issue of why the body and hence the voice has become a site of such literal and metaphorical resistance' (Boston 250). Instead of analysing the voice in relation to the text to determine the political or ideological value of this work, Boston instead suggests we focus upon the body. Both Knowles and Werner write as if the play text is the only place where subversion can take place; that we can only challenge and resist through how we read the text, but Boston argues that for many thinkers, particularly feminist, the body can be a place of resistance.

Knowles quotes Derrida to demonstrate the ways in which the spoken has been prioritised over the written, where the spoken is equated with truth and meaning, and

the written is mistrusted. But we can also see Knowles' criticism as part of a wider philosophical logocentrism that Cavarero discusses where voice is second to thought and speech (Cavarero 9). The bodily voice of breath and sound is not considered in Knowles' critique: he is only concerned with the domination of the words upon the speaker, not the capacity of the speaker to speak or not. This is part of a broader separation of intellect and feelings, and we can read an assumption in Knowles' argument that to approach the text intellectually is a sociological approach, and therefore political, whereas an approach first concerned with the body is always emotional, psychological and therefore de-politicized.

The voice practitioner's emphasis on the feeling of voice is interpreted as a psychological reading of a play text, and therefore cannot result in a more radical or challenging version. But this I believe is ignoring a potential radicalism in the focus on the feeling of voice: voice not just as the carrier of speech, but a bodily experience of the social. I instead explored how the political efficacy of this voice practice is not a concern with 'freedom' as a universalised, individualistic platitude, but as a kind of bodily, psychophysical freedom of expression that is often denied. It is only from this experience, this feeling, Berry, Linklater and Rodenburg argue, can the structural oppression that exists in the text can be challenged. Following this point, I theorised that this same experience could challenge broader structural oppression that the text represents. Berry, Linklater, Rodenburg and Boston's defence of their practice from accusations of conservatism presented me with my own hypothesis that this work has a potential radical political efficacy.

3.3.3 Voice training and habitus

For political efficacy to be realized, we must, following Boston, take an alternative approach to voice practice through a sociological perspective. Bourdieu writes that

the power of language is not an illocutionary force; it is not something inherent to language, but rather a delegated power from the social relations and institutions that govern (Bourdieu and Wacquant 147). Furthermore, Bourdieu argues that language is of the body, and our relation to the social world is expressed through the body:

Everything suggests, for instance, that the bodily schema characteristic of a social class determines the system of phonological traits that characterize class pronunciation (Bourdieu and Wacquant 149).

We cannot understand the politics of language without seeing linguistic practices as within the whole of a subject's habitus, where language is just one aspect. Our internalised conscious and subconscious habitus determines linguistic practices, as well as who has the capacity to speak, and this is expressed through the body. Habitus therefore structures how we speak.

The habitual voice that the voice practitioners conceive should be understood through this perspective of habitus. Here we are not setting up a binary between a bad, restricted habitual voice, and a good, natural and free voice, but rather stating that any voice in any condition is only ever a product of its habitus. In this sense, a term like natural is not about prioritising some primordial pre-social voice, but rather it can undermine the notion that any of our habits are 'natural':

There are many misconceptions about what constitutes the 'natural' when it comes to those habits which afflict the voice. Students stand slumped in front of me and say, 'Look, this is my natural way of standing'. It is not natural to slump. It is habitual (Rodenburg 21).

The word 'natural' is used to cover up that which is socially and culturally inscribed upon our bodies. Furthermore, it is anti-training, implying that voice work changes the pupil's voice from their natural way of speaking to something artificial. This is a dangerous essentialisation that allows pupils to believe that it is natural for their voices to be restricted and repressed, and accordingly it is natural for them not to be listened to or heard. Rodenburg explains how it is not about creating a list of habitual behaviours that are bad, but rather it is a question of choice:

I am not saying that slumping is wrong. It is only unwholesome when there is no other choice. So slump, through choice; mutter, through choice; be inaudible, through choice. By understanding and sensing the natural – being able to distinguish the way it feels from the habitual – all physical choices should be available (Rodenburg 22).

Inchley writes how there is a danger in the ideology of 'finding your voice', both for the actor but also the playwright, of a 'delusion that vocal empowerment helps individuals to avoid the regulatory norms of society' (Inchley 3). Accordingly, voice practice via habitus must not simply help the student avoid these regulations, but rather make them visible and empower the participant with the tools to confront them. For this research, then, the concept of the natural or free voice's primary sociological purpose is recognizing the social and cultural working upon our bodies. Rather than voice work as training towards the natural voice as universalised, always natural, good and free, it is about the natural as opposed to the habitual, about whether through voice work there is a capacity to begin to undo the various restrictions and repressions that constitute and structure our voices.

Habitus is not merely determined by social structures but is created out of an interplay between these structures and our own choices and decisions. Voice practice cannot delete what we have already experienced, nor directly change our social and cultural environment (past and present), but perhaps it can begin to affect this interplay between the socio-cultural and the individual. The relationship between habitus and field is dynamic and dialectic:

In one direction there is flow of influence from field to habitus that produces a relationship of conditioning in which the field structures the habitus. In the other direction the habitus can influence perceptions of the field in which it finds itself and generate a relationship of cognitive construction (Reay 'Feminist Theory' 227).

Habitus also contributes to how meaning is constructed in the field, in how agents make sense of the world. A change in habitus, accordingly, can change this construction. Here, like Muldoon's dance practice, experiencing the voice's

relationship to the external world through the body, determines a practice that focuses on the feeling of undoing and changing vocal habitus, and then mapping how that feels when externalised back into the world.

3.4 Rationale for Practice and Methods

My research therefore investigated whether there is a relationship between voice training, habitus and the political engagement of young women. I decided to investigate this through practice-led research, using drama workshops with groups of young women as my primary tool of research. Accordingly, this research aimed to create a model of voice practice that could be conducted with different groups of young people as a form of political intervention. Following my review of the existing literature in voice, youth politics and applied and community theatre practices, the key research question became: **What is the political efficacy of the intervention of voice training and does this training contribute to young women's political engagement?**

I designed a practice that differed from existing work with young people by integrating voice training through the lens of habitus, meaning that the voice was not just the tool for discussion but the active point of examination. This eschewed the orthodox way in which voice is conceived in much of the existing practice, where instead of the process ending with voice and voice being found through the platform of performance, the training of voice was the starting point and the performance we produced was the result of this training. This approach allowed me to investigate the relationship between habitus and the voice, where voice training became a tool to reveal the participants' habitus, and to demonstrate whether the voice is something through which habitus can be changed. I decided that my research should be practice-led rather than a practice-based project. This distinction I understand between whether

the practice created is the object of the research (practice-based) or whether the practice helps develop new conclusions about such practice (practice-led). As my project was fundamentally about how one can *do* voice practice with young women, I believe that the practice needed to contribute to the theorisation of the voice rather than ending with the workshops as the research outcome or product. The theorisation and analysis of the workshops instead was my research outcome. Accordingly, in the rest of this chapter I will discuss in detail the methodology I adopted, as well as the research challenges I faced.

3.4.1 Methods

I designed a series of practical workshops to be undertaken with groups of young people. These workshops combined exercises from voice training, devising theatre techniques and ensemble training. The workshops also contained a discursive element, where I would lead discussions about political themes with the young people. The participants were recruited for the workshops through existing youth theatre and outreach programmes in two institutions: a well-established theatre in Leeds and a theatre specifically for young people's work in Ellesmere Port. In Leeds, the young people who took part in the pilot sessions were already attending a specific course and therefore no additional recruitment was needed. Subsequently for the week project during the Easter holidays, I recruited by asking the participants on the pilot sessions and through running a taster workshop at one of the theatre's youth theatre sessions. Young people completed sign up forms at this taster session, which I then followed up to confirm their attendance. In Ellesmere Port, I recruited the young people in association with the hosting organisation, where they advertised to all the young people who used their service. As a result, I had 4 core participants in Leeds and 7 core participants in Ellesmere Port. Figure 1 shows the workshops, location, date, length of time and number of participants. More detail on each of these groups is outlined in Chapter 4.

Pilot Group	Leeds	February 2016	3 day sessions over 3 consecutive weeks	Varied participation each week.
Leeds Group	Leeds	April 2016	4 consecutive days.	4 Participants
Women's Group	Ellesmere Port	August 2016	3 and a half consecutive days.	3 Participants
Term-Time Group	Ellesmere Port	September 2016 to April 2017	Once a week two-hour sessions	Varied participation each week, but resulting in 3 core participants

Figure 1.

My participants were provided with a Participant Information Sheet and they signed a consent form in line with the University of Leeds ethical guidelines (the consent form can be seen in the appendix; however, I have chosen not to disclose the Participant Information Sheet as it included information that might compromise the anonymity of my participants).

The Leeds workshops all took place in the same space, a room in a separate building to the main theatre where the outreach programmes are run. The workshops were in the daytime and usually ended around 3pm, depending on how much we had got through. The Ellesmere Port Women's Group took place in a studio theatre, in which all the young the people were very used to working and happened during the daytime. The Term-Time Group however took place in the evening after school or college in a much smaller rehearsal room. This created a feeling of an after-school club rather than an intense project. Accordingly running a workshop during the holidays as a kind of intense "project" (Leeds Group and Women's Group) was very different to shorter sessions but over a longer period (Term-Time Group). The Leeds/Women's Group meant that I worked with the young people for less time, but in a more intense way. In these three or four days the young people could give their full concentration to the

project and it felt like they were entering something separate from their everyday lives. In the Term-Time Group, a week would pass between each session, meaning that a lot would happen in the young people's lives in between. This meant that in each session it felt like we had to backtrack and recap a lot more than when the days ran consecutively. However, it also felt like the session and the participant's everyday life were much more caught up together as the training was running parallel to their regular activities. This meant that the personal lives of the participants got brought into the room in a much more direct way.

I created a workshop plan before each session which I loosely stuck to, but also wandered from when it felt appropriate. Hughes, Kidd and McNamara discuss the usefulness of 'mess' when researching through applied theatre practice. They outline how knowledge in applied theatre research is generated through a combination of the reflexivity of the research/practitioner, the participatory and embodied knowledge of the workshop and non-creative qualitative research methods that are often external to the workshop (Hughes, Kidd and McNamara 191). Sometimes pre-designed research models do not meet the experience in the room and methods must be adapted to unpredictable circumstances. They use the term improvisation to describe how the application of research methods must be shifted to support the unpredictable creative process (Hughes, Kidd and McNamara 207). The reflective practitioner must accept the 'messiness' of practice not as something inferior to designed methodologies but essential to discovering the unpredictable and untheorized. In this sense, deviating from the workshop plan was instructive itself. I could reflect after the sessions on why certain activities that I had planned no longer "felt right" in the room, for instance, or consider how some activities took longer or shorter than expected. This was instructive for working out the merits of voice practice as well as for comparing my participants and comparing the groups.

I audio recorded all my workshops. I made the decision just to record the voice and not video record because I wanted the research to be epistemologically underpinned by the idea that meaning can be grasped through the voice alone. These recordings were accompanied by field notes which I made during the dinner breaks and after each session. Running the workshops presented a problem that I could not write notes at the same time, so I had to rely heavily on the audio recordings. I made sure that I listened to the recordings of each workshop within one day of it taking place for additional note taking so that I could remember the experience more clearly. Furthermore, in the Pilot, Leeds and Women's Group I had a research assistant to discuss what had happened to help thicken my analysis.

Combined with the workshops was a series of interviews with the participants at different points along the process. Coleman describes interviews as performances: 'an event set up and conducted with a purpose in mind', where speaking and listening takes place, but this speaking and listening should not be confused as a natural conversation, despite how informal it might feel (Coleman, *Voters* 92). The memories and representations produced in interviews are co-produced between the interviewer and interviewee: what the interviewer wants to hear, or what the interviewee thinks the interviewer wants to hear, as well as many interpretations of communication and miscommunication. This does not invalidate interviews, but rather is something to be considered when both performing and analysing them, that is, the different performances of the self can contribute to an understanding of the performer's vocal habitus. One way in which these performances can be understood and contextualised is by having different kinds of interviews. I set-up peer interviews at the mid-way point of the project, and a group interview at the end of the project that was a reflection on the process. These interviews were not entirely free of the agenda of the researcher, of course, as in the first instance the participants knew ultimately that I would eventually listen to their interviews, even though I was not present. However, being

interviewed by each other allowed them to act differently in the interview scenario, and accordingly perform a different version of themselves. I then undertook individual interviews with each of the participants several weeks after the project ended.

I transcribed the interviews and analysed them alongside listening to their original recording. My analysis and findings in this sense largely emerged from listening to the young people. This was because of the epistemological approach that underscores this research: that the voice itself can carry meaning, or in other words, knowledge will not just be evident in the content of speech, but in the quality of the voice; in how voice sounds, feels and changes. Basing my research on this approach created a series of methodological problems that I will now address.

3.4.2 Listening

Much of the analysis of this research was based on the act of listening. Considering the school of thought in which meaning is created rather than found, listening is not a neutral or passive act, but rather an act of interpretation in which meaning is shaped by the listener. Accordingly, researchers Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan (Mikel-Brown and Gilligan, 1992; Taylor, Gilligan and Sullivan 1995; and Mikel-Brown 1998) advocate a method for listening, that is, a method of interpretive analysis. This method, the Listening Guide is voice-centred and is concerned with the different voices within the voice:

a method that is sensitive to the polyphonic nature of voice, the nonlinear, nontransparent interplay and orchestration of feelings and thoughts, as well as to the issue of power (Mikel-Brown 32).

The guide provides direction through tracing the different ways the participant understands themselves and others, the different way they appropriate or resist other voices, and the different narratives present in one voice. Furthermore, they place emphasis on what is not said and what is missing from the participant's account.

Underpinning this, the guide attempts to illuminate the position of the researcher, where they consider their own social, cultural and personal history in the act of interpretation, and how this shapes what she hears.

The interpreter is asked to listen to the interview or conversation at least four times, each time listening in a different way. The first time they are advised to grasp the overall shape of the interview and its narrative, noting any of their initial responses, and considering these responses in relation to their position. Secondly, the listener specifically listens to the 'I' in the voice: how the participant speaks about herself and how she represents the self. Third and fourth listens branch out into the voice's relational position: how the speaker places themselves in the world and how they frame others around them. This listening can take the specific focus of the research questions and the listener can undertake as many different types of relational listening as needed.

Rather than apply this listening guide exactly as advised, I adapted my own version of it more suited to needs of exploring vocal habitus. I rewrote the different ways of listening to construct an understanding of the habitus of each participant through the voice. The first, second and third listens are like the original: firstly, listening to capture my initial, broad responses and to construct an overall narrative; secondly listening to hear the 'I' and how the participant talks about themselves; and thirdly listen for how the speaker places themselves in relation to the other participants. The fourth listen, however, examined how the speaker positioned themselves in the world, outside of the workshop context and in wider frames of reference, such as their class position, their economic position, their political position or other social settings. The fifth and final listen explored the voice apart from the speech content, listening to tone, pitch, volume, speed, breath, resonance etc. This last listen placed emphasis on the embodied voice apart from speech and content, listening to how the voice sounded

rather than to what it said. In combining these 'listenings', I interpreted and constructed a picture of each participant's habitus through hearing how they sounded in parallel to how they represented themselves.

3.4.3 Interpreting habitus

This research is premised on being able to articulate the participant's vocal habitus, as well as notice how and whether this habitus changes. In this section I will discuss habitus in relation to methodology. Bourdieu argued fervently that one's existing habitus is a resilient and durable quality, to the extent that for the most part, people's habitus rarely changes. To experience a sudden transformation of habitus, which Bourdieu calls a habitus clivé, is to experience a rupture in the self, torn apart by internal and external contradictions. This cleft Bourdieu experienced himself through quite dramatic social mobility from his upbringing in a peasant village in rural France. I would not dispute that one's dispositions, the products of habitus, are long-lasting. In this sense, I did not expect in the short period of time I was with the participants that they would experience this kind of dramatic change in habitus. Rather, to consider how habitus might change, I needed to be able to see moments in which the participants, if only briefly, performed their voice differently. I had to observe the participants behaving differently and a feeling of being entitled to behave differently despite their habitus. Accordingly, I could observe whether voice training was related to this different experience of voice.

In a round-table discussion on habitus (*Sociological Review* 2016), sociologists Elizabeth B. Silva, Helene Aarseth, Sam Friedman, Lynne Layton and Muriel Darmon discuss how habitus as a concept is something quite ungraspable and to some extent unobservable. They argue that the best way to observe habitus is through mapping

the process of transformation. In this sense, habitus is something that can be best understood in reflection, in seeing how participants change during a workshop process. Another angle on this comes from Diane Reay who argues that we can get a better understanding of habitus by seeing it as a method rather than object. Here habitus is a way of seeing the world, a way of understanding the process of change (Reay, 'They Employ' 358). This is fundamentally using habitus as way of 'exploring domination in everyday practice' (Reay, 'They Employ' 359). In this research I explored how domination effects the everyday practice of the voice, that is, how habitus allows us to identify domination in everyday practices of speaking and vocalising.

Accordingly, instead of trying to grasp a participant's habitus immediately, it was in the reflection on the process that it became visible (or audible). I had to discover the participant's habitus not as something immediate but as a process of my own interpretation, where their repeated behaviours became clear through close, detailed observation and listening. Another approach I adopted to ease this problem of interpretation was to discuss habitus with the young people. That is not to say we discussed French sociological theory directly, but rather, I brought the idea of habits into our conversations when we reflected on the training. Accordingly, I found out what habits the young people themselves thought they had, why they thought they had them, and how they felt it prevented them from feeling fully confident in their voice.

3.4.4 Interpretation and Representation

Arising out of these different considerations is an ethical question that is common to most research involving human research subjects: interpretation and representation of the subjective position. This perhaps is heightened in research like this that is

concerned with the politics of voice and the politics of who is heard and who is not in society. Bill McDonnell raises an ethical concern with community theatre practice that reduces the work and efforts of participants to a theory that a researcher or practitioner is trying to explain:

How is it that radical practices can produce so many narratives in which the people are effectively silenced: in which they are described by, spoken for, and reduced to examples of the working out of a (projected) radical praxis? This is not to argue that outsiders do not have a valuable role: but it is a role that must be tempered by dialogue, and the recognition of the dangers of political intervention into any reality (McDonnell 133).

McDonnell argues that researchers must find a way for multiple voices to be present in writing, so that the participants' voices are neither lost or appropriated. Part of how we address this, McDonnell argues, is through seeing ourselves as co-authors with participants, rather than agents of transformation.

My research methodology had elements of ethnographic practice: participant observation (particularly in the "down" time in between exercises or on breaks), informal interviews and what Willis describes as "just being" there (Willis 90). Ethnographers such as Willis have argued that the researcher needs to ensure that their analysis is reflexive, so that they neither attempt an entirely objective reading of their research participants, nor try to deny any influence of theory and ideology. Rather than fear 'naked subjectivity', the researcher must recognize their own position, instead of attempting to entirely separate themselves:

The central insistence, for instance, on the passivity of the participant observer depends on a belief that the subject of the research is really an object. The concern is to minimize 'distortion of the field' with the underlying fear that the object may be contaminated with the subjectivity of the researcher. Too easily it becomes an assumption of different orders of reality between the researched and the researcher (Willis 90).

Recognizing that the 'final account' says as much about the researcher/observer as it does about the observed participants signifies the subjectivity of representation, rather than attempting to hide it. This is a recognition of the reflexive relationship the

researcher has to their subjects (Willis 95). It is important then to note that my 'analysis' of the participants is subjective interpretation and not objective description.

Significantly, we can look at these issues as a question of voice. Atkinson argues that the writing ethnography is a practice of multiple voices in collaboration to create a complex, layered account. On describing the use of 'exemplars', the use of quotes from the participant almost like evidence, he writes:

First, they provide the reader with concrete – sometimes vivid – if not fragmentary, vicarious experience of the social world in question. Second, they allow for the introduction of multiple perspectives and voices in the text. Thirdly, they allow for a polyphonal and collaborative text, constructed between the sociologist, the reader, and the social actors represented in the setting (Atkinson 82).

The use of participant's quotes in the text needs to move beyond the idea of mere evidence to prove theory and instead provide an opportunity for a different kind of voice in the text, a voice that echoes the moment that is being examined rather than just represent it. The participant's voice prevents analysis from being an accumulation of facts, and instead becomes a different voice of interpretation of the examined social world (Atkinson 91). Further than this, Atkinson argues that the researcher also writes in different voices in their analysis. Sometimes the researcher takes on the voice of the sociologist as analyst, and sometimes they take on the voice of the observer, who was present at the social scene. The first voice takes on the authority of interpreting an event, the second voice appears momentarily in descriptions of the event, which remain yet to be analysed (Atkinson 92). These two voices remind the reader of the way in which the ethnographical account is only ever a reconstruction of the social world, and that these constructions are multiple and layered.

Specific to applied theatre research, Sally Mackey argues that practical research in this field can be considered as polyphonic conversations:

Polyphony suggests a number of different voices participating in the overall project, frequently following their own routes and independent needs,

sometimes harmonious and occasionally not. Within this polyphony are moments of homophony, where all voices join together into one clear and combined melodic line. There are also moments of monophony, where singular voices can be heard quite distinctly, as is the case so often in conversations (Mackey 487).

In this sense she describes practical research as 'multivocal' (Mackey 487). Here both Mackey and Atkinson are using voice as a metaphor to describe how research should reflect and represent the multitude of people involved beyond the author. This is a way of expressing the collaborative nature of this research and that participants are not merely observed, but actively contribute to constructing what knowledge is found. In my research, an attempt to produce writing that is multivocal, in the way Mackey outlines, presents the problem of the material voice. This research was less concerned with representing the young people, but rather my writing wanted to capture something tangible about the voice. This brought an added difficulty to the attempt to write multivocal research: I was not simply trying to bring a layer of different voices into my writing, but trying to bring in the actual voice, beyond a useful metaphor for representation.

A final consideration is how my voice relates to the participant's voices. This is a question of my voice not just as an author, but as a researcher, a practitioner and finally a subject of voice training. It is inevitable that my understanding of the participant's vocal habitus must be mediated by my own habitus. A recognition of my own habitus in relation to the participants was therefore needed. This recognition addresses the ethical consideration of whether interpreting and writing about the participant's voices is an act of silencing. The recognition of my own voice's role in the research can help the reader understand my analysis as interpretation. In the final section of this chapter I begin an analysis of my own voice, which I describe in more detail in Chapter 5.

3.5 My Voice

I have a voice too, a voice equally effected by social structures, by my own habitus; a voice that changes dependent on field and that sounds different from how I write. If, according to the assumption that not being able to exercise your democratic voice in the political sphere is not just a problem for the extremely disenfranchised, but that most people in the United Kingdom do not experience the agency of vocal political participation, then I too do not have any special experience of civic vocality.

Then what is the relationship between my own voice and the research? How did my own experience of voice enter the workshops or effect my relationship with the participants, and furthermore the story I produced afterwards? And did conducting and participating in this research shape, change or effect my voice too? In analysis, therefore, it was imperative for me to reflect on the position of my voice in relation to the participants' voices. Rather than considering myself in terms of the insider/outside during a workshop, my reflections on the workshops and interviews are also reflections on my voice: hearing my voice as part of the process rather than something detached, above or outside of it.

Accordingly, my voice was also an object of research, and meets the participants' voices in the investigation of embodied vocality. Firstly, there were various social, cultural and political similarities in our positions. I am not very much older than the average age of the participants and, if not quite part of their generation, from a very similar generation that faces similar economic insecurities, alongside an uneasy and shifting global landscape. I am also from the ex-industrial North of England and like the participants I went to a youth theatre as a teenager, finding a place of identification there away from my comprehensive school. Like all but one of the participants, I am female, and recognize myself acting many embodied gender norms, particularly in

the voice. I recognize many similar political opinions in the young people, or at least, I had similar opinions at that age, and furthermore recognize an idealism that I probably have since lost.

Without getting too lost in personal reflections, these kinds of recognitions in myself begin to address where my own interest in exploring political voice comes from, and how this interest has developed alongside my own vocal development. Further than this, I was interested in whether I noticed tensions and habits in my voice and whether I noticed any changes through running voice training. I also thought it was significant to notice the different version of my voice I performed, and how I tried to represent myself in the workshop space. As the workshop leader I had certain things about myself that I wanted to present: expertise and authority at the same time as respect, patience and approachability. Yet in the space I was also performing the role of researcher, meaning that my voice was also used to find things out. Using voice and habitus as simultaneous research tools to reveal how I positioned myself in the workshop space as both facilitator and researcher, helped me understand how habitus has influenced my interpretation of the practice.

Through this research, then, my voice is both like the participants' and not like the participants'. The question of my voice is a question of negotiating this sameness and difference, and how that illuminated the development of my own vocal habitus. But further than my relationship with the participants, my voice has also undergone voice training. Prior to the workshops I completed a course in Linklater voice training at Birmingham School of Acting. I found this training quite a remarkable experience, noticing immediate changes to my voice, body language and sense of presence. I often draw on the technique in my personal and professional life: noticing breathing when I feel tense or nervous, enacting simple voice exercises before I give a conference presentation or being aware of unnecessary tensions in my body

(particularly between my eyebrows; thinking too hard). As I uncovered criticisms of the practice, such as that of Werner or Knowles, I could not help but think their arguments did not match what I had experienced. My instinctual reaction to their criticism was that it was wrong, though it took a few moments to intellectually work out why. This gap between their criticism and my experience I believe is reflective of a lot of the subsequent critique I have found of Linklater in particular: a criticism of her discourse without actual practical experience. The instinctual feeling that the course had done something important to me, that took a while to theorise, emboldened me to believe there was something politically efficacious about this work. In reflection, the training had allowed me to experience an immense and deep sense of relief.

Moving from a participant to a workshop leader was also significant, which I discuss more in Chapter 5. I chose to re-frame the course I participated in, choosing and adapting certain exercises, around political voice. In this sense, initially, the training was not the focus of my workshops, like it had been in my course: instead politics was the central theme. This not only allowed me to bring other aspects of my practice into the workshops, the ensemble and political discussion for example, but it also prevented voice training from being an end goal, that is, a pressure on the participants to perform the technique correctly. Rather, it was positioned as a tool towards producing a piece of political performance that wanted to challenge both how young women's voices are often silenced.

3.6 Conclusion

The literature review of voice, youth politics and the position of voice in applied and community theatre has demonstrated a gap in practice for the material and embodied voice. Accordingly, I devised and undertook a voice practice based on principles of the psychophysical and embodiment through the pedagogy of voice training, as a

different way to explore how we understand young people's political voice. This research, instead of considering political voice either as an act of representation, or the content of political opinions, explores the politics that inhere in how the body produces voice, and what are the political effects of producing the voice differently. The forthcoming empirical chapters examine the results of this practice in four different ways.

The first empirical chapter, Chapter 4, takes a broad look at my practice, finding commonalities between the different workshops as well as differences. It assesses the effectiveness of different parts of the practice, arguing that politics was found in moments of vocal contestation. Chapter 5 focuses in depth on habitus through a micro-study of four of the participants, exploring how habitus is revealed not only through how the participants represented themselves, but through the very sound of their voice. Chapter 6 examines how voice training relates to questions of gender, arguing against the principle of women's voice being different-but-equal, and instead demonstrating liberating possibilities of voice training for women. Finally, Chapter 7 moves away from questions of habitus and the individual to examining the collective voice and ensemble. Through exploring the concept of the crowd, I argue that politics can manifest in the voice through multiple voices coming together to sound as if it were one voice. In each of these chapters I demonstrate that training of the voice should not be dismissed as a repressive system of control, but rather, in the correct circumstances, it is a political intervention of liberating the voice from its regular, regulatory performance.

CHAPTER FOUR:

PRACTICE

I devised and facilitated a practice to interrogate what engaging with the voice politically could be like for young women. Identifying a gap, where much existing work done with young people about politics is premised on the idea of voice as a largely metaphorical and symbolic idea, I explored instead whether the political could be found in the material voice: the physiological voice, the body. From carrying out political voice workshops with a range of young people, I discuss in this chapter the political potentiality of the embodied voice, and how this can be harnessed towards political engagement through performance. Considering politics through the definition of contestation, my practice suggests that in some contexts simply talking about politics does not always provide the circumstances or opportunity to enact politics. Voice, instead of just the words spoken, can be the enactment of contestation through the opportunity to perform the voice differently. For those for whom being listened to is rare, political voice could be the reconfiguration of their voice by creating a space where they demand to be heard. I argue that in my practice this moment of contestation arose from the precise relationship between the young people's political opinions (content) presented through the performance form of creating an entirely vocal piece of theatre, supported by the method of training the voice.

This discussion of my practice is based on a specific definition of politics as contestation. This emerges from the writing of Rancière, where politics emerges in moments of dissensus (Rancière 1999). Using this specific definition allowed me to depart from focusing just on the political opinions of my participants, broadening their political activity to also how they speak and how they protest. Furthermore, this places the voice as something material and embodied at the centre of my analysis, exploring

whether there is a relationship between the material voice and dissensus. I argue that specific aspects of my practice, such as working on the non-linguistic voice and voice training, offer a different way of understanding political voice, departing from the regular practice of political discussion. Voice training, I argue, is the pathway from understanding the repression of voice, of identifying how the political affects the material voice; to vocal resistance against this repression by helping young people perform their voices in a different way.

The voice workshops that I discuss in this chapter were designed around a three-part structure of method, form and content. The method was based on the practice of voice training derived from Kristen Linklater and Patsy Rodenburg. The form refers to the theatrical conventions I wanted to establish in both the exercises we did and in the performance: an entirely vocal performance where the performers could only rely on their voice to make meaning. And lastly, the content was the discussion of politics, the broad theme of politics and political voice that we focused on through the week, the “issues” that the young people cared about, that would provide the ‘what’ in the performance. All these three components were interlinked and dependent: their dependency was, I argue, the moment of political contestation. An entirely vocal performance, where the audience had to listen to the young people, meant that the form reconfigured the position of young people as listeners to young people as the ones who speak. The ability to enact this vocal performance, using a range of different non-linguistic sounds to represent political ideas, came from the young people practicing voice training. Furthermore, voice training offered a direct way for the young people to experience their voice differently, through the releasing of tensions in the body.

At the early stages of the workshops, the participants often saw the voice exercises and the discussions we had as different things. Yet as the workshops developed, and

as I developed my practice across the research process, the connection between these two aspects became clearer. The gradual dissolving of this separation also matched the ways in which the young people talked about their political voice. At the start of the project, the young people would talk about the political voice abstractly: something they could describe through political figures, for example, but not something they felt like they had themselves. Yet as the workshops continued, the young people described political voice less as something separate to them; rather, they were doing politics in their very act of voicing. Later in the chapter I will explore how the young people began to use a terminology when describing the voice that related to how they felt about their position in the political world. Terminology such as pressure, power and support were used to directly link their political voice to what they were experiencing in their body. This, as I argue, is because of how political discussion was interwoven with the form and method of voice.

If we visualise that at the start of any of the workshops, on one side of the practice was the voice and games that played with the non-linguistic voice, and on the other side was political discussion and debate, this chapter maps how these two aspects met. The bridge between them, I argue, was voice training. These two aspects meeting was a reconceptualization of political voice as something that enacts politics of contestation, rather than being a metaphor for political opinion. Rather than practice that separates working on the voice from talking about politics, a practice of political voice's efficacy relies on these two parts being inextricably linked. After outlining the timeline of the different voice projects that I ran, giving the reader a sense of each workshop, I discuss and compare the different ways I experimented with method, form and content in each setting.

4.1 Workshops Timeline

February 2016: Pilot Workshops in Leeds; "Pilot Group".

The first workshops I did were three sessions on consecutive Wednesdays at a youth group in Leeds. This group formed as an outreach provision of a major theatre in Leeds where young people can come to gain skills and qualifications in the arts if they are not in education or employment. The provision is run for 16-19-year olds. The group was marked by expected patterns of behaviour of more difficult to reach young people: lateness, regular absences, and moments of lack of participation or even leaving the room. Yet the young people I worked with, despite an initial reluctance, were extremely talkative, somewhat engaged, and for the most part tried the exercises I set them. A larger group than the other workshops, of about twelve (though this number fluctuated each week), and about half/half gender split. All the young people were from Leeds and mixed in terms of ethnicity.

On the first day, it was clear that the young people did not know what to make of me or what was really going on. My greetings were met with silence, I got them to sign the ethical release forms which caused more confusion and I tried to explain what we were doing over the next couple of weeks. The room we worked in was a familiar space to all the participants, fairly big, with a pillar in the middle, and whiteboards on the perimeter. The young people felt comfortable in this space, perhaps even a little complacent, and they felt free to leave the room, make themselves brews or go out for cigarettes. The social workers tried hard to keep a fair amount of discipline, which was met as time progressed and they became more invested in what I was doing. A noticeable aspect of working with this group was the way they would split along gender lines, as if it were natural or inevitable. Partner work would be done in same-sex pairs, or if we had two groups, there would be a male group and a female group. There was almost a school-like feel to the group, which perhaps came from in being

a programme that resulted in qualifications, and in that sense their participation was not entirely voluntary.

In the first week I introduced the group to basic voice exercises, had some good discussion about what they thought politics and political voice was, and did some drama games. The second session was mostly dedicated to big group discussions about different issues that the young people wanted to talk about, which we then used to pull together a short performance in the third week.

April 2016: Core Project in Leeds; "Leeds Group".

Developed out of the pilot sessions, the next set of workshops I ran was a project in the Easter holidays, combining participants from the pilot group with members of that same theatre's youth theatre. This combined the more "hard to reach" young people, with young people with a specific, professional interest in the acting industry. The project was just under a week long, took place at the outreach department of the theatre, and had four participants (two from the pilot group, and two from the youth theatre). All four were female, and were aged 18-20: Emily, Lucy, Lauren and Rachel (whom I will describe in much more detail in Chapter 5).

Taking place in the same space as the pilot group's sessions, this brought Emily and Lucy from the youth theatre into new terrain. As well as this, many of their friends from the youth theatre who said they were going to take part did not turn up, meaning that on the first day (with Lucy ill), Emily was completely on her own in a new space. The first day could have felt like a false start, initially even a bit awkward, but we found that the small group was beneficial to the work. With just three and then four participants in the room, as well as an MA student, Alex, who was helping me, and the social worker who ran the programme, Sheila, we had a manageable sized group of people, meaning we had more time to discuss things, and more time for individual

attention in the voice work. The sessions ran from 10-3 each day. The whole space felt more mature than the pilot groups, with the young people choosing to spend their Easter holidays in this workshop, as it was not compulsory or part of any programme. The small group also allowed them to bond quickly, and as the workshop was only a week long, there wasn't time for fall outs or drama. This workshop particularly felt like the right people, at the right time, and a strong feeling of ensemble was created in a short amount of time.

The structure of the four days combined voice training, discussion, games and improvisation. On the first day we began the voice training process, got to know each other through a broad discussion of politics, and played a lot of initial warm-up games. On second day we got more deeply into voice technique and began creating work through image theatre exercises. On the third day we consolidated the training, had specific political discussions that led to creating text and soundscapes, and created more content for the performance. The final day consisted of putting the performance together, with the young people performing in the afternoon.

August 2016: Women's Project in Ellesmere Port; "Women's Group".

The third project was specifically billed as a women's only group and took place at a young people's theatre company in Ellesmere Port, Cheshire. I wanted to run a project just with women to see if women engaged with embodied training differently without men present. At the time of arranging this workshop, I believed that there would be men in the Leeds Group (which there was not). Accordingly, the difference between these two groups was not in the literal demographics of the participants, as both were all women, but that in Ellesmere Port they attended the project on the understanding that it would be all women. This project was three and a half days long and took place in the summer holidays. The group started fairly large, but diminished down to just three core participants, aged between 14 and 18: Sophie, Lara and

Natalie. I was also assisted in this project by Emily from the Leeds group, to help run activities and to reflect on the sessions. Ellesmere Port is a small industrial town between Chester and Liverpool, with a large part of the population economic migrants from Liverpool, most of the young people's parents are from Liverpool, or identify with Liverpool. In this sense, these young people are "first-generation" Ellesmere Port, which is reflected in their sense of lacking identity, of not being sure where they're from, of not being sure what their accent sounds like. Too far out to be from Merseyside, not posh enough to be from Chester, Ellesmere Port citizens find themselves in a cultural limbo, and accordingly I felt that the young people I worked with endeavoured in other ways to grasp onto identity; strong interest in cultural markers such as music or clothes, and their political concerns gravitated a lot around identity "labels".

Though billed as a "women's group", we did not discuss gender too much, rather the young people wanted to deal with bigger political issues, and in the end Brexit was a major theme of the performance. The group was thrown slightly on the second day, with the numbers dropping from quite a big group to just three. This reduction in numbers was for a variety of reasons, largely to do with the availability of the young people, in one case the participant felt a lot older than the other participants so was not comfortable, and in one case the project was not suitable for the young person's abilities. Yet in the end the three who stayed felt like they benefited from the smaller group, as it gave them more time to work out what they thought about things, and more space to try out the more advanced parts of the practice without feeling like they were being judged. We managed to pull together a performance on the last day, which was performed in the theatre company's studio space for their office staff, and a few industry professionals who happened to be in the building on that day.

The structure of the project was similar to Leeds, with voice training, games, discussion and improvisation on the first and second day, leading to creating and consolidating a piece of work on the third. In this group, political discussion was very present, with a lot of discussions arising spontaneously in the middle of drama exercises.

October 2016 – April 2017: Extended Practice in Ellesmere Port; “Term-Time Group”.

This final stage of the practice consisted of weekly, two-hour workshop on Wednesday evenings in Ellesmere Port. This was set up to see how different it would be to do an extended piece of practice, over a longer period of time than the week-long projects. The members of this group varied through the terms, but settled in January to three regular participants, aged between 17 and 19: Sinead, Joe and Amy. At the end of this period, we performed a piece at the theatre’s new work night. After this, we did a two-day project in the Easter holidays, with two of this core group (Sinead and Joe), and a new third member, Emma.

This period of the project felt strange, as if there was perpetually a future promise of it taking off that we never really reached. Enthusiasm in the sessions was not matched by actual attendance, as week by week other things came up in the teenager’s lives. Although each session as a stand-alone workshop was successful, with strong engagement with the practice and the political discussion, we could never build on each session as it never really felt like we had a clear group or ensemble. The group who eventually became the consistent attendees all went to sixth form together, studying for a BTEC in performing arts, and the sessions became an extension of their college day. In this sense, the sessions became an opportunity at times to help these individuals with their actor training rather than a coherent political project. Yet despite this, there were some valuable moments gained about the efficacy of voice

work with adolescents, with the opportunity to work closely with a couple of individuals over a longer period.

4.2 Voice Technique

Voice technique, deriving from the predominant voice theory in the UK of Linklater, Rodenburg and Berry, is largely unpractised outside of drama school or conservatoire contexts. Although it has been popularised through publication of their manuals, as Schlichter outlines, much of the use of these resources have been adopted by the “self-help” phenomenon, applying the training as part of expensive, courses of “training the self” in corporate contexts (Schlichter). Furthermore, as I outlined in Chapter 3, there is a suspicion in applied theatre, or theatre for social change settings about teaching technique. Deriving from fears of “depositing” knowledge on the participant, rather than theatre practice as a kind of co-production, there is an absence of actor training in non-professional theatre contexts. I devised my practice therefore out of a rejection that training is necessarily culturally domineering, and rather, I wanted to explore whether in certain contexts, this practice can be both liberating and politically efficacious.

A course in Linklater or Rodenburg technique is long, and there is much more to the practice than I could fit in the workshop time available. Accordingly, I stuck to simple, key principles that could be undertaken in shorter amounts of time, which I outline in this section. A more comprehensive and practical guide to their work can be found in their manuals *Freeing the Natural Voice* (Linklater 1976) and *The Right To Speak* (Rodenburg 2015). The fundamental part of their technique, for my practice, is the importance of noticing tensions and subsequently eliminating tensions. This is established through noticing the difference between the body in states of tension and in states of relaxation. Linklater introduces the ‘sigh of relief’ very early into her

practice, where participants experience the feeling of relaxation in a deep exhalation of breath. This relaxation draws a connection between breath and the body:

Step One: Participants directly experience and notice tension by raising their arms in the air and stretching as high as they can, holding their breath.

Step Two: Participants release the arms at the same time as exhaling, the arms then leading the spine, as the whole back falls forward (as if touching the toes).

Step Three: Participants then slowly roll back upwards.

Step Four: Repeat, gradually moving from an exhale of breath to a 'sigh on sound', where the participants vocalize the moment of release as if making a big, demonstrable sigh of relief.

This is a very initial but palpable and experiential way for participants to get rid of tensions, understand the difference between muscular tension and relaxation, and furthermore draw a direct connection between muscles, breath and the voice. As the workshop continues, the sigh of relief can be used more personally or politically by connecting this relief of tension with things that are making the participants feel tense. You can sigh out a bad day, for instance, sigh out what someone said to you, you can do collective sighs for each other, going around the circle identifying something for each participant to which everyone gets rid of with a sigh of relief.

A considerable amount of time early in the workshop should be spent on a longer period of tension and relaxation. This can be connected to understanding the body's breathing mechanisms. The breath is the fundamental principle of Rodenburg's practice, arguing that we should conceptualise speaking as supported by an 'arc of breath', beginning in the pelvic area, through the abdomen, chest, throat and then finally through the mouth (Rodenburg 115). As if throwing an object, she uses the example of an arrow, the voice should be sent in an arc, rather than speaking being supported by short gasps of breath. The arc of breath is about 'sending words out, and, to some extent, standing by what we say' (Rodenburg 115). Tensions through the body prevent this arc, trapping the voice.

Linklater argues that the freeing up of tension and allowing muscles in the body to relax allows for a better distribution of energy in the body. Energy is not wasted in states of tension in muscles that do not need to be used, and therefore instead this energy can contribute to voice production. In this sense, over a period of time, relaxation should energize participants, rather than make them feel drowsy. Linklater advises that at first participants may feel tired after relaxation exercises, but gradually this sleepiness should translate into energy. As well as this, relaxation can introduce participants to mechanisms of breathing, that is, to 'observe without controlling' the breath (Linklater, *Freeing* 25). Participants, either lying on the floor or sitting on a chair, are asked to methodically tense up a part of their body and then experience relaxing it, before tensing up the entire body, and then allowing it to relax into the floor, feeling heavy. The participants are told the only muscle now working should be the diaphragm, the unconscious muscle that supports breathing and the voice. This then leads to the participants being encouraged to focus on their breathing, noticing their breathing, and seeing, in this almost trance-like state, whether they can notice the involuntary breathing mechanism: where they no longer control their breath consciously, but the body uncontrollably yields to a new breath. At this level of relaxation, Linklater suggests that the participant vocalizes "a touch of sound", a deep 'huh' sound that feels like it comes from deep inside the stomach. This, for Linklater, is the beginning of finding the "natural voice" that comes from a place apart from tension. Part of this, is that this "touch of sound" is not found by listening, but rather through feeling the voice. Linklater specifically means a *touch* of sound, the feelings of vibrations in the body (Linklater, *Freeing* 35). This, she argues, helps reimagine the voice as established in the stomach, taking tension away from the throat.

From this initial feeling of vibrations in the middle of the body, Linklater training moves to amplifying vibrations across the body, which in turn should amplify sound. She sets

out two principles to these exercises on vibrations: that vibrations are murdered by tension; that vibrations need attention (Linklater, *Freeing* 41). I found that these exercises provided an immediate sense of experiencing the voice differently, and furthermore a way for the participants to easily identify the feeling of their voice inside different parts of the body:

Step One: The stomach. Participants breathe in, and then release the voice on a hum. They breathe in again, release the voice on a hum but then extend the voice into an 'ah'. When the voice transitions to 'ah', the participants place their hands on their stomach, and shake the stomach by pushing the top part of the abdominal in and out rapidly. The voice should have a 'shaky' quality. This causes the voice to vibrate through modifying the body rather than forcing it through the voice.

Step Two: The same thing is repeated, but this time moving up to the chest. Participants breathe in and out on a hum, transitioning to an 'ah'. On the 'ah' sound, they softly beat their chest with their fists, again creating the quality of vibration in the chest. This exercise particularly helps clear up the voice if it is feeling congested in the chest area.

Step Three: The vibrations move up to the mouth, with the participants exhaling on a hum, into an 'ah', then back to a hum, and with their fingers massage the lips, feeling the vibrations in that area, before returning to an 'ah'.

Step Four: The participants move up the body, from the stomach, via the chest, to the lips on one breath, repeating the various manufacturing of vibrations. They then take away the hand movements, and just produce the 'ah', seeing if there is now a different quality in the voice.

These exercises are fairly easy and accessible, can be enjoyable and allow the participants to experience something new. It also alerts the participants to how different parts of the body can produce different vocal qualities.

Another exercise that can be approached quite early in the training is identifying and eradicating tensions in specific places. The usual target areas are the jaw, throat and tongue. Linklater argues that too often we rely on these muscles, causing them unnecessary strain, rather than focusing on the breath. This often leaves them tense and harmed. Immediate attention can be paid to the jaw, for instance, by requesting that participants try and breathe through the mouth, allowing the mouth to remain

slack, rather than the jaw being clenched. Linklater and Rodenburg identify specific exercises for each muscle and embarking on the exercise usually reveals to the participant just how tense that area is without them previously realising.

These three muscles are part of Linklater's 'opening the channel' exercise. This is about creating a free 'channel' from the chest up to the head, through which the breath and voice escapes the body. Comparing this channel to a drinking straw, where the head is perpendicular to the channel of the throat, but can be extended upwards, Linklater's exercise attempts to recreate the feeling of the head in its extended position when in its regular place. The voice should exit the mouth, as if it were a straight line, and as if the voice were like water from a fountain. By moving the head into different places, the participant removes the support of the throat, meaning that support instead must come from the breath. This trains the participant to understand the throat just as a "channel", rather than something that supports the voice:

Step One: The head relaxes backwards, and the participant vocalizes a deep 'huh' sound. They beat their chest to feel the voice being produced here.

Step Two: The head returns to its regular, upright position, and the participant vocalizes a 'heh' sound, trying to place the voice at the top of the mouth. If the participant puts their finger on the top of their mouth they should be able to feel vibrations here.

Step Three: The head falls forward, facing the ground, and the participant vocalizes a high pitched 'hee' sound. The vibrations should be felt on the teeth.

Step Four: The participant experiments between these states, moving the head from each one. They try move between the states on one exhalation. They then keep the head stationary in its regular position, and try to emulate the feelings of the other state.

Step Five: The participant blends the 'huh-heh-hee' into one 'hey'.

Linklater argues that this exercise relaxes the throat through removing its ability to become tense in its attempt to support the voice. This creates a stronger connection to the centre of the body, which she writes should be the centre of vocal energy (Linklater, *Freeing* 79).

These principles of noticing tensions, releasing tensions and generating energy, I identified as the key components towards a political voice practice. My practice was hypothesized on the idea that the method of voice training could be harnessed for political means based on these concepts. As I will discuss in more depth later in the chapter, I found that voice training exercises provided the young people with a clear, physiological connection between feeling in their bodies that that they could or could not speak, and how they observed in the social world that young people are often prevented from speaking. Voice training furthermore was part of articulating this observation, in the language of the training itself, which in turn, was part of them feeling like they did have a voice.

4.3 Voice and Meaning

My practice was also based on an engagement with the non-linguistic voice. This was a playing with voice without the aid or structures of words and indeed without physicality: the form part of my method/form/content structure. The participants were guided through exercises with the aim of both making the voice the primary carrier of meaning, firstly through eliminating physicality, and secondly getting rid of language and words. This meant that the participants had to develop a broader vocal imagination, using their voices in ways they were not used to doing. This was a difficult task, with abstractness in the voice at times more challenging and embarrassing than the body (Hafler 4-5). Accordingly, part of the practice was about a gentle and gradual development of the group's vocal imagination towards a non-linguistic vocabulary to try and convey political meaning through the non-verbal voice alone. I found that voice training helped the young people articulate a non-linguistic performance mode to express their political thoughts and contestations.

In Aristotle's argument that humans are political animals because of the progression from voice to speech, a teleology of voice is set out, where voice ends in speech and language. But as Thomaidis writes, the non-verbal voice has not simply disappeared or fully become speech, but rather remains, troubling linguistic structures. The trajectory of voice to language is not complete, but rather remains a struggle: 'Voice-phone still resists language-logos' (Thomaidis *Theatre* & 21). This resistance is the resistance of the material voice, which, following Cavarero, has been dismissed in favour of language throughout history. This logocentrism is part of a wider undermining of the materiality of voice as feminine, and its relegation as unimportant symbolises a dismissal of the feminine and the female voice. As resistance to this relegation of the material voice, we worked on practice that elevated the subject's vocal sound to the primary point of focus for the audience, where meaning was grasped through the voice alone.

The exploration of the non-linguistic voice in this practice was not to find voice that escapes meaning, but rather, to try and find an expression through the voice that, through 'its apparent exteriority hits the core of the structure' (Dolar 28). A large amount of training the non-linguistic voice was stumbled upon by rejigging existing drama exercises, changing the focus from physicality to the voice. For example, games like mirroring, where the participants in pairs copy each other's movements was changed to copying the voice. The game of gibberish was the easiest way to access the non-linguistic voice, and accordingly I used it as an opening to the project with several of the groups. In this game, person A asks person B a question: B answers in gibberish or a made-up language, and C translates what they said back into the language the room understands. Yet, how quickly this game still relied on regular linguistic structures demonstrated how difficult it was for participants to use the non-verbal voice, and how quickly, following Dolar, the voice gives in to signification. This was the first game I played at the women's project in Ellesmere

Port. At first, there was a good engagement in the game, and it served a good “ice-breaker”, or rather, something that got people immediately engaged in the voice. I tried to progress the game, asking them to ask each other more thoughtful and interesting questions, hoping that the voice would follow. While the questions got more complex, at this stage the voice did not match this complexity. The gibberish responses were very unadventurous, mainly just variations on ‘blah blah blah’ – the go-to sign post noise of ‘gibberish’, a gibberish sound that is still based in regular linguistic practice. Partly just nervousness and embarrassment of the new participants, of course, but also perhaps a sign of not being used to experimenting with the voice in a more abstract, or non-linguistic way.

Most of the early games in this women’s project had a similar reaction, a nervousness about experimenting with the voice. We played a variation of character game where the participants lead from a body part, seeing how that affects the way they move. We adapted it so that the body part also had a sound. The young people found it very difficult to come up with sounds from the body parts. It was clear there was a reluctance to sustain these sounds over the length of their walk, rather they would do it once or twice, look around embarrassed, and then maybe do it again if they felt they ought to. This signified a block, which would remain present across the couple of days, of thinking too much before doing. The young people spent a long time thinking of a sound rather than just doing it in immediate reaction. This let them second guess themselves, as well as ‘try to be clever’, coming up with a sound that was very representative of the body part in a sort of descriptive way. For instance, the ear was a buzzing sound, the knee a clicking sound, the legs a hum reminiscent of skipping.

The desire to be clear, or make sure everything that they did had a clear meaning, often blocked the expression of the voice. But in exercises where the young people did not have time to think about what was going to come out of their mouth, the voice

was much less self-conscious. In an exercise called Energy Circle, in the women's group, the participants had to send a loud 'hah' around the circle, clapping the hand of the person next to them, saying hah in unison. I played around with this by asking them to channel different emotions, moods and intentions, e.g. upset, angry, happy. I then asked them to take responsibility for the mood, where anyone in the group could change it and the others follow. They took this responsibility without question, taking each other's suggestions and knowing the right moment to change the feeling. Here they were a lot more imaginative and playful with their voices, because we had taken away the time to think. They just had to react to each other without any time to question what was going on, or any time to think of something 'good' or 'funny' to do. Having only a few minutes ago been embarrassed by using their voices in this creative way, now they were using their voice to react to each other in imaginative and expressive ways.

In Leeds and the women's project in Ellesmere Port I assumed that it would be best to start with these more regular drama exercises as a warm-up to the Linklater or Rodenburg voice training, based on a suspicion that the young people would be used to this kind of thing, whereas the voice training would be much more alien or embarrassing. However, in the term-time project I did in Ellesmere Port I reversed this order, beginning with the voice training before moving onto the non-linguistic voice. In the two-day workshop in the holidays that came at the end of this project, the first morning was entirely devoted to very specific voice training. After drawing the voice (discussed below), we started with relaxation and went through the main exercises I have listed: breathing, sighs of relief, releasing tension and vibrations. Out of the three participants, Sinead and Joe had been to previous sessions and had some experience, but this was Emma's first time. All three however joined in fully with the exercises and did not have much trouble engaging. The effects were immediate: after a series of spine rolls and sighs of relief, the participants walked around the room

expressing how they “felt light”, and I observed that they looked taller. They were all surprised by the change in each other’s posture.

After a period of relaxation, which they said had made them feel calm rather than tired, we began the specific voice exercises that help to get rid of tensions in the face, jaw, tongue and throat. They committed to the exercises and did not feel embarrassed, and discussed afterwards how they had loads of energy, “felt louder without pushing”, or felt that they were beginning to understand the different parts of the body and how sound is produced better. We then took a break for dinner, and after this began work on non-linguistic voice games such as ensemble block (where the participants move around the room doing a gesture and sound simultaneously), soundscape scenes (closing your eyes and creating a scene just with the voice of things like the park, or your school), and machine rhythm (where they make the sound of a certain kind of machine together, just with the voice). Compared to previous workshops, where it had been quite difficult to get the participants to just use their voice, in this workshop all three were ready for it and un-fazed. After doing the soundscape scenes, we discussed the difference between creating literal sounds of the location (waves on the beach for instance) or sounds that represent how you feel in that place. The participants felt like they were doing a mixture of these two kinds of sounds and were taking responsibility collectively for making sure both happened.

To explore this differentiation further, we did the machine rhythm exercise, but I got them to create machines like the “anger machine” or the “happiness machine”. Here it became clear that the creation of non-linguistic vocalisations correlated with some of the sounds we had been making in the morning during voice training. The happiness machine drew on pleasurable sighs of relief; the angry machine created sound through clenched and tensed jaws, teeth and throat; or the anxiety machine sounded a long, high pitched hum, with a closed mouth, that never got to fully vocalize

into an open sound. In this sense, beginning with the voice technique gave the participants a non-linguistic vocabulary of the voice, and how the voice feels in the body in different emotional states, that they could then draw on when creating this work. The states of the muscles used for voice production could be used to help create feeling, rather than intellectually deciding prior to vocalization. This muscular vocabulary both comes from and allows the voice to be free of the pressure of having to think of something. Further than this, this training also provided a vocabulary for creating sounds with the intention of being political, as I will explore later in the chapter. In the early stages of each project, the connection between creating non-linguistic sounds and political discussion was not explicit. The connection was made more gradually, and it was in this sense that voice training became the bridge between the non-linguistic voice and politics. Voice training made an explicit connection between the sounds the voice makes, aside from words, and the politics of why young people do not feel listened to. The exercise described in the next section began to clarify this connection.

4.3.1 Drawing the Voice

In all workshops, the participants began the voice training process with Linklater's 'Drawing the Voice' exercise. The participants are asked to draw two pictures: the first, 'my voice'; the second, 'how I wish my voice to be'. These two drawings were an opportunity to begin discussing habitus, without me literally explaining the concept of habitus. I have included some examples of these drawings in the appendix. Through the drawings the young people could identify how their social and cultural background had manifested in their voice, and furthermore express how they felt about their voice: their habitus. The second drawing, of what they wanted their voice to be, allowed them to express the kind of voice they felt they could not have because of various personal inadequacies. Here, the principles of voice training explained how the gap

between the first and the second drawings was not personal inadequacy, but something that the participants were being sociologically denied.

Encouraged to try and keep their drawings abstract rather than a literal picture, the participants have an opportunity to frame their voice visually in an imaginative way, beginning to separate the voice from the intellect and express it more creatively. Though in some workshops the young people found it quite difficult to keep their drawings abstract, relying on literal signifiers to do with cultural background or things like fire representing energy, some participants found that keeping their drawing less literal helped them express their voice more clearly than trying to describe with words. In the women's group, Sophie remarked how she finds when she tries to articulate something about herself personally, there is a gap between her thoughts and how she expresses them. However, she found great relief in the feeling that the other people in her group 'got' her drawings. Equally, it was also an exercise in clarity for the subject themselves. Jade remarked that a lot of what was in the first drawing wasn't clear until she did the second one. What she wanted her voice to be really clarified what she felt about her voice now: it was in looking back that the first drawing became clear. Accordingly, we joked about the drawing being much clearer than speaking: whenever Jade can't get her words out properly, she need only hold up her drawings.

In the women's group, the drawings confirmed a disconnect between what you want to sound like, and what you then think is heard. A general unhappiness with their present voice; described as monotone or lacking identity, the voices the young people wanted seemed to indicate something that was freer or wilder. Lara for instance, used straight lines in her first drawing to represent her perceived monotone voice. These lines were interrupted and blocked by large black rectangles, representing times when she stutters or can't get her words out. In between these lines were colours of

expressiveness, expressiveness and wildness in her head that do not translate into the voice itself. Kiera's two drawings on the surface looked quite similar: a mess of wavy lines all in the same colour. However, she asserted the significant difference was the direction of the voice. In the first drawing the voice was fragmented, the lines are going off in different directions in an aimless way. In the second, there was a direction, and aim of the voice, which was presented in a kind of matrix: it goes and returns, it continues rather than trailing off, it isn't limited but fluid.

What became clear across these drawings was an association of the current voice with thought, the internal, private voice; and the second drawing, the one they want, was associated with expression. They felt like their present voice as something interior, but the voice they wanted was something free from this internal cage, something that could escape the head, as it were, and connect with others. The desire expressed was a desire towards a voice that they did not think about, that was not trapped by thought. The imagining of an ideal voice that was external and separate from them gave this second drawing a utopian quality. Considering utopias not as some fantasy, idealized future place, but, via Mannheim, utopian ideas as something unrealized, that when realized will break with reality as we know it, the concept becomes practical ideas that could become tomorrow's reality (Kumar 174). Jill Dolan theorises utopian performance, or utopian performatives, a moment in which performance lifts both performers and audience slightly above the present: an 'affective vision of how the world might be better' (Dolan 6). The second drawing is an unrealized idea of voice: yet the exercises and furthermore performance we enacted during the workshop are brief moments of its realization, instances of utopian performatives. Politics here manifests in a defiance against the first drawing, that the voice must always remain this way, that habitus cannot change. The attempt to move towards the second drawing contests how the participants have been denied this voice.

In the term-time project, I introduced a third drawing: where the participants would draw an outline of a person and then identify on it places of tension, or rather, places on their body that they thought prevented drawing one from becoming drawing two. It became clear through this that the participants largely felt that their problems were a mental block, a tension in their mind that prevented them from having the voice they wanted. This was a good introduction to beginning voice training, where I could introduce the idea of focusing on the body not the mind, seeing whether working on tensions in the body could help the participants to move closer to their second picture, rather than something they must deal with psychologically. It also presented the second drawing as an attainable ideal, with practical steps towards its realization.

4.3.2 Blindfolds

We often worked with blindfolds to try to change experiences of listening, and the effect of using the voice alone both on the speaker and the hearer. As addressed in Chapter 3, often in applied theatre practice, workshops begin with physicality and in fact take away the voice to take away the various ways in which the voice is loaded with culture, nationality, class, gender etc. This principle helps equalise the space, meaning that those with limited language can participate, or reduces the feeling of difference between the participants. However, in this research it was these precise differences that manifest in the voice that I wanted to pin-point and address. I wanted the participants to notice and confront these differences, rather than bypass them. In other words, confronting how habitus manifests in the voice. To notice these habits, we had to train ourselves in listening to what we hear (Boal, *Games* 92). I did this through games that took away physicality, leaving behind the voice.

The well-used blindfolds game as a trust exercise was adapted as an initial way for the participants to place the voice at the forefront of meaning and understanding. Usually in pairs, one participant will lead the other around, who is blindfolded or has their eyes shut. We integrated the voice into this, where the blindfolded participant would be following the voice rather than the touch of their partner. The voice was the only indication of presence of the other. The leader played around with different voices, different expressions, or different intentions, such as telling a story, stream of consciousness, having a rant etc. Relying on the voice alone enhanced or aggravated the feeling or atmosphere being created. In the pilot session in Leeds, for example, there were completely different reactions to this exercise, dependent on the participant and their relationship to their partner. Lauren, who was partnered with the support worker, felt a really strong sense of trust for her partner after the game. The voice, a calm, clear and reassuring voice, heightened this experience, and she felt comfort being led by that voice. She declared afterwards that she “felt what trust meant”. On the other hand, with some of the men in the group, who used this game as an opportunity to annoy each other, the voice amplified the sense of antagonism between them. After they had been led by the voice, most of them said it made the experience “worse”: scarier and less about trust. Here, the presence of the voice becomes something that cannot be ignored. With their eyes shut, the blindfolded participant cannot ignore the voice, even if the voice is uttering something they do not want to hear. This raises an interesting tension between the ways that voices, particularly these participants’ voices (as they made clear in discussions we had) who felt like they are ignored and not listened to, and the actual difficulty in not listening to the present, material voice.

In each of the groups it was clear that this focus on the voice was unfamiliar to them. The participants who regularly attended youth theatres said they did a lot more work on physicality, Lucy for instance described the voice as largely neglected in previous

drama classes she had done. Equally, a lot of the participants felt under-confident in their vocal abilities: Sophie describing her voice as “weak”, or Joe thinking he talked “too fast”. It was clear that working on the voice was rare for them and was also useful for them in their personal lives, especially for those participants who had thoughts about working in the theatre. The blindfold game accordingly was a good opportunity for the participants to gain confidence in just using their voice and seeing the power of their voice. Their partner, the blindfolded participant, became dependent on their voice and had to listen to them, despite any perceived differences or insecurities about the voice. Whether the voice was calm or aggravating, it had to be listened to, and in this sense, it became a voice that mattered (Couldry 1). Though this exercise was not explicitly political, it began shifting the participants’ focus away from worrying about what their voices said, to thinking about the sound of the voice. As the workshops progressed, this shift became more integrated with the political. What I investigate in the rest of this chapter is how this clear focus on the voice supported the young people articulating the social and the political, both linguistically and non-linguistically, and further, offered an opportunity of political resistance.

4.4 Political Engagement

As the workshops were framed around ‘political voice’, in all cases the participants expected in some way to talk about politics. Having political discussions proved useful either to get a sense of the individual participants, discovering either where they stood politically, or to see how much experience of politics they had; or to gather content for the performance. However, I am more sceptical that having political discussions proved political in and of themselves, that is, the act of talking about politics translating into the participants feeling or experiencing the political. This is following the ideas of Campbell (2008) and Diorio (2011) outlined in Chapter 2, that entering into politics is about contestation rather than consensus, and furthermore Rancière’s definition of

politics as dissensus. Rather than entirely dismiss political discussion however, as I developed my practice I tried to incorporate political content into how we did voice training, eliminating this separation between the two. Furthermore, political discussion was key to establishing clear points of frustration and anger in the young people's lives that we could use for creating performance.

Richard Sennett argues that in the 20th Century, there was a shift from public individual to private individual (Sennett 4). Social relations became modelled on intimate relationships between each other, rather than on public appearances. This has led to a politics of consensus, where political disagreement in the public sphere could threaten to harm private relationships. Nicholas Ridout aligns this situation with Rancière's "post-democracy", a situation (post totalitarianism in the 20th Century), where the concept of democracy in itself, 'abolishes in advance any future political conflict in the name of utopian consensus, in which dispute, disagreement, conflict – in short the very people (the demos) after whom democracy is named – are made to disappear' (Ridout 19). Consensus is the very disappearance of politics. In Rancière's definition, politics is not the discussion of legislative or representational matters, nor is it a discussion of the social positioning of individuals or groups within the social field, but rather, the moment where the field itself is disrupted, a moment of interruption to the regular activity that is carried out in the name of politics. This interruption is enacted by the part that have no part (the demos), whose enactment in and of itself questions the existing order:

Political dissensus is not a discussion between speaking people who would confront their interests and values. It is a conflict about who speaks and who does not speak, about what has to be heard as the voice of pain and what has to be heard as an argument on justice (Rancière 'The Thinking of' 2).

Furthermore, Rancière argues that this moment of interruption is not about a recognition of identity, but rather a challenge to that very identity that pinned them down to their place and habitus (Rancière qtd Blechman, Chari and Hasan 292-293).

Accordingly, politics is not an affirmative moment, but rather entirely a moment of contestation. I will discuss how political discussion at times in my practice was closer to being affirmative and consensual, whereas voice training was an opportunity for dissensus, through contesting the participant's habitus.

The usefulness of sitting in a circle and discussing politics of course to some extent depends on the young people, and how usual or unusual it is for them to be able to express their opinion. Furthermore, how young people conceive of political talk, and how they enter into political talk of course is a matter of habitus, the interaction of a person's socially structured behaviours with the context in which they are acting. For some young people, for instance, political discussion may be conceived as an opportunity for contestation that they are regularly denied: in school, at work or within their friendship groups. At the pilot sessions, for instance, there was a high level of excitement and energy in entering political talk. This group of young people were much more conscious of firstly, not being listened to by adults in their lives, and secondly, willing to openly disagree with other people in the space. For instance, there was a heated discussion about what the age of voting should be, with one member of the group suggesting 6 years old, which was immediately disputed by the others. Political discussion in this context was an opportunity to disagree with your friends and contemporaries, rather than consensus forming.

In contrast to this, in the women's project the political discussion was comprised of a series of unrelated opinions, without much reference to other people's points. A number of the participants in this group were used to polite political talk and debate in school, premised on what Diorio describes as the liberal principle of the sovereignty of the individual's opinion and right to participate (Diorio 504). In the case of Lara, this kind of political debate was a significant part of her friendship group, describing how her and friends would discuss news items to come to an opinion together. In the first

session, after initiating the discussion on a question about what participants think having a political voice is, the conversation moved quickly to a more general discussion, each person giving their general opinion about politics, rather than debating this concept of political voice. It was as if political voice has already been translated into 'my opinion': how you get opinions, and how that relates to our identity. This group of young people saw their opinions as very much tied to identity, and the strong attachment to defining their identity became the focus. Not that the conversation necessarily needed to talk about political voice, but the reduction of discussion to individual opinions that were strongly connected to the individual's identity removed the possibility of contestation. Contesting the other's opinion in this context would have been to contest and question their identity, and accordingly cause much more offense than any of these young people were prepared to cause. What resulted, therefore, was a series of head nodding after each person made their point, a support group rather than a political debate, that was premised on the right of the individual to speak and have an opinion. Following Diorio, this is incompatible with political discussion based on contestation, where even the right to participate is something up for debate. In this sense, whilst this kind of discussion might be therapeutically beneficial for individuals to have a space to externalise their opinions, it is not a political space of contestation and dissensus.

To avoid these kind of conversations, I tried to frame political discussion in the term time Ellesmere Port workshops through practical exercises. I did one exercise with three participants, Joe, Sinead and Amy where they had to identify whether they agreed or disagreed with a statement. After I read a statement, the participants placed themselves in the room, one side was agree, the other side was disagree, and the centre was neutral or "I don't know". After they have placed themselves somewhere, I asked them each what they thought. The physical element of this game, where the participants have to immediately identify with their bodies what they think before

having an opportunity to discuss, encouraged a level of disagreement and contestation within the group. It was physically displayed that there were different opinions and disagreeing with someone was an act of walking to another part of the room, rather than arguing with them. This meant that in the first instance, there was a right to disagree and not to form a consensus: the goal of the game was not to all find each other in the same part of the room. Interestingly, I chose for them to display their disagreement physically, rather than vocally, and if I were to run this exercise again, I would see what effect having a non-linguistic sound for agree or disagree had on their willingness to be in opposition to each other. Physicality was a good starting point, but with more time I would allow this to progress to sounds before then moving to the stage of discussion.

The participants felt like this exercise encouraged them to listen to people when they didn't agree. Seeing someone else in another part of the room or seeing them walk to another part of the room if they changed their mind, was a physical rupture that Amy said, "made you think about it again". Sinead said that when someone stood in another part of the room, she would find herself agreeing with aspects of what they said without agreeing with the statement as a whole. The layout of a spectrum of agreement to disagreement visually allowed the participants to slightly move if their opinion was shifted by the other members of the group, without having to declare that they had fully changed their minds.

Yet, though the bodies displayed disagreement with each other, in discussion the participants were much more reluctant to contest each other's opinions. When each person would explain why they had taken a certain position, it was rarely in opposition to what someone else had said, but again firmly grounded in it just being their opinion. In discussing the disagreements in the room, all three participants wanted to make it clear that these were not the result of some people being wrong and some people

being right, but rather a matter of difference in perspective, where no opinion can be “wrong”. This seems problematic, when some opinions clearly did come into conflict with each other, and where it potentially could be harmful to not consider the other’s opinion as wrong. For instance, when discussing the statement: “I think young women are more insecure than young men”, Amy and Sinead (as young women) were adamant that they thought this was true. Joe remained relatively neutral, barely contributing his opinion. Yet, in a previous session, Joe had argued that there was no longer any gender inequality, and that men or women more or less had the same rights. In that discussion, Amy was on her own without Sinead, and must not have been confident enough to disagree with him. In this second context, with the support of Sinead, the discussion did not happen because Joe chose not to disagree with them. The lack of willing to disagree prevented Amy from challenging Joe on his opinions of feminism, with this view simply remaining a different, but equally valid, perspective.

This game did help us come up with some clear political demands. The agree or disagree of the game streamlined the process of working out what issues were important to them, and we quickly established young people and employment rights as the theme of our piece. The physicality of the game let the participants see, not just agreement or disagreement, but similarity of experience when it came to things like job prospects, low wages, and career uncertainty. In view of this, the content of political discussion became more useful for creating content for the end performance, namely the creation of ensemble text that all the participants would speak. Within the performance of this text would be an opportunity for different voices to agree or disagree with what was being said (which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 7). Political discussion amongst each other was not a useful place for, in Rancière’s terms, politics to happen, as it too easily encouraged or led to consensus. Instead, I argue in the next section, that it was in performance that dissensus could happen and

politics manifested. This partly was possible because of how voice technique had allowed the participants to perform their voices differently.

4.5 Performance

Ridout suggests that performance, specifically theatre, can create temporary spaces of public appearance, where a 'democratic resistance to the threat of the post-democratic future' (Ridout 19) could be articulated. Rancière refers to politics as aesthetic, in the sense that it is a 'reconfiguration of one's body, of one's lived world, of one's space and time' (Rancière qtd Blechman, Chari and Hasan 294). Dismissing the idea of a 'political life', he instead states there is only a 'political stage' on which actions take place, and this stage happens 'out of place' in places that are not meant to be political (Rancière 'The Thinking of '4). James Thompson argues that the performance space, whether through a theatrical event or an applied theatre workshop, can be the space on which politics is enacted, that is, where an interruption happens. The applied theatre workshop, for Thompson, is already political because through its very happening, it already contests the existing political distribution, because it is inherently about the participation of the part with no part (Thompson, *Affects* 175). Rather than identifying the political in my practice through the different discussions we had, I suggest that politics emerged in the short performances we created, through a reconfiguring of who is listened to, who is looked at, and who cannot be un-heard.

The regular performance convention established for the piece was to blindfold the audience. This was firstly to shift the focus of the piece away from the physical body to the voice, where the voice would be primary place of meaning. But at the same time, the fact that the audience could only hear, that they were made vulnerable through lack of sight, and that the voice could not be ignored, also repositioned the

performers. In a society where women are so used to being looked at, where women or young people should be seen and not heard, the blindfolds created a space where they were the lookers and they were the speakers. In most of our political discussions, across the workshops, the young people described a situation where they felt like they did not have a political voice, not because they did not know what to say, but because they felt strongly that they were not listened to. In the pilot group, one participant said people only listen to her voice when she sings; when she speaks not only is she not listened to, she is often interrupted. Emily in the Leeds project remarked how she had to listen to teachers in school, accept their opinion without discussion, and furthermore how she felt like this attitude persisted at University. The participants in the summer group believed that older generations think they are less informed about politics than they truly are, and if they actually listened to what young people said, they might change their mind about them being apathetic.

Farinati and Firth propose a politics of listening as essential to feminist discourses, arguing that listening 'provides an alternative to the dominant quality of the gaze' and 'despotic qualities of speech' (Farinati and Firth 69). They argue that being looked at, the gaze, prevents mutual engagement, and furthermore is something that objectifies and disciplines (Farinati and Firth 70). The performance at the end of each of these projects accordingly ended with a group of blindfolded adults, some of whom had direct relationships with the young people as their social workers or mentors, in the centre of the room. Unable to move because of the blindfold, and the inability that anyone has to physically close their ears, made it extremely difficult for the adults to not listen to the young people. Here, the young people, as the part that are not listened to, contested this configuration, demanding to be listened to, interrupting the regular order.

The voice itself was also reconfigured and repositioned through performance. The performance space is an opportunity to perform differently, to re-perform one's voice, breaking the regulatory system that normally governs how one speaks or vocalizes. Marvin Carlson outlines three definitions of performance: a display of skill; a recognized and culturally coded behaviour; and the success of an activity (Carlson 72). The performance of political voice for these young people, who talk of being disparaged vocally, would normally fall into the latter categories: unconscious, repeated behaviour, or the need to consciously perform well or successfully to be deemed worthy of speaking. Yet, following Carlson, a performance space can allow for the subject to configure the act of voicing politics away from being judged by its success, to being observed as something performed. Political performance in this context therefore takes the focus away from a judgement of subject's ability to perform politics, but to their ability to perform, to display skill. However, skill in the context of my practice, because of the focus on the material voice, is reconfigured from the success of their speech, to the skills of their voice that has come about through voice training.

The conscious performance space can also disrupt the second category: that of regulatory behaviour. In the context of gender performance, Judith Butler argues that parody can be used to reveal both something that is performed, as well as the contingency of this performance. Using the example of drag, Butler states that this deliberate imitative performance reveals the contradicting nature between ideas of "inner" and "outer", that is, between inner "truths" and external appearance. It is not only that the outer appearance contradicts an inner essence, but also that this inner feeling no longer can be prioritised as the original; it is exposed as something externally inscribed and contingent too. Parody in this sense can be subversive as it is not a parody of an original, but rather 'parody is of the very notion of an original', an 'imitation without origin' (Butler, *Gender* 175).

Parodic performance was a tool in the women's group's performance. The piece was established around the conceit of a TV show, called 'Your Voice', where young people were invited to speak about politics, but in the very act, they were cut off and prevented from speaking. This was then contrasted with adult's voices, voices of politicians, that were allowed to vocalize, but empty of saying anything meaningful to the young people. Parody was used to "act" these adult's voices, as well as undermine and satirise what adults think of young people's voices. For instance, the TV show opened with the host asking Sophie, as the contestant, questions that could not be answered with a simple yes or no answer. When Sophie tried to answer, the host undermined her responses by playing back different versions of Sophie's "voice" (supplied by other members of the group) that contradict. Here Sophie, the young person, was framed as someone not to be trusted, or someone who cannot form her own idea. The host does not accept the idea that someone's answer is more complicated, and Sophie's protestations are drowned out and effectively stopped by the sound of white noise created by the rest of the group [TRACK 3].

However, in another section of the performance, Sophie was able to reconfigure the perceptions of her voice through a conscious parodic performance of her own voice. Describing her own voice as gentle and complaining that because of the softness and femininity of her voice, people often do not take her opinions seriously, thinking she is "airy" or has her head in the clouds, Sophie manipulated these qualities in her voice to make a political point. In a parodic TV commercial, where the group create a fake charity advert to "sponsor a young person" after the results of the EU referendum, Sophie used her "soft" voice to impersonate the soporific, manipulative voices regular to these kinds of adverts [TRACK 1]. Sophie's voice, one of the reasons why she thinks people do not take her seriously, was reconfigured through performance as something performed. This demonstrated the contingent nature of it, demonstrated it

as something that is not natural to her, and therefore not intrinsic to any impression of her. Further than this, this soft voice was then used to make a political point. In an interview after the project, Sophie no longer just described her voice as “soft”:

My voice is... soft. Erm. But powerful in the way it needs to be. I think I use it wisely and it... erm... I know how to use it to be effective. And I know that it can be. Erm, so even though it's quite, erm, soft and light in its actual sound, I think the way that I use it and what I use it for is actually quite strong, so.

Sophie has appropriated her soft voice as something that can be politically useful, and in this sense, it becomes strong and powerful.

Similarly, in another scene, another young person, Lara, created a soundscape based on the impersonation of a politician [TRACK 2]. Not using any words, Lara impersonated the politician with a simple “blah-blah” sound, repeating this phrase in different pitches and at different speeds, pretending to make an important speech. Each of these “speeches” were followed by over-the-top applause by the other members of the group. In this section, Lara undermined the idea of the naturally good public speaker, the male politician, by parodying his voice as just the same word over and over again. She mimicked the way the politician manipulates the tone, pitch and speed of the voice to produce a good sound, but simultaneously revealed this voice to be devoid of content. Furthermore, by repeating ‘blah-blah’, she undermined the need for the kind of vocabulary or jargon that comes from “expertise” in order to make a political statement. Accordingly, this performance demonstrated that being a “good speaker” is not something natural, but something that can be imitated, and furthermore can be imitated by someone who is not usually considered a good speaker: a female adolescent.

The political efficacy of our performances came from how the participants repositioned themselves from people who are not listened to, to people who demand to be heard. At the same time as this, they undermined existing notions of “good

speaking”, revealing the contingent and performative nature of the established political voice. There is a further political dimension to this work that ran simultaneously to performance: voice training that provided the vocal and bodily means to articulate the political in performance.

In my analysis of how the voice can perform dissensus, and how the material voice can provide an opportunity for politics beyond political discussion, voice training has underpinned this point. Engaging in voice technique was the key to engaging with the embodied material voice in a way that demonstrates how it is sociologically and culturally shaped. Furthermore, voice training provided the skill and technique to undermine the idea that good political voices come naturally to some speakers, demonstrating that all speakers have the potential to perform their voice in this way. In these final two sections, I will demonstrate more explicitly how voice training in my practice was the bridge between the voice and the enactment of politics, through how the training both allowed the participant to draw direct connections between the two; and finally, provided the participants with a vocabulary of the material voice that created moments of political performance.

4.6 Connecting Terms

During this research, I have discovered that the young people refer to terms when engaging in voice technique that carry connotations of the political. That is, these terms, being used in a largely physiological way, connect to terminology we use about political matters, perhaps in a more metaphoric way. Accordingly, we can examine these terms, how they relate to voice technique, and how they can therefore be used to integrate the political directly into the practice.

4.6.1 Pressure

The sigh of relief exercise draws a direct relationship between physical release and more psychological feelings of stress, anxiety or tenseness. In this sense, it is both a physical and mental release of pressure, where the holding in of the breath creates feelings of pressure in the body which are then released. One participant in the term time project, Sinead, as someone who suffers heavily from anxiety and mental pressures, particularly found this exercise as psychologically freeing. Each week she looked forward to doing this exercise, remarking afterwards “I needed that” or “I feel so much better”. One week, we did the exercise three times in a row, each time increasing the pressure of holding the breath for longer and tensing the arms even more. As we pushed it further on the third time, she exclaimed “Oh my god, it’s so heavy”, her voice incredibly tight, high pitched and restrained. We then released, exhaling powerfully on sound. After releasing, her voice was full of laughter and pleasure: “I’ve been so tense all day” she laughs, the feeling of relief palpable and clear in the joy in her voice. This specific day had been particularly stressful for her, and this exercise let her let go of everything to move onto the workshop.

In the following week, we did a Boal exercise called gravity, where participants notice and physically experience gravity on their body as they walk around the space. Gravity eventually defeats them, as they are pushed down to the ground by the weight of it, ending up lying on the floor immobile. Here the participants are noticing and physically feeling the weight of everything they carry every day, the amount of work they do every day just to hold themselves up straight and walk around. Then, the participants find a way to fight back against this pressure, eventually finding their way back to their feet, and then experiencing the opposite; the feeling of lightness and weightlessness, as if they could fly. After completing this exercise, Sinead felt as if

she was genuinely taller and lighter, as the act of fighting back against this pressure made her feel weightless. We connected the breath to these feelings: Sinead talked about how the breath really demonstrated how much pressure you are under, as if you are feeling stressed it is hard to hide it in how you are breathing. Stress leads to faster, uncontrollable, short breaths. When you are calm, the breath can take its time. Being able to combat the feelings of stress with the long, calm sigh of relief could be one way of taking control of your breath and fighting back against this pressure.

We related this discussion of pressure to the pressures she and the other participants felt as young people in terms of jobs and careers and whenever they had to think about the future. Here the feeling of lack of breath, or short, quick breaths was related to those feelings when under pressure in specific situations: thinking about the future, attending a job interview, confronting an employer. The breath connected pressure, caused by a social/economic situation, as being both a psychological feeling and a physiological feeling. Sinead created a character who we put into stressful, pressurised situations such as job interviews, or had to speak to her employer about something like asking for time off, and we played around with how the character breathed in these situations. In the initial interactions the breathing was fast, short and hard to keep control of. The character then re-faced the situations after taking the time to control their breathing, exhaling a long and pleasurable sigh of relief. Changing the breathing patterns helped the character confront these situations and helped them feel more physiologically calm so that they could, for instance, challenge their employer about a problem. Through this fictional character, Sinead demonstrated how a physiological response could help with feeling under pressure, and though of course not eradicating the problem completely, begin the process of confronting and challenging the issue.

4.6.2 Noticing

A substantial part of voice technique is noticing how the body feels: noticing tensions and noticing their eradications. In one session in the term-time project, Sinead asked me how you know if you feel tense. Often, it is not until you experienced being relaxed. What Linklater and Rodenburg technique aims to do is demonstrate how a state of tension, something that the participant might claim they naturally do, is learnt behaviour. This training often means that participants experience the feeling of muscular relaxation in certain parts of their body for the first time, and it is through this that they notice the tension. Several sessions later after this initial question, Sinead remarked that doing voice practice gives her the space to relax, and in this space, she is then able to notice the changes to her body.

Noticing for the first time that which seems natural but is socially structured is an initial part of political engagement. Emily, in the Leeds project, for instance discussed how her political awareness came from noticing things that were wrong in the world, and once she noticed them she felt like she had to do something about them. Similarly, noticing vocal restrictions as being part of bodily tensions that can be eradicated is the first step to being able to change these restrictions. Emily for instance, described how taking part in this project had made her start noticing times when she tensed up her muscles for no clear reason in her day-to-day life. Sinead furthermore elaborated that through noticing the changes to her voice, each session, she was beginning to feel stronger, freer and more confidently vocally. This principle of noticing is the first step in contesting that voices must remain structurally oppressed. By noticing the way these oppressions manifest physiologically, the participants can connect this to the social and political. They notice that as a woman they hold their stomach inwards, for example, or as a young person they think their voice is too loud. Emily noticed that her perceived lack of range was not a physical problem with her voice; range was

something she could train, but a problem of how people perceive her voice. This begins the process of contesting this perception.

4.6.3 Power and Support

Voice technique is largely about support and training the muscular structures of the body so that the voice (produced in the larynx) feels supported and strengthened. The voice's power: its ability to be loud without being strained, or soft and still resonant and projected, comes from this support base. We spent a lot of time focusing on support, either through understanding breathing and the diaphragm, or to feeling strong in other parts of the body such as the chest. An exercise about 'sending the voice', finding Rodenburg's 'arc of breath', was particularly useful for allowing participants to experience how their voice travels in space and remains strong [TRACK 13]. In partners, participants throw a ball to each other. They then match the arc of the ball's journey with their voice, vocalizing on a 'm-ah' sound. As the hand flows backward in suspension, the participant begins the 'm' part of the sound on their lips, and then as the arms comes forward and releases the ball, the mouth opens into the 'ah'. Once they have got used to this feeling, with the help of the ball, we take away the balls, and in a straight line, they send their voice across the room, imagining the ball throw. In the Leeds project, I related this exercise directly to the sense of feeling listened to, exploring whether the strength found through this exercise could influence their political voice. At the start of the session I got each participant to write down a political statement, something that they felt strongly about. After the final part of the exercise, where they had sent their sound to the wall without the tennis balls, I then asked them, all together to speak the statements that each of them had written. Because the participants imagined sending the ball, the statements were spoken by strong, supported voices, and all four participants sounded louder and more powerful than they did, in say, political discussion. Rather than thinking about how to make a political statement sound strong, they focused on the physiological process of sending

the voice, and accordingly strength was found physically rather than something they applied on top of the statement.

Sophie, from the women's project in Ellesmere Port, spoke extensively about a correlation between strength in her voice and in her "political voice". Describing herself as having a "weak" voice, both soft in tone and also prone to nervousness:

I used to get quite nervous with my voice, and I used to do the whole like, you when like you erm, when you get nervous and you do the whole swallowing thing and you're like oh, and your voice cracks and stuff like that. That used to happen to me, and I would panic about that a lot. And erm, I feel like that came from it that stemmed from this feeling of like oh, not, you know, what I have to say isn't important and all that stuff.

Here Sophie draws a direct connection with her voice feeling weak, cracking and her mouth getting dry, with the feeling of not having a strong, important political opinion. During the workshops then, by starting with the voice and building up her vocal strength, Sophie felt more comfortable talking about politics as well. She told me about specific moments in the project where she felt her voice got stronger and felt more supported, such as the vibrations exercises where she felt like she gained strength in the chest. She also discussed how even at the start when they felt nervous or less confident in front of each other, doing the vocal warm ups ended up giving them confidence in their voice:

I think erm, again I think that it links in with just confidence, and strength, cos physical strength and mental strength are, erm, they're two very different things, but they connect so much, so I think erm, there was an element of everyone feeling a bit intimidated to do vocal stuff in front of each other. And I think getting over that was a big thing. But also having the actual physical strength from the warm ups contributed to obviously the clarity and the strength of the actual performance. So, I think it was definitely connected to that extent.

Furthermore, bringing the body into states of relaxation helped Sophie reflect on things she felt and thought in a calm way. Being able to think in a state without tension helped her find ways to say her thought 'out into the world'. Overall, Sophie felt that after the project her voice had changed mainly in that it had become more powerful. She felt she now has "the confidence to know that I can be using my voice and I – I'm

good to use my voice, I can use it in a way that is helpful and good and erm, I feel much more powered of it". This powerfulness did not come directly from having space to discuss politics, but rather these discussions happening on the basis of large amounts of voice technique that set-up muscular systems of support before she entered into discussion.

It is in this sense that the political efficacy of the practice emerges from the interlinking of my method, form and content. Political discussion is used to create themes and content for performance; voice training helps provide a terminology that connects the experiences of tension or relaxation in the voice and body to broader political points; both combined, help participants create a vocal performance that repositions their voice politically. This three-way process is understood best through the creation of soundscape performances.

4.7 Soundscapes

The soundscape in my practice was a vocal performance without the use of words. Relying entirely on the non-linguistic voice, participants would try and find sounds to represent political ideas, producing a piece of performance of contestation and dissent. In this section, I argue that being able to come up with the non-linguistic vocabulary for the creation of these soundscapes came from engaging with voice training.

The starting point for developing soundscapes was through Boal's image theatre exercises. Creating an image that represented a time when one of the participants felt like they had been silenced, the participants then had to create a second image that would be a solution to this problem. In Boal's exercise, the participants find a way to move from the first image to the second one, through theatre, to practice this move

of fighting back against the oppression that initially silenced someone. After we had done this, I asked participants to go back to the first image, and instead of acting it out in a naturalistic way, to try and find sounds to represent what was going on. We would then apply the same form to the second image, and then the participants would experience going between the two soundscapes that they had just created.

In the Leeds project, we used a story from Lucy about a classroom situation where she felt she had first been silenced by her peers, and then by the teacher. When returning to the first image to begin creating a soundscape, the first sound we discovered was the sound of being silenced, or not being listened to, a kind of interrupted “B-uh” sound. It was as if Lucy was trying to speak but the word got cut off. Consonants never making it to a vowel. It was quite breathy, guttural, falling into sighs: a stopped voice. The other participants played her peers who ignored her. They developed different sounds to cut her off: forceful “hah” sounds, elongated vowels that rolled over her stutters, clicks and other noises from the teeth and tongue. This at first was awkward and hard to find, but the more we tried the easier the participants found it to abandon words. Emily spoke of finding it quite exciting to try and find a sound for rolling her eyes [TRACK 5].

With the second image, where the peers who ignored Lucy would instead enter into a discussion with her, Lucy’s cut off consonants became open vowels. “C-uh” and “b-uh” became long “ah’s”. Lucy talked about it going from something much more staccato to something with more flow, symbolised in the move from consonant to the vowel. We worked on how this change happens, and how it felt to finally allow the cut off consonants to become fully vocalized vowels [TRACK 6]. This move from the consonant to the elongated vowel sound was reflective of Linklater’s sigh of relief exercise. To recap, the sigh of the relief is when the participant stretches their arms into the air on an in breath, holds the breath to experience the tension, and then

releases the arms at the same time as exhaling deeply, producing a sigh on sound, relieving tension through the body and voice simultaneously. Lucy's frustration of not being able to make the sound, and being stuck at the consonant, was like the tension of the stretched arms and held breath. Then, the feeling of release in the full vocalization was like the relaxation felt in releasing the breath and arms on a long 'ah' sound. Here the participants drew a direct comparison between a vocal representation of being silenced to being heard, with the physiological experience of vocal tension to vocal release.

In both the Leeds project and the women's project, we developed soundscapes corresponding to themes that arose out of political discussions we had had. Across these soundscapes were examples of a direct link between a political experience and voice training. In Leeds, one of the themes was feeling helpless, and for this sound the participants created a pressurised outbreath of deflation [TRACK 7]. This was different to the sigh of relief: instead of a pleasurable sigh signalling the release of tension, this was a heavier sound. A sound of frustration rather than relief, less of an open channel and more like a trapped breath forcing its way out. The final soundscape, being politically active, was a combination of beating on the wall with a powerful, deep 'huh' sound [TRACK 9]. This 'huh' sound was reflective of the touch of sound we found in the Linklater exercise a couple of days previous. This is the sound found deep in the belly, in the state of relaxation and without muscular tension. This sound was drawn on to provide strength to the soundscape that represented political protest.

In the women's project in Ellesmere Port, we also created a sound for being silenced. This was an intense mumbling sound, the attempt to make words, but nothing understandable, as if someone had been gagged or forcibly prevented from speaking. Over the top of this, the other participants produced a white noise sound, to further

prevent the speaker (Sophie) from being heard [TRACK 3]. In order to help Sophie produce this sound, she literally covered her mouth with her hands. This simultaneously symbolised someone preventing her from speaking, at the same time as the individual's own physical blocks that prevent full voice: her hand covering her mouth a direct experience of how our own body can block free vocalization.

In these examples we can see how voice training was drawn upon to represent the political experiences of the young people. This is because voice training made clear how being silenced or the opposite, feeling able to voice, is something that can be experienced in the body. Becoming aware of how their bodies have been marked by their experiences of politics, the young people used these marks to help them articulate this experience to the audience. By using the motifs of voice training: vowels and consonants, sighs of relief, the touch of sound or blocks and tensions (as some examples); the young people demonstrated how this training has helped them articulate, via the material voice, how their voice has been restricted, and furthermore, how to combat this restriction.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that political voice in my practice can be found in performance, rather than in more traditional modes of discussion and debate. In each project, performance was the place where direct contestation of the political position of young people, of working class young people, or the political position of women took place. Furthermore, I believe that the soundscape was the most effective performance form for this moment of dissensus. The soundscape not only placed the material voice, the voice according to Cavarero that has been feminised and regulated throughout history, at the forefront of where the audience grasp meaning.

But further than this, the voice without words allowed the young people to protest directly, without having to justify themselves through discussion or debate. The protest was in the voice itself.

Though the workshops drew on a variety of practices, from drama games, improvisation to discussion, voice training was the underpinning principle. In this chapter I have demonstrated that although at times voice training was not presented in an explicitly political way, through combining it with political discussion and the attempt to make pieces of political performance, the young people themselves found the connections between the technique and the politics of who can speak in society. This was a gradual process, resulting in the performance of soundscapes that most explicitly united the material voice with political protest.

This is because of the ways in which the voice was both reconfigured in the performance space, but also because of how it was reconfigured in the young person's own body. In this sense, voice training is the key that relates the material and non-linguistic voice to political contestation, through the way it can help the participant directly experience their voice differently. The voice is first experienced differently in the body before it then takes space differently in the world. In the next chapter, I will discuss more specifically about how voice training can be an act of contestation, through the lens of habitus. Looking at the participants from the Leeds workshop, I demonstrate through habitus and class, to what extent voice training can affect participants' relationship to the social world.

This chapter has also raised questions about gender and women's voices. In Chapter 6 I will look in more detail to how questions of gender arose in the practice, and how they relate to voice training. Finally, Chapter 7 will examine the idea of ensemble, also raised in this chapter. In each project I wanted to combine voice training with

ensemble building, looking to the performance as being an example of collective voice. In Chapter 7, I will look more fully at the success of this, comparing the different projects. Additionally, however, what an analysis of my practice has suggested is that the process of voice training can be a process of ensemble itself. That is, the collective endeavour of embarking on training together is a process of collective change, change produced as a consequence of being in a group.

CHAPTER FIVE: FIVE VOICES.

In previous chapters I explored how voice can be read, understood or heard as separate to speech (Cavarero 2005; Dolar 2006; Kreiman and Sidtis 2011; Thomaidis 2017). The analysis in this chapter is predicated on this idea, through situating how we understand the voice in its relationship to the body that produced it. Meaning ascribed to the voice can be read through an understanding of the body as much as through the content of the speech. The lens through which I will negotiate the relationship between the body and the voice is Bourdieu's concept of habitus. Focusing on the voices of four women who participated in my political voice workshops (the fifth voice being my own voice), I examine the quality of their voices in relation to their perceivable habitus. And inversely, their habitus is furthermore revealed by their vocal quality. These four women all took part in a week-long voice project in Leeds in 2016, as described in Chapter 4. Here they engaged in a mixture of voice training, political discussion and drama exercises, creating a short performance at the end of the week. The project was succeeded by interviews with each participant a month later. I decided to just focus on the Leeds Group in this chapter in order to discuss each voice with sufficient detail. Less concerned with language, but the specific qualities of voice that are considered in voice training: tone, pitch, speed, volume, articulation, breath, in short, how the voice sounds, the focus on voice quality alongside habitus lays ground for an analysis of the intervention of voice training. What did the intervention of voice training do to the body and as a result to the quality of voice? Accordingly, I discuss to what extent, either through changes or through similarities of voice quality, voice training can firstly reveal habitus (to both the participants and to myself), and secondly can affect habitus.

The fifth voice, my own, is an essential but difficult part of the analysis, that not only reflects on my own vocal habitus and how voice training has affected me, but also helps signal the ways in which my interpretation of the other women's voices is based on my own socio-cultural condition. This analysis is highly subjective. The written analysis is another version of my voice, and accordingly, the admission of my own habitus can help the reader understand how I have chosen to interpret and present other women's voices.

The chapter will firstly draw a precise connection between habitus and voice training, before presenting a portrait of each of the four participants through my own interpretation of their habitus. I then analyse the quality of their voices in relation to specific concepts associated with political voice before examining how habitus manifested in the young people's relationships with each other. Finally, I present some insights into my own voice and habitus as a lens through which to understand the analysis before drawing conclusions about the success of voice training and political intervention.

5.1 Voice and Habitus

Habitus structures how we live and interact with the world: it permeates our choices, our thoughts, our ways of walking, talking and being. It develops out of a complex interplay between our background, and how we act and react in different social settings (fields). Our voice too is part of this structure and is determined by habitus. Significantly, habitus is embodied: it is the social world in the body (Reay, 'Becoming Habitus' 432). How our voice performs, not just what we say, but how our voice sounds and makes sound can be read through habitus. Our different vocal

performances are reflections of how habitus makes us act and react in different fields. Importantly, these performances do not just reflect, but actively structure and shape the fields simultaneously. Accordingly, similarly to how I defined everyday performance in Chapter 1 as the practice of repeated behaviour that manifests as natural (Goffman 1959; Butler 1990), our performative acts are the actions of habitus, and accordingly habitus is something alive, active and dynamic.

The voice techniques of Linklater and Rodenburg, as outlined in Chapters 3 and 4, were crafted through examining how social structures affect the voice in a physiological way, with vocal repression as the result of bodily tensions that develop through sociological repression. This is the way in which social and cultural markers such as class, gender or race directly impact the body, and subsequently the voice. Habitus as an underpinning principle to the practicing of voice work provides a sociological reading of why the voice is as it is, but also, importantly, acts as a lens through which to see social embodiment as something dynamic that can be changed. Voice practice understood through habitus prevents it from falling into ideas of an essentialized, 'correct', trained voice, grounding it in the principle of revealing habitus by revealing the social agent's place in the social world (Maton 59). Voice training in this context is not reduced to the correction of bad habits, but about, in the first instance, noticing habits as constructed, performed behaviour rather than something natural. As Rodenburg writes when discussing vocal habits that people have picked up, it is not that people aren't allowed to repeat these habits if they so wish, but often subjects misrecognize a vocal habit as something natural to them, meaning that they can't change it. Women tightening their stomach, preventing the ability to breathe deeply, for example, Rodenburg identifies as a habit acquired through concerns to do with their appearance. Many women, however, think that quietness is natural to them, rather than a result of a lack of breath support (Rodenburg 77). Believing this is natural, she says, leaves the subject with no choice: the habit controls how they speak

(Rodenburg 22). It is in this sense, she argues, that many of us have lost the right to speak:

I once happened to be teaching at Eton, one of the most privileged public schools in Britain, and I was stunned by the open vocal release and freedom, by the extravagant range and confidence which the boys used to address me and one another. This was in dire comparison to a comprehensive school in a depressed area of South London where I also taught. Here the voice and speech of students (all the same ages as the boys at Eton) were held, tight and pushed. Discussion was minimal. It was rare (Rodenburg 6).

It is not that the Etonian pupils had already attended a full course in Rodenburg's voice technique and the South London pupils had not: the Etonian pupils' voices had not been diminished by the world. They already possessed the right to speak through their position in the field. The capacity to speak, the physiological act, both Rodenburg and Bourdieu recognize as being 'strictly proportionate to the sense of having the right to speak' (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 412), and this dominant voice has taken the right for themselves, and for themselves alone (Rodenburg 6). This dominant voice destroys and discredits those who do not speak in the same way (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 464). For Bourdieu, the revelation of habitus is most clearly to be found in our embodied practices:

One's relationship to the social world and to one's proper place in it is never more clearly expressed than in the space and time one feels entitled to take from others; more precisely, in the space one claims with one's body in the physical space, through a bearing and gestures that are self-assured or reserved, expansive or constructed... and with one's speech in time, through the interaction time one appropriates and the self-assured or aggressive, careless or unconscious way one appropriates it (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 476).

Engaging in voice practice, therefore, could play a double role of both revealing vocal habitus, through paying attention to the tensions and habits the voice has acquired, at the same time as beginning to undo how these habits have dominated the body. Recognizing habitus as a dynamic phenomenon through which the subject has some agency, perhaps the undoing of this vocal habitus could begin to change the subject's interaction with the social world, and accordingly, change the social world itself.

5.1.1 Voice Quality

Determining and analysing voice quality presents clear interpretative problems. Kreiman and Sidtis write how voice quality is multidimensional, meaning that the possibility of different listener perceptions is permanently present, so that quality can never have 'fixed acoustic determinants' (Kreiman and Sidtis 9). Despite this difficulty, the authors attempt a comprehensive study of different vocal qualities across age, gender and race, basing their analysis on difference in vocal quality either being 'organically based' (physiological – relating more to things like age, or to some extent gender), or learned 'habitual behaviours' (social or culturally based) (Kreiman and Sidtis 65). For instance, they describe how women's voices use a wider range and change pitch more sharply, whereas men's voices tend to be more monotone (Kreiman and Sidtis 129).

Though this study does reveal some illuminating consistencies across social groups in voice quality, it also presents too binary a distinction between organic and habitual behaviours. Rather, the way in which cultural inscriptions effect perceptions of our voice are not purely a result of physiological equipment, but rather the physiological is simultaneously inscribed by the cultural. Yvon Bonenfant outlines a performative inscription of the interrelation of queerness and vocal timbre (Bonenfant 2010), for example, or Rodenburg outlines anatomical variations alongside learnt physical habits that implicate male and female voices as different (Rodenburg 74). Accordingly, an analysis of vocal quality cannot be reduced to simply the physiological or to social habits, but rather is always an interplay of the two:

In other words, our social body is in a constant state of flux. It changes. Emotional responses, postures, work and play activities, desires, states of satiation, respiratory patterns, and so on, all transform, even if very subtly, the ways that our bodies metabolise, move, and pulse. These changes necessarily affect the voice of that individual because of the voice's exquisite responsiveness (Bonenfant 76).

The vocal quality of the four participants, Emily, Lucy, Lauren and Rachel, I consider in relation to habitus, that is, how the social interacts with their physiological voice production. Through painting a character profile for each participant and a thick description (Geertz 10) based on my interaction with them during the workshops, I analyse the relationship between the quality of their voices and their perceived habitus: how habitus is found in voice quality, as well as how perceptions of voice quality already depend on perceptions of habitus. In the remainder of this section, I present a portrait of each voice.

5.1.2 Emily

Emily, recruited from the youth theatre, participated in the Leeds project and subsequently, as someone interested in drama facilitation, assisted me in the summer project in Ellesmere Port. Bright, talkative and funny, she overwhelmingly comes across as a likeable person, who can engage you in conversation with ease. From Leeds, working class and now at university, Emily is an ambitious person, constantly aspiring, and willing to put herself in new situations. Dark haired, dressed like a typical student in 2016: oversized blue denim jacket, choker, heavy eye-liner; Emily is popular and culturally aware. She is confident with the way she takes space, talks with strong, dramatic gestures, and likes to initiate conversation. She lets you know how she is feeling, and her mood could easily dominate the room. Our conversations in the car home from Ellesmere Port usually discussed matters to do with drama and the acting industry: what friends did, the problems with drama schools, how hard the industry is, particularly for working class people. She vented frustration with this world, frustration with university, and frustration with the incompetence of past teachers and tutors. Her ambition, it seems, comes into tension with her experience of classrooms, of academia and of economic barriers to success.

During the project, Emily took a leadership role in the group. With Lucy, another participant, she would usually be the one to suggest ideas, to try things out first, and felt comfortable instructing others what to do. Emily was a strong presence in the room, feeling at ease in the space. At most times, she was confident throwing herself into exercises, but there were some moments that she found more difficult. For example, we played one game, originating from Boal, where one participant is instructed to stand and face the others and must try their hardest not to laugh or smile (I discuss this exercise in some detail later in the chapter). It is the job of the other participants to “break” her. Emily was incredibly distressed by this game, practically screaming with frustration, and it made her feel upset that she wasn’t listened to or paid attention. This was the only exercise where she ‘gave up’ when she found it too difficult. There was something about being so actively ignored that was hard for her to tolerate.

Over the week spent in Ellesmere Port I got to know her well, beginning to feel more like peers than instructor and participant. It all felt at ease, she laughed at me when I tried to parallel park when we would drive to Greggs. Laughter characterises her: she is generous with it, laughing at my jokes even when I didn’t deserve it. Her speech is punctuated with laughter, not so much a nervous laugh, but a laugh to indicate that she does not take herself seriously. This is very much part of Emily’s conception of herself, and of her voice. She is confident, in the sense that she can make people laugh or people like her, but she feels less confident in being taken seriously. On the first day of the project, she described her voice as ‘cartoon like’, as in lacking clarity and she had a desire to reach a bigger range of people. At this point in time, she felt like her voice could only go so far: she would be listened to by her friends or her parents, but beyond that she would get ignored or not seen as serious. Despite her perceived loudness or confidence, her habitus as a working class young woman prevents her from feeling her voice as politically powerful, meaning she has to

undermine herself, with laughter or jokes for instance, in order to not imply any self-importance. This has marked her voice as follows:

- Pace: Emily speaks rapidly, getting all her ideas out in one go. It sometimes feels like when she has been given the opportunity to talk, she makes sure she can get everything out that she wants to say before the opportunity is taken away from her.
- Volume: Emily speaks quite loudly, and she has a tendency in each sentence to choose certain words she emphasizes for effect. Her voice can be heard over others. This combined with pace marks her mix of confidence and frustration.
- Laughter: Emily's voice is colourful and bright, and marked with laughs as she speaks.
- Tone: Usually, Emily's voice is relatively low, and she describes her own voice as low and monotone. However, in moments of excitement, her voice rises in pitch in an uncontrolled way, suggesting she has this range, it just comes in the moments of breaking her regular vocal performance.

5.1.3 Lucy

Lucy absolutely loved the speech that we collectively wrote during the project that was spoken as ensemble text. She told me how she took it home to show her Dad, brimming with pride, and now has it stuck up on her bedroom wall. That we made something together, containing all our different voices but still having a strong political through-line really excited her. Political practice excites Lucy and having turned 18 just before the 2015 General Election, she wants to participate as much as possible. Politics aren't alien to Lucy, and, as her desire to show her Dad the speech we wrote demonstrates, she was brought up on liberal, leftist ideals. Rather than from a party affiliation or trade union background, this identification with the left has largely come from a more middle class, cultural sphere: music, TV shows, theatre etc. This is present in Lucy's habitus as a largely principled person: educated, but always wanting to question and know more; opinionated but also liking to listen. She is overwhelmingly a pleasant person, contributes to discussion without dominating, and wants to help people form their own opinion. The kind of person who is considered a good friend, there for people when they need her, and who will give her opinion but never wants to be preachy. She has a strong connection to her family, who have

influenced her significantly in her views, and she clearly cares about her relationship to her parents. I feel like Lucy tries to come across as your average person, got her head down at school, dresses in a fairly standard way for a teenager, works at a doctor's receptionists where she is happy to fade into the background. But underneath I think she is full of passion, desire and some uncertainty. She seems resilient, seems to have a well-grounded and strong sense of self, something that comes from her supportive family. She wants to be an actor, and is currently on a gap year before trying to get into drama school. The kind of resilience I describe is a quality considered a necessary requisite of trying to become an actor; that is, realizing the difficulties of that profession, but going along with the mantra often professed that if you believe in yourself you can make it. This kind of ideology runs through her, an untampered idealism, reflected in her references to things like *To Kill A Mockingbird* or Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech: she is inspired by principled figures. A lot of this also comes from Lucy's confession that she hasn't always been confident, that she used to be shy, but she learnt to push through this and stand up for herself.

Lucy's voice is soft and clear. It is confident, but not loud, and, largely I think to do with her actor training, is quite expressive. She is keen to fill the voice with how she feels and felt. She is quite measured when she speaks, she seems to think first, and has tried to develop the way she speaks in accordance with wanting to convince people of her opinion, and her confidence comes from this articulation. For example, when we were doing vocal rants (stream of consciousness speaking), Lucy told me that her rant about politics was a rant that she had already done before. That she chose, for an exercise that is more about release and letting things out than about making a political argument, to speak something that was already rehearsed demonstrates the extent to which she wants to feel in control of what she says, especially when it comes to politics. Considering herself someone who used to be quiet and shy, she believes she has pushed herself to be more vocal and more

prepared to speak out in front of people. In this sense, she has a malleable voice: she changes it depending on context. With people who like to speak, she says she is happy to take a back seat, whereas with shyer people she is also happy to take a lead. Lucy's main objective isn't necessarily to be heard, but rather to convince other people, and she changes her voice accordingly. Her voice is marked as follows:

- **Softness:** Lucy's voice rarely raises in volume, except in moments of exasperation or anger (though in my experience, never in the present, only in reflection).
- **Pace:** a calm and steady pace, the kind of pace as if she were reading or public speaking. She has developed a pace that makes her understandable and easy to listen to.
- **Accent:** a very soft Yorkshire accent; people from Yorkshire think she's "posh", but people from outside Yorkshire recognizes she is from Yorkshire.
- **Expression:** Lucy speaks as if she is acting, she makes clear in her voice how she is feeling, and chooses words to give extra emphasis and expression to.

5.1.4 Lauren

Lauren wants you, and everyone in the room to know that she is a self-titled "diva". She comes into the rehearsal space in three-inch heels, and every day she wears a different wig. "Do you keep dying your hair every night?" I ask her naively, "No!" she screams back at me, "It's a wig", and she shows me a photo of the new, desired wig she wants to buy. Lauren takes pride in the time and devotion she gives to things like her wigs, her clothes, and the external impression she wants to make on you. If Lauren doesn't make an impression on you, I think there would have to be something wrong: she is loud, excitable, I have never really met anyone like her ever before, and I can't help but feel completely endeared by her. She declares so much self-confidence, how much she loves talking about herself for instance, that sometimes masks a sensitivity and insightfulness underneath. She comes across as intimidating when you first meet her, completely controls the energy in the room, but she would be horrified if she knew that anyone considered her a bully, as all she claims to want to do is exude positivity and generosity. When she walks into the room, she shouts, screams, makes a big deal about something that has happened to her, makes sure

everyone knows what mood she is in. She cannot help but react to things that happen in the loudest and exaggerative way as possible: laughing, screaming, shouting, running around the space, huge exaggerated gestures. During one exercise, Emily, who was supposed to be guiding Lauren while she had her eyes closed, accidentally walked her into a wall. The absolute eruption of sound that followed: shrieking, shouting, accusations and anger, storming around the room as if she had been the most betrayed she had ever been in her life. In the middle of another exercise, she suddenly screamed out of no-where, and when we asked what was wrong, she paused and then said, "No, carry on". In the end, all that had happened was the realisation of a coffee stain on her t-shirt, but she had to react largely, even though she didn't even want us to know what had happened. At the same time, however, there are moments of calmness, of quietness and self-reflection: these moments come when she is engaged in the exercise and wants to learn more.

She is tall, mixed-race, 20 years old, with a complicated background leading her to seek additional educational provision. She has had other problems with social security and employment that has led her to feeling frustrated by the political system to the point of apathy. Although she clearly has a lot of opinions, she chooses when to declare them, often taking the approach that there just isn't much to say because she feels so let down and disenfranchised. She has sudden moments of feeling down, of her mood being interrupted by an unwanted phone call, or some other external problem that prevents her from enjoying herself in the moment. She can suddenly just "not feel like" doing an exercise that at another time she would have really enjoyed. But she always tries to fight through this. She is incredibly resilient, and I think her brashness, her over-confidence and her identity as a 'diva' are all part of this resilience. She also seeks both purpose and comfort through music and singing. To engage her, I just bring up music and get her to talk about the music she makes and why it is important to her.

Because of her love of music and singing, Lauren is engaged and focused when I do voice technique with her. I expected her to write it off as boring or embarrassing, but instead she clearly wanted to be able to do it and get better at it. With some of the exercises that make you pull strange faces or make strange sounds, she asked if she could turn away and do it in her own space, because she was embarrassed, yet she still wanted to do the exercise, whereas she could have easily just refused. When she went into her own space, I could hear her trying hard to get the exercise, and she kept practicing over and over again instead of just pretending she had got it. There is a diligence and focus in Lauren that could easily be missed in any surface interaction with her. She clearly has an ambition towards something, meaning she is prepared to work hard when it comes to things like voice, perhaps arising from a desire to be famous.

During reflections on the exercise where the participants drew their voice, Lauren could not resist giving us a full description of what she was trying to get across. Instead of telling us what the other members of her group saw in the drawing, she immediately told us what she did, displaying no interest in the other people's reflections on her drawing. Similarly, at one point, Sheila (the social worker) brought up a good point that Lauren made about Rachel's voice, and Lauren interrupted her, shouting "Can I say it?... The really interesting facts that I thought". Really drawing out the word 'I' in a demonstrative way, she ensures that everyone knows that this point came from her, rather than being about Rachel's drawing. Equally, she is very confident describing other people and letting other people know what she thinks about them.

Lauren refuses to acknowledge the idea that people do not listen to her. Despite all the cultural reasons why many people might not (her age, class, gender or race), she

is adamant that people always listen to her, because she makes sure they do. During an exercise where I asked them to share stories about a time when they felt ignored, she refused to give one, saying "I haven't got one that's my story". Her voice here is much harsher and aggressive than usual, losing her lyrical, lilting quality. The voice expressed a defensiveness about the idea of being ignored, as she sees people acknowledging and listening to her as a personal achievement, and furthermore something within her control. How much this is something she genuinely believes, and how much is a defence mechanism is unclear.

Like everything else about Lauren, her voice feels unique. She has an incredibly thick local accent. She speaks unusually slowly, in a rhythmic and lyrical way, words dragged out over unusual tempos, emphasis in the uncommon places, sometimes using the wrong words, or making words up but you usually know what she means. She calls politicians, 'politicals'. She is sometimes incredibly hard to understand, at times you even give up, but for what she lacks in clarity, she makes up in expression. However, there are clear moments when Lauren goes quieter or silent, and the absence of her voice is very noticeable. For instance, when we engaged in text work and the ensemble speech, she was significantly quieter than she was during improvisation. The added stress of text work and having to read off the page quietened her, the intimidation stopping her from vocalizing. In contrast to the text work, she was the most confident at the vocal rant (talking in a stream of consciousness) than any of the others. She was happy to continue talking much longer than anyone else, letting her voice wander not just in content, but in actual tone and pitch. As she ranted about things that make her angry, her voice got even higher than I've ever heard before, soaring over the top of everyone else. Afterwards she cried, "No I'm feeling... ANGRY!", the astonishment in her voice, a gasp for breath just before she shouted 'angry', implied a new connection between her feelings of

anger and the freedom in her voice that she hadn't experienced before. Her voice is marked as follows:

- **Pace:** Lauren speaks so slowly and rhythmically, breaking the standard tempos of how people usually speak. She is comfortable taking lots of time to speak, and enjoys dragging words out for as long as possible.
- **Tone/Timbre:** Lauren's pitch moves all around the place, all of the time. The tone of her voice is constantly changing and surprisingly you. When she described her drawing of her voice, the tone constantly shifted, with the middle of the sentences rising in pitch before settling down towards the end, before rising again. This creates a feeling of everything coming out of her mouth sounding spontaneous, as if it even surprises her, that she doesn't think before she speaks but just goes with whatever first comes to mind.
- **Accent:** Lauren's accent is incredibly strong, and her speaking is characterised by lots of dialect, or perhaps even her own versions of words that you have to guess at.
- **Expression:** Lauren's voice is alive, permanently expressive, not hiding anything, and always letting you know as much as possible about how she feels. When she described her voice as being "A vision of fire", the word 'fire' burst out of her mouth, as if the energy could no longer be contained, demonstrating how much she associates her voice with positive energy and expression.

5.1.5 Rachel

Rachel spent most of her time during the project in close proximity to the wall. On the first day, she was attached to it, body closing in, shoulders tense, caving inwards, crumbling the chest. Over time she detached herself slightly, agreeing to join in with exercises, and even starting to speak. But she would often go back to the wall to deflect attention from herself, or to remove herself from the group situation. She is small, petite, sometimes you can forget she's there, so incredibly quiet that even when she does utter something, you have to ask again. She usually takes the opportunity to nod or shake her head rather than answer my questions audibly. She loves writing, and would rather do that than speaking, and when I left her alone to write she seemed much more at peace. She has moments of chattiness, usually outside of the rehearsal space, on dinner breaks, where she told me about her friends, who has annoyed her and who has made her feel good. She attends this drama group because she has not found mainstream school system easy and clearly has a complicated background.

She is impossible to read or grasp anything from, her face often blank, her voice not expressing much. You can't tell if she hates or loves an exercise: can't tell if she is choosing not to participate or whether she is too nervous to participate. Her silence borders on the frustrating. Underneath this lack of participation is a constant worry of hers not to let anyone down: she feels that if she participates she will do this, rather than recognizing that others want her to join in.

She enjoys writing and uses this as her primary way of expressing herself. During the project, I gave her the opportunity to go away and write a poem or monologue to ensure that something of her voice made it into the performance. When she finished writing it, and came back into the room, I asked her how it went. She just nodded. We asked her if we can hear what she had written, but she refused to read it out to us. She agreed to read it in the performance, but not before that.

What becomes confusingly clear as you talk to Rachel is a discrepancy between her relative quietness, especially compared to the other participants, and the way she perceives her voice in her head. For instance, she describes herself 'shouting at people' when she barely opened her mouth. How she hears her own voice is clearly different than how we hear her, she feels her voice being loud in her head. In the rehearsal room, she is reserved and separate from the rest of us, yet at the same time keeps coming back and places some value in the project and the people in the room. The rest of the group gave her a lot of encouragement but she still refused to do things. Sometimes, the encouragement possibly made it worse, made it feel more like she was letting people down.

Her voice quivers when she talks. It is short, staccato, seems like it can't support itself for long. It is high pitched and she speaks with a strong accent, often mumbling: she is quite difficult to understand. Her sentences are as short as possible, usually giving

one word or a couple of word answers. It is the absence of her voice that characterises most of the workshops, and what was interesting where the moments where she did choose to vocalize. These were often moments of vocalizing her own self-doubt, making sure you knew that she doesn't think she is very good either: "I can't do it", "I suck at drawing", "I don't want to let anyone down". This all marks her voice as follows:

- **Softness:** Rachel's voice is incredibly soft, difficult to hear, often under her breath. Missing out consonants, sometimes it's more like a series of sounds that you have to work out. In the first exercise of the project, where in pairs participants had to ask each other three questions to get to know each other, her voice was so tiny as she struggled through these pre-set words, her partner had to speak it back to her to make sure she heard it right.
- **Quiver:** There is a quiver present in her voice, a kind of shake in the voice as she is speaking, suggesting it is not being supported properly and that it doesn't have much strength behind it.
- **Pitch:** Rachel's voice is usually at quite a high pitch, quite youthful, adding to the softness of it. She sometimes sounds deeper, usually at moments where she finds more strength in the voice.
- **Non-verbal:** Rachel surrounds her speech with sounds, such as a nervous laugh, or a kind of affirmative noise meaning yes rather than having to say it. She will also choose to shake her head and nod rather than speak.

5.2 Vocal Performances

Habitus determines the subject's 'feel for the game', the extent to which within a field they feel they understand its rules and conventions, or the extent to which they feel out of place. A subject's habitus determines how they perform in different contexts. By examining their performance, we can determine something about their habitus, or vice versa. In this section, I will compare the different participant's voices, and examine how certain qualities of voice manifest aspects of their habitus. I conduct a discussion of specific qualities of voice (pitch, volume, tone etc.), looking at how they relate to broader, more subjective qualities that are commonly associated with a successful and privileged voice: specifically examining 'confidence', 'articulateness' and how the participants conceive political voice. I discuss how and when the voice signifies these broader qualities and explore how these qualities come into tension

with the subject's habitus. Here we can see that these qualities manifest differently across different class habitus, which is demonstrated in the specific voice qualities.

5.2.1 Confidence

Improving confidence and self-confidence is cited in general culture as one way to overcome injurious problems of representation and self-representation, particularly with regards to class (Hinsliff 2017) and gender (Gill and Orgad 2016, Favarero 2017). Confidence is presented as an individualised, subjective psychic labour that the individual must cultivate and work upon to acquire self-belief, and to battle the inequalities she faces. Yet this intense focus on confidence as an act of self-improvement and self-governance distracts and turns the focus away from 'the culture that produces self-doubt, lack of confidence, shame and insecurity' (Gill and Orgad 339). Confidence as an act of self-labour, and a goal for economic, emotional and social security repositions social inequality as an individual problem.

Furthermore, confidence as a personality trait is presupposed as belonging to more privileged identity groups (male, middle-class, white) and assumed to be missing from more disadvantaged groups (women, working-class, ethnic minorities and young people). This presents a simplistic idea of what confidence is, something that people either possess or do not possess, which can be increased or decreased. Yet, with the four participants, their perceived confidence varied throughout the project, and was dependent on the field that they were in, that is, the social space. Rather than assuming the middle classes are generally confident and the working class are not, it is clear that manifestations of confidence are dependent on how much the subject has a feel for the game within a particular field. In this next section, I explore how this confidence manifests in the voice, and furthermore how different vocalizations of confidence indicate different understandings of what confidence is within different

social fields. Considering how confidence is presented as a form of self-labour that can mask social inequality, perhaps the term is less useful as a marker of individual change or development, but rather of habitus operating itself.

As an initial indicator of confidence, I considered how each participant talked about and reflected on their own voice. Emily, for instance, spoke about herself as someone who is 'loud' and 'opinionated'. She described how she made herself loud and talkative so that people would like her in school, and so that she would not be invisible. This role of being loud and funny is very much part of her identity and is performed both through how she speaks and how she talks about her own voice. One of the first exercises we undertook in the project was called 'Drawing the Voice', where participants draw their voices in an abstract way: what they think their voice is like, followed by a second drawing, what they want their voice to be. Emily tried to convey in her drawing the idea of her voice being expressive, perhaps over-expressive and cartoon-like. She laughed at herself when she described how she tries to cover up how she is feeling, but her voice always gives her away. She expressed how she wanted her voice to reach more people, or "have it listened more": there was a short sigh after this sentence, where it was unclear whether she was sighing despondently, or laughing slightly to cover up her point. In this sense, she is confident to use her voice, but less confident in whether she will be listened to.

Lauren exudes self-confidence when she talks about herself. She is proud to announce that she likes talking about herself, in fact, she says she could talk for ages about herself, and she is happy to compliment herself openly. In the drawing of the voice exercise, Lauren had difficulty in signifying much difference between the drawing of her voice now and the drawing of how she wanted her voice to be. Skipping the moment of reflection where other members of the group described her drawing, Lauren immediately told us what she was trying to do: in the first image, she depicted

fire and positive energy. When she tried to then describe the second drawing, she slowly searched for words, but only found the vocabulary of the first drawing: “strong, positive vibe with colours”. She put a lot of emphasis of “positiveness”, and she wanted her voice to have the power to be “in everyone’s faces”. This was how she wanted her voice to be, and at the same time, outwardly conceptualised her voice as already like this: she could not describe her current voice differently to how she wanted her voice to be: that is, loud, confident and powerful.

When I asked her whether there have been any situations where she has felt like people do not listen to her, she half accepted that this might happen, but made more effort to pronounce that she demands people do listen to her, in her words “like enforcement” (enforced):

Listen to what I say. You hear me good, and it’s like, they’ll have their opinion obviously about it after what I’ve said. And if they don’t like it. Then. Just forget I said it... I don’t care, I don’t care, people need to listen to me, what I’m saying, I want to be heard.

As she made these statements, (“Listen to what I say. You hear me good.”) she mimicked herself in a forceful voice, as if these statements epitomised her. As she then launched into “I don’t care”, her voice rose in pitch, becoming tenser, making more of a demand than expressing confidence in people always listening to her. Here she revealed a tension under the surface of this confidence, where her demand to be listened to comes into conflict with the reality of being someone in society who is often ignored. She conceded this when discussing how the political class do not listen to people like her, exemplifying a tension in the concept of confidence that identifies confidence as a skill that increases your social status. Defining herself largely by her self-confidence, she attempts to use it as a tool of resilience against the ways in which she is socially stratified. This reflects what Favarero names ‘confidence chic’: the ways by which the (female) subject is dominated by others through an internalisation of the demands to be confident in neoliberal society. Yet, this endless self-regulation

of having to keep voicing her self-confidence is betrayed by the ways in which this self-regulation further reproduces the ‘injuries inflicted by structures of inequality’ (Gill and Orgad 330) by representing the problem as internal rather than external.

Lucy, on the other hand, is less openly confident vocally and less confident in talking about herself, but a lot more confident in the power of her voice to persuade. She is aware of using her voice in different ways in different contexts. Approaching situations like an actor, she has a consciousness about the way she changes her voice for effective performance. This level of self-awareness possibly comes from the fact that she claims she used to be shy. She has made a conscious intervention to “take a risk” and change her voice to come across as a loud and confident person. Lucy acknowledges confidence as something to be worked on and self-improved, indicating it as a personal problem that can be solved through individual effort. She draws on this experience when both talking about her own voice as well as about other people:

But also I quite, I don’t know, I think I was that person that sometimes didn’t want to speak, I was a bit shy and wasn’t, was unconfident, so I kind of like try to make people engaged and like say at least something. Because you know sometimes you just gotta do things that scare you in order to get over it.

She ended this point with a laugh, and her voice here was more broken up and staccato than usual, indicating a lack of assurance and some doubt. The lack of vocal confidence in describing her confidence exposed a hole in this narrative of self-betterment, where the female subject is stuck in a perpetual act of self-improvement and self-governance against the interference of moments of low self-esteem or a lack of confidence. As the issue of confidence has already been internalised as a personal problem, Lucy cannot identify moments of self-doubt as something to do with social inequality. Instead it is something that she tries to hide. She continued to emphasize her vocal confidence by describing her voice as malleable, by which she meant that she can switch between the loud or the quiet person, depending on the context. This

suggests some vocal confidence in most situations, where she neither feels like she must prove herself, or that she feels too nervous to take a lead, demonstrating the ability to adapt to different fields, or have good general feel for the game in different contexts. This confidence is about the ability to adapt, rather than other confidence indicators such as 'loudness'. She is, however, tentative of complimenting herself, and would prefer to situate having 'good views' as an objective thing, rather than something to be congratulated over:

And I also think like, you tend to do things you think you're good at, and you think you're – and I think that, dunno if this sounds big headed, but I think... I think like I have some like like like, alright views on politics, and like I have some alright things to say... Maybe that's what I'm good at.

Though her self-confidence has grown, she is embarrassed at seeming too confident, and frames her strength as just being 'alright'. When admitting this to me, at first, she spoke under her breath, reflecting her embarrassment, but as she continued her full voice came forward, perhaps remembering the importance of seeming confident.

Despite this, she finds it surprisingly difficult to describe her own voice. Quite often in response to questions about the self, she deferred or deflected to anecdotes, references from popular culture or famous quotations and platitudes. Whilst being confident in the self, she is less confident than Emily or Lauren, for example, to directly speak about herself:

I'd describe my voice as kind of... uhhh I dunno.... I suppose I sound... I sound a little... It's really hard to describe. Cos you can describe other people's voices.

Her voice was a lot less certain and more exasperated as she tried to directly talk about her own voice. Her words stutter, until, on a higher pitch she exclaimed "It's really hard to describe". She found it difficult to discuss the voice in this very subjective way and preferred to speak about it abstractly. She also described how she used to hate her voice, but now she felt less bothered about it, because she had 'prepped'

herself to separate it from herself, and thinks it is not her voice. Here we can see this disassociation between herself, her thoughts and opinions, and the sonorous voice.

There is a tension here between perceived confidence and the sound of the voice across the participants. Lauren and Emily, who come from a lower socio-economic background, identify confidence with being loud, and actively make themselves speak at a greater volume to seem confident or get attention. Lucy, middle-class, however sees self-confidence as her ability to articulate, rather than something to do with the volume or even sound of her voice. Here we see a value difference in what confidence is across social class: for Emily and Lauren it is about being loud and visible, despite what you say; for Lucy it is entirely about what you are expressing.

However, Emily's idea of confidence is ruptured by the class tension within herself: moving from comprehensive school to a prestigious university. She, for instance, identified herself as different to most young people of the same social background to her. She split the young people she knows into two types, those who have an opinion on things, and those who do not. Categorising herself as the former, she described where and when this comes about:

I think it's more – when you start to notice things going wrong, you want to do something about that. Or like people that, people notice. I think there's like two different people, where people like notice things and let them happen, and people who notice things and say that's not ok.

As she began to make this point, her voice cracked, and she positioned the voice in the throat, implying a certain uncertainty, or frustration at trying to articulate this point. She found her voice again ('you want to do something about that'), the register deep, her timbre clear. She then kept emphasizing the word 'notice', making it, for her, the significant part of the sentence. Here she deals with her own competing frustrations, both at other young people who don't care, and at her own inability at times to do something about all the bad things that she sees. The emphasis on notice self-

identifies her as someone who sees through lies and misinformation and thinks critically. She wants to identify as someone who sees things differently to her working-class contemporaries:

But I think, er, I think, that definitely stems from like, the people I know that went to like... Mechanics straight from school or hairdressing straight from school or went in the army, they were very much like, didn't have an opinion on things. Let, let, like that's how it is, and kind of like accepted how it is.

As she stated the vocations of her contemporaries', her voice became very rhythmical, mimicking mundanity, almost robotic, demonstrating her view that they are not thinking for themselves. As different from them, her voice then changed as she told me about what she is interested in, rising in pitch and volume as she listed all the different things she cares about. Emily is aspiring to the articulateness that Lucy describes: she thinks having an opinion sets her apart from her school contemporaries, in the fields outside of school such as university, it is not loudness that makes her confident and visible anymore but being critical. This tension Lehmann formulates as working-class young people adapting to a new (middle-class) field (university) at the expense of their former relationships with high school friends (Lehmann 11). Here the working-class student can find themselves in a kind of limbo between the two fields: separate from their working-class background, but not quite accepted into middle-class life. The monotony in Emily's voice as she listed her contemporary's vocations demonstrates her rejection of working-class professions, yet the increase in volume, pitch and speed as she tried to tell me about the things she is interested in instead, signifies these things as still aspirational: she is reaching for them, propelling towards them, but does not feel fully confident in discussing them. She still relies on volume to get herself noticed, at the same time as trying to practice articulateness.

Unlike the other participants, Rachel rarely took the opportunity to talk about herself and readily identified as not being confident. She identified as shy and knew that other

people perceive her as shy. When I posed questions to her she gave me the shortest possible answers: a couple of words, a shrug or a nod. Her most regular response to questions about herself was “I don’t know”. What is interesting was how these I-don’t-knows differed over the course of the conversation. The first time, after I asked her would she consider herself a political person, she responded immediately: “Don’t know”, missing off the I to cut off the question quickly. The tone was questioning, raising in pitch as if to suggest uncertainty: it was not an assured I-don’t-know after a period of consideration, but rather a way of evading the question. Similarly, when I asked her about her writing, something that she claims to love doing, she responded with the same kind of indecisive I-don’t-know. When I provoked further, asking her how often she wrote, her I-don’t-know went down in pitch, landing on “know” in a much more assertive way, demonstrating to me that she was determined not to answer these questions. Again, when I asked her how she felt when she is writing, her voice got more frustrated, the pitch instead rising severely on “know”, followed by “I just do it”. The most confident of her I-don’t-knows came after I asked her whether there has been a time where she felt confident expressing her voice. Her voice did not rise in pitch in the same way and it was slower. Here she felt like she could genuinely answer the question as she does not know a time when she has felt confident in her voice: she is confident in her own lack of confidence.

Rachel often tried to undermine or dismiss her own abilities. For instance, when I asked her about her drawing of her voice that she did in the workshops, she replied: “Yeah, but I suck at that, I can’t draw”. At first, she expressed this statement under her breath, to herself, before then asserting directly to me “I can’t draw”. It felt as if she had caught herself being wholly negative about the experience, perhaps something she has been told not to, and then tried to laugh it off by telling me she can’t draw. She similarly told me how she put a poem she had written for the project in the bin afterwards, her voice sounding deliberately careless, trying to be as

dismissive as possible about the whole activity. Rachel tries to negotiate her own feelings of low self-esteem against the pressure to try and be confident. She perceives confidence as a positive feeling, and therefore something she should aspire to, and lack of confidence and shyness as negative. As she described her lack of confidence as her ongoing problem, something that she always knows is there, she indicated that she thinks her shyness is another personal deficit, something to add to her list that only contributes to this low self-esteem. Significantly, the said poem that she claimed to have put in the bin basically described how there are other ways to get your point across than speaking about it and being loud. Here there is a frustration between thinking that volume and loudness is something she must learn in order for people to think she is positive and confident, and a deep reluctance if not resistance to being loud.

During an interview, Emily and Lucy discussed the leadership role they took on during the project. Particularly with Rachel, Lucy spoke about how she thought they were helping her through gradual steps. Lucy reflected on Rachel's situation through her own eyes of once being shy, and approached how to help her as if a matter of mentorship. She mimicked herself helping Rachel:

Like 'come on'... Let's do it together first, then build your confidence up.

The voice here performed the action of encouraging the not-present Rachel, almost like talking to a child. Considering herself confident as a former shy person, Lucy recognized Rachel's shyness, and felt a duty to help her speak up. However, this inevitably created a gap between her and Rachel, where she took on a kind of teacher role when interacting with her, rather than them being equal members of the ensemble. It furthermore demonstrated self-confidence as an individual rather than collective process. The extreme difference between Lucy and Rachel's habitus, despite them both self-identifying as shy or quiet at one time, meant that Lucy's

attempt to equalise their experience and expect Rachel to deal with feeling under-confident in a similar way to her, backfired in her voice un-intentionally sounding patronising. Here the instructive tone in Lucy's voice asserted the sociological gap between them despite any similarities in age or 'shyness'.

However, Rachel's resistance to loudness was clarified in describing a moment when she has enjoyed reading her work in public: at a Mental Health Awareness event at the theatre. She said it was a good experience "Cos I got to indirectly shout at my Dad". It was not the experience itself that she enjoyed, but that it was premised on her relationship to her father, and that she got the opportunity to indirectly confront him. Here her voice felt powerful because the veil of performance allowed the confrontation. In the interview, she repeated "indirectly", emphasizing the significance of being able to use performance as a tool to attack him without having to directly attack him. As she told me this, her voice slowed down, sounding tentative and the rhythm of her speech slightly disjointed. Perhaps she was unsure whether to talk about it, or perhaps she deliberately disrupted her regular voice to keep this story on the edge, keeping it 'indirect', enigmatic and mysterious. As I tried to help her elaborate the story, she just whispered again "Indirect", and then left me grasping and responding to my own questions: she remained totally silent. It is hard to distinguish between what is lack of confidence, and what is her finding power in choosing to withhold information. Her desire to confront people indirectly suggests both: she doesn't have the confidence to be confrontational, but she also enjoys the fact that she has got out her anger at someone without them fully realizing. It is as if there is some confidence, if not maybe, some power, in when she chooses to use and not use her voice. In her conversation with me, for example, she certainly exerts power over the interview by leaving me asking questions to which I get no response.

5.2.2 Political Voice

How the participant's voices responded to conceiving political voice was significant in capturing how they related to the political and whether they thought they had a place in the political sphere. Emily's sense of having a political voice varied between feeling listened to and feeling ignored. Overall, she thought that she did not particularly have a strong political voice, or a voice that is taken as politically authoritative, but at the same time, she wanted to recognize that she has more opportunities to be heard than other people. This characteristic lilt between confidence and frustration is marked in the voice she performs when talking about politics or discussing when she has talked about politics: a lilt, between slow and fast, soft and loud, and always landing on certain words that are given prominence.

This is demonstrated in two anecdotes about occasions when she has felt like her voice got through to people, and when it did not. When asked if she could describe a time she has felt not listened to, or ignored, Emily quickly responded "All the time". This response was a whisper, on the in-breath, not sounding angry but rather, a surprise, almost being in awe herself of the problem. She followed this by a laugh, realizing the scale of what she had just said, and clarified, her full voice returning, "I think it's more... more so not listened to than listened to". She then described how older people in her life, when she would give her opinion, often responded that she clearly hadn't thought properly about her view, even when she, briefly, felt confident that she had made a good point:

And I'd be like no, cos I'd like, cos I'm young I do know what I'm on about. And then, he'd be like, no you don't, no you don't. And then he'd like kick off, and I'd be like... I think there's a lot of it like in the older generation, that consider like just because you have an opinion, like, it's kind of funny to like break it down. And then if you, if it gets breaked down enough then you're just like, not going to have it at all. Or there's no point in saying it cos you know, it's just going to, nowt come of it.

In this story, the 'adult' enjoyed trying to wind her up, bringing up things that he knew would antagonise her, just to then break her opinion down. In describing this event, Emily's voice got quicker and louder, reflecting this feeling of being 'riled up' that she describes as experiencing. As she continued, and talked about giving in to this attitude, her voice deepened, got quieter, trailing off as she said 'nowt come of it', as if giving in.

In contrast to this, Emily described being listened to by her peer group at school during the 2015 General Election campaign, when she came across her friends making jokes about Ed Milliband, and in her mind just following what the tabloid media thought about him as a joke candidate:

And then I remember them just taking the piss out of Ed Milliband, and I was like have you ever like listened to his policies... And then my friends would purposefully try and annoy people by being like 'Uh-huh Nick Farage'... And then we got all the manifestos up and I were like see he is actually a dickhead. I was like you don't actually want to vote for him. And then we were like when you take the mick out of Ed Milliband, I was like he's actually trying to change stuff, but because people view him like this, he can't... And they're like oh god yeah, he does have some good stuff, and I was like "Mm-hm. Yes. Stop taking mick out of him".

In recapturing this story, she demonstrated a clear frustration with her friends, her voice rising in tone when she directly asked them whether they knew any of his policies. This was then rewarded at the end of the anecdote, when she mimicked her friends giving in and agreeing with her in a sheepish whisper ('he does have some good stuff'), followed by different version of her voice, jokingly triumphant ('Mm-hm. Yes. Stop taking mick out of him'). When she told me how it felt to successfully prove her point, her voice got carried away with excitement: "you get a bit of a, like a – yeah – yeah – I feel like – I've done it then". She couldn't quite grasp at the words to describe the feeling, but it is heard in her voice: in its rising in pitch and volume, in big out breaths and laughing through her words. She joked about the feeling being a rush, and then did a cartoon, American accent: "I could change the world!". Similar to laughing at the idea that she feels ignored 'all of the time' in the previous anecdote,

Emily making fun of her own reaction through mimicry comes out of an embarrassment in encountering a feeling of genuine political power, something that feels quite rare in her life. In the face of these two overwhelming concepts, her voice automatically resorted to laughter and joking. Following this mimicry, she spoke about how these little feelings of getting somewhere are crucial in motivating you to do anything. In this sense, this feeling was profoundly important to her, perhaps the reason for protecting it with a joke. Contrasting it as a different feeling of being riled and excited than her experience with antagonising adults, the feeling of being listened to, the adrenaline she experienced, came from a sense of accomplishment. On the other hand, the adrenaline associated with being ignored made her stutter and feel like she couldn't get her points across. This was reflected in how she described these feelings: the first, the 'yes' feeling, the words are uttered through a release of breath, like the 'sight of relief' exercise we practiced in Linklater training where the out breath is associated with the relief of tension. Then as she described the second feeling, the angry, riled-up feeling, her voice got caught in the chest, tense and frustrated. The first feeling of being listened to felt like the vocal sigh of relief; the second feeling of being ignored felt like vocal tension.

These different qualities in her voice when describing and trying to engage in politics manifested at different points during the project. On the first day, during our first political discussion, Emily spoke very quickly, a kind of monologue, but more like a stream of consciousness, where her opinions fell out of her mouth even before she had time to think them through. It felt like she was trying to get everything out as quickly as possible, because usually she would not have the time and space to do this. In this discussion about political voice, Emily came in straight away, and then spoke without pause for a couple of minutes. Her voice stuttered slightly, she repeated words as she tried to clarify her thoughts through speaking, she rarely paused for breath, and as she finished sentences, her voice rose in pitch propelling

her into the next sentence, like a never-ending list. As she made her final point, “I’d really like a really strong political voice, but I feel like nobody necessarily wants that to happen”, she began strongly, asserting her want, but as the sentence continued, her voice faded out, quietening. It felt as if all her points before were leading up to this statement, but, as she spoke, she lost her confidence to assert the right for herself to have a strong political voice. This contrasted with the third day, when we discussed an article. At this point Emily felt less pressured to get all her points out in one go, and made her interjections gradually, with shorter contributions. In this discussion, she replied and engaged with the other dialogically rather than as a monologue.

Lucy’s conception of political voice differed to Emily’s, as she placed more emphasis on researching and forming your own opinion, rather than the politics of struggling to be listened to. She placed importance on the idea of a “balanced” opinion that comes from looking at both sides of the argument and then making your own decision. The purpose of her political voice, then, was about both convincing others of her opinion, but more crucially, to demonstrate the need for other people to also have strong, balanced opinions. In this sense, her ‘political voice’ pertained to articulateness and the sense of being principled, rather than anger or frustration with political matters.

Lucy’s story about a time when she felt like she was listened to, arose out of her disagreement with tactical voting as a matter of principle. After being told to vote Labour to stop the Conservatives winning in her area, Lucy responded that she wouldn’t change her mind, and it was important for her to vote for the policies she agreed with: “I’m going to vote for what I want and what I say”. Through retelling this story, Lucy’s voice found strength and volume in the ‘I’s’ in this sentence, emphasizing her belief in the individual finding their own opinion. After the election, her father told her that a colleague in work asked him why he didn’t try and convince Lucy to change her mind and vote Labour:

And she was like, are you not going to tell her, are not going to say that she's wrong, like are you not going to persuade her to do differently? And my Dad was like, no, because I think she has a point. And I was like 'Yesss!'

Lucy's voice increased with speed up to the point of her Dad's intervention, giving his response like the punchline. She then recaptured the feeling of being listened to in her voice as she said 'yes', restraining the joy and excitement she felt in a really closed, tight sound. Lucy restrained the feelings involved in this story into the elongated consonant of 's', barely opening the mouth. However, when asked to elaborate and discuss this feeling, her voice opened and relaxed, higher and more lyrical, as she described how good it felt to persuade her Dad. This support from her father, helped her feel like an adult:

I felt like, nah I think, the kind of epitome of being an adult is being able to express your opinion in an informed and educated way, and – and also being able to tell other people, and maybe get them to think about the other side of things.

Furthermore, Lucy demonstrated that feeling like an adult is directly related to how seriously her opinions are taken. When asked, since turning 18, does she feel like she is treated like an adult when it comes to having political opinion, she replied "Erm... Not, nah. Not really." She thought about it for a moment, her voice rising in pitch, before settling on 'nah', her voice sinking. It then seemed to her not a big deal, as she described how her colleagues at work simply assume not to include her in political discussion, her voice becoming matter of fact or blasé:

I know at work, like loads of people are older than me. Like in their 40s, 50s, erm. And. Whenever we you know talk about, ohh, we voting in or we voting out. Like they're never actually talking to me. They're always talking to the other adults in the room.

Here, from previously considering herself an adult, Lucy separated herself from the 'other adults' because of how they treat her. She mimicked their voices regarding the EU referendum in a kind of sarcastic, sing-song way, evidencing a level of boredom and frustration with their discussion that she cannot contribute to. When I asked what she thinks the reason for them not including her is, she rapidly replied "They just think I'm not interested", the speed of her response making the first words slightly

incomprehensible, throwing the remark away as if it was obvious it doesn't need much attention. She then laughed through her next line, "Cos I'm a young person", again displaying a surface level of not being bothered, like it's a joke, but revealing a frustration underneath.

Lucy's impression of her voice being strong, comes from convincing other people to have an opinion, rather than simply being right, and her political frustration arises when she cannot do this. She described how when she talks to people about politics, she tries to make her voice sound compelling. In this sense, she is aware of political voice being some kind of performance that endeavours to get an instrumental reaction out of its audience. Political voice is less a moment of frustration, or alternatively, of release, and more a consciously performed act that she works at.

Lauren made it clear in every political discussion that she doesn't care about "political" because they don't care about her. Her apathy, however, constitutes and characterises her having a passionate political voice. In her long rants about how politicians don't care or don't listen to her or other young people, her political anger and opinions inevitably fall out. Her description of why she is apathetic quickly became anger against the political class, and the expression of this anger came through her voice as if she couldn't stop it. When I asked her about politicians not listening, she interrupted me:

Yeah they just need to hear people more. But they do put on these campaigns where they want our votes or they want our ideas or feedback, how to make the place a better place. It's like erm, they'll get us to do all that we've just wasted all our time basically, and it's like, they haven't listened to us at all.

In this interruption, her voice immediately took a much higher pitch, like it burst out of her mouth. Her voice is usually slow and drawn out, but here the speed quickened, almost like a rant. She then slowed down, deepening her voice, like a statement of

fact: “we’ve just wasted all our time basically”. This idea of wasting time made Lauren feel despondent and fed up, contributing to her rejection of politics.

In contrast to this, Lauren’s feeling of engagement comes from when she feels like she isn’t wasting her time. The project, she felt, wasn’t a waste of her time, she felt like there was a purpose to every activity we undertook as they all contributed to the performance:

This is what I’m saying because I could actually understand why you was getting us to do it!

She also interrupted me with this point, in a very high-pitched tone, slightly exasperated, emphasizing how important this point is to her. She repeated this idea of the project not wasting her time often and linked it to her overall enjoyment of the project. She listed all the reasons why it was worthwhile: “you’ve made us learn, do, we all had fun”, landing with emphasis on each justification, really spelling out why this is important to her. Here, working towards a performance justified and gave a reason to see the activities as purposeful, allowing her to engage politically, whereas normally she would just see any political discussion or activity as pointless and a waste of her time.

By examining how ideas of confidence and having a political voice manifested in the participants’ own voices, I demonstrate that specific traits produce different vocal qualities dependent on the person’s habitus. This is a matter of both communication and perception: it demonstrates, for instance, that Lauren has a different understanding of what confidence is than Lucy, but further than this, that confidence is heard differently in these two participants because of their different social backgrounds. Accordingly, the teaching of traits like confidence, or concepts like political voice as objective skills with objective value is problematic, as it presents these traits as neutral qualities. Like definitions of voice and agency, as outlined in

Chapter 2, these traits are not qualities that young people do or do not possess, but rather are aspects of themselves that they navigate and perform in relation to the field that they find themselves in. In this sense, discussion of whether a young person has a political voice is only of use in relation to their habitus and the field in which they are speaking. In the next section, I will begin to discuss the interrelation of the participants' voices, and how habitus is not just a matter of individual agency.

5.3 Habitus and group dynamics

Each participant's habitus was not independent from others in the group, but rather they interacted, corroborated, complemented or came into tension with each other. Smyth and Banks argue that institutions can effect habitus: the 'impact of a group on an individual's behaviour as it is mediated through organisations' (Smyth and Banks 265), combines with an individual's habitus and their agency in young people's decision making. They argue that social class can be embedded in an organisation over time, but at the same time, this can change based on the individuals who use the organization. In this sense, the ethos of the organisation hosting the project affected how the young people interacted, but alongside this the different social backgrounds of the young people also had an impact. Accordingly, the group dynamics emerged out of the interplay between the ethos of organisation and the individual member's habitus.

There was a clear, established, sociological divide already in place in this group before we even started the workshops that all members were aware of. Emily and Lucy had come from the youth theatre, a weekly club for teenagers, very much like an extra-curricular activity, which young people attend specifically interested in a career in theatre or performing arts. This club has a strong ethos of discipline, of working hard, and the purpose of training towards becoming an actor, rather than just

a youth group. Rachel and Lauren alternatively come from the theatre's designated outreach programme to those considered more "marginalized" or "disenfranchised": a programme for young people who had difficulties in mainstream school systems and therefore were seeking alternative education. There is a clear class divide between these two programmes, and it is rare for the theatre to bring them together. Despite all four attending their respective programme for a long time, the two pairs had never met each other before. The project took place in the building of Lauren and Rachel's programme, making it in some respects their "territory", further supported with the social worker, Sheila, who was present also being part of their programme.

However, it was very much clear and consistent that Emily and Lucy dominated the group and took on leadership roles within it. Lauren and Rachel's participation would vary through the week and through the day, but Emily and Lucy would always be at the forefront of each exercise. For example, once Lucy arrived on the second day, the combination of her and Emily resulted in Lauren or Rachel being much less audible in exercises like the voice training. There was a slight silencing of these two participants, not because of the conscious behaviour of Emily or Lucy, but instead perhaps because of a sense of inadequacy or not being able to do the more technical training when Lucy arrived. This was not present when it was just Lauren, Rachel and Emily. Yet, however, what is significant is how through the week this dynamic was resisted, the nuances within this clear pre-decided sociological divide and the moments when this structuring would relent or briefly loosen.

For example, as stated, Lucy did not join the group until the second day, so this divide could not fully establish until her arrival. Consequently, Emily found ways to relate to the group through finding commonalities with Lauren. In the very first exercise, where they were instructed in pairs to ask each other questions, Lauren and Emily ended up falling easily into general conversation rather than asking each other specific

questions. Lauren sounded surprised as she told us how they have lots of mutual friends. Emily, on the other hand, displayed uncharacteristic nervousness: rather than trying to complete the exercise she found it more comforting to try and establish a bond with Lauren. When she reported back to the group her voice was quiet and was punctuated with a nervous laugh. Without Lucy, Emily felt slightly isolated in this new field: a different building, entering a new group, whereas in the subsequent days with Lucy's presence, Emily was happy to jump into new exercises or situations. When we played a simple exercise of throwing a ball in a circle, Emily remarked how she felt "really weird", in a higher pitched voice, slightly frantic, trying to make a joke but displaying discomfort. Emily first emerged as feeling confident in the room during the drawing the voice exercise. I split the group into two to discuss each other's drawings before coming back into a larger group. Emily was split into a group with myself and Alex, the research assistant. Here she became more talkative, and willing to take a lead in analysing the pictures. She was willing to discuss the drawings at a deeper and more abstract level and did not feel the need to say things like "I feel weird" as she did in the larger group. Taken away from Rachel and Lauren, and placed in a group with two university students, Emily performed a more serious version of herself, feeling comfortable in this group to display this side of herself. With Rachel and Lauren, however, she was more likely to be tentative, and not wanting to display that she was "good" at the exercise. Here we can see Emily trying to operate between her habitus as a working-class young person, and the field she largely finds herself in at this point in her life; a university student.

When Lucy arrived on the second day, the four immediately split into their expected pairing, literally dividing into these pairings in partner work, for example. However, in certain exercises this divide became less clear. In the morning, we did an exercise taken from Boal, where one member of the group is instructed to try and ignore the others, and the others have to make them pay attention to them through their voice.

I asked the research assistant, Alex, to be 'on', and one by one the participants volunteered to try and break her, using previously written political statements. Lucy got up first, trying to play around with volume and speed, but eventually gave up. Emily then tried but was as equally unsuccessful. Both found the exercise incredibly frustrating and demoralising: Lucy's usually measured voice quickly became exasperated, racing through her words and tripping over her tongue; Emily crying "I don't like it" in an uncharacteristic, high pitched voice. The frustration they both experienced momentarily diminished their confidence in commanding the rehearsal space, which made them seek Lauren's help. In the end, it was the three of them working together that made Alex crack. The moment when this happened resulted in indescribable vocal mayhem: the three of them screamed, cried, ran around the room. Whatever frustration they felt during the exercise was matched by the level of euphoria from finally making her listen. This feeling of happiness was experienced equally between Emily, Lucy and Lauren: they felt equally silenced, and equally listened to. However, Rachel did not join in this exercise at all, and remained silent throughout. This set up the precedent of a new divide that was forming in the group: Emily, Lucy and Lauren, who would all join in with everything without hesitation, and Rachel who had to be encouraged.

This new group dynamic continued to establish itself in the devising process. The first exercise where they had to create a scene independently of my help was an image theatre exercise, where they created a still image based on someone's own story of feeling silenced. Emily and Lucy tried to help Rachel join in, asking her if she had a story, but she just shook her head. Emily tried further to make Rachel feel included, asking her about her writing, and when Rachel just nodded her head, Emily was forced to give in, simply saying "That's cool" in a mellow, deflated voice. There was clear frustration from Emily and Lucy that they were not getting a reaction (much like in the exercise mentioned above), so they resorted to just getting on with it

themselves. Despite Lauren refusing to contribute a story, she was happy to join in and help Emily and Lucy, whereas Rachel detached herself, and stood silently, waiting to be told what to do. Though only Emily and Lucy contributed directly to decision making, they simultaneously attempted to include Lauren by making jokes with her, saying she should play the 'ring-leader' in the scene they were making. They felt less comfortable trying to include Rachel in this way. At one point, when Lauren was not sure about doing something in the scene, Emily joked at her "Why are you getting shy?" Lauren immediately objected to this, shouting "I'm not getting shy", demonstrating that firstly she did not want to be seen as shy, and secondly that she wanted to position herself alongside Emily and Lucy, rather than below them.

This new dynamic was exposed clearly on the third day of the project, when Rachel had spent the morning writing a poem for the performance and then refused to read it out loud in front of us until the performance itself. As we decided to move on, it was clear she was upset, and as Sheila tried to console her, the other members of the group noticed and tried to join in helping her. Rachel claimed that "They're all so much more confident and I don't want to let them down", her voice filled with a level of emotion that was unusual for her, and it broke on the word 'confident'. The other three immediately tried to encourage her, Emily telling her "I want you to feel important in it", and Lauren, in a much wiser, more mature voice, speaking to her like a mentor, "I've told you this before... you're actually brave". This moment clearly encouraged Rachel to join in and not leave the room, and it was important to her to get this approval from the other three. It also demonstrated an anxiety within the other three of how separate she had become, and a desire they had for her to feel more included.

This new established dynamic, where Lauren felt closer to Emily and Lucy than she did to Rachel, encouraged Rachel to be more vocal to make the ensemble complete. Instead of abandoning the ensemble, she was encouraged to join in and push herself.

This wouldn't have necessarily happened if the previous group dynamic, where she could feel safe in a pair with Lauren, remained. Rather, Lauren's desire to join in and learn new things and to have a different experience than she usually would at her normal drama group forced Rachel to do the same thing. The dynamics between individuals in this project caused a shift in regular patterns for each of the participants. Through engaging in a shared process (voice training), and a shared goal (producing a performance) the participants had to adapt to each other's practices, causing a disruption in their own. I will discuss the change in group dynamics in terms of political intervention in the conclusion of this chapter. Before that, I will examine whether engaging in voice training had any tangible effects on the habitus of individual participants.

5.4 Performing differently: breaking habitus?

The opportunity to perform differently, both in the workshop space and on the stage, is a moment where the habitus that regulates the voice can be recognized, paused or even changed. This moment that breaks with habitus might only last during the performance, or it could begin to permeate and translate into the regular performances of the participant's lives.

Through the project, the beginning of a change in Emily's regular habitus was in the way her voice began to slow down. This is reflected, for example, in how differently she engaged in political discussion from the first day (fast, stumbling, like a monologue) to the third day (calmer, measured and dialogic). The combination of voice technique with discussion and drama exercises allowed her to get rid of the 'excess' of thought through the project, so that she could articulate her opinions more precisely. Undertaking exercises in voice technique also helped Emily identify

tensions in her voice she didn't know existed. She told me about a tenseness in her jaw she had never noticed before and identified a lack of clearness in her chest. On the third day, she found solutions to these problems through exercises that work on clearing the channel, from the chest through the throat to the head and jaw:

And I felt like, even my parents commented on the like, they thought... I was a lot clearer in how I was getting stuff across.

In the word 'clearer' itself, Emily's voice changed, a full and expressive tone, a feeling of presence and clear, direct expression.

After the project, she told me how she had become more conscious in her general life, like sitting on the bus, of these tensions, and would now make a conscious decision to relax these muscles, trying to get rid of tension in her body. She believed that the elimination of tensions also helped the group during the project:

I think it helped the group – I think it helped like a calm room. Erm. And I feel like after it we were always a lot more like, likely to have a discussion and likely to be in a discussion a lot more.

The releasing of bodily tensions helped release psychological tension in the space, which allowed for more political discussion, and helped political discussions go on for longer.

What is significant for Emily's voice is whether this physiological clearness translated at all into a feeling of clarity when expressing the political. This happened for her in the work we did on the non-linguistic voice, and through creating sections of performance that do not use words but convey political messages through sounds alone. We created soundscapes based on themes that came out of political discussion: feeling silenced, feeling helpless, feeling engaged and being active [TRACKS 5, 7, 8 and 9]. The participants found different ways to convey these feelings, as an ensemble, without using speech. Emily was particularly engaged in this process, enjoying the process of exploration, trying to find inventive ways to

express different words or actions. In reflecting on the process, Emily said she realized that by taking words away, she could make her voice clearer. Removing the pressure of finding the right words, Emily felt she could get more directly to the political feeling she was trying to express.

Furthermore, Emily had the idea of making these four soundscapes like a journey, a journey from feeling silenced to being active. Through performing this journey vocally to an audience, Emily got to experience moving from having opinions (feeling engaged) to acting upon them (being active). This jump is something that Emily previously felt she hadn't made: she had opinions but didn't do anything about them. This hasn't translated into precise political activity, but from interviewing Emily a month after the project, there was a stronger awareness of the need of political action, than in her contributions during the project. Whereas during the project she was frustrated by political powerlessness, in the interview, she positioned herself much more confidently as someone who has the opportunities to be heard:

So I think like, my voice is heard necessarily more than other people's voices. And I think... and that, that annoys me because I feel like everyone should have a valued opinion, but I feel like it's just a matter of circumstance, like. I feel like people do have opinions, it's just they have nowhere to express them.

Here Emily has moved from a young person who doesn't have a platform, to feeling like a young person who does. This is the starting point, perhaps, in engaging directly in political action, and the motivation for this comes from the feeling of being engaged and active, found through the voice.

Lucy, though already quite articulate, found new strength in her voice through the concept of relaxation. She reflected in the interview how she was surprised to feel her voice strengthening over the week rather than getting tired through too much use:

I felt, I felt, like I could shout or raise my voice and it wouldn't, it would just feel like I was talking normally. It didn't really, it felt really like the voice was so relaxed that I could literally like just, screamed and it wouldn't have hurt, or it

wouldn't have, I wouldn't have lost my voice... I don't know, I felt like it was strengthening rather than... weakening.

This physical strength in her voice, found through eradicating tensions, had allowed her to keep the voice strong even in situations where she felt frustration or tension. Instead of allowing the voice to become tense because she is frustrated, as she did for example in the exercise where they had to make Alex laugh, Lucy discussed now how she has learnt to consciously relax the voice in situations that frustrate her:

I was shouting at my brother and I was like really angry. And I was like I don't want to really shout – because it hurts. So I kind of relaxed my voice, and relaxed everything, and then shouted at him... I remember like doing it [in the past] and it hurting. So now I kind of make a conscious decision to go – right – “JACK!”

In the pause before she shouted her brother's name, she demonstrated a conscious decision to relax her throat and jaw. This action directly relates to the 'opening the channel' exercise from Linklater, where the student works on creating a free, open channel for the breath to pass through from the chest to the head and jaw. After doing this exercise in the project, Lucy remarked that she experienced a new feeling, on the inward breath, of her whole throat and chest feeling cold, demonstrating a clearer channel. She also, during this period, realized how much tension she carried in her jaw for the first time. These exercises helped her notice the difference between states of tension and relaxation, teaching her how to move between the two, allowing her to use the voice differently even when experiencing tension mentally.

Although Lucy prior to the project was interested in politics, and had spent time, particularly during the 2015 General Election, considering her political opinions, she, more than the other three, expressed a precise feeling of political power coming from the ensemble voice. She described how performing the ensemble text was the most powerful part of the performance for her:

Erm. I think this speech where we spoke at different times. I love that speech, I have it still in my bedroom. I, I have a little read of it whenever (laughs) when I want. Erm, and I, when I, after the performance like I took it home and was like 'Dad read this!' (Laughs)... IT'S SO GOOD!

Lucy goes back to this speech for encouragement, harnessing the collective strength of the group (which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 7). There is something significant for her about the fact that all four of them did it: that they all wrote it and spoke it together is what makes her feel like it is a powerful speech. As someone who places a lot of importance on people forming and expressing their individual opinion, it is interesting that Lucy valued the moments of ensemble in the performance more than anything she did individually.

Though Lauren and Rachel were less explicit about changes to their voice in terms of the voice technique, they expressed clear changes after the project relating both to their personal and political relations. Rachel described herself as “more gobby” since the workshops. In this moment, she genuinely sounded more gobby than I’ve ever heard her. She interrupted me to tell me an anecdote about standing up for herself in her friendship group. She also told me about how she had just previously told one of the social workers “I’m not staying here this afternoon”, her voice defiant, letting me know that she was going against what they wanted her to do. These acts of defiance signify a clear change: not that she wasn’t defiant before, but she now vocalizes this anger rather than staying silent, demonstrating a change in how she uses her voice to express herself. When I asked her what she thinks her voice sounds like, after the workshops, she repeated “more gobby” and “more opinionated”. Whereas during the project it felt like her anger or her opinions were entirely internal, after the project she outwardly vocalized them. Even the word “opinionated” she drew out, giving extra emphasis and time to the word, whereas previously she would get through words as quickly as possible. She told me that she got angry last week, her usually high voice now lower:

Sheila was like calm down... I know you’re getting wound up – yeah well don’t wind me up anymore

She stumbled over her words as her voice sped up, bringing back that feeling of anger. In this sense, though she still found difficulty expressing herself clearly through the voice, she had at least become willing to express how she felt.

Placing Lauren in a different group than she was used to changed the way she behaved in the rehearsal room. I first met Lauren during the pilot workshops I ran for three consecutive weeks. This was with a large group of young people, not with specific interest in acting, like Emily or Lucy from youth theatre, but largely there for educational provision outside of the school environment. This group was also mixed gender, about half boys and half girls. What was immediately noticeable about Lauren, then, when she arrived in this new group with just Lucy, Emily and Rachel, was a distinct change in her attitude and voice. She seemed older, more mature and more focused. Even in the interview after the project, when I ask her what this new group was like, she replied "It was different. It was very different", in a different voice, one that was deeper, more reflective and wiser. This change was partly because she had had some experience of the workshops before and I maximised on the idea that she already had some expertise. But also, this change was due to Lauren performing her voice differently in a different field. In a group that was slightly older, all women and with some members from a more secure background, Lauren wanted to take things more seriously and treat it professionally. Not only this, but she enjoyed the opportunity to perform differently in a space she knew so well:

It's better to try stuff. I think the stuff what people want you to do but it's like, you think of it in a way you gonna think, that this is how it's going to be, it's going to be boring it's just going to be about talking, it's about politicals and that. But when you actually come to do it, and it's a room full of people who you don't know, that's when it makes fun actually better because it's different people who you've never seen before, they're actually bringing their ideas what they think, and it's making the atmosphere more interesting, and more enjoyable for yourselves. And then if it's a continuable thing, it's like, it's them people again who you get to, because you don't hardly know them, so that's what I prefer. I prefer to do stuff what I'm not keen on but to give a try, but with different people who I've never seen or I don't know.

As she described that at first, she could have found the idea of talking about politics boring, she uncharacteristically rushed through her speech in a slightly sarcastic voice, (“it’s just going to be about talking, it’s about political”), undermining her past self as not being open minded or up for things she initially doesn’t like the sound of. But then as she began to reflect on the new group, a group with different people, her voice brightened, slowed down, and she enjoyed expressing how it was actually “interesting” and “enjoyable”. The different group created a different space for her, where she did not have to be cynical about “political”, but rather she could try new things and enjoy herself. Lauren, as having identified herself as someone who did not care about politics and does not vote in her normal life, only felt like she could have a ‘political voice’ in this different field. She described Emily and Lucy as “different” types of people, her voice when expressing the word “different” was full of surprise, and eagerness. This difference she makes clear is one of the reasons why she enjoyed this project so much, the opportunity to be around people very different to her, but still able to get on with them. Because Emily and Lucy were so confident in the rehearsal room, Lauren did not feel like she had to be the one that kept the energy in the group up, or the one who had to always speak. Not only could she try new things, she could also try and be a group member rather than leader.

Lauren’s ability to engage in the workshops fully did result in some changes in her voice and her relationship to voice technique through the project. On the first day, after we did the basic work of breathing and relaxation Lauren was the most noticeably feeling tired. She noticed that the kind of breathing she was doing after the relaxation exercises was closer to the way she breathes in bed. Noticing this was an important step in acknowledging changes in the body, and rather than just experiencing these differences as wholly negative (I just feel tired), she was connecting them to her general experience of the world. By the third day, the experience of relaxing muscles had already translated into energy rather than

lethargy. She remarked after a long period of voice work in the morning, "I feel the fire and energy inside my chest". Here Lauren associated the voice work with positive, warm feelings and an excess of positive energy. After this session, we had a political discussion around an article. As opposed to the first day of the project, where Lauren had decided she had already said enough about "politicals", she was actively joining in the conversation. Though her points were the same about politicians, this time she wanted to express them, she no longer felt it was pointless to talk about people who don't care about her, but instead wanted to speak about them critically. The energy generated by the training helped her move beyond apathy.

The performance [TRACK 17] at the end of the project was also a clear opportunity for the participants to perform differently, to break with their regular habitus and experience the voice in a different way through the conscious act of performing in front of an audience. Emily performed two different voices in the piece: firstly, a voice that is consciously acting, through playing different characters, usually for comic effect; and secondly a version of her own voice that made political statements. It is in the contrast between these two voices where we can see the desired clarity, range and, without meaning to sound simplistic, seriousness of her voice that she said was lacking on the first day. It is in the first, 'acting' voice where the voice sounds cartoon-like, over expressive, loud, funny and slightly obnoxious. She portrayed different characters ringing up a radio station, all with different voices, for instance, or played a patronising radio host talking down to the contestant who is a "young person". The voice is high pitched, over-the-top and over-expressive, too loud and too fast. But then, as she dropped the parodical act, and her voice returned closer to 'normal' speaking voice, we hear her voice is not over-expressive, cartoon-like or too loud, but engaged, clear and focused. The moment of conscious performance gives her space to make her voice present, meaningful and political, without having to undermine the

point she has made with a laugh or a joke. It is a liminal space where she can perform political voice and feel confident in doing so.

Lucy had a slightly different journey in the performance, as she was more directly playing some form of herself. The soundscapes originally developed out of her anecdote about feeling ignored in a classroom scene. In order to create a soundscape of these feelings, Lucy imagined herself in that situation, what she would like to have said, but kept cutting herself off before she could say it, producing the characteristic cut-off consonant sounds of the piece [TRACK 5]. She said when she was creating this at first it felt awkward, “but then I kind of just thought, just do it like would in a normal performance like”. As she spoke, her voice quality became revelatory, like she was surprised at herself, and surprised at her ability to convey across such a powerful message without words.

This made the move through the soundscapes from feeling ignored to feeling engaged particularly important to Lucy, as it was an opportunity for her to change her original performance of the story in real life. This enthused her to be the one that spurred the others from the feeling engaged soundscape into the being active soundscape, initiating a banging on the wall sound that transformed into a rhythmic chant from all four [TRACKS 8 and 9]. After the performance, Lucy’s voice had a level of excitement that was uncharacteristic: she was slightly lost for words trying to describe how she felt, and her voice was far less measured, faster, grasping at thoughts. As someone who generally speaks calmly, discusses her political opinions in quite a systematic way, the performance allowed her to experience her political voice in a much more visceral, affective way, without the comfort of words and logic, and instead relying on the feelings of the non-linguistic voice. This association with political engagement with the non-linguistic voice left her, literally, lost for words.

Similarly, for Lauren, the performance space allowed her to engage with her political voice which she would normally repress because she felt like there was no point. However, the purpose of performance, of performing in front of an audience, gave her a point, and accordingly she could let herself engage without feeling like she was wasting her time. Lauren declared that after the performance she felt like ‘the star of the show’ which, (though compromising the ethics of ensemble performance) demonstrated that she felt like people paid sufficient attention to her. Her other fear, forgetting the words, was also undermined by this entirely vocal performance, where, with a blindfolded audience, the participants could read the words freely off the script. This allowed to Lauren to bring levels of confidence she has when she goes into long tangents about herself, into a clear, focused script.

Accordingly, there are clear examples of voice training making a tangible difference to both how the young people produced their voice, as well as how they conceived of themselves. Though these examples are often small and detailed, they demonstrate an efficacy of focusing on the body as the starting point for exploring how young people make themselves heard in the social and political spheres. This, I believe, confirms the potentiality of voice training as a form of political intervention, which I will discuss fully in the conclusion of this chapter. Before doing so, I discuss my own voice, how this relates to the practice, habitus and how I have interpreted and analysed the voices of the participants.

5.5 My Voice

The first note in my field notes, having listened back to the recording of the workshops in Leeds, read “How scouse am I?” My regular accent is pretty scouse (colloquial for a Liverpool accent), but that I heard in myself a heightened scouse accent suggests a distance between my perception of my voice, the listener, and how my voice

sounded in that workshop space. Perhaps I am denial about how scouse I am. I am always this scouse, but I just don't hear or recognize it. Or perhaps, I was even more scouse in this setting because I was nervous, and when I get nervous, apparently, my voice falls even further back into its regional signifiers, maybe out of comfort, or maybe because of heightened emotion.

This accent is by far the most noticeable thing about my voice. I remember going to University in the south of England and feeling like people could hear me coming. People always comment on it, both in a friendly way and in a less friendly way: but it is rare outside of Liverpool for people not to notice and say something about it. It gives me a strong and clear cultural and social identity, which I can't imagine not having in your voice. It sometimes helps charm people, disarm or endear them, makes them laugh, but it also brings derision, or people thinking you are of a lower class, less educated than them and sometimes it even makes people frightened of you. Having a scouse accent immediately identifies you as working class, despite your social or economic background. Although I feel like I come from working-class roots, grew up in a deprived area and went to comprehensive school, I am also a PhD student with educated parents and relatively do not face huge economic barriers. In this sense, I think most social discrimination I face is through and because of my voice, rather than tangible economic disadvantages.

At the same time, this discrimination based on accent can be useful. The accent can sometimes disarm people. It is the reason why I can enter a workshop space and make the young people feel at ease: I don't sound like a posh PhD student, I sound more like I am one of them. It normalises the things I talk about: you can talk about voice technique or doing research in a way that doesn't sound completely alien from the young people's lives because my voice grounds the content of what I say. At the same time, as a facilitator, and as someone also trying to run a workshop with these

young people and instruct and guide them through complicated exercises, I need to establish some level of authority, or rather respect that makes them feel like there is a point to joining in with the workshop. In this section, I will discuss how through the voice I engaged with this balance between authority and being alongside the participants.

I undertook a Linklater technique course at a drama school in England the summer before I began my practice. Arriving in this field, of a prestigious drama school, brought mixed reactions: of course, imposter syndrome of not being enough of a trained actor, but also a thrill came from pretending and living like a trained actor for a week. Who I was in the room was also unclear. My intentions for doing the course were quite different to everyone else's: actors topping up their training, professional voice coaches and a couple of retired University of life types. I was simultaneously receiving the training as a student, learning and developing my own voice, alongside being conscious of what things will work in my own forthcoming workshops. As such, I was training both my "actor" voice (which was what the tutors were most interested in) at the same time as being aware of my subsequent facilitator voice.

At the beginning of the training we had to draw the voice, the same exercise that I did with the young people. I think, in drawing, I was trying to conceptualise my voice as the disconnect between thought and vocalisation. Reflecting on this, I find it hard to separate what I actually think of my voice and my understanding of what voice is through extensive academic research I have undertaken in this doctoral programme. I know that any drawing of my voice has been trying to get an academic idea of voice out, distancing myself from actual reflection on my own voice and how it physically sounds. In each situation where I have done the drawing the voice exercise (at the Linklater course and in each of my own workshops) I have been consciously aware of what I am implying about myself and my voice (and perhaps this has also been

true of the young people). In the drama school, I fell into some philosophical idea of voice probably as a defence mechanism about feeling uncomfortable in a proper actor training course. In the workshops I have run I have overdone the abstractedness of the drawing to set an example to the young people, trying to steer them away from using words. In this sense, I am trying to use my drawing of the voice not only to set a precedent, but set myself up as a leader who understands and joins in the exercises too, but is also one step ahead of the participants and knows what is going on in the room better than they do. This was clear when we began sharing back the discussions of our drawings on the first day of the workshop in Leeds. I quickly rushed through what was going on in my picture, not allowing other people to contribute in the way I did with other people's drawing, placing discussion of my voice out of bounds. I was clearly separating myself from the participants, establishing a hierarchy where they can't analyse me in the way I analyse them, keeping myself enigmatic and knowledgeable.

The decision to undertake research into voice, as someone who admittedly, like Rachel, prefers to write seems strange to me sometimes. But, I think undertaking this research and facilitating these workshops has given me the opportunity to perform my voice as an expert - to seem like an expert on voice. Instead of someone with a voice that is largely deemed as lower class or unintelligible, in workshops I have a voice that participants aspire to. Whereas in most situations outside of Liverpool someone at some point comments on my accent, in the workshops in Leeds not one participant did. That's not because I was covering up my accent, as I have pointed out, it was stronger than usual. Instead, within the context of the workshop leader, the scouse accent is no longer considered base, but instead has been elevated. Through running these workshops, I think I experienced a sense of vocal freedom of the voice

not being stratified by attitudes towards accent. The performance of workshop leader created a space where this particular stratification was diminished.

More than personal reflections, my voice was an active part of this research, and indeed active in the act of writing. Further than the positioning of my voice in the workshops, my authorial voice is significant to how I have framed the participants. Their habitus has been mediated through my voice. This is of course a symbolic concept of voice and demonstrates the limits of writing about the material voice: the material voice must be represented through this symbolic voice. The voice that appears in my writing is different to my workshop leader voice, it is the voice of a researcher rather than a facilitator. It is a voice that wants to find things out, draw conclusions, and propose new ideas. Most significantly, whereas as a workshop leader I tried to take a more neutral position, where I facilitated the young people's discussions and opinions, my voice as a researcher has a political agenda. The writer's voice looked for moments of the political, looked for dissensus and looked for changes in habitus. This is not an attempt at a relativist position, where my findings are merely subjective, but rather, an ethical concern following McDonnell that my participants' voices, through my writing, merely become a research agenda. The inclusion of reflections on my voice provides the reader with a context for my analysis, so that there is scope for the reader (complemented with the audio recordings of the performances) to hear beyond my words, and hear their voices in their material form, something inevitably that gets lost in my writing.

5.6 Conclusion

The intervention of voice training can be a political intervention when it is considered through the perspective of habitus. Departing from voice training simply as the

acquisition of skills, or training towards a correct voice in drama schools and prestigious theatres, Linklater and Rodenburg have developed a practice that can be used to help the participant notice their habits, and through the lens of habitus, see habits as part of a broader socially or culturally constructed performance and enactment. Voice training in this context identifies for the participant that tensions, repressions or problems in their voices are not natural to them, but the bodily manifestation of who has the right to speak.

Konstantinos Thomaidis correctly identifies that Linklater's concept of the 'natural voice' is too a construction, a construction of the natural that appears natural, in the same way habits do. He describes how the training assumes that the participant has been afflicted by culture, rather than culture being a significant part of their vocal identity (Thomaidis, *Theatre & 53*). Mihyang- Amy Ginther similarly argues that the construction of a good or natural voice relies on the judgment of some on the participant of what is good. However, who decides this, specifically referring to the UK drama school context, can as easily be part of socio-cultural power dynamics that perhaps restricted the voice in the first place (Ginther 44).

These criticisms should not lead to an abandonment of this kind of voice training, but instead re-emphasize the importance of how the training is framed. Though the Linklater natural voice is a construction, so too is the pre-trained voice. Both and all voices are constructions. The valorising of the pre-trained voice, with a fear of criticising the participants' cultural or social upbringing, too easily becomes a relativist position, where understanding and valorising difference becomes more important than identifying harm. What is at cost here, is that although as true as the trained voice being a construction is, this can mean in practice that a restricted, tense voice, a quiet voice, an unsupported voice is somehow 'more natural' to certain groups of people. This continues the stereotype that loud, supported and confident voices are

natural to other groups of people. This furthermore means that when young, working-class women, such as Lauren, are loud and confident, it is often perceived in a more negative light as 'brash' or 'gobby', because confidence is not seen as natural to people like her, or rather, she is not meant to have it and if she does, it is the wrong kind of confidence. The goal of voice training is to undermine the notion that any of our habits are 'natural'.

If we take the example of Emily, who desired clarity and range at the start of the voice training process, the aim of the work was not to demand that her voice become technically clearer. Rather, clarity and range were framed within the political understanding of those terms: her desire for a wide range of people to listen to her and to understand her. The voice training is merely a tool to help Emily experience and feel clarity and range as something bodily, rather than something intellectual. This helped her understand that her body had the ability and the right to clearness and the ability and right to a wide and varied vocal range. She could then reflect on the times when she does not feel like she has these things as something she is politically being denied, rather than something she is failing at. Here there is a link between noticing the feelings of tensions in the body, that she can then begin to eradicate, and noticing the moments of social injustice in her life that created those tensions.

Habitus is significant to how the training is framed. Certain qualities of voice are not things to acquire, not possessions that you can obtain to make your voice better. They are no more than indicators of habitus, and how because of habitus the particular way the subject performs in different fields. This is made clear in the way that certain traits, such as confidence, were performed differently in the participants depending on their habitus: Emily and Lauren in their 'loudness', Lucy in her desire to articulate. Noticing and being able to change or adapt voice quality, then, is not about working towards a

correct voice, but part of, following Butler, finding and using the tools available within a highly regulated framework (Butler qtd Salih 66).

In conclusion, I want to discuss in more detail the effect of voice training as a political intervention. The training had some, though limited, effects on the individual participants. All four participants outlined in this chapter experienced some sense of first, noticing their own voice, the tensions and repressions, and then, secondly, experiencing their voice differently as a result of the project. The qualities in their voice they noticed, a tension in the jaw, a new-found clearness in the throat, were small changes. Yet these changes directly contributed to the creation of a piece of public political performance, a performance that both marked an intervention by the young women in what they wanted to say about the world, and simultaneously allowed them to perform their voices differently than they usually would.

But further than this, the voice training harnessed a sense of collective freedom that manifested in the voice. For example, Rodenburg describes moments of vocal freedom where the habitual voice loses its control over the body:

It usually releases when the defence system of habits is momentarily dropped. Many people I work with bear witness to hearing a sound escaping from them, not feeling it contained or held within them: a cry for help, a really loud belly laugh or suddenly being powerfully articulate in a critical argument. The sound we make in these instances is so clear and loud that only after a few seconds do we realize it is our very own voice (Rodenburg 29).

A clear example of this happening in the project, was when Emily, Lauren and Lucy collectively managed to make Alex laugh. The sheer vocal exhilaration, screaming and shouting but not restricting their voices, laughing, and just generally making an incredible noise without even using words, that erupted in that moment signalled a moment where the habits momentarily dropped. At the same time, the constructed group habitus that divided Lauren from Emily and Lucy because of their backgrounds also dropped. No longer just Lucy and Emily feeling in charge of an exercise, they

also needed Lauren's help to be heard, and when they experienced feeling heard together, collectively, their voices experienced the vocal freedom that Rodenburg describes. In this moment, because their voices are equally free, they become equal in a social sense as well. Two types of freedom happened simultaneously: physiological vocal freedom, and freedom from pre-existing social positioning. This is direct demonstration of those moments where a change in habitus can begin to effect and change social world itself, even just for a couple of seconds.

This point demonstrates that even with the time limitations of a doctoral thesis, there is a glimpse of the potentiality of the work as political intervention. Rodenburg and Linklater's practice is long, the process is slow, and relies on the participants continuing to work in their own time, something I would not expect of teenagers. However, the fundamental experience of noticing, of realizing your voice as a manifestation of the social world, and the ways in which the social world has imprisoned your voice can be instant. The political anger that noticing brings is what is significant to this research and this intervention. This political anger was demonstrated in the text of ensemble speech the participants spoke, and was demonstrated in the deep, penetrating 'huh' sound they made in their soundscape symbolising political action. To conclude, these vocalisations of political action I believe directly relate to the experience of voice training, the realisation that you can experience voice differently, creating the possibility of a different experience of the social world.

CHAPTER SIX: WOMEN AND VOICE

The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) currently run as part of their 'RADA in Business' programme a series of courses in actor training skills to assist women in their careers in corporate settings. The programme promises that participants will learn how to perform and communicate with authenticity, authority and impact to overcome the specific challenges that women face in business. 'Confidence and Presence for Women', for instance, is a course designed for women entering the workplace which, through teaching the fundamental tools of communication (body, breath and voice), women are taught skills of confidence to help them overcome barriers in their jobs. The course describes how participants will explore status, common body language and their own personal brand in order to: 'understand the impact that you have on others, and learn how to enhance your impact in order to come across with more confidence and presence' (RADA). This course costs £3000 for a business to send eight women to one day's training.

Writing in the *Evening Standard*, Jasmine Gardner (2012) describes her participation on one of these courses. She discusses how she worked on her status by engaging in a different kind of breathing, her presence by practising eye contact and body language, and power through approaching posture. Gardner identifies a link between the absence of women in high-profile business roles, and the kind of behaviour she learns on this course, hoping that it could teach her how to get into a boardroom herself. Voice training is proposed by RADA as a way of enabling women in specifically masculine dominated industries.

This demonstrates the ways in which women are perceived to be at a disadvantage, or even a deficiency, when it comes to skills of communication and seeming confident and assertive, especially in male dominated industries or establishments such as politics, or managerial or executive roles in business. This raises questions about the relationship between training and the position of the marginalised voice. Deborah Cameron (2017) criticises the course at RADA for assuming that women can be taught how to be as “good” communicators as men, without considering the ways in which women’s communication is deemed deficient purely through being uttered by a woman, and not because of how she speaks. Accordingly, the sociological reasons why men and women’s speech are perceived differently are not considered. Instead, only women must pay a large amount of money to better themselves, rather than any courses designed to help men learning to improve their behaviour. Though this kind of training at RADA exists for men on other programmes, their training is not specifically gendered in the way that women’s is, with a specific subcategory of courses just for women.

A course that costs £3000 and does not perceivably challenge the causes of women’s suggested disadvantage implies that women must learn how to be able to compete at the same level as men. This identifies a feminist problem in the use of training to rectify the disadvantage or deficiency in women’s voices. Does the use of voice training, especially when you consider courses like RADA in Business, continue the repression of women’s voices, by firstly considering them deficient, and secondly demanding that women’s disadvantage is their own problem that they have to solve through personal work and self-care? Or, can training when presented in a radical rather than a corporate context, help provide the tools of resistance against the silencing of women’s voices?

6.1 Deficient or Different?

In her seminal work comparing the language use of women and men, Robin Lakoff argues that women face two forms of linguistic discrimination: how they are taught to use language, and how language treats and describes women. She describes how young girls are discouraged from masculine forms of speaking through humiliation, yet at the same time, if she then develops a feminine way of speaking, she is also repressed, as it 'will later be an excuse others use to keep her in a demeaning position, to refuse to take her seriously as a human being' (Lakoff 5). Accordingly, women are damned if they do or damned if they don't: if 'she refuses to talk like a lady, she is ridiculed and subjected to criticism as unfeminine; if she does learn, she is ridiculed as unable to think clearly, unable to take part in a serious discussion' (Lakoff 6). Though some of the specifics of Lakoff's analysis seem mildly out of date, her argument is fundamental to the debate of feminist linguistics: are women's voices deficient, or are they undervalued? Does the repression of women's voices come from women being prevented from engaging in certain speech styles, or does it come from a cultural and social devaluation of the different way that women speak, meaning that accepting and valuing this difference would counteract the repression?

6.1.1 Different but Equal

In response to Lakoff's provocation, feminist linguists have argued that there is a presumption that difference is bad. Baxter, for instance, describes this approach as the 'deficiency perspective', arguing that it is an 'androcentric' view, as it positions men-as-norm, meaning that their language use is superior and accordingly women must change (Baxter 55). 'Men-as-norm' implies women are deficient, and therefore the emphasis falls on women to adopt more masculine traits to compete with men. Instead, Baxter argues for the different but equal perspective, where instead we

acknowledge that women's language use is different because it has different aims and ends. This difference is not a problem itself, rather it is unfairly devalued.

Gilligan argues that women are unable to find the language to represent their experience. Disciplinary approaches that deal with how we represent ourselves through speech, such as linguistics, psychology and philosophy, have always started from the male experience, meaning that there isn't a language in these disciplines to explain how women's sense of self is structured. As a consequence, 'women come to question whether what they have seen exists and whether what they know from their own experience is true', meaning that women suffer from personal doubts invading their sense of self (Gilligan 49). This leads to, for example, women's reluctance to make judgements. This reluctance is not from a lack of knowledge, but from an uncertainty about her right to make moral statements (Gilligan 66). Women's voices are pervaded by 'a self uncertain of its strength, unwilling to deal with choice, and avoiding confrontation' (Gilligan 69). This of course is a considerable obstacle to women's political activity and engagement, when we consider politics as largely defined through contestation.

Linguist, Deborah Tannen, has produced a series of books, both academic and popular, that outline the differences in men and women's speech. Rather than seeing women's conversational style as inferior to men, where women have to change, Tannen wants to demonstrate that men and women have different but equally valid styles. She argues that some scholars have wished to affirm equality between men and women in the fear that difference can justify unequal treatment. However, pretending that they are the same, is harmful to women as they will be treated based on the norms of men (Tannen 16). Furthermore, she describes how not all problems in male and female dialogue is down to male dominance, but rather

misunderstanding. Understanding, rather than trying to change, is the key to successful dialogue between men and women.

One of the key differences that Tannen outlines between men and women is between “rapport-talk” and “report-talk”. This is about the tension between women commonly being thought of as talking too much, and the ways that men are shown to dominate talk in public places. Tannen analyses this tension as two different types of talk. The difference between rapport and report talk is between private and public speaking, women prefer private, men prefer public. Women’s conversational style is the language of rapport: ‘a way of establishing connections and negotiating relationships’ (Tannen 77). Men’s language is of report, which aims ‘to preserve independence and negotiate and maintain status in a hierarchical social order’ (Tannen 77). Specifically, she writes for instance how men tend to speak for longer in public discourse, but in private settings such as the home women complain that men do not speak to them. She describes how generally women feel like men at home both do not talk to them and do not listen to them. This, she claims, is problematic to women because they base their relationships on intimate private talk: telling each other what they are thinking and feeling. Men, in contrast, do not base such importance in this kind of discussion, perhaps thinking it trivial (Tannen 80). Alternatively, women in public (both public speaking, but also in any social situation which is not intimate, e.g. parties or larger groups containing strangers) are more hesitant about how they speak. Because they aim to build rapport, they ‘play down their expertise’, whereas men ‘seek opportunities to gather and disseminate factual information’ (Tannen 125).

What is problematic in Tannen’s analysis is that she presents the difference between public and private as a ‘preference’ between men and women, as if women’s absence from the public sphere exists just because women have a different preference of speaking style. This does not consider the harmful outcomes more widely if women’s

talk is resigned to the private sphere. This difference is not equally valid: one style of speaking means its speaker has considerable more power, influence and representation in broader society. The other resigns its speaker to talk regarded as meaningless, idle and trivial conversation. Tannen argues that “understanding” is the solution to difference, where men and women continue to speak differently but attempt to acknowledge and understand that they are coming from different places. Men and women must continue to speak ‘on their own terms rather than applying the standards of one group to the behaviour of the other’ (Tannen 121). Yet this resigns women only to rapport talk, as furthermore just “understanding” each other’s differences as equally valid (and accordingly unchangeable) will not counteract the absence of women in public discourse.

6.1.2 Difference as Constructed

Deborah Cameron objects to the ‘different but equal’ perspective. She argues that women’s “different voice” is a linguistic and socio-political construct that potentially continues to contribute to women’s absence in fields such as politics. She describes the “different voice” ideology as viewing women’s distinctive political contribution as ‘a way of doing things – and saying things – that eschews aggression and point scoring in favour of cooperation and consensus, making politics more civilized, more modern, and more human’ (Cameron and Shaw 2). This, she argues, makes it difficult to separate what women’s speech is, from what it is believed to be, and in the process, voice becomes a metaphor for all the distinctive qualities women are supposed to bring to politics (Cameron and Shaw 3). Furthermore, she highlights a tension between women bringing supposedly positive and preferred styles of behaviour, such as non-combativeness and politeness, to politics, and their actual absence from politics. If women offer a different style that is largely seen as good and preferred, why are there not more women involved?

In response to this, Cameron and Shaw undertook a study of female and male party leaders during the 2015 General Election to see whether women actually bring a different voice into politics. Previous studies have demonstrated that different speech styles depend more on the culture of the institution than on the gender of the speaker (Shaw 2000; McElhinny 2012; Walsh 2016). Furthermore, in Cameron and Shaw's study of the party leaders, they found that women's style of debate did not vary significantly from men's. Rather than just adopting stereotypically "masculine" speech styles, they argue that all speakers used a mix of both. What affected the use of speech styles more than the gender, was the position of the political party that the leader represented (Cameron and Shaw 74). More significant than the question of a different voice, is the question of participation: of how much and how many women participate in political discourse, and of women's relative absence, either literally or through not speaking. Furthermore, they argue through a review of the media representations of these politicians after the debates, gender speech differences are clearer in their reception than in their production:

The women were persistently represented as more different from the men than they really were, and what was said about the nature of differences often owed more to familiar gender stereotypes than to careful observations of the behaviour being commented on (Cameron and Shaw 110)

Arguably, the fixation on difference continues harmful stereotypes of women's speech that are not true but are heard through the assumption that there is a difference. Furthermore, Cameron and Shaw argue that the constraint of women's participation could be linked to focusing too much on the different voice ideology, as the speech styles that women apparently adopt are not devalued when undertaken by men. Politicians such as Barack Obama for example, were praised for their more dialogic approach. In this sense, it is not the style itself that is devalued, but simply, women, and if we focus too heavily on this myth of difference, we are at risk of ignoring the actual barriers to female participation (Cameron and Shaw 16).

The different but equal perspective normalises and naturalises women's voices as absent. By valorising women's voices as different, there is an implication that this difference is how women's voices naturally are. This in turn implies that women have no opportunity to not speak in this way. Lakoff herself argues that even if being polite, or co-operative or whatever the decided feminine norm is, is a good thing, she objects that she should automatically have to be any of those things because she is a woman (Lakoff 52). Presuming that women have to adopt something "unnatural" to them in order to take on typically masculine speech forms at the same time presumes that there is a natural feminine speech form that is inauthentic to betray. This contributes to the idea that women cannot perform their voices differently, that is, not only a deficiency, but a permanent one.

Accordingly, it is not a matter of valuing women's speech styles, but addressing the actual absence of women's voices: why are women's voices less present in public life? Cameron argues that there are two strands to understanding this absence: economic reasons, the opportunities to learn the linguistic skills needed for public life; or symbolic/ideological, the cultural practices and representations that continue to exclude women (Cameron, *Public* 9). Women are excluded simultaneously by being represented in broader culture as not being good at speaking at the same time as linguistic resources to help with this not being available to them. These two spheres of course rely and perpetuate each other: the unequal distribution of linguistic skills is the consequence of a cultural repression of the female voice (Cameron, *Public* 9-10). Women are not taught the skills of communicating in the public sphere, which in turn continues to position them as not being good at it. Instead of allocating resources to women, the idea that they do not belong in the sphere of public discourse is perpetuated. Accordingly, instead of seeing this absence as a reason to provide more resources to women, the idea that they do not belong there dominates, which means they are not taught the skills.

Though women's voices are different to men's in tone, in pitch or other various and varying anatomical differences, there is not an inherent difference in communicative styles. However, there is a constructed difference that continues to perpetuate women's relative absence and silence. As part of this silencing is related to the distribution of communicative skills, voice training could be a way of rebalancing this inequity. Yet, this raises questions about the political efficacy of training the self, and whether this tackles the initial causes of this silencing. Before addressing the question of training directly, I will first explore some of these questions within the frame of the material voice, rather than just speech patterns and linguistics.

6.2 Femininity and the Material Voice

Dunn and Jones describe how the 'voice' in the context of feminism has been ascribed to the various aspirations, such as political and sexual rights, that have historically been denied women:

In this context "voice" has become a metaphor for textual authority, and alludes to the efforts of women to reclaim their own experience through writing ("having a voice") or to the specific qualities of their literary and cultural self-expression ("in a different voice"). This metaphor has become so pervasive, so intrinsic to feminist discourse that it makes us too easily forget (or repress) the concrete physical dimensions of the female voice upon which this metaphor was based (Dunn and Jones 1).

The literal, audible voice, alongside its metaphoric manifestation, has too been the site of both the silencing, and the empowerment of women. Dunn and Jones use the term "vocality" to capture all of voice's manifestations besides linguistic, arguing that all aspects of voice are culturally constructed, through the act of hearing, that is, the perception of women's voices, or rather the focus falls on what is being heard by the listener, not what the speaker thinks they are uttering. The contexts in which the voice is heard ascribes meaning on the body and, because of the way society is structured by codes of sexual difference, 'both the body and the voice are inescapably gendered'

(Dunn and Jones 2). How the voice is heard, therefore, will be structured by perceptions of gender.

Furthermore, scholars have described how the voice in its materiality is associated with femininity, as opposed to the voice as speech and thought, which is masculine. Cavarero argues that the history of philosophy has prioritised the masculine logos (language) over the feminised phone (voice):

Symptomatically, the symbolic patriarchal order that identifies the masculine with reason and the feminine with the body is precisely an order that privileges the semantic with respect to the vocal... This voice becomes secondary, ephemeral, and inessential – reserved for women. Feminized from the start, the vocal aspect of speech and, furthermore, of song appear together as antagonistic elements in a rational, masculine sphere that centers itself, instead, on the semantic. To put it formulaically: woman sings, man thinks. (Cavarero 6)

Whilst voice is used in its metaphoric sense in feminist movements as a symbol of agency, empowerment and representation, it is women's association with the material voice, beneath speech, that culturally silences them from the semantic. The symbolic patriarchal order that privileges the masculine over the feminine is simultaneously prioritising the semantic over the vocal (L. Fisher 87). The question becomes, to eliminate this prioritisation, do we re-associate the feminine with the semantic, or do we elevate the vocal and the body to being equal to thought?

In her essay 'The Laugh of the Medusa', Cixous describes how women have been prevented from engaging in the semantic. She argues that women's writing is omitted from discourse and that discourse is written from the perspective of the masculine. In response to this, Cixous makes a demand on women to write as writing is often the place where subversive thoughts that change social and cultural structures begin (Cixous 879). What she simultaneously argues however is that by writing subversively women will not attempt or replicate male writing. Instead, within women's writing and in turn women's speech, the *body* will be heard. She argues that the censoring of

women's bodies has led to the censoring of women's voices, and through engaging in discourse women can overcome this:

By writing herself, woman will return to the body which has been confiscated from her, which has been turned into the uncanny stranger on display... Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time (Cixous 880).

In this sense, overcoming women's silence in discourse is not a matter of prioritising the semantic or the body, but of understanding that uniquely for women, the two are always connected. There is no scission between speech and text. For instance, Cixous describes the physiological reaction that a woman may have when she stands up to speaking in front of people: 'her heart racing, at times entirely lost for words, ground and language slipping away' (Cixous 880). The distress of public speaking, she argues, is double for women because not only is it transgressive for women to decide to talk, at the same time the woman knows that her words will fall on 'deaf male ears' who only speak in the masculine language (Cixous 880-881). Cixous essentially calls for women to speak and write, but speak and write from and to women, arguing that women speak their own language that inverts and invents the male discourse (Cixous 887).

It is arguable that Cixous essentialises the female voice. Yet this essentialism is not with regards to how women speak in terms of vocal quality, that is, for instance the rapport versus report speech that Tannen refers to. Rather, this essentialism is about the presence of the body in women's voices. Fuss argues that a tendency towards essentialism in discussing *écriture féminine* should not be misunderstood as feminists replacing one essentialised way to describe women (the patriarchal understanding of the woman) with another. Rather, through articulating that there is an "essence" of woman (through women's bodies), she argues that a sense of what being a woman is can always be kept separate from male definition, imprinting and socialisation (Fuss

68). In this sense, woman's "essence" is not something to which women must be defined by, but a part of femininity that escapes patriarchal structures.

By framing this essence as related to the body, the body can be understood as a site that can resist the masculine. The voice, as part of the body, becomes part of this freedom. This can furthermore be understood in the voice's position in the relationship between the linguistic and the body. Cavarero argues that a prioritisation of voice as bodily rather than linguistic reminds the listener of the body behind the voice, rather than the voice being 'abstract like the truths postulated by reason' (Cavarero 7). The dismissal of the voice as body ignores how the reception of language is inextricably linked to the body that produced it. As Linda Fisher writes, the body 'enables or limits our actions and endeavours in an immediate and fundamental way' (L. Fisher 88). In this sense, the woman that speaks cannot transcend her bodily voice, as the words are already marked by her female body. The inextricable link then, between a woman's voice and her body, is not a way in which women's voices are just simply different, where the devaluation of the body is a dismissal of difference, but rather a complex interdependency where the female body cannot not be heard in the woman's speech.

Cavarero furthermore describes how in linguistics, the voice is separated from the body by speech finding its home in thought. Speech therefore becomes the sonorous emission of the mental signified, and as a consequence the voice is generalised, and the unique body that emits it is no longer important. Voice is just the audible and phonetic component of a linguistic system. Nancy Fraser (2013) objects to theorisation of feminist linguistics based on this school of thought, originating in structuralism and Lacanian discourse. She argues instead that feminist linguistics must consider the socio-political position of the body that speaks, whereas the structuralist tradition abstracts language to a self-contained system. This means that

this system can only ever be permanent: as feminists we should consider language structures not only affected by culture, but furthermore responsive and structured by cultural and political change.

In this sense, the voice as body is significant to feminist linguistic thought, as it both means we can consider the singularity of each voice (Cavarero 9) and the broader socio-political position as woman as a class (Fraser, *Fortunes* 162). In this sense, thinking about the body in relation to voice is not just about re-valuing the feminised body, but ensuring an approach to voice that considers it sociologically and politically significant.

6.3 Training and Gender

The body can reveal not only how women's voices are different, but how this difference comes from repression and lack of access to resources, rather than a naturalised difference. Disputing the different but equal perspective, if there is a deficiency in women's voice, or rather, an unfair distribution of the resources of voice needed for women to enter public discourse equally to men, what is needed to redistribute these resources? Is there a form of redistribution that simultaneously challenges the cultural representation of women's voice? So far in this thesis, I have discussed whether voice training can be used to both reveal and challenge habitus. In the rest of this chapter I will discuss the efficacy of training, but also the problems of training, with specific reference to the gender question.

Rodenburg describes extensively physiological repressions that are developed out of gender norms. She outlines, for instance, how during adolescence the change in women's bodies may cause problems for their breathing and posture through them

becoming 'tighter and more withdrawn, more round-shouldered and protective of their sexuality' (Rodenburg 50). Rodenburg describes how women have a tendency at this stage either to close down, or to do the opposite and over-extend their bodies. She also describes how male adolescents fall into a 'vocal bluff' where they over-compensate: too loud, too aggressive or too deep. In contrast, girls learn vocal reticence, meaning they learn to devoice, tone down and not interrupt (Rodenburg 50-51). Rodenburg even describes how clothes can affect the voice: high heels, for instance, preventing the breath (Rodenburg 58). Furthermore, despite outlining the anatomical differences between men and women, largely to do with the size of the larynx, Rodenburg argues that these biological differences do not amount to the social differences assigned to the different genders:

Greater lung capacity and rib power do not necessarily produce greater volume. No one would accuse top flight female opera singers of singing any less powerfully than their male counterparts. A man usually senses this capacity and authority and his right to do it more readily than any woman. Any woman, after sessions of training, can begin to feel the powers for herself (Rodenburg 74).

Lack of power is through socialised behaviours learnt in the body. Women, she writes, tend to slump more, have more difficulty standing in a neutral position with their legs apart, and becoming round-shouldered to protect themselves, collapsing their spine. Women are taught to reduce the amount of physical space they take up, reducing their breath capacity, especially when women have a tendency to constrict their abdominal area, in a desire to look thin. This discomfort in taking space physically is also reflected in the voice, which Rodenburg describes as de-voicing, where women tend to demonstrate less conviction in the voice, their sentences trail off, and the words they choose less definite. Rodenburg argues that these physical and social habits are so deeply entwined that work on one will begin to affect the other. Voice training inevitably addresses physical habits because Linklater and Rodenburg method use the body as the starting point for the voice. Specific voice exercises require the body to change physical and postural habits.

6.3.1 Habitus and Gender

In the previous chapter I drew a connection between vocal habits and Bourdieu's habitus. Feminist scholars have discussed an absence of gender in Bourdieu's writing (Adkins and Skeggs, 2004), with his writing largely framed around class. Yet this does not mean that Bourdieu's theory cannot be applied to feminism, particularly the ideas of different forms of capital, how we define agency, and habitus. Furthermore, habitus is a useful concept to discuss further the relationship between voice training and the subordination of the female voice.

Bourdieu's concept of capitals can be useful to decipher the kind of work that generally falls to women: the work of maintaining relationships, which Reay defines as a form of emotional capital. This, she writes, is an extremely gendered form of capital, and is further implicated by social class (Reay, 'Gendering' 57). It is a form of capital of the private sphere and is generated in affective relationships with family or friends. It is also the one kind of capital, she argues, that cannot be accrued as an investment in the self, but rather, it is 'used up in interactions with others and is for the benefit of those others' (Reay, 'Gendering' 71). The maintenance and accrual of this capital broadly fits with some of the descriptions of women's 'different' voice: voice as used towards relationship building, co-operation and the affective rather than effective realm. In this sense, the voice becomes effective in its ability to gain capital and is perhaps structured thus in its obligation to accrue emotional capital, to the deficit of other forms of capital. This perpetuates women's voices as part of the private rather than public sphere.

Steph Lawler argues that habitus allows us to both understand how gender and class are incorporated into the embodied self, but also, how such identities are conferred on the subject, so that they are 'marked normal or abnormal, as wrong or right' (Lawler

110). Habitus demonstrates how class or gender discrimination is moved onto the individual, it is 'not what you do or what you have, that is marked as wrong or right, normal or pathological, but who you are' (Lawler 112). It is the differences in habitus that manifest inequalities. In this sense, difference is a marker by which to be discriminated against. In her analysis of two protests organized by mothers, one in a working-class estate and the other in a middle-class, Lawler demonstrates how even your very act of resisting against discrimination or oppression is counted as legitimate or illegitimate dependent on your habitus. In other words, only 'some forms of contestation get to count as 'resistance'' (Lawler 121). She presents a dilemma here: simply casting off the markers of difference does not threaten existing systems, yet if putting on 'middle class accents does not represent a threat to social relations, how far would affirming working-class existence do this?' (Lawler 122).

Lawler cites Butler as a possible remedy to this dilemma, discussing Butler's objection to Bourdieu that the validity of a performative utterance is entirely on the social authority of the speaker. This is true to some extent, yet there is still space for the subject to resignify their voice, like an imposter, where the imposter can seize authority if they speak as if they had such authority. She questions whether there is a sure way of designating between the authority and the imposter, and whether there are moments where the 'utterance forces a blurring between the two', where such utterance calls into question legitimacy and authority (Butler, *Excitable* 146). However, Lawler argues that this is perhaps a theoretical point, rather than an empirical:

Although political changes have occurred that have involved dominated groups re-using and therefore resignifying the very terms by which their 'dominated' status is marked, Butler does not show (though she wants to claim) that these resignifications are the motor of such changes. It may be that resignification is only able to occur in specific social contexts (Lawler 123).

These contexts are perhaps where social change is already happening. Lawler argues that Butler's work downplays the role of the audience, the viewpoint of the

person hearing the subject. Authority, she writes, 'cannot simply be claimed by the speaker: it must also be granted by the listener' (Lawler 123). In this sense, it is not just about the subject performing their voice differently, but also about how an audience receives that voice.

This brings us back to the question of agency. Lawler writes how the maligned working-class women in her study had agency, but it did not matter because of how they were received and presented in the public sphere, in the media etc. In this sense, in the tandem relationship between agency and structure, agency can push back, but some structures will be harder to push back against, for certain groups of people. As Lawler poignantly writes this is what it means to be dominated (Lawler 125). Yet, resistance must start somewhere, and the subject must find some means by which they have the capacity to push back. The voice can be considered synonymous to agency in both a metaphoric sense where the voice symbolises women's struggle for agency, self-determination and representation; and in a material sense, where the physical voice can speak differently, as if granted authority. Because of this two-fold nature, the voice can tackle both the redistributive inequality and the symbolic inequality that women face vocally. The material act of speaking differently can make a redistributive and representational challenge. Butler argues that social situations are not static, and therefore iterations that had no prior legitimacy break open the possibility of future forms (Butler, *Excitable* 147). It is this possibility that is significant. This may be a theoretical point, but through the practice of voice training, I explore whether there is an empirical efficacy to this idea.

6.3.2 Gendered politics of training

From the feminist perspective, there are two broad criticisms of the ideology of voice training associated with Kristen Linklater and Patsy Rodenburg. The first is a concern with the "natural voice", the idea of an ideal voice that is natural, and free from cultural

markers. The second is about ideas of “self-care”, and the ways in which labour of the self both largely falls to women, and furthermore implies that any deficiency is an individual problem.

The existing literature that criticises specifically Linklater’s technique and its terminology of the “natural voice” broadly criticises the perceived ideology of the work rather than the actual practice. The training’s progression towards freeing the natural voice is posed as problematic as it presents a myth of an ideal, naturalised voice free from ‘corrupting influences of culture’ (Schlichter). This suggests the idea of a universalised, authenticated self, homogenizing experiences of voice in its desire for neutrality. Diana M. F. Looser argues that this desire for neutrality is as politicized and structured as any other voice, under the myth of being natural (Looser 30). This runs the risk of denaturalising voices that do not fit expectations of the natural voice. Gender differentiations, for example, could be seen as unnatural, and furthermore erased out of desire for neutrality. This devalues these differences as abnormalities that need correcting.

This leads into the second criticism of voice training as an act of self-care. Schlichter writes how Linklater’s approach can be practiced as:

a form of cultural work that allows for transformation of individual participants’ bodies and voices, and in conjunction, the production of an embodied sense of selfhood in a particular twenty-first-century context (Schlichter).

This is a transferral of power from the regulation of authorities, to the regulation of the self. In this sense, the practice could be a disciplinary system that reproduces forms of identity ‘through a notion of authentic selfhood in conjunction with the ideal of the natural voice’ (Schlichter). This is exacerbated by a marketisation of the practice, like the RADA in Business course I outlined in the introduction, through expensive workshops, its reproduction in corporate settings and the production of manuals of the practice popularised as kind of self-help books. Regulation of the self is in

particular a feminist issue, because of the extent to which women are expected to self-care. From her experience of participating in a Linklater course, Schlichter commented on the majority of participants being female, to which the instructor replied that this was common, as “self-discovery” is primarily a feminized practice. Furthermore, that women are constructed as deficient, means, of course, there is a wider market of aiming self-care at women.

Yet, on the understanding that the different but equal perspective is insufficient for targeting the actual absence of women from public discourse, clearly there needs to be at least some work involved in equalising male and female voices, particularly when it comes to politics. It is one thing to demonstrate the harmfulness of positioning the individual rather than broader society as the cause of inequality, meaning that it is their responsibility to self-improve; but at what point is self-care not an act of exploitation, but rather, an act of politics? Political resistance takes work, takes self-labouring, and to stop any action that requires self-care on the premise of it being reactionary surely results in nothing changing. In this line of thinking, any suggestion or answer to the economic and cultural inequalities that face women is cut off as anti-feminist just because it is something that only women must do, meaning that the act is unequal. Yet, we are starting from a position of inequality, so any suggestion or answer must be aimed at women, and women must act and work as part of their own resistance, as it will not be granted.

Furthermore, the criticisms of Linklater’s natural voice fail to provide a rounded understanding of her practice, stopping at the terminology and not seeking out underneath the poorly named “natural voice” whether there is something more politically efficacious. The natural voice is constructed, as is the pre-trained voice. Concerns that voice training eliminates the cultural markers present in the un-trained voice presupposes that cultural differences are politically efficacious in and of

themselves. Similar to the different but equal perspective, this kind of relativism assumes that cultural repression emerges purely out of a devaluing of these cultural markers, ignoring the other economic and redistributive causes of oppression. But further than this, this criticism points to no empirical evidence that Linklater training erases cultural difference, and rather posits its entire criticism based on semantics and choice of words.

Annette Schlichter, who took part in a series of Linklater workshops, describes how the technique in practice, created openings in the discourse of naturalisation of voice:

But if we look beyond the naturalizing language, the teaching of breathing and vocalization offers an avenue of self-transformation, especially in those moments when the breathing work leads to a relief of the voice from signification (Schlichter).

In practice, Schlichter identified a difference between practicing correct breathing and “breathing freely”. The practice of breathing freely is about the removal of habitual blockages that eventually shift ‘an individual’s understanding of her own corporeality’ (Schlichter). Schlichter argues that rather than this producing an authentic body, experiencing this different relationship with the voice releases the self from the burden of the authentic self, through a disruption of the relationship between the voice and linguistic meaning. The deferring of voice away from the larynx to the body, she argues, shifts the focus of voice away from linguistic performance, allowing the participant to experience an unfamiliar self. Accordingly, Linklater voice training is a form of self-care that ‘can reach beyond the limitations of a culturally dominant notion of the voice as an aural carrier of authentic selfhood’ (Schlichter). In this sense, this self-care has the potential to develop a voice that resists.

6.4 Gender in my practice

Most of the participants in my practice were women. Partly deliberate in the case of the women's group in Ellesmere Port, or accidental in the case of Leeds, the only male participants I had were during the pilot sessions, and Joe in the term-time project. Even in the women's project, which was billed as being just for girls, there was for the most part a rejection of the idea that men and women's voices were different. When I asked at the end of the project, for instance, would the experience have been different if there were male participants, all the women's group argued that it would have been the same. With some exceptions (Lauren for example preferred the project without men) most of these young women denied that having men in a workshop space altered their experience. It is interesting that Lauren had this different view, as one of the few participants who did experience these workshops both in a mixed gender environment, and as a women only space.

It was the billed women's project where the young women were the most adamant that they would not be affected by a male presence, and that gender differences are over-exaggerated. Lara, one of the most politically articulate and informed of the participants, felt like she had never experienced gender discrimination when it comes to things like voicing your opinion:

I think it's just an age thing. Maybe... maybe. To be honest I've never experienced that being... told for me. Because of my, of how I've like grown up and stuff. I've never really experienced someone tell me, you know, you're a woman so your opinions not valid. But I mean age, yeah, definitely.

For Lara, being a young person felt more restrictive than being female when it comes to having political debate. This problem was something she genuinely felt frustrated about because she was too young to vote. However, she had yet to experience being denied voice based on gender discrimination. Lara, at 15 years old is abnormally politically articulate for someone her age and had developed an active interest in

politics through her friendship group. Attending an all-girls grammar school, her and her friends would come into school and discuss items in the news, forming an opinion collectively. In this sense, Lara's experience of female voice is of the public sphere, where every day she participates with other young women in political discourse. As a result, she feels confident in talking about politics, feels like she is allowed to talk about politics, and the only thing that prevents her political participation is not being able to vote because of her age. Yet, I believe there were clear ways the women's voices in these workshops were gendered, both in how they chose to represent themselves, and how they experienced voice differently during the workshops.

6.4.1 Representing the self.

Lara was unrepresentative of the other female participants throughout all of my practice, who, even though they would not put their lack of confidence in political discussion down to gender discrimination, they also would not articulate or frame their voice with the same assurance as Lara, and furthermore, described how they would avoid political discussion. In situations where they described their voice or described their participation in political debate most of the female participants were more likely to downplay their capabilities than men. For example, Joe, who took part in the term-time project, in any moment of self-reflection would declare absolute self-confidence in himself, or in his opinion, making statements like "I don't give a shit. It's my opinion, it's my voice". In contrast, and in accordance with the literature, most women participants were very tentative about their opinions and their knowledge. Natalie, for instance, doubted her knowledge of political matters and therefore said she does not have political opinions, despite being able to talk for a considerable amount of time about identity issues. Similarly, Sophie described herself as not being political before this project based on her lack of knowledge:

I didn't necessarily think that I thought I was capable of it, because I wasn't sure what I was doing, and I didn't really know much about it. But I think, erm, it was something that I... I wasn't passionate about because I didn't know

much about it, but I was passionate to learn. And to do that. So I think, I'm glad I had the confidence to just ok I'll go for that and see what it's all about. I think I was more curious than anything.

Since taking part in the project, she realized she was political, not through gaining knowledge, but from seeing that it is not about the amount of knowledge you have, but about how much you want to or can make a difference. For her to consider herself political, it would need to be a definition about how she can contribute and change society, rather than a definition based on having strong opinions.

Furthermore, the women were also self-critical and self-doubting when describing their voice. At the start of every project, we did an exercise called drawing the voice, where participants represent what they think their voice is like through an abstract drawing. Most of the young women's drawings tried to represent some kind of frustration with their voice, largely to do with thinking there was a big gap between how their voice sounds and how they would like it to sound, and furthermore a gap between thought and speech. Sophie, for instance, in her drawing tried to convey how it's hard for her to get across her ideas, both because her voice is soft and delicate, but also because she thinks it's disconnected. She felt like she had lots of different voices and she wanted to feel like she had one voice that could make her points. These 'different voices' suggest a perception from Sophie that her voice defers, that she panders to the person she is talking to and that she is aware of the other person at all times. In this perception, the successful performance of her voice was about building relationships. In contrast to this, in an interview after the project, she described a change in her voice:

[Her voice is] Different to when we first started. Cos I wasn't too sure before. I definitely feel more rounded. Erm, with my voice I feel like I don't have to use different voices to do different things. I've got one where I can use it powerfully, I can, and I can use all the different angles of it when the times I need, but it's not like a separate person. Anymore.

This shows a confidence in the voice as one that has the potential of a wide range of tones, of volumes, of expressions, but is essentially the same voice. She has

experienced the possibility of difference in her voice, but that does not mean she is making herself speak in a different voice: rather her voice always had this potential, it is just about allowing for it.

The ability to represent the voice differently after the project was two-fold. Firstly, it demonstrated a change in how she perceived her voice: Sophie no longer had to accept that she has a delicate, soft voice, she can think of herself also being strong and confident, and furthermore, she was happy to say that she is strong and confident. Secondly, it demonstrates an actual difference in her voice, through her experiencing her voice differently. She found that her voice is multi-layered, and that her one voice had the right to many expressions. It is both, following Cavarero, a unique voice of her body (Cavarero 4) that reveals her as a unique being, at the same time as demonstrating her capacity for a wide range of different sounding voices. In this sense her unique voice is not tied down to one sociological “type” of voice: the unique voice is multiple and relational. This is because voice training allows the subject to experience their voice differently, through bodily practice.

6.4.2 Experiencing the self.

My workshops have demonstrated how voice training can make women experience the voice differently, which means a different experience of the self. This different self is an alternative to the self the woman presents, a representation that largely diminishes her vocal capabilities. Because, following Linklater and Rodenburg, vocal limitations are a mental restriction that leads to a bodily restriction, voice training means that women do not have to be convinced psychologically that they have the right to a different kind of voice, rather they can experience it directly by engaging somatically.

At the end of the term-time project in Ellesmere Port, three participants, Sinead, Emma and Joe, did two days extra in the Easter holidays. These two days were particularly interesting in terms of gender because Joe participated on the first day, but not the second. This meant that Sinead and Emma had the direct experience of the workshop with a man present, and without. Both agreed that they preferred the second day, and it was on the second day that they felt like they “got” the training and felt a real difference in their voices. Emma, for instance, has a very soft and tentative voice. It is quite breathy and caught in the throat. On the second day we did some work on the voice with text, working on vowels and consonants. The text was a speech from *Measure for Measure* that contains at least loosely some feminist questions about women as objects within men’s power structures. In one of the exercises, the participants broke down a sentence into vowels and consonants, and practiced saying the vowel sounds of the sentence without the consonants. So, “Oh you beast” (Emma’s line), becomes “oh-oo-ee”. After practicing with just the vowels, the participant then tried speaking the sentence as normal. Something remarkable happened with Emma when she went back to speaking the line as written. Her voice was suddenly much stronger, clearer, louder and powerful; it lost its breathiness and felt like it was supported by the whole body. Even Sinead was incredibly shocked, saying it was like listening to a different person. Emma was confused that she sounded so different, asking whether there was genuinely a change as she had been told that she had a “flat voice” but has never known what to do about it. For her, breaking down the sentence into its components took away much of the stress she associates with trying to deliver lines. Just practicing the vowels helped her lose the excess of breathiness and throatiness.

In this case, Emma experienced a different voice: a voice that does not think about what she is doing too much. Practising the voice non-linguistically just through the vowel sounds helped her not worry about trying to perform the meaning of the text

successfully. When she then came back to the speech as written, she could continue this way of vocalizing, focusing on the feeling of the voice and not on a good linguistic performance. She told me in reflection how she has recorded her voice in the past, so she could listen back to it and see if she is doing it right. But today she felt that she performed her voice well through a different connection to it. She knew it was a good performance not through listening back to it, but by feeling it. This simple exercise she felt had “changed” her voice.

6.4.3 Voice and resistance.

After working on these texts individually, we created a small ensemble performance using the texts alongside developing short soundscapes based on the themes of the speeches. We discussed how women can feel vulnerable and trapped in situations, but also discussed how women can stand up for themselves. We then created a soundscape for vulnerability, one for feeling trapped and one for empowerment. What was significant, was that this performance was an opportunity for Emma and Sinead to resist some of what had happened the previous day with a man present. On the first day, we had used an image theatre exercise to devise a scene where a woman is told that she has to change what she is wearing in work. We worked through the scene to find a solution, and then made a soundscape of the scenes. We discussed what themes we would like to explore, and the question of feminism was brought up by Joe, who claimed that feminism is lost these days and has no meaning. Sinead tried to argue with him, saying that people misunderstand what feminism is, to which Joe replies:

I'm one of those guys who does understand what feminism means, but I honestly don't – I believe in that, I believe in that – honestly women should – honestly.... The amount of stuff you're going through – but people have took it too far... Turning feminists into “feminazis”.

Sinead could not hide her frustration with Joe for using this term and managed to call him out for its incorrectness. Yet, she then apologised for what she perceived as

lecturing him. Because Joe, genuinely, displayed sympathy for feminism, Sinead felt bad for being frustrated by his choice of language. She refrained herself from shouting at him again. Emma remained silent throughout the discussion.

The short performance we made on the second day became an opportunity for Emma and Sinead to contest these things, without the male presence. They both said how they had preferred the workshop without Joe there, as they felt that his presence, even when he ostensibly agreed with them, prevented something, as Sinead described:

Even though he was agreeing with our stuff it still felt.... Like when he mentioned that feminazi term, I wanted to kick him. URGHHH! NO! It felt more powerful as a group when it was just women. It felt more comfortable.

Equally, Emma said it was easier without Joe. Making it clear that this was not to do with Joe as a person, but to do with power relations in the room, both young women felt that they could not actually make the political point they wanted to make about feminist issues when Joe was there:

And it felt more powerful. When there was a man in the room it sort of alters the status. Even though you've [me] got quite a high status in this room anyway because you're leading it... But having him there broke that up a little bit. I don't know if you noticed that but for me it broke it up a bit because there was a man in the room. And he was the only guy in the room, so. He kind of had a bit of power. In terms of atmosphere anyway, not in words, but in atmosphere.

Just Joe's presence made Sinead and Emma feel like they were not really discussing the issues the way they wanted to discuss them. If they had had to listen to a male perspective on the texts they worked on, it would have been disrupted because he would have argued the male's perspective. They felt that because men are "good at arguing", the man would get their way in the discussion, and without Joe there, they felt like they had the opportunity to be the loudest.

In this sense, we can hear their soundscape performance on a broader level as about women's weakness in society, or on a more personal and specific level, Emma and

Sinead feeling vocally confined on the first day with Joe present, which they were then able to resist on the second. We can furthermore see this in the contrast between the soundscapes they made with and without his presence. The soundscapes we created on the first day represented a specific scenario where a woman was told she had to wear high heels as part of a dress code at work, which she decided to go against by turning up in flat shoes [TRACK 10]. The woman, played by Emma, is ordered to change her shoes by her manager, Joe, which at first is condoned by the bystander, Sinead. We then recreated the scenario with Sinead becoming an ally of Emma's, choosing to also take off her high heels, leaving Joe with little to do about it. We made a soundscape for the first and then transitioned into the second. Both soundscapes suffered slightly from trying to represent the narrative, meaning that all three were using demonstrative sounds, trying to signify words rather than create sounds that represented the feelings of the characters. Yet, further than this, Emma and Sinead's protest against Joe as manager through the non-linguistic voice failed to sound like a protest. When they improvised the scene with words, they came up with arguments demonstrating why he could not treat them like this. In the non-linguistic version, their voices do not threaten Joe, but create sounds that sound like laughing. The sounds remained complicit rather than authoritative and are strangely conventionally feminine in a heightened way: high pitched, mocking and even gossipy.

This contrasted to the strength of voice they found in the soundscape on the second day, where the women vocally moved from vulnerability, to frustration to empowerment [TRACK 11]. The sounds for vulnerability were weak voices, quiet and muted, small one-off unconnected sounds, a low hum and the voice choking in the throat. The soundscape for feeling trapped was made through a trapped voice, the air trapped in the throat, gasping for breath, balking and coughing with a high-pitched sound that wavered inconsistently. This then moved to a soundscape of

empowerment through a consistent rhythm made through the stamping of feet, and a repeated “hah” sound. The whole body became engaged: clapping, jumping, and an ecstatic loud, high pitched open vowel sound. We put these soundscapes together with Emma and Sinead alternating lines of their text, as if the text brings them from feeling trapped to feeling empowered. The empowerment, then, is articulated through the non-linguistic voice. In the soundscape of the frustration women experience, Sinead is able re-perform the frustration she felt with Joe for his remarks. But instead of stifling this frustration, it is able to erupt into the soundscape they created of standing up for yourself, allowing her to both release her frustration, and contest Joe’s remarks through the voice.

6.5 Conclusion

In one sense, women engaging in voice training can be problematised as an act of self-care, that not only implies that women’s voices are deficient in comparison to men’s, but also that resolving this deficiency falls to the individual responsibility of the woman, if she wishes to succeed, especially in male dominated spheres. Working on the voice from this perspective seems like a gendered labour that only women really have to do, because of the ways in which their speaking is devalued. Yet, in this chapter I have demonstrated that writing off any engagement with the self as problematic leaves us perpetually stalling, as it becomes incredibly unclear what we can do to tackle vocal inequality. As outlined, arguing that women’s different voice needs to be valued equally to men fetishizes a way of voice as natural to women, meaning that women have no option. Instead, voice training can de-mystify certain ways of speaking as being “natural” to certain groups of people, giving the participant a wider vocal range. In order to progress, I believe it has to be accepted that certain ways of speaking are needed in certain contexts. The point is these ways of speaking should never be considered the right of one social group and not another.

Women's voices have been associated with the body, as opposed to men's being associated with the mind and thought. This of course is part of a broader masculinisation of thought and rationality. At the same time, the body could be the site of resistance against this. The voice training that I have undertaken has prioritised the body as the starting place for the voice, not to give it the same value as the mind, in the sense that it is just different but equal to the male voice, where prioritisation is the valorising of difference itself. Rather, the body is prioritised because through voice training it can be the site of change and resistance to the ways that women are supposed to speak.

Schlichter demonstrates how voice training's focus on the body allows the subject to experience the self differently, disputing any notions than the authentic self. My research hopes to demonstrate something further than this: that this different self can be a political subject, contesting the regular ways in which society expects women to be. That the young women I have worked with consider themselves after the project to be "louder", "more gobby", "more powerful", "stronger" all contradict the expectations of women's different voice as "polite", "soft", "kind" and "accommodating". This begins to demonstrate that women do not necessarily have to bring a different voice to politics, rather they can compete equally to men in the public sphere when the resources are distributed fairly.

However, this still leaves the problem of reception and perception. Cameron outlines how women's absence from public life is also about cultural representation of women's voices. Similarly, Lawler explains how the working-class women's protest was not allowed to be a legitimate protest because it was already marked and maligned by their class position. If a woman's voice becomes louder or more confident, does that change just become something that is perceived more

negatively? She is not loud, but gobby, not strong, but brash. Is having agency over your voice enough, if it is incredibly hard for an individual to push back against the structures that receive and continue to represent women in this way? In this sense, voice training is not a solution to vocal repression that women face, but the starting point to acquiring the agency to perform your voice differently. It is better to have the choice of being perceived as 'gobby' than resigning oneself to permanent silence. To push back further against such structures, however, perhaps voice needs to be considered as something larger than the agency of the individual. In the next chapter I will look at how we approached ensemble in my practice, and the political efficacy of united voices, of collective voice.

CHAPTER SEVEN: COLLECTIVE VOICE

Thus far in this thesis I have discussed politics in relation to the individual's capacity to engage or intervene politically. This chapter will examine voice as it manifests collectively: the sound of voices vocalising together. In Chapter 2 I outlined how communication skills for young people have become part of the 'skills agenda' of employment, reifying the act of speaking as purely a skill to be sold for work. Voice training as defined in my practice could also be interpreted this way, and furthermore, voice training has a history of being associated with "correct" ways to speak, further marginalising those from discriminated social and cultural backgrounds. I theorised that a practice that considered the collective voice could counteract this problem. Focusing on the collective voice could prevent voice training from just being a matter of individual skill, where the purpose of the training goes beyond self-betterment, and instead aim towards building the strength of the ensemble. In this chapter I will examine in practice whether this approach counteracted the individuality of voice training and whether there was any political efficacy in focusing on collective voice. I demonstrate that the ensemble voice transcended differences between the participants, creating a stronger sense of equality in the space; allowed participants to support each other's voices, taking away any pressure on the individual to "get it right"; and finally created a space for politics to appear, through the concept of the collective voice as a crowd.

This chapter will first discuss the theatrical ensemble and how I applied ensemble training to my voice practice. I then draw a relationship between ensemble and crowd theory, the idea being that when social actors form a crowd they act and speak as one body. Through combining ensemble and crowd theory, I argue that collective

voice not only undermines the more individualising aspects of voice training, but it is politically efficacious itself in the context of the isolation and atomisation that pervades contemporary, neoliberal society.

7.1 The Ensemble

Theatre practice has a long history of training voices to speak together. An immediate example is the Greek chorus, which has translated into many other practices through the centuries, with choral speaking as a convention either within the play text, or a performance practice of certain theatre styles. The Greek chorus had a dramatic purpose of commenting on the action of the play in a collective voice. Accordingly, the chorus was an explicit device used to connect the on-stage drama with the wider social issues of the day, the point of connection between the drama and the audience. Participating in a chorus was part of a citizen's education, to take 'part in a chorus was to be embedded in a social texture and to have a share in the pleasures of community' (Billings, Budelmann and Macintosh 1). There is a gap however between ancient and modern conceptions of chorus: whereas choruses were of civic and democratic importance in ancient Greece, they are largely presented as a problem in modern practice:

where choruses were and are a success, the success is understood to be a product of hard work by directors, choreographers, conductors, and performers, moulding a group of individuals into a unified group: choruses do not come naturally to modern Western theorists and practitioners (Billings, Budelmann and Macintosh 3).

Jens Peters argues that the role of the chorus in 20th Century society was different from its role in ancient Greece because of a difference in how the individual relates to the community. Peters argues that the chorus is complicated when society is broadly based on the modern idea of the rational individual (Peters 307). Kurzenburg argues that in the 20th Century chorus individuals are placed into something

essentially communal without the foundation of a communal form of life (Kurzenburg qtd Peters 308).

In response to this problem, 20th and 21st Century practitioners have used choruses as a political device precisely to counter this individualism and isolation from a sense of commonality. Erika Fischer-Lichte describes how forms of chorus-based theatre attempted to create communities, 'not merely the representation of community on stage, but the coming into being of a community involving actors and spectators alike' (Fischer-Lichte 348). One of the most famous practitioners who used the chorus in his work was Brecht, where chorus was a device of politicising the drama of the play, separating action from the psychology of the individual character, and presenting it as a broader social issue. The chorus points beyond 'the immediacy of the characters' present actions to the larger framework that conditions and enables those actions: what kind of world, enables the characters to act the way they do' (Revermann 164). Furthermore, the chorus has been utilised in professional theatre practices of the 21st Century as a device of direct participation by a community. Several contemporary productions of Greek tragedies in recent years have included a 'community chorus', a group of non-professional actors who live in the location where the play is being performed, as a way of representing the audience on stage. These productions have been seen at many prestigious venues in the UK including the The Almedia, the Royal Opera House, the Young Vic and Home MCR.

Chorality fundamentally creates questions about the individual's relationship to the community. Rather than just a matter of aesthetics, this perhaps is the so-called 'problem' of the chorus in modern society. This becomes a matter of voice, where political voice as the voice of the individual is so often assumed, and collective voice so often treated with suspicion. The practice of ensemble theatre making directly confronts this problem, a form of performance where multiple actors perform together.

The ensemble differs from the chorus in the sense that it is not just a convention within a play or performance, but rather an entire system, an ensemble company, for example, or a form of training. Through outlining different definitions of ensemble, I examine the relationship between the individual and the collective in my practice.

7.1.1 Definitions of Ensemble

The theatrical ensemble is a broad term that largely comes into usage through the 20th Century. Its definition is largely based on its cultural context, having a different history in Eastern Europe, for example, from UK or from the US. John Britton argues that the emergence of the ensemble in the early 20th Century in Russia arose from a dissatisfaction with productions heavily premised around individual actors and a “star-system” (Britton, ‘Introduction’ 8). Radosavljević argues that a broad definition of the term that encompasses varied practices would be work that fundamentally considers itself collective, creative and collaborative. More specifically, different practices of ensemble consider themselves this category through their organizational structure, their longevity (i.e. the same artists working together over a long period of time), a similar practice of theatre or coming from the same training producing a shared theatrical vocabulary, or finally a specific, common purpose. In this section I will explore ensemble as something that can be defined through a political purpose, that is, ensemble as a collective practice that suggests an ideology of the political significance of collective action.

John Britton, in attempting to define ensemble, speaks of an ineffable ‘it-ness’ that belongs to an ensemble that is created and sustained through performance. This ‘it-ness’, he argues is hard to define, but is something the performer or audience can feel (Britton, ‘Introduction’ 4). Britton provides a series of metaphors to try and help capture this feeling, for instance, if the ensemble were understood through the metaphor of a body, it would be one body, with different parts and components, but

essentially breathing as one (Britton, 'Introduction' 11-13). The different components have different functions, but ultimately rely on the other components, to the extent that they are conceived of as one body, and if they were to be seen in isolation, they would cease to represent that wholeness. Discussing Granville Barker's ensemble practice, Phillipa Burt writes how Barker saw theatre as a social art fundamentally based on principles of co-operation and collaboration, and that the actor could 'experience a stronger sense of freedom in performance through an ensemble' (Burt 319). In these definitions, ensemble both has an aspect of discipline, of moving and being as one, but also of liberation, where the support of being part of something allows the individual to develop in relation to others.

In applied and community context, rather than professional theatre, ensemble and ensemble training has been utilised to generate feelings of togetherness, belonging, and overcoming existing boundaries between different communities by creating a new community through the ensemble. Mohler, referring to a theatre programme working with young people involved in gang violence in Los Angeles, describes how the work can create 'an unlikely ensemble from people who initially might define themselves, at least partially, by their perceived difference to others in the group' (Mohler 92). Using repeated ensemble building exercises, Mohler argues, the programme intervenes into the intensely stratified gang culture. The programme looks at basic principles of ensemble and improvisation, playing simple drama games, emphasizing the importance of fun and play. Furthermore, Mohler describes how the rules of basic theatre games provide a structure to help the participants feel like they're not just playing games. The programme leaders introduce the idea of ensemble by 'comparing it to the idea of a sports team' (Mohler 95) and at the start of the process ask each participant to come up with a rule that will allow the group to function effectively as a team. This company's ensemble training provides a common experience of play, something largely absent from the young people's lives, which

creates a new integrated community premised on this different experience. The ensemble gives the opportunity to perform their designated social roles differently, as participants 'break from performing the roles determined by gang mores' giving them simultaneously perspective regarding their own subjectivity (Mohler 99).

Neelands writes how the process of ensemble in the drama classroom, which he describes as pupils being-with each other, has a social purpose that extends beyond the process of doing drama or theatre:

In this sense, young people in both schools were learning how to act together in both artistic and social domains, so that their learning about how to act together in the drama classroom was also shaping their social actions as a community beyond the drama class and also, possibly, beyond school (Neelands, 'Ensemble' 181).

It is in this sense that the ensemble's political dimension is apparent. A practice fundamentally about not only the capacity for individuals to work collectively, but the necessity to work together is an ideological statement that prioritises the communal, collective and the social. Chris Johnston argues that commercial theatre currently dominates the theatre industry, with personal, individual achievement prioritised over working together. The ensemble is a necessary corrective to this domination (Johnston 145). Johnston's distinction highlights the importance of collective theatre practice for work with a social purpose: work that aims to bring about development but wishes to avoid neoliberal notions of personal advancement or employability can utilise the collectivity of ensemble to counteract these aspects. Significantly, this is done in its form: being in an ensemble is an experience of the communal, collective and social. Accordingly, the ensemble is the bridge between the artistic and the social. It is both a training in artistic quality, and a process of imagining and experiencing a different kind of social world. A theatre ensemble can both demonstrate in its operation how a democratic civic society might feel like, at the same time as present through the content of the piece an idea of what it might look like, theatre both showing

'what needs to be changed and imagining and deliberating how it might be changed' (Neelands, 'Ensemble' 185-186).

Ensemble training therefore became a key part of my practice, where I endeavoured to use ensemble exercises as a way of finding a form of collective voice. In this next section I will discuss the different ways I combined ensemble training with my voice practice, and how this training contributed to a different kind of politics that manifested through the workshops: a politics of the crowd.

7.1.2 Ensemble Training

Many of the leading theatre practitioners who work with ensembles emphasize the significance of training, examples being Grotowski or Meyerhold. Training encompasses the teaching of a specific technique alongside learning how to be an ensemble: in fact, the two complement each other. Practitioner John Britton has developed a form of ensemble training called 'self-with-others'. It trains the individual through their relationship to others in the group. This, he argues, trains the performer to be reactive, live and present. It is psychophysical in approach, and much like voice work, is premised on the eradication of blockages. That is, the ensemble develops through the individual members overcoming physical and mental blockages, rather than through the acquiring of skills. This overcoming of blockages comes through the individual exploring their relationship to the others in the group:

This training is intended to encourage performers to be truly individual while also putting themselves at the service of others. It is in the meeting of these two elements – self and others – that ensemble emerges (Britton, *Self* 318).

Britton's training uses simple exercises that are repeated over long periods of time to train this specific sense of self and others. Using ball games, and combinations of pair and group work, through repetition, Britton encourages ensemble members to notice and reflect on gradual changes in how they play.

Vsevolod Meyerhold is another significant practitioner who contributed to how I considered ensemble in my research. Meyerhold, a theatre director operating during the early years of Soviet Russia, practiced a form of ensemble training that aimed to foreground group work. He used the image of an orchestra to explain his ensemble, where individuals never function as isolated instruments, but rather work together to create the orchestral voice (Skinner 64). Meyerhold's training, known as biomechanics, was a series of precise movements that actors learn both individually and with others. In rejection of more psychological forms of actor training as developed by Stanislavsky, Meyerhold's biomechanics aimed to communicate expressively and directly with the audience, and the actor was trained in a 'machine-like acting vocabulary' (Law and Gordon 3). Meyerhold argued that psychological states are determined by physiological processes, and that the training of an actor can alter these physiological states. By 'correctly resolving the nature of his state physically, the actor reaches the point where he experiences the excitation which communicates itself to the spectator and induces him to share in the actor's performance' (Meyerhold 199). Actors would learn and rehearse these movements in unison with other actors. Here the individual was learning the skill of the movement and simultaneously grasping the rhythm and feeling of the group. Meyerhold argued that the actor must go through this training, learning to have physical control over the voice and the body in order to then carry out of the social functions of the theatre (Skinner 71).

These practitioners were significant to my research, as ensemble training in my practice was a deliberate political decision to counteract the potential individualising aspects of Linklater or Rodenburg voice training. Theorists have identified how speech and communication skills have become part of an enterprise culture, where talking is a measurable skill that employees can be good or bad at, and furthermore can be trained to get better at for the purpose of productivity (Drury et al 1998;

Cameron 2000; McKenzie 2001; Thurlow 2001). This approach reifies the voice into something that the individual can market, separating it from themselves as an abstract skill. Similar to the voice training described in Chapter 6 as a tool to help women in the world of business, Linklater practice could easily be transferred into this corporate and enterprising setting, where participants are learning to enhance their voice in order to sell themselves. Collective voice, I theorised, would be a rejection of this individualisation of the voice. Further than this, I wanted to investigate whether ensemble training not only negated ideas of individualism, but also made appear a politics of collectivity. In other words, whether doing things together, rather than individually, could create an anti-hierarchical space, where the social differences between the participants could be suspended. Here, collectivity is politically important because it could challenge the dominant order that regulates which voices are more important than others, creating a temporary space where all voices have equal worth. Accordingly, I wanted to train the participants in ensemble practices alongside the training of the voice, so that this voice training was always be considered in relation to the others in the group, and not just about the individual's development.

My approach in designing the workshops therefore, was to integrate ensemble training into voice training. This was two-fold: either adapting ensemble training exercises to include the voice or developing individual voice training exercises to consider ensemble. Ensemble exercises predominantly about movement were useful for this integration, and a useful starting point, as moving in unison is something largely familiar because of dance, whereas vocalising together, with the exception of singing, is quite rare. I would start an exercise focusing on physicality and gradually move to voice. Voice training in one sense is about individual development, yet from my own experience in participating in Linklater training, I felt that the group taking the course became an ensemble. Though initially an individual process, undertaking this process with others, with mutual support, developed a shared vocabulary through the

training that established a group identity. I wanted to harness this feeling more strongly in my practice with the young people by integrating ensemble voice directly into the training. What I found, however, was the training towards a vocal ensemble, to both create and perform work collectively, I believe was easier for the participants to access through the specific voice training, rather than adapting ensemble exercises to the voice.

For example, a game that I named ensemble block, begins with participants moving together around the room. They are close together, forming a tight unit. They learn how to walk together in the same direction without faltering, also learning how to walk at the same pace, and furthermore change the direction and pace smoothly. The game progresses as actions are added in. The group move uniformly, doing the same action. The group is instructed that the action can change, and anyone can change the action, and when an action changes, the direction also changes. The idea is that any individual can take responsibility for changing the action, in full knowledge that the rest of the group will follow and commit to the new action. But if a member of the group does not like the new action, they have an obligation to then change the action themselves. The final layer I added was the voice, where each action would also have a non-linguistic sound that everyone would also make. This last development to voice was particularly difficult for the participants. Suddenly when adding the voice, the participants felt like they had to think about what they were doing. This abstracted the voice away from the body, as coming up with a sound became a cognitive process, and furthermore became something individualised. What sound they made, they felt, reflected them, and they were being judged for how good or bad their sound was. Feeling on the spot, in this sense, made the participants think about whether what they were doing was correct, as if they were being tested. Accordingly, the participants were too worried about what they were individually doing to consider the

common purpose of the game, that is, to keep the voice and movement going together.

Instead, beginning immediately with the voice, rather than adding it to a physical movement, helped the participants to not think too much before they vocalized. For example, a game called Energy Circle, asks participants to send a 'Ha' sound around the circle by clapping the hand of the person next to them. On the moment of the clap, the pair vocalize the 'Ha' together, and then pass it along to the next person. This initially produces a strong group rhythm and collective sound and movement. Then, to develop the game, I asked the participants to vocalize the 'Ha' in correspondence to an emotion: simple emotions such as sad, angry, happy. Here a shared vocal tone began to emerge: the sound of sad was a unified level of sad, or a unified level of angry, with the participants tuning in to each other's levels. Rather than trying to surprise each other, or do sad "differently", the participants matched. However, when I complicated the game a bit more, and introduced more complex emotions such as suspicion or jealousy, this unified voice began to unwind, and the participants played more with individual responses to the stimulus. They stopped vocalizing at the same time, and rather "acted" their own unique interpretation of the emotion. The simpler emotions took away the time to think about their performance, and what they vocalized was in response to other people, rather than thinking of how to do it. The more complicated emotions created an opportunity for more psychological acting, and therefore the participants aimed to be different to each other, rather than the same.

In contrast to these two examples where I tried to integrate the voice into ensemble training prior to voice training, I also tried to find ways to make ensemble part of voice technique. Another primary exercise I used across all groups was the ball game. This is a simple exercise of standing in a circle and throwing a ball to other participants. Often used as an exercise to learn other people's names, the ball game seems like

something quite basic and initial to group bonding. However, as Britton describes, the ball game should not be used as means to another purpose, such as learning names, but rather a primary ensemble exercise in its own right (Britton, 'Self' 330). As the game progresses, you can add more balls, or develop other variations such as throwing without a designated direction. I combined the ball game with Rodenburg's exercise called the arc of breath (Rodenburg 115), discussed in depth in chapter 4, to directly relate the ensemble processes with the voice [TRACK 13]. Moving from the group ball game, to throwing the ball between partners, the voice was added to the throw of the ball, where the participants had to match the voice to the arc of the ball's movement. We then took away the balls, and continued with the voice, imagining the ball. Finally, we added text, short statements that participants had written, and tried speaking these statements together. This began the process of working on a piece of text that the group would speak collectively. The ball game developed a sense of being tuned in to each other, the key requirement for ensemble speaking. This gradual development of working together, but with a clear purpose of completing a simply vocal exercise that did not put the individual on the spot, allowed the participants to gradually find their collective voice, that was not the responsibility of one member of the group, but part of a process of voice training.

There are similarities between this exercise and Meyerhold's process of biomechanics. Following a framework of three models of movement, Meyerhold's actors move from co-ordination, to canon, to counterpoint. Co-ordination is the development of the actors engaging and understanding each other's actions and is trained in exercises like ball throwing. With canon, the individual moves from working through a specific movement individually, into working in a pair, where they carry out a movement in relation to the other. Counterpoint brings together the whole group, where instead of individuals working side by side, the movements are integrated together, creating ensemble movement and a group rhythm. Here we can see a

similarity, from my participants starting with a simple co-ordination exercise of being in sync with each other through the ball game, to working specifically in pairs, and finally making a collective sound. This gradual process ensures an accuracy of the individual contribution, but with the end goal not being this accuracy, but rather, the ability to maintain such precision for the purpose of group performance. It is not a case of prioritising the individual or the group, but rather, this training acknowledges the individual 'as a building block of the collective, but collectivity itself is also a legitimate aim of the work, not a by-product of the training' (Skinner 76).

My investigation of ensemble has determined the form as anti-hierarchical, in correspondence with Radosavljević's definition, and as something that explores the relationship between the individual and the group (Radosavljević 11). Ensemble training was not just a technique of aesthetics, but a way of re-examining the individual's relationship to the rest of the community. Individual development in the project was positioned directly in relation to the creation of an ensemble performance. This not only prevented voice training from being an entirely internal matter for the individual, but also positioned it as a political process of developing the collective voice. In the rest of this chapter, I will argue that the collective voice produced by the ensemble can be understood as a political phenomenon through the concept of the crowd.

7.2 Crowds

'Voice of the people' is a phrase used in political discourse that is related to no audible, or material sound. It does not speak, it only represents, and it is unclear who these people are other than a majority. It is produced and contained by silent acts like voting, polls and surveys, but it remains a speechless mass that has nothing to do with a real population (Baudrillard 5-7). In contrast to this, the crowd is materiality.

The crowd gathers in space and in time, and in this sense, proposes a threat to order (Coleman and Ross 13). In documenting the representation of crowds in sociology, Borch argues how the crowd (like the chorus), has been conceived as a problem in modern society. This is a problem for rationality and a political problem for the constituent liberal subject (Borch, *Crowds* 16). In a crowd, the individual ceases to be an individual and becomes that which can be countable. Robert A. Nye documents how crowd psychology as a theory comes into prominence in the later 19th and early 20th centuries as an attempt to show the failings of the French Revolution and subsequent forms of democratic politics of the masses (Nye 60). Citing Gustave Le Bon as one of the most prominent of crowd psychologists, Nye writes how Le Bon and his contemporaries felt that modern European society in this period was entering an “era of crowds”, and this was the result of democratic politics being “dominated by irrational and spontaneous collective mechanisms” (Nye 60). Nye argues that collective psychologists between the periods of 1892 and 1914 attempted to universalise all examples of group phenomena under the psychologies of the crowd (Nye 76-77). This theory produced the concept of the crowd as something dangerous, and dangerous to existing rule, and following this, something dangerous to the public in general.

Gustave Le Bon describes the power of the crowd as only suitable for destruction, where the individual is no longer capable of thinking like an individual, as the unconscious takes over from the conscious, the ‘heterogenous is swamped by the homogenous’ (Le Bon 6). Le Bon argues that by being a crowd, the individual acts very differently to how they would normally act, they are put into a collective mind that obscures and prevents their own intelligent capacities. Within this, Le Bon is arguing that the psychology of the crowd means that the individual is no longer able to think clearly, which makes them carry out irrational behaviours. Le Bon frequently draws on images of the body, or bodily sensibilities such as the crowd being seduced (Le

Bon xiv) or that crowd sentiment is contagious, like a disease to be caught (Le Bon 7). Furthermore, the individual in the crowd is described as becoming a barbarian, rather than a cultivated individual (Le Bon 8). Here Le Bon's imagery directly distinguishes the crowd from the rationality and intellect of the mind. Borch argues furthermore that Le Bon feminises the crowd:

that masculinity (and all the associated male attributes of progress, reason, civilisation etc.) would turn into its female counterpart (characterised by atavism, irrationality, sentiment, excitement, hysteria and unappeasable sexuality) (Borch, *Crowds* 44).

The feminisation of the crowd implies that the crowd is extreme and cannot control itself. The extremity of crowd behaviour that cannot be controlled, for writers like Le Bon, inevitably leads to what is commonly known as a "mob mentality", where the mob irrationally and intolerantly exercises its will without care for consequence. This mentality is easily open to manipulation by demagogic leaders.

That the crowd has been characterised through this expression of mob mentality has made it something in political thought to largely be feared. McClelland argues that the positioning of the crowd as something to be ruled, means that simultaneously the presence of the crowd creates the fear of it turning into the mob, something threatening rule (McClelland 1). This fear has been capitalised on to keep existing rule in place. Since the French Revolution, McClelland describes how the ruling class witnessed how the occasional angry mob can transform into political power:

Now the political opponents of the people were to be made to suffer from the backlash of their own contempt; what they had formerly bracketed together in the same sneer – the people, canaille, mob, crowd, anybody except themselves – had now become part of the permanent world of politics and political calculation (McClelland 7).

There becomes, then, a political need for the crowd psychology espoused by writers such as Le Bon, to condemn the crowd as the enemy of political enlightenment. Any gathering of people, 'any form of popular politics was mob politics' (McClelland 7).

Accordingly, following such condemnation throughout much literature, Borch argues that subsequent understandings of the crowd retains such negative features:

Indeed, in much crowd semantics, the crowd is looked down upon, and it is perceived as a phenomenon to be forestalled so as to avert irrationality and de-individualisation from taking firm hold of modern society (Borch, *Crowds* 16).

This position, however, relies on a necessary link between irrationality and de-individualisation, or rather, rationality and individualism. However, if we conceive that rationality and individualism are not dependent on each other, and that collectivity does not necessarily lead to irrationality, a different conception of the crowd could be formulated that does not incite such fear.

7.2.1 Crowds and Discharge

Rather than viewing the crowd in these conservative terms of mob-rule or destruction, I argue, following Elias Canetti, for a different understanding of crowd as, like the ensemble, a process of equalisation. Canetti, like Le Bon, identified the crowd with power. However, this power is a positive political force where destruction is not just physical destruction, but a destruction of hierarchy, where the individual transcends sociological boundaries. In a crowd, he argues, all are equal, the 'man pressed against him is the same as himself' (Canetti 16). This process is one of discharge, where what makes the individuals in a crowd different from each other disappears. Rather than see this as a sense of alienation or isolation, Canetti argues that this frees the individual, as it frees them from differences that are imposed upon them from the outside world:

Only together can men free themselves from their burdens of distance; and this, precisely, is what happens in a crowd... when no one is greater or better than another, that people become a crowd (Canetti 19).

Significantly, this is an illusory difference: people feel equal, but are not actually equal, and this feeling of equality will also disappear (Canetti 19).

In many ways, Canetti and Le Bon's description of the crowd are not entirely dissimilar. Both identify a moment of transcendence and transformation where the crowd acquires a 'collective mind' that makes them 'think and act in a manner quite different from that in which the individual would' if they were not in a crowd (Le Bon 4), as side by side, each individual feels homogenous, side by side, they feel the person next to them as they feel themselves (Canetti 16). Yet Le Bon's writing displays contempt for the crowd out of a fear of irrationality that will lead to destructiveness in society, whereas Canetti's passion for the crowd exists precisely because society as we know it is momentarily destroyed. The suspicion of crowds, accordingly, is a political point: the destructiveness that Le Bon warns us against might be something desirable. Reconfiguring Le Bon's insistence on terms of irrationality and irresponsibility instead into what Canetti describes as the transcendence of enforced social stratification, the crowd could manifest a moment of political freedom, where its components can think and act differently than they usually have to do. For instance, Le Bon writes how within a crowd, the individual is induced to act against his 'best-known habits' (Le Bon 8). Habits, as defined in Chapter 5, are not simply a person's self-willed actions, but a series of socially constructed behaviours that are repeated over and over to the extent that they seem normal and natural. Accordingly, the crowd is a space in which the individual can act contrary to these constructed habits. If we apply these ideas to voice and how the voice has been discussed thus far in this thesis as socially stratified, there is perhaps the possibility of vocal freedom, where the voice can act differently. Canetti describes how within the crowd, suddenly 'it is as though everything were happening in one and the same body' (Canetti 16). What are the political effects of a moment where, suddenly, it is as though everyone were speaking in one and the same voice?

Jodi Dean, developing Canetti's theory, discusses how a crowd does not have a politics in and of itself, rather it is an opportunity for politics (Dean, *Crowds* 8). The

power of the crowd is a force that creates the possibility for people to enter politics. What this crowd becomes, whether it is simply a “mob” or whether it becomes a political struggle, is itself a matter of politics:

Which a crowd event is, or, better, which it will have been, is an effect of the political process the crowd event activates... The determination whether a crowd was a mob or the people results from political struggle (Dean, *Crowds* 8).

Dean argues that political organization and action can result from the egalitarian discharge of the crowd, if the right circumstances are in place. Related to this, is Rancière’s argument that politics is not the operation of political governance, or engagement in debate towards consensus, but the demos, the group in society that has no part, making themselves visible and audible through the disruption of the regular order of governance. Politics ‘occurs only when political subjects initiate a quarrel over the perceptible givens of common life’ (Rancière, ‘Introducing’ 7). The space of the crowd presents a presupposition of equality between individuals within the crowd, undermining the existing social hierarchy. The crowd therefore proposes a threat of destruction to the regular order, it demonstrates a moment where the order could be different, the initiation of a quarrel over what is given. The crowd, therefore, is an opportunity for the demos to appear, and therefore, manifest politics.

If the crowd creates the potential for people to enact politics, and what is more, the temporary experience of the crowd can then be harnessed for further political action, is there a way of replicating the crowd in theatre practice, and more specifically, in voice practice? The definitions and practices of ensemble that I have outlined clearly connect to the crowd. The ensemble is constituted by individual elements that come together, but through their coming together, act, breathe and think as one. There is a transformation of the individual, which is premised on equality, and the theatrical ensemble is non-hierarchical. Significantly, the ensemble is temporary, and is created and sustained in performance, with performance as a liminal period alike to Canetti’s

discharge. On this premise, I argue that the experience of collective and ensemble performance in my practice, specifically vocal performance, can be likened politically to the experience of discharge within the crowd. By exploring the relationship of the individual to the group, both in ensemble practice and in political theory, I argue that it is the quality of becoming one body in both crowds and ensembles where the voice can become politically active.

7.3 The Individual and the Community

According to writers like Le Bon, the crowd is a threat to individual rationality. The crowd is the operation of the unconscious and therefore it is irrational and irresponsible. Furthermore, the crowd delimits the individual, where the individual not only acts differently but ceases to behave as an individual. This description of crowds presents a purposeful distrust and suspicion in group and collective activity, as it argues that acting as part of a group by necessity prevents the individual from acting morally and politically, according to her own will. This is based on the premise that for the individual to act politically, to have any agency, they must be acting according to their own individual agency, and agency only comes from an individual capacity. On the same assumption, a subject's political voice can only be heard if that voice belongs to the individual. In this section I will discuss the limitations of conceiving of political voice as something individual, and furthermore discuss the extent to which 'the individual may actually acquire transformative potentials by participating in crowd behaviour' (Borch, 'Body' 277).

Dean argues that political subjectivity has been limited and enclosed by the idea of the rational individual. Political theory, she writes, has not only privileged agency against structure when discussing political will, but also demanded that agency be

entirely predicated on the freedom of the individual. Accordingly, collectivity is only ever associated with constraint and a lack of freedom:

Political theorists explicitly construe political agency as an individual capacity. Others take the individuality of the subject of politics for granted. I argue that the problem of the subject is a problem of this persistent individual form, a form that encloses collective political subjectivity into the singular figure of the individual (Dean, *Crowds* 73).

Not only is collectivity disassociated with political will but viewed with a kind of suspicion that discounts any collective action as political. Premising political subjectivity entirely on individual agency ignores the way in which the subject's agency is constantly in relation to social structures and the actions of others. But further than this, it denies subjectivity to those operating politically within a group, a crowd, or collective movement.

In this sense, are the actions of a group, an ensemble, made up of the disparate actions of a collection of individuals that come together for a shared purpose? Or, can we also think of a group or ensemble becoming a body that acts itself, as if it were one body? In this sense, group agency is not just the agency of individuals, but also the agency of the group as a group, as if it were a kind of "super-agent" (Szigeti 845). If this the case, are the individuals within the group represented, are their individual voices heard, or do they disappear within the overarching voice of the group? Is this a problem for the political efficacy of the subject, if their individual voice is not individually represented, or is it this moment of sublimation into the group where the political happens?

In my workshops I have identified three different modes of collective vocal performance that represent the potential relationship between the individual and the group. Each of these modes can be understood through different definitions of political intervention, and significantly, each produces a different kind of political voice, a different group sound.

7.3.1 Individual voices and rants

Political traditions of liberalism classically define society as the sum of independent individuals. Detached from a broader social consciousness, the individual is a rational, conscious being responsible for her own actions. Political voice in this definition is the political opinion of the individual, formed through their own reason. The crowd mentality is a threat to this voice, and the individual voice should vocalize according to her will in spite of the crowd, or other individuals. In an exercise called ranting, I asked participants to talk continuously about a subject, all at the same time, but without any relationship to other people in the room [TRACK 14]. Each individual would just start talking and keep talking, letting themselves continue to see where their thoughts took them. We all ranted at the same time, but no one paid any attention to anyone else, or what anyone else was saying. In opposition to ensemble speaking, the rant is an entirely individual exercise, where the participant must actively ignore other voices and focus inwardly.

The purpose of a rant is largely psychological, where the participants get things “off their chest” and is useful at the start of a session to leave the world outside behind, or at the end of the session as a kind of debrief. It is a way of releasing excess thought, a kind of catharsis, and most participants felt relief afterwards. The sound of the group ranting was discordant. It was difficult to hear individual words or voices, but you could hear different vocal qualities operating. In this sense, only the quality of their voices came through: tones of frustration, anger and disbelief. It was a messy sound, but it was unconstrained, and the actual words spoken seemed secondary to how the speaker was feeling, as if their feelings were propelling them through the speech. Although the participants felt that ranting gave them a sense of relief afterwards, their voices during the rant were tense. Furthermore, their bodies, as they stormed around

the room, generating the right amount of anger to keep themselves going, were stiff, tense and angular, their pace fast. Ranting produced tension rather than eradicated it. In this sense, the relief partly came from stopping the rant. The rant in this sense was the speaking equivalent of the participant tensing their muscles to then experience what relaxation feels like.

Group ranting therefore also made clear the difference between how multiple individuals speaking and co-ordinated speaking sounds. The vocal quality of group ranting reflected a tension and a frustration that produced anger. But this anger was isolated and not channelled. The energy produced in the voice was undirected and therefore lacked clarity and power. The rant was necessary for the participants to clear their minds, and in one sense was a moment of contestation, where individuals could talk about something that made them angry and disagree with that thing. Yet this contestation was not heard, it was lost amongst all the other voices of contestation. The rant winds down rather than leads to a coherent ending. The voices trailed off as the participants began to run out of things to say, got quieter and disappeared. It left behind breathiness, but it also left behind anger. As individuals the rant helped each participant connect to a political issue. Yet, the voice that tries to make political statements, without co-ordination with others, could only remain psychological.

7.3.2 Ensemble text and consensus

The development of a piece of text to be spoken chorally, or collectively, what I refer to as ensemble text, came out of a specific political discussion I facilitated during each project. After having this discussion, I asked the participants to engage in a free writing exercise about each of the themes that arose in the discussion, which I then crafted together to create a longer piece of text. The text in this sense, was fundamentally a negotiation of the different views of the participants, and accordingly

in some ways an example of consensus forming. Text was initially written by an individual, reflecting their opinion. Each individual piece of text was crafted together to become the opinion of the group. Further than this, the individual's initial piece of text was written in response to group conversation, and in this sense, it was the individual negotiating the group consensus, which was then re-negotiated through bringing the texts together. The process of creating and performing this ensemble text, therefore, was about how the individual related to the group, and how the individual navigated their political voice in relation to the voice of the community. This navigation could be read as consensus forming, where the disparate individuals come to some kind of mutual agreement in performing a shared text.

Rationality is not simply an individual will, but a collective construction that develops out of social interaction. Communicative action, as most notably theorised by Habermas, is the process of political deliberation through discussion with others. This is not just in terms of making political decisions, but also relates to how the individual positions and constructs themselves in the world as a socio-political being (Kim and Kim 58). The process can take place both in formal discussion, such as in the public sphere, or specific institutions, and in informal discussion, such as everyday conversation. At the project in Leeds, the ensemble text was written based on a discussion we had about an article referring to a "democratic deficit" in the low voting turnout for young people in the UK. From the discussion we pulled out themes: feeling silenced, feeling helpless, feeling engaged and being active. The discussion was an opportunity for the participants to speak more informally: to discuss and share their views and generate ideas. Informal deliberative discussion is an opportunity for non-purposeful conversation meaning that the participants can focus on the discussion itself, rather than a specific outcome, such as a policy (Kim and Kim 54). These ideas could then be formalised through the participants' writing, and then again in the decisions each participant made when performing the text.

During the Leeds project, we spent the afternoon of the third day working on the performance of this text [TRACK 15]. Firstly, we all read the text aloud together, slowly, several times, allowing the participants to get used to it, especially since some of the participants were less confident with text. We then began to experiment with it, as I instructed the participants to play around with the text, changing the tone, speed, places of emphasis, volume etc. Significantly, I instructed them that this was an individual decision, it was not that they all had to change the speed, for instance, together, but that different voices would be doing different things. This was of course difficult at first, but we kept trying it repeatedly, and with time each participant became more comfortable individually experimenting with the text. Meyerhold's practice, when approaching text, used the technique of splitting up words across the ensemble voice, exploiting all the different ranges of possibilities of speaking the word across all the different individuals. In this distribution of individual sounds, the actor takes 'collective responsibility for the performance of the word itself, sharing the phonemes of the text' (Skinner 64). Rather than these decisions being the unique expression of the individual performer, they are individual contributions to a collective whole.

How then, in my practice, each participant chose to speak the text demonstrated how they were trying to navigate their position and their voice in relation to the whole group. I will discuss how the Leeds participants, described in Chapter 5, approached this text. The sound of the text varied as the participants became more confident and made different decisions about their relationship to the text. The first couple of times we read through, it of course sounded like a recitation. Emily and Lucy were quite confident at reading it out loud so took it at quite a fast pace. On the second reading I told them to slow down and read it with them to keep the pace slower. When we first tried a reading with individual voices varying their delivery, Lauren and Rachel found it difficult to join in. We let them mark out parts of the text that they wanted to join in

on in advance to help them. By the fourth reading, Lauren was participating. The only direction I gave was that everyone would say the line: "Getting your voice heard". This was the one line that everyone spoke in unison in the same way, for the rest of the text each individual sounded different.

Emily's delivery, for instance, was about emphasizing the points she really cared about. Whereas Lucy spoke the entire text, Emily chose to come in in the middle of sentences. This would slightly alter the sentences meaning. Coming in mid-way on the sentence "Our opinions aren't valued by people in authority", at a higher pitch, turning it into a statement of outrage and disbelief, rather than a statement of mere fact. Here Emily personalised the statement: it moved from a statement about young people in general to about herself. In a similar way, she and Lucy often operated in canon, where one would echo the others word slightly afterwards. In a list of ways that young people can be active in politics, Lucy would start, and then Emily would follow: "tweeting, protesting, writing". The echo had an effect of multiplying the voices, as if the voices would go on forever, revealing the mass voice to be made up of a series of individual voices.

Lauren performed quite differently to the others. She made small contributions, and when she did speak, she did not vary her voice greatly. In one sense she was overpowered by Lucy and Emily's voices. Yet at the same time, the constant presence of their voices gave her the space to gradually become more involved without anyone paying too much attention to what she was doing. Each time we practiced the text, she contributed more, and her voice rose in volume. By the time we rehearsed it for the final time, she was regularly starting the statements, demonstrating both a will to speak and a sense of the whole, where she had been actively listening to Lucy and Emily. In this sense she was coherently part of the ensemble voice, her contributions led as well as followed, she negotiated different ways to contribute to the group voice.

Dean describes how collectivity brings 'a sense of invincibility, an immense courage and capacity to put self-interest aside' (Dean, *Crowds* 114). This invincibility, in terms of the voice, allowed for Lauren to be in one sense, heard, but also not heard, meaning that she could begin to play. Returning to Granville Barker's statement that the actor has a sense of freedom within the ensemble, through participating in ensemble speaking, Lauren's voice could experience a freedom, through taking away the constraints and tensions of "getting it right". Participation in this kind of choral speaking demonstrated a negotiation the individual makes between their own voice and the ensemble. It demonstrated a progression from the individual of private self-interest in the delivery of a rant, to a 'we' of common action (Barber 190). In one sense, that Emily personalised her delivery could demonstrate an individualisation of the text, negating its collectivity. But alternatively, this demonstrated the space within the crowd for the individual voice whilst simultaneously having the collective support as if you were one voice. In this sense, the ensemble text develops from a process of negotiating political ideas, into an enactment of collectivity.

Dean, when discussing the role of the Communist Party in the US in the 1930s, discusses the difference between political understanding, and the ability to enact politics. She discusses a story where a young woman, who is politically astute, did not understand what political power was, until she had to confront her father about her decision to marry someone he disapproved of. When her father was enraged with her, she imagined the entire Communist Party in the room with her, which gave her the strength to fight back. Having a political opinion, or a shared political identity such as being working-class, or a young woman, is not political power or will. Such power comes from being part of a collective, which harnesses a force:

a force strong enough to go up against the law and win, a force neither fully internal nor external, neither reducible to particular organizational features nor separate from them, but rather an affective infrastructure capable of enlarging the world (Dean, *Crowds* 213).

Lauren's political agency in the speaking of this text does not come from making sure she is heard, rather it is the opportunity to speak given to her by being part of the crowd. Furthermore, though Emily and Lucy enjoy playing with the text, and in the process, personalise it, this personalisation is always in relation to the other voices: it never results in monologue, rather the voices listen as they speak, they negotiate and thus speak together. This is because, ultimately, the sound of the ensemble must be served. In this sense, individual decisions are important, but they are not more important than the overall sound of all voices. An individual's decisions contribute to, rather than undermine, the collective. The concept of shared purpose, inherent to ensemble, overrules, and it is this shared purpose that collectivises the voices. The ensemble text was the mediating point between the sound of individuals, and the sound of a crowd.

7.3.3 Collective voice and dissensus

This development from the individual rant through the ensemble text into collective voice was symbolised in the performance at the end of the Leeds project. The structure of performance evolved from the four women ranting about a subject, speaking at the same time and moving around the space. The rant began to unwind and from it emerged the piece of ensemble text. The voices moved from unorganised individuals, oblivious to each other, to an organised collective where the voices combined, co-operated, and were in tune with each other. The ensemble text then led the voices into the final two soundscapes of the performance, feeling engaged and being active. The soundscapes represented a different kind of political intervention, a form of contestation, or dissensus, as discussed in the Chapter 4. The conclusion of the ensemble text was not therefore a rational consensus, but a non-rational, non-linguistic protest of young women, in general, rather than four individuals.

The soundscape was a material sound of a general concept. The individual voices constructed a shared, common material voice that wanted to represent the political voice of young women. The voice is the tool of moving from being individual to being collective and through its materiality it became symbolic. The capacity to sound as if they were one voice comes from training the voice together: conducting individual voice training as an ensemble process and constructing a shared non-linguistic vocabulary. The process of voice training simultaneously became a process of collectivisation, through the construction of a set of shared sounds that represent them, as a group, politically. Here the voice is simultaneously material and symbolic.

Furthermore, the political efficacy of this protest exists in the ensemble, rather than hearing distinctive individual voices, sounding as if it were one voice. Edith Hall describes how the sound of the Bolshevik chorus in unison during a festival following the October revolution represented a political will of social equality:

where the massed human voice becomes the instrument of emotion and meaning beyond any specific time, place, language or culture. In the final section, the full choir of mixed male and female voices sings in succession, 'Ah, oh, e, a'... This chorus is pre-linguistic, but also post-linguistic. In a world where the revolutionary immersion of self and other will not only erase all hierarchies and class distinctions, but extend to all nationalities and all languages, why would the choral collective need to close off its open vowels and consonants that demarcate one language from another? (Hall 307)

The non-linguistic vowel sounds in unison create Canetti's feeling of being one voice, as this kind of sound prevents linguistic differences from being heard, which Hall describes as eliminating demarcations between languages and nationalities. In the young people's soundscapes, the vowel sounds also eliminated the demarcation between the different participants' voices. The participants discussed with me how the process of ensemble was a process of equalisation for them. For instance, Lucy and Emily, both identifying themselves as the stronger and more confident members of the group, discussed how in the end all four of them worked well together. Lucy

described how powerful she found the ensemble text because it had come from all of them, and that even though Rachel was less confident, during the performance she was different: she “obviously took a bit more... time to build that confidence. But what was good was that when it came to it she full on went for it”. Similarly, Emily said that during the week she felt that her and Lucy were leading the work, but when it came to the performance all four of them felt much more equal. Emily recognised that Rachel and Lauren were from “different backgrounds” but thought that because they “had to work together” they found a way of becoming a tight ensemble. The principles of unity and equality of a successful ensemble overcame perceived differences and boundaries.

But further than this, Lucy recognised that no matter how confident she felt or came across, she needed the other members of the group to make her point. She saw their ensemble performance as not just a group support system in a psychological way, but people willing to fight together:

Yeah cos I think the whole... piece – I took from it was the – we’re stronger when we’re doing things, not just talking about it, and saying about it. And – yeah you can try do it on your own, but you need other people as well. You need people to get on your side and... fight your corner.

Even as one of the stronger members of the group, Lucy drew strength from the other participants. Though many of my participants, such as Lucy, often told me how they felt like they are not listened to or heard, there was a sense that this was a point about all young people, and not about them as individuals. In this sense, it did not matter if individual young people are not heard distinctly in ensemble vocalisation, this did not take away their agency, as they see their lack of voice as being directly related to being part of a disenfranchised group, a group of young women. It is not that they want to be heard individually, they want young women to be heard. Accordingly, they found strength in the collective voice of young women, to amplify their individual voices both metaphorically and literally.

Another way to examine this is to see it through Rancière's definition of politics as dissensus. Arguing against politics as rational consensus forming, Rancière states that egalitarian effects only 'occur through a forcing', that is, through one group challenging rather than consensus forming (Rancière, 'Introducing' 5). This group's challenge is the 'power of the people with nothing, the speech of those who should not be speaking' (Rancière, 'Introducing' 5), the demos:

Political subjects are, thus, not representatives of parts of the population but processes of subjectivation which introduce a disagreement, a dissensus. And political dissensus is not simply a conflict of interests, opinions, or values. It is a conflict over the common itself (Rancière, 'Introducing' 6).

Becoming a political subject is not an act of representing an identity group but occurs in the enactment of politics. Whilst the participants remained individual voices, their expression correlated to the existing distribution of power where individual voices have the right to express opinions, but these opinions make no mark on the existing order. However, once their voices came together, the young women disrupted the idea of who is heard and how they are heard. To contest their position of being disqualified from political discourse, the young people 'had to do more than raise or criticize validity claims', as they did in ensemble text, they must 'problematize the speech situation itself' demanding that they are entitled and capable of being included (Russell and Montin 548). Young people are not expected to talk as one voice; firstly, they are literally denied that right by being "too young" to be deemed rational enough to make political decisions; and secondly, they are expected to cultivate their voices only for their own individual benefit. By voicing collectively, the young women called into question their category as young women (inaudible, apathetic politically), demonstrating instead that they are audible, political subjects.

To explain this further, I will discuss the women's group in Ellesmere Port's ensemble performance in contrast to what happened in Leeds. The structure of the performance was similar, combining ensemble text with soundscapes (the whole performance can

be listened to on [TRACK 16]). Yet, rather than the ensemble text leading to a collective chorus in the soundscape, the soundscape led to the text [TRACK 4]. Beginning with one voice, then two, then all five (myself and Emily in her support role joined in to help), the text was performed in the same style of speaking together but with individual variation. I spoke the entire text underneath to keep it together, as the others played around over my voice. Yet though there were coherent moments of unity, of speaking together or moments of echoes like in the Leeds performance, there was a strong sense that this performance sounded like a discussion rather than one voice. Voice in this performance never became collective, rather it remained the sum of individual voices alongside each other. This was further symbolised by the way the performance ended. The sound of collective voice faded out, as the performance ended instead on the repetition of the line “We’re told we’re too young to make decisions”. This line was said one by one by each participant. After a moment of speaking together the participants returned to individual voice. The collectivity that was found in the Leeds group’s final soundscape, the sound of collective action, was not found by this group. This final line, rather than disputing their category as young women, too young to make decisions, allowed its point to remain true. Spoken by individuals, this line was not contested. Unlike in Leeds, where the voice of young people in general was materialised, in Ellesmere Port we only heard the sounds of individual young people.

7.4 Conclusion

In previous chapters, when discussing the efficacy of my practice I have focused on the development of individuals. In many theatre for development or social change practices, what happens to the individual is discussed alongside whether the project has brought about any broader, concrete social changes, perhaps through bringing about certain policies, or the repositioning of an oppressed group in society. This

project did not aim to address specific policy or law, or specific campaign issues - an example would be campaigning about the voting age. This was largely to do with the nature of the project: we never aimed to target a precise problem, rather, the project was a more conceptual exploration of the idea of political voice, than having specific political aims. Furthermore, where and how the young people were recruited also meant that I met a broad range of young people that did not necessarily have a common dispute or problem to tackle, other than the position of young people in general in political life.

Yet there is evidence for the potential for change beyond the individual, in the specific changes that took place within the groups themselves, for instance, as discussed in Chapter 5, when the different social positions in the group were momentarily transcended, or in this chapter in the equalisation of voices in the crowd. To conclude, I argue that it is the primacy of ensemble in the practice that creates this potential for voice work to have an effect beyond individual participants. Both the effects of equalisation within the group, and the enactment of the political through collective voice, demonstrate ensemble practice as something politically efficacious, that when applied to specific campaign issues could point towards broader social change. Following Neelands, this is in the way that ensemble performance can demonstrate a different social world, both in its content but in the form of being-together. This adds a potency beyond the individual's political voice, as vocalising together presents a different way for young people, in a post-industrial, enterprising society, both to engage with politics but also engage with each other, that is absent from many young people's lives.

CONCLUSION

Voice cannot be pinned down. Voice is material, but in utterance it disappears. Voice is marked, but these marks are hard to see. Voice is heard. To see voice, one must see it through the body and how the marks on a particular body produce a unique voice. My thesis began with the question, Can voice be pinned down? Pinning down refers to an exact definition of voice in its relation to language. Marks and materiality: my emphasis on the voice as the body suggests an attempt to fully define it and in doing so, pinning it down to my own political agenda of the voice as a tool of resistance. Yet voice escapes my own definition. Through focusing on voice in its materiality, my participants' production of the non-linguistic voice moved beyond a definition of voice as subservient to words. But in doing so they produced a symbolic voice, a voice that represented the political voice of young women in general.

In this concluding chapter I will address my key questions and key findings through three points: the politics of the non-linguistic voice; how we can conceive voice training as a form of political intervention; and the ensemble as an example of the crowd. I will then discuss the application of my findings in the fields of applied theatre and political communication.

8.1 The politics of the non-linguistic voice

My investigation has found a definition of political voice through the non-linguistic voice. Participants created a new vocabulary through experimenting with the non-linguistic voice to express their anger, dissent and resistance to political structures. Simultaneously, this shared vocabulary, erasing the restraints of linguistic structures that demarcate one word from another, also dissolved the lines between the different participant's voices, blending the voices, equalising them, as if they were all speaking

as one voice. Here the voice could not be pinned to one individual, one individual was not responsible for the protest, but one voice emerged that collectively contested. Furthermore, my research found new ways to identify politics in the voice, beyond words, through the very sound of the voice. Exploring habitus through tone, pitch, volume, speed etc., rather than just what the person said, allowed for a different kind of analysis, where what the participant said was also in relation to how they said it. Following Bourdieu, that the structures that repress voice are not linguistic but sociological, these structures permeate the very sound of the voice, far beyond the linguistic.

From investigating the sound of the voice, I was able to draw conclusions about the participants' habitus. I demonstrated how the qualities of vocal sound; volume, tone, pitch speed etc, cannot be simply attributed to certain social backgrounds. For instance, loudness is not simply an indicator of security, confidence or self-esteem, nor are these qualities necessarily indicators of one social class. Furthermore, investigating the four voices in Chapter 5 demonstrated that there are both similarities and differences in the sound of the voice across different class backgrounds, which manifested at different times. This is because how the voice sounds is as much dependent on different social fields and contexts as on its social background. In this sense, trying to give young people a political voice through the teaching of specific qualities such as confidence are not useful to combatting vocal inequality. Drawing these two points together, I found that it was more instructive to consider vocal tension or vocal freedom as the markers of whether the participant felt able to speak. For example, when Emily discussed a time when she had felt silenced, her voice sounded tense and strained. When she discussed a time when she had felt able to speak, her voice replicated an openness, and a sense of relaxation through a sigh of relief. Tension or freedom was a better framework for understanding the relationship between the sound of the voice and vocal repression than more subjective markers

such as volume or speed. This furthermore demonstrates how the principles of voice training - i.e. that tension is associated with social stratification - were already operating in Emily's everyday speech, outside of the voice workshop.

The practice of the non-linguistic voice was not just vocalizing abstract gibberish. Taking away words provided the opportunity to create sounds that resonated with the body, and accordingly with muscular tensions and relaxation. This allowed the participants to express directly sounds that represented forms of social stratification, because these sounds corresponded to muscular tensions that were caused by such stratification. Taking away words produced sounds that did not just describe social injustice but embodied it. The production of these sounds was possible because we engaged in voice training which helped participants identify how injustice marks the body and therefore the voice.

8.2 Voice training as political intervention

Emily described sitting on the bus a couple of weeks after the project and noticing that her jaw was unnecessarily tense. She then chose to consciously relax her jaw. Before the workshop she never knew she had a tense jaw. Now she knows and knows how to do something about it. The significant contribution that this research makes to the fields of applied theatre, youth politics and political communication I believe is that voice training can be a practice of political engagement. Rather than voice training being limited to the acting profession or as a hobby of successful middle-class professionals seeking to enhance their communication and leadership skills, training can be placed in applied theatre, community and educative contexts as a political intervention. Applied theatre and performance studies scholars have identified performance as a space in which the subject can perform themselves differently and this can re-contextualise performative acts, revealing and undermining our habits as

contingent practices. James Thompson discusses how the applied theatre workshop can be an act of contestation against the distribution of the sensible through people who do not usually have the right to take part in this kind of event, doing precisely that (Thompson, *Affects* 183). Voice training is about the revealing and eradication of performative habits, allowing participants to perform their voice differently and from this disrupting the idea of who is normally allowed to speak. But further than this, voice training allows a bleeding from the performance space into real life situations. The techniques of voice training can be utilised for performance, but also stay with the participant afterwards. Emily, on the bus, re-created the workshop, the performance, in her daily life simply through the act of recognising this tension and releasing it.

Voice training is the lynch-pin in this research to accessing what I have described as the material voice. Voice training helped the young people access a different way of communicating, through understand what their vocal capabilities were. Furthermore, as the researcher, voice training was the main tool to try and access and understand habitus through the voice. Voice training helped the participants identify how the sociological had manifested in their bodies and helped them eradicate these tensions. As a researcher it gave me a clear structured method of identifying tensions, discussing them with the participants, and to try and move beyond them. Furthermore, it was this focus on the material voice in the workshops, rather than simply seeing the discussion as the political part of the sessions, that helped the young people create a non-linguistic vocabulary to use their voice as protest and contestation.

In Chapter 2 I discussed how voice is appropriated by the “skills” agenda, where good communication is a quality to be learnt for employment and work place efficiency. As discussed in Chapter 6, voice training can also be appropriated for business, with the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art offering a series of courses to improve business and

management careers. I argued in Chapter 7 that focusing on the ensemble is one way of preventing voice training from just being a matter of individual development. Furthermore, like teaching young people communication skills, it could be argued that voice training improves individual voices, but beyond this marginalised groups will still not be listened to or deemed worthy of voice, despite this training. As I argued in Chapter 2, feeling ignored or silenced is not just because young people do not have platforms for voice, silencing is also because of *who* they are. However, I want to argue that there is a key difference in voice training that means it is not simply another form of skills learning that young people must become good at, nor a platform for voice that can simply be dismissed.

This difference is the sociological element of the practice of Linklater, Rodenburg and Berry. By framing vocal deficiency as a sociological problem rather than a personal problem, the practice of developing and improving the voice is inherently in defiance to this social problem. This means that working on the voice is in resistance to how certain voices are silenced rather than being co-opted. My practice made clear that the voice is something that my participants were being sociologically, economically and culturally denied, rather than a personal deficit. The principle of noticing is key to this. Noticing tensions in the voice is coupled with noticing the sociological reason why that part of the body might be tense, weak or strained. This was not framed as the participants having to strengthen this aspect of their voice, but rather noticing gave them an opportunity to choose to resist this tension. In the same way that political activism often emerges out of knowing the structural reasons why inequality and oppression exists, working on the voice in my practice emerged from noticing and understanding how social structures have impacted the body, rather than from an imperative to be “better”. Rather than positioning my practice as something that would lead to political voice if the young people adopted the technique correctly, engaging in the practice *was* the political voice: it was political in its precise resistance

to vocal tension. In this sense, my voice practice was not just about remedying the harm that has afflicted the young women's voices, but about helping to provide the knowledge for the young women to equip themselves to fight back.

My specific exploration of these questions in relation to gender helps clarify this point. In Chapter 6 I discuss the 'different-but-equal' perspective, which argues that women's voices have been discriminated against because as a society we do not value the aspects of women's voices that are different. These aspects are usually cited as typically feminine attributes: respect, understanding, care or kindness. Yet I argue that this perspective is harmful as it essentialises women's voices as inherently feminine. Furthermore, it presents women's oppression as simply coming from the repression of difference rather than broader structural discrimination that puts women at a vocal disadvantage. Voice training practices demonstrate very little difference between men and women's voices anatomically (as outlined in Chapter 6). It is clear then that differences are social and cultural differences that have manifested physiologically. To work on the voice, approaching these differences, is not to imitate a male voice, but to demonstrate that what is considered masculine can also come from a woman's voice and therefore is not natural to men. This is not imitation or co-option, but a demonstration that women can vocalize in a way that they have been denied. Furthermore, women can understand how it is something they have been denied, rather than something natural or unnatural to them. For example, Emma from the term-time project in Ellesmere Port, had been told that she had a "flat" voice, which she accepted as a personal problem. In one simple exercise, working on the vowel sounds of a short piece of text, Emma immediately defied this description of her voice, producing a full-bodied, rounded and powerful sound.

My research accordingly has demonstrated that voice training, presented in the right context, can be an example of political intervention. It can reveal how the social and

political has stratified the voice through marking the body and help the participant resist against these marks through training and technique. Furthermore, it can help provide a vocabulary to politically fight against further stratification through a vocabulary of contestation.

8.3 The ensemble and the voice of the crowd

I also found that voice training contributed to the sense of ensemble in a group of participants. Focusing on ensemble was an essential aspect of my research, and through exploring the collective voice I have found a relationship between ensemble and crowd theory. The crowd, as conceptualised by Canetti and Dean, is a political force of equalisation, egalitarianism and contestation. This concept helps illuminate and identify how the theatrical ensemble can become a political force. In both Canetti and Dean's account of the crowd, rather than seeing it as something simply destructive, they present it as a positive political force that destroys existing hierarchies. The qualities that give the crowd this ability can also be found in the ensemble: individuals coming together to form a collective mind and body and a sense of egalitarianism where individuals become equalised through their homogeneity. I identified a political force then in the voice ensemble, where voices come together to produce collective sound, as if they were one voice. This collectivisation provided an opportunity for contestation: both through the specific political point the ensemble voice was making, but also to contest the sovereignty of the individual. Departing from the idea that political voice is necessarily an individual voice, the participants found new systems of support through their collective voice, where their individual voices gained strength through the others. They defied the idea that political voice is something that can be granted to or gained by individuals by demonstrating that political voice was something that they wanted to experience together. It was no longer about an individual feeling listened to, but about whether

young women are listened to. Furthermore, this resulted in a process of equalisation of the participants, where previous social divides were undermined and erased, as the ensemble voice both allowed the individuals to perform their voices differently, despite their habitus, and furthermore the differences between them could not be heard.

In this sense, I argue that the voice is a tool of *becoming collective*. In one sense, the voice can be used to construct shared political principles, something like communicative rationality. But once these principles have been constructed, the voice can also construct a shared community and protest around a shared vocabulary that leads to collective voice. Voice training is one way that this can happen. Entering a training process with others is the process of mutual development, where you work on the voice together, and accordingly create frames of understanding. Training in my research allowed the participants to create a shared non-linguistic vocabulary which they then used to create a collective performance. Furthermore, the experience of training is an experience in collectivity. I learnt from this process that specific ensemble games are not necessary to building an ensemble: the process of going through training itself can provide this. Even though it seems like the participants are working individually on the voice, they are simultaneously constructing a shared understanding of the voice specific to that group of young people.

The practice of voice training accordingly is a political intervention: both concerning the habitus of the individual participant, and the collective political power of the ensemble. In the next section I will discuss the benefits of these findings.

8.4 Why voice matters

Nick Couldry's book *Why Voice Matters* discusses the symbolic harm that manifests in the denial of voice to many in political matters and how voice is the only effective opportunity we have to challenge neoliberalism. Further than this, this thesis has argued why the material voice matters. In this section I argue why the material voice, and accordingly my research findings, matter to the two fields in which this research places itself: political youth practices in communication and applied theatre.

Couldry argues that we are experiencing a contemporary crisis of voice in politics, culture and economics (Couldry 1). Neoliberalism as a force consistently denies voice through its relegation of the social in political matters. Couldry wants to extend the definition of voice beyond opinion and representation to something that is specifically useful in confronting neoliberalism: voice as *process* and voice as *value*. In this definition voice becomes a connecting term to interrupt neoliberalism's market-driven values and instead reassert the importance of the social in politics:

The term 'voice', as used here, does not derive from a particular view of economic processes (consumer 'voice') or even mechanisms of political representation (political 'voice'), but from a broader account of how human beings are. The value of voice articulates some basic aspects of human life that are relevant *whatever* our views on democracy or justice, so establishing common ground between contemporary frameworks for evaluating economic, social and political organisation (Couldry 2).

In this particular time of neoliberalism, voice matters as a social and human resistance to the relentlessness of the market. Furthermore, voice specifically matters to young people and how young people engage politically. Coleman argues that civic education can be a key part of challenging the 'vicious circle of self-perpetuating expressive superiority' that exists in the public sphere that prevents true democratic citizenship (Coleman, 'Speaking' 408). In our precarious political and economic climate, where young people express feelings of uncertainty and insecurity about their futures, young citizen's voices need to both have the capacity to challenge the common sense of

neoliberalism and feel like their voices are listened to and matter. We are already beginning to see shifts in public discourse, led by young people, even over the period in which I wrote this thesis. My research began in a context of so-called “apathy”, with young people’s engagement in the political continuously cited as a diminishing voter turn-out statistic. In 2018, despite attempts to write-off the so-called “youthquake”, we find ourselves in a context where young people are gradually becoming active in mainstream politics. Corbynism has produced a dynamic, grassroots political culture that, as Barnett describes, is driven by young people to create bedrocks of local, popular left-wing activity (Barnett 2018). Now more than ever the question of voice in relation to youth politics must be further explored to prevent this new social movement fading into stale internal party activism. This thesis is a call for scholarship that is engaged directly with young people to consider how we frame, define and articulate political voice, arguing that any practice concerned with voice must consider it in its material form.

The material voice is largely absent from the discussion of how we engage young people in politics. Voice is used in the best instances to describe the potential agency of young people, and in the worst examples as a buzz-word to replace genuine political commitment. What this research demonstrates is that a commitment to voice must consider it physiologically alongside the more symbolic understanding of voice as opinion, agency or voting. For example, in Chapter 4 I discussed the specific case of Sophie, a participant in the women’s project. She described how she discovered the potential political power of her voice through realising its physiological power. Having previously seen her voice as “weak” and “soft”, the descriptions of how her voice sounded translated into how she conceived her political voice. Realising she has the capacity for a powerful and strong voice physiologically was experienced simultaneously to discussing politics, meaning she further realised that she also has the capacity for political strength. The denial of power in her voice both physiologically

and politically was related and related to how she was socially denied voice. This example demonstrates a value in considering the material voice alongside discussing how young people can find their voice in politics.

In applied theatre discourses, voice is also largely conceived in this symbolic sense. Further than this, there is a relative absence of voice training in the discourses of good practice in this field. This means that training is preserved within prestigious drama schools or expensive courses like RADA in Business, separating it from social and political contexts. This thesis has aimed to demonstrate why voice training should be more widely available and not just for professional actors. As I outlined in Chapter 3, the absence of actor and voice training in applied theatre discourse I believe is related to two orthodoxies of practice: firstly, a misunderstanding of how power operates in a rehearsal space; and secondly, the heavy focus on cultural representation as the political goal of an applied project or workshop. The absence of training can be related to a fear of the workshop leader “imposing” cultural value on the participant, which is enabled by the unequal distribution of power in the space (the workshop leader as powerful, the participant as subordinate). This leads to the participant not being “heard” and therefore not being represented: instead the participant recreates the trainer’s idea of good practice, correct voice, etc. I argued that this perspective can be problematic as by focusing largely on the power relationship between the practitioner and the participant, there is a chance that the broader structural powers that the workshop could be fighting against are potentially being ignored. In this thesis I have explored that training, rather than the characterisation of it being the imposition of cultural norms, is an opportunity for the participant to access resources that they are usually denied. The fear of training as cultural imposition also fetishizes the pre-trained voice as something natural to the participant which dangerously assigns certain vocal qualities to certain types of voice. Further than this, the focus on representation, where voice in its symbolic sense

becomes the goal of the workshop and is an end in itself, does not confront the redistributive injustices that accompany cultural misrecognition and underrepresentation. Training, I demonstrate in this thesis, can be one way to address the unequal distribution of vocal resources: that young women, for instance, have the same right to certain types of voice than more culturally represented groups. I want to propose to applied and community theatre practitioners that there is a political imperative to consider voice training as part of their practice, in order to challenge vocal inequality that restricts the feelings of a free and liberated voice to those who can afford it, usually those who already possess this freedom in a relative sense.

Furthermore, this research positions itself within a growing trend in voice scholarship in theatre. Following the calls from Kimbrough, Inchley and Thomaidis that a (re)theorisation of the voice is necessary in contemporary theatre discourse, this research proposes that this theorisation is also needed in applied and community theatre. I have identified both a growing interest in the voice in theatre and performance at the same time as lack of critical interrogation of how it is defined in applied theatre. This research offers a participatory addition then to this new scholarship, demonstrating how a consideration of the material voice is important for politically engaged practice outside of professional contexts. Furthermore, I offer a definition of political voice as material and embodied that challenges the way voice is considered too simplistically in practice and discourse that uses the term as synonymous to opinion, or a loose idea of the participant's agency.

This research accordingly presents a different definition of political voice as material and embodied to scholars in both theatre and performance and communication studies, as well as a proposal of potential voice practice that could be undertaken with young people in many different contexts to explore their political voice.

8.5 Limitations and future research

There have been limitations to the scope of this research project that point towards future further research. The most considerable limitation was time. Most voice practitioners argue that undertaking training is a long and gradual process, with small changes happening slowly. Furthermore, they state that like with any instrument, the voice needs continual practice. In this sense, engaging in voice training can be a life-long process. My practice was limited by both the time constraints of doctoral research and that working with young people must generally be done either in the evenings or in school holidays. This limited the amount of time I could spend with the young people to week long projects, or short evening sessions. However, from the progress I identified just from a short amount of engagement, I would argue that a long-term research project where the practice continued with the same group of young people over a longer period could be extremely beneficial to this work.

Furthermore, this project was limited by the kind of young people I could get access to. Largely because of efficiency and resources, I chose to recruit my participants through youth theatres. This was useful because existing structures of recruitment were in place and furthermore these institutions already had adequate space, resources and policies for such a project. However, this limited my participants to young people already interested in theatre. This interest of course varied, with some participants actively wanting careers in theatre and others attending their drama provision just to get out of the house. Yet, it meant that I was working with young people who had at least some experience in performance and in that sense, voice. To draw more substantial conclusions about young people in general, projects could be done in more general settings, such as schools or youth centres, to see the effects of the work with a group of young people with more diverse interests.

This project was also in some ways limited by its generality. That is, in each workshop I wanted to discuss the concept of political voice in general, meaning that our discussions and therefore the work we produced was aimed at considering how young people feel silenced in the political sphere in general. Accordingly, we did not target specific political issues. A future project could perhaps work with an identified campaign. By doing this, I could identify more directly if there is a clear link between the political intervention of voice training and tangible political activism.

Furthermore, I believe there is substantial scope for further research examining the relationship between different forms of actor training and political and socially engaged theatre practices. I would furthermore be interested in a research project that explored how professional actors have engaged with voice training, particularly actors from working class backgrounds, seeing whether the technique provided any sense of social liberation, or whether the training is too closely connected to their labour to be felt as liberating. The social and political effects of voice training is something that needs to be researched much more expansively, particularly drawing on empirical evidence of actual practice, rather than abstract critique of the voice teacher's writing.

8.6 A Proposed Practice

I want to conclude this research with a guideline of proposed practice that could be replicated by other practitioners. This guideline can be found in the appendices. This is not to write something that becomes absolute, or even something obligatory, but rather, knowing the limitations of my own research, this guideline is to encourage a practical use of the material, collective voice in other contexts. Accordingly, this proposition should be read as a guideline, considering the specific nature of my investigation, and should be applied accordingly to the practitioner's own context, with

the specific need of their participants. This is an example of what I believe worked the best and accordingly, I think a strong structure to approach voice training in non-professional contexts.

This guideline is structured around the three components of my practice that I identified in Chapter 4: method/technique (voice training), form (non-linguistic voice and ensemble) and content (political content). I identify some of the key exercises that worked for me, describing how and why they fitted into the overall aim of the workshops.

Linklater writes if you are holding your breath, a part of you is absent. We are drawn back to a question that emerged in the first chapter of this thesis: the relationship between voice and presence, or perhaps, voice and being present. The free-flow of breath from inhalation to exhalation is a voice present and ready. Being present challenges the apathy of absence, it demonstrates someone who cares. Engaging in the voice ignites a small demand to care, a small rejection of apathy, an engagement in being alive and present. Small demands grow as voices multiply and connect, leading to the presence of a collective voice that is active, present and ready. Politics happens.

My thesis demonstrates a hope for the emergence of a class-based politics of contestation, driven by young people, where the voices are loud, collective and reject all attempts by authority and capital to be marked.

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APPENDIX 1: A PROPOSED PRACTICE: A GUIDE TO THE MATERIAL VOICE.

This proposed practice presents ideas of how to conduct two aspects of my workshops: technique and form. This is a descriptive guide that presents each section in chronological order so that the user can grasp a sense of how to structure the workshop. This guide should not be read as absolute but read in relation to the user's own workshop context.

9.1 Workshop Practicalities

Setting up a workshop should be a straightforward process and needs little resources other than a decent sized space relative to the size of the group: enough space to move somewhat but does not have to be big enough for sports or big physical activities, for instance. Paper and pens are useful for exercises such as drawing the voice or for making notes of political discussion. The only other item I brought to my workshops was a set of tennis balls for warm up activities. The size of the group may not be entirely in the practitioners control, but from my research I would recommend a smaller rather than larger group. More than twelve may get difficult to give sufficient attention, especially when you are dealing with more delicate or detailed exercises. I found that even running sessions with as few as two was useful and generated exciting material. The participants do not need to bring anything to the session, though having some expectation of it being about the voice and about the politics I thought was useful as they were not surprised by the amount of attention we gave the voice. When to run the workshops depends on the practitioners and the young people's own timetable of course, but this decision will affect the quality of the project. I preferred running workshops during the day over an intense week as it helped the participants more fully immerse themselves in the technique and they would

remember the previous sessions more clearly. However, running once-a-week evening sessions over a long period of time did allow for more integration with the participants everyday life: or rather, their everyday life was more clearly part of the workshop, rather than the workshop feeling like a retreat from normal life.

In either case, a detailed workshop plan with approximate timings should be made, which can then be reflected on and rearranged after each session. In the rest of this guidance, I will discuss how the practitioner works out how to design their practice, in what order to approach exercises, and how to integrate the voice training with the performance form. I believe that each project should aim to create a piece of performance, even if it is only short, to give the workshops a clear and concrete aim.

9.2 Technique

Beginning voice technique needs to be carefully undertaken. It requires a confidence in persevering with the training even though it might be unusual for the participants, combined with an awareness of making it accessible and not completely alien. I believe that drawing the voice is an excellent way to start, as it begins the process of thinking about the voice as something other than just speaking. It combines a metaphorical and material consideration of the voice and furthermore it lets the participant identify their own habits; that there is a different way their voice could be. Finally, it creates a clear framework for the course: at the start of the course the participant identifies themselves at the first picture, and then they can track their journey at the end of the course in comparison to the second picture. The training can be framed through these drawings, and as facilitator you can refer back to some of the things they identified in their voice when you are undertaking the practical work.

Drawing the voice can lead to a discussion of tensions in the body. This can lead smoothly into beginning the voice exercises with tensions as an easy starting point to getting physically involved in the work. Feeling tensions and eliminating them through conscious relaxation is something conceivable to the participants and has immediate results. The 'sigh of relief' is an easy place to begin. Asking participants to stretch their arms into the air, experiencing the feeling of bodily tension, and then asking them to release their arms experiencing the feeling of relaxation and release is the fundamental principle of this voice work. The last component to add to this is the breath. When the participants release their arms, they also release through exhaling, a big, pleasurable sigh of relief. Then, the participants sigh on sound, letting the voice create a sound with the exhalation of breath. Here the participants have experienced the relationship between muscular tension, breath and voice in a fairly simple exercise.

This was also a good opportunity to draw a connection between tensions and the participants' experiences. We could attach images or events to the sigh of relief: sigh out a bad day, sigh out that thing the teacher said to you, sigh out your friend who is being unfair. We also 'sighed' for each other: the whole group sighed out for each person's specific bad experience. Immediately the participants are associating tension with things that happen to them, rather than their own inadequacies. Release is associated with defying those experiences.

Relaxation is a key part of the practice, and a good initial exercise for exploring these ideas further, particularly at the end of the day. The participants are talked through a system of relaxation, where they lie on the floor and experiencing tensing and relaxing each muscle in their body. Eventually, they are instructed that the only muscle

operating (metaphorically) is the muscle associated with breathing, the diaphragm, and they are asked to begin imagining the diaphragm inflating and deflating, or moving downwards and then upwards, in line with their breathing. This helps the participants understand breath as something deep, moving the place of breath away from the chest into the belly. From this place of deep relaxation, the participants can produce what Linklater calls a 'touch of sound', a small, soft and deep sound that feels like it comes from deep within the belly. This small amount of vocalisation is a big start, and participants often experienced a different kind of sound and different experience of producing sound.

I found that exploring vibrations and resonating chambers was a good next stage of the workshop. The exercises around vibrations are easy, produce immediate results, and can be funny or feel a bit like a novelty. These exercises (outlined in chapter 4), get the participants to create vibrations in their stomach, chest and then lips, moving through these three places. Other Linklater and Rodenburg exercises I believe are best introduced after the participants really engage and get this one, as they will seem a lot less esoteric and alienating. Discussing the exercises with the participants demonstrated short term effects, where the young people described immediate differences. Linklater and Rodenburg discuss how even noticing a change can be a long process relating how their students have often been resistant to change. It is also common that students report changes in a negative way as part of this rejection. They note that it is important to be wary between this kind of response and actual harm or pain.

Before moving onto some of the more advanced Linklater exercises, I would recommend engaging with some of Rodenburg's more fundamental ones.

Furthermore, some of these exercises can reclarify the relationship between voice, habits and the political. Rodenburg's 'arc of breath' exercise was extremely important in my workshops. In this exercise participants work in pairs and through a ball to each other. They match the breath and a vocalised 'm-ah' sound to the throw of the ball. As their hand pulls back in suspension to throw the ball, they breathe in, and then exhaling into 'm-ah' as the ball arches through the air, the sound ends as their partner catches the ball. This helps the participant strengthen their voice and learn how to send their voice across different spaces in a clear and supported way. As the participants get used to this, we take the ball away and they practice just vocalising across the room as if throwing the ball. Once the participants have mastered this, you can use this exercise to move into text. To integrate this with the political, I got participants to speak previously written political statements, imagining the ball arching in the air in front of them and landing at the other side of the room as they spoke. Rodenburg also outlines a series of useful exercises to help with range. These exercises are useful as quick warm-ups and are simple to do. In one example, participants speak number 1 to 10 but alternate between high and low pitch on each number.

The more advanced Linklater exercises work through eliminating specific muscular tensions: the throat, jaw and tongue; and the exercise called 'opening the channel'. These should be undertaken later in the programme and it is important to make sure the participants have 'got' the other exercises first. The practitioner should avoid introducing new exercises out of fear that the participants might be bored. I did this in one session and it was clear that the participant was not ready. A final part of the Linklater method that could be introduced is working on the text. I only did this with one group who were particularly interested in acting. I was surprised to see the effect that the text had on one participant, however, which made me think about whether

text could be a useful tool in some case. This text exercise played with vowels and consonants. The participants take a couple of words or a sentence and work out what the essential vowel sounds are. For instance, “To be or not to be” would become “oo / ee / ur / oh / oo / ee” (depending on your accent). The participants practice just making these sounds, forgetting about the words and letting the vowel sounds and length dictate the voice. When the participants then add the consonants back in, they are often surprised at something new in the voice which emerges from not worrying about trying to consciously convey meaning, but through bringing the sounds of the sentence to the forefront.

There are many variations and choices of specific exercises to use dependent on the needs of participants. What is clear is that teaching voice technique should be gradual but not cautious. The practitioner should be bold and confident in the practice and not worry about being too weird or boring. From my experience, teenagers can be incredibly invested in this training as long as it is made clear to them throughout why it is useful or important.

9.3 Form

Form refers to the non-verbal voice. The exercises below are methods I used either to train the non-verbal voice (aside from specific voice technique) or to create non-verbal performance. Many of these exercises have been adapted from existing games from practitioners including Augusto Boal, Chris Johnson, Max Hafler and John Britton. To begin, I chose simple drama exercises that start to use the voice without words. For instance, ‘Gibberish’ is a game where you go around a circle, with one person asking the next person a question. That person responds in ‘gibberish’ i.e. made up sounds, and the third person translates this. This game is quite good at the

start of the project as it is quite accessible, can be used to help them introduce themselves and gets the participants to start using their imagination. Energy Circle is a good exercise to use the non-verbal voice without the participants having to think too much about the sounds they are making. Sending a 'hah' around the space by clapping the hand of the person next to them, the participants can experiment with the non-verbal voice by changing emotions rather than having to think of new sounds.

Training the non-verbal voice was largely towards the creation of soundscapes. I found that when I played a game called Machine Rhythm before creating the soundscapes, the participants had a better sense of what they were being asked to do. Machine Rhythm is a really simple game where one by one participants come into the centre to create a 'machine', using typical sounds and actions and each individual has to contribute to the whole, so they must look and listen to what the other participants are doing. After doing a traditional machine, the practitioner can choose different types of machine. These can start out more concrete, a machine that makes a specific thing for instance, and gradually get more abstract, a machine for a certain emotion, a happiness machine, an anxiety machine etc. This allows the participants to start thinking about sounds that could be conceptual rather than literal.

The process of making soundscapes for political questions started with adapting Boal's Image Theatre exercise. Participants discuss personal stories of a particular thing that happened to them, for instance, a time where they have felt like someone silenced them. They choose one person's story and create an image for that. They then discuss a solution for that story and create an image for that. Next, they introduce dialogue to work out how to move from the first image to the second image. Then I asked them to take away the dialogue and instead think of sounds. So, they think of

sounds to represent what is happening in the first image and then think of sounds to represent the second. They then must work out vocally how to get from the first set of sounds to the second set of sounds. Finally, I ask them to take away the image so that we are left with just the voice experiencing the sounds of being silenced (in this instance) to the sounds of being listened to. Once the participants had successfully done this task, I found they understood how to then create soundscapes for our chosen political themes.

As I outlined in my thesis, the practitioner can vary how they integrate these two components. I counter-intuitively found that beginning with the voice work helped the participants non-verbal imagination, as the training had given them an understanding of how the voice can relate to feelings in the body.

9.4 Politics / Content

There are various games, exercises or techniques to introduce the idea of 'politics'. What I found most conducive was gradually finding ways to integrate the political into the drama games or voice technique. That is, moving from the political part of the workshop as a clear, formal discussion to bringing it into the practical exercises.

In each workshop I found the "right" moment on the first day to have an informal discussion about politics in general. This happened out of the blue in my pilot workshops and I believe it really helped settle the participants into the project and got them personally invested and excited by being able to talk about things that mattered to them broadly. It also helped me get to know them. The only other way I structured a specific political conversation was to generate material for a free-writing exercise

that would eventually evolve into constructing the piece of ensemble text. I used a newspaper article to frame this discussion.

Boal is a useful practitioner for finding games that are charged with the political. Exercises such as Gravity (where participants experience the amount of “weight” they carry around with them on a day-to-day basis and then fight back against this), Image Theatre or the game where participants try and make one person laugh who has been instructed to ignore them all carry political and social messages about how we can fight back against existing structures. Further than this, I endeavoured to make politics present in each game and exercise we did. When we do the sigh of relief at the start of the session, that release of tension could be about a specific social or political problem. Drawing the Voice is about confronting how the political marks the body. Instead of working on pieces of random text during voice exercises, the participants can use their own political statements. The workshop design should find ways for the political to be gradually interwoven into the technique and form, so that the participants are enacting politics and not just discussing.

APPENDIX 2: DRAWING THE VOICE

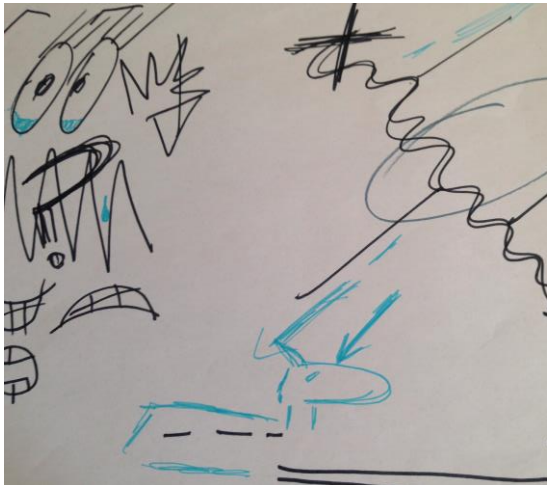
My voice (August 2016)



Now

How I want it to be

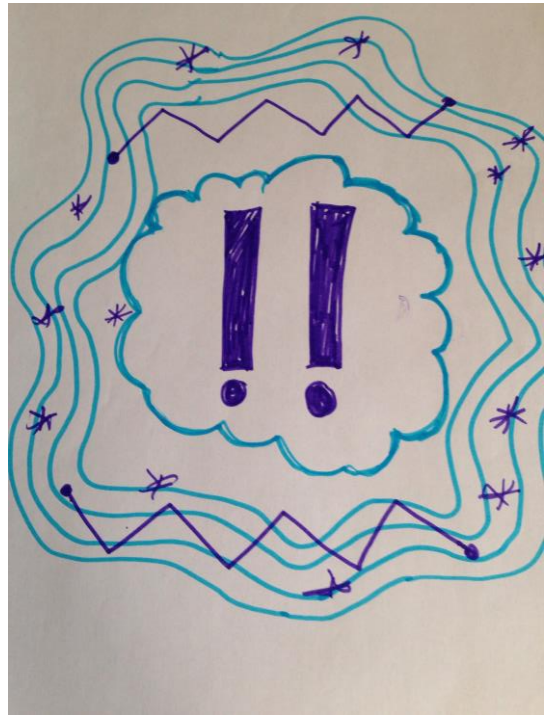
Emily



Now

How I want it to be

Sophie



Now

How I want it to be

Lara



Now

How I want it to be

APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Consent to take part in Performing Political Voice	Add your initials next to the statement if you agree
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated [REDACTED] explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. If I wish to withdraw consent I can contact Sarah Weston by emailing [REDACTED] or speak to my programme leader at the [REDACTED]. I understand I can request that data collected before withdrawal from study be deleted.	
I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential.	
I understand that other genuine researchers may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	
I understand that relevant sections of the data collected during the study, may be looked at by individuals from the University of Leeds or from regulatory authorities where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my records.	
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the lead researcher should my contact details change.	

Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	Sarah Weston
Signature	
Date*	

*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant.

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/ pre-written script/ information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be kept with the project's main documents which must be kept in a secure location.