

Review Article

## Towards a Performative Understanding of the Voice: “Mi Querido Diario Trans\*” and My Voice in Transit

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### ABSTRACT

In this article, I examine several epistemologies that address the phenomenon of voice. From these perspectives, I identify certain binary principles that have been transversal across the studies reviewed. Against this backdrop, I assess the limitations of such principles and highlight the performative paradigm as a framework for understanding voice in its post-humanist, gendered, racialized, classed, and political dimensions. Finally, I offer an anecdote from “my beloved trans diary” to concretize the preceding reflections and to raise questions regarding the support policies for trans\* people implemented by healthcare professionals.

### Keywords:

Voice; Trans\*;  
Transmasculinities;  
Performativity; Health

## Hacia una comprensión performativa de la voz: “Mi querido diario trans\*” y mi voz en tránsito

### RESUMEN

En este artículo, recorro varias epistemologías que abordan el fenómeno de la voz. A partir de ellas, establezco ciertos principios de binariedad que han sido transversales en los estudios presentados. Frente a ello, concluyo sus limitaciones y destaco el paradigma performativo en función de comprender la voz en su dimensión posthumanista, genérica, racializada, de clase y política. Por último, les ofrezco una anécdota de “mi querido diario trans” que permite materializar las reflexiones antes expuestas, a la vez de establecer ciertas preguntas sobre las políticas de acompañamiento para personas trans\* por parte de profesionales de la salud.

### Palabras clave:

Voz; Trans\*;  
Transmasculinidades;  
Performatividad; Salud

## Rumo a uma compreensão performativa da voz: “Mi querido diário trans\*” e minha voz em trânsito

### RESUMO

Neste artigo, exploro diversas epistemologias que abordam o fenômeno da voz. A partir delas, estabeleço certos princípios de binariedade que têm sido transversais aos estudos apresentados. Diante disso, concluo suas limitações e destaco o paradigma performativo em termos de compreensão da voz em suas dimensões pós-humanistas, de gênero, racializadas, de classe e políticas. Por fim, ofereço uma anedota do “meu querido diário trans” que me permite materializar as reflexões mencionadas, ao mesmo tempo em que levanto algumas questões sobre as políticas de apoio a pessoas trans\* por profissionais de saúde.

### Palavras-chave:

Voz; Trans\*;  
Transmasculinidades;  
Performatividade; Saúde

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## INTRODUCTION

In this article, I examine the phenomenon of the voice from a transdisciplinary perspective, drawing on the performative paradigm while grounding the discussion in my own experience as a trans\* masculine non-binary person. Although it may seem paradoxical, I must situate myself within the space of transmasculinity, due to the particularities of my vocal becoming, which differ from the vocal transitions experienced by transfeminine people. Far from an identitarian approach, I see the concept of *trans* as a site of belonging that “holds open the meaning of the term ‘trans’ and refuses to deliver certainty through the act of naming” (Halberstam, 2018, p. 19). In this sense, rather than conceiving of transition as a path with a specific goal, I understand transitioning as a process—one that enables me to identify, explore, and celebrate my embodied self-governance in relation to the world.

Although I address this more explicitly toward the end, one of the aims of this text is to challenge the biomedical discourse in order to denaturalize the notion of its effectiveness. Rather than seeking universal answers, I intend to kindle questions that might help reimagine the roles and responsibilities of professionals involved in processes of vocal transition. In this regard, and given the limited literature on the subject, it is crucial to activate the question of the voice from transmasculine performativity and, in this article, through my own situated experience—thus narrated in the first person.

I want to clarify that, although my academic and political efforts are always motivated by a desire for reparation in response to the “epistemic violence” (Hernández, 2015) historically inflicted upon us by academia and other well-established institutions, speaking in the first person does not mean that I am speaking for all trans\* people. I do not claim to speak on behalf of any collective project. I speak from my situated position, as this is how I have learned to conduct my work within academia. More radically, throughout my career, I have consciously attempted to elude the traps of representation and representativity.

With this in mind, I invite the reader to explore definitions of the voice phenomenon that reveal the limitations of binary frameworks and, consequently, highlight the benefits of understanding it through the performative paradigm. I will then reflect on how the voice behaves and unfolds in relation to gender and other intersecting vectors. Finally, drawing from my project “*mi querido diario trans*” (“My Dear Trans Diary”), I will outline some key considerations that give rise to a set of questions I hope will resonate with health professionals.

## The Voice as a Non-Dichotomous Phenomenon

From very early on in Western philosophy, voice has been understood as an exclusively human and binary phenomenon. Aristotle (1991), for instance, states:

Now, that man is more of a political animal than bees or any other gregarious animals is evident. Nature, as we often say, makes nothing in vain, and man (sic) is the only animal whom she has endowed with the gift of speech [*lógon de mónon ánthropos ékhei tôn zôon*]. And whereas mere voice is but an indication of pleasure or pain, and is therefore found in other animals (...) the power of speech is intended to set forth the expedient and inexpedient, and therefore likewise the just and the unjust. And it is a characteristic of man that he alone has any sense of good and evil, of just and unjust, and the like, and the association of living beings who have this sense makes a family and a state (pp. 43–44 [Spanish version]).

This definition does not place the voice (*phoné*) as an exclusively human attribute; however, it identifies *logos* (speech) as a distinctive feature of humans and their social condition.

This understanding of “voice,” in connection with its social—and therefore political—role, conceives of it primarily through its communicative function, subordinated to *logos*, to confer humanity to the speaker. Nevertheless, as several Aristotle scholars have shown, this conception implies that, while “the Aristotelian distinction between eloquent animals and noisy animals may seem coherent, (...) its epistemic consistency dissolves when reason, intelligibility, and audibility are denied to politically excluded figures—that is, to the foreigner, the madman, the woman, and the slave” (González, 2019, p. 245). Therefore, to think of the voice merely as a tool for speech is to restrict its function to what is intelligible and, consequently, to establish a hierarchy in which the written word is privileged over the ephemeral nature of oral communication.

Since the foundation of linguistics, speech has been defined as that which must be separated from language, with language being the stable and therefore study-worthy component of linguistic activity. In the words of Ferdinand de Saussure: “By distinguishing between language and speech (*langue et parole*), we are at the same time separating: (1) what is social from what is individual; (2) what is essential from what is accessory and more or less accidental” (De Saussure, 1916, p. 41). Moreover, although there is an acknowledgment of the dependence between language and speech, their distinction is established as necessary for the study of language itself (De Saussure, 1916, p. 46). This dichotomous operation is mirrored in Saussure's understanding of

the linguistic sign as "the combination of a concept and an acoustic image" (De Saussure, 1916, p. 92), or as "a two-sided psychological entity" (De Saussure, 1916, p. 92). At this point, the voice is once more appraised from a binary framework, as both a pre-linguistic and linguistic phenomenon.

Later, structuralists began to challenge these ways of studying language, emphasizing speech as a manifestation of language that deserved to be studied in its own right. Fascinating—despite disciplinary and temporal distances—are the resonances between the Theory of Enunciation and Speech Act Theory (SAT). Although they address different dimensions, both approaches recognize the situated nature of language and, in some way, begin to glimpse the voice as a legitimate object of study. Émile Benveniste (1970) states:

It is the very act of producing an utterance, and not the text of the utterance itself, that constitutes our object. This act is performed by the speaker, who mobilizes language on their own behalf. The relationship between the speaker and language determines the linguistic characteristics of the enunciation. It must be considered an act of the speaker, who takes language as an instrument, and in the linguistic features that mark this relationship (p. 1, [T.N. quote translated from the Spanish version]).

In Benveniste's theory, context is an active agent in the act of speaking, providing a framework to standardize analysis.

Meanwhile, in John Austin's SAT, the author emphasizes the action underlying any vocal performance: "to say something is to do something, or that in saying something we are doing something, and even, that because we say something, we do something" (Austin, 1971, p. 141). This theory would later become one of the foundational premises for Judith Butler's (1990) theoretical framework. As Shoshana Felman (2012) observes, unlike Benveniste's theory, Austin's performatives renounce the "constative" character of utterances, thereby embracing the possibility of failure:

In the eyes of its creator, the performative instrument, even as it tends toward the constative ("cracking the cradle of reality"), is itself performative—that is, capable of the act of failing, erring, or losing ground, an act constituted precisely by its lack of inherent means, by its fall or slippage. Austin declares, "My reasoning has fallen flat on its face," much like Don Juan says to Sganarelle (p. 58, [Quote translated from Spanish]).

The scandal of the performative, therefore, lies in its condition as promise—always open to failure and disappointment.

In this brief review, we can already discern the dichotomies that specific disciplines have echoed in their efforts to solidify their scientific status and to objectify (that is, to assign an identity to) their study phenomenon. This occurs despite the simultaneous acknowledgment of a dimension in which "everyone knows that, in the same subject, the same sounds are never exactly reproduced, and that the notion of identity is only approximate" (Benveniste, 1970, p. 1). The binary classification system has thus enabled the voice to be understood in terms of stability, standardization, identifiability, and therefore normalizability. This binary reduction has a long-standing tradition, grounded both in universal referents such as Aristotle and in the modern Western logics derived from Cartesian thought.

Although various disciplines have tried to grant the voice a place of its own, from very early on it has been conceived as separate from the body—as though it could or should be distinguished from it, rather than a form of embodiment on its own. Consequently, when I mention the body, I do so in a way that exceeds its purely biological or biomedical materiality. Thinking of the voice through the performative paradigm, therefore, entails conceiving of the body from a phenomenological (Ahmed, 2019) and post-humanistic (Chadwick, 2020) standpoint. From this perspective, it becomes productive to draw on (trans)feminist thinkers such as Karen Barad (2024), who defines the body not as a divisible or isolable unit detached from the world, but rather as an element that is entangled with the environment.

The binary operation that many structural theories have performed around the voice must thus be understood as an artificial mediation intended to facilitate its analysis. This gesture has come at the cost of solidifying binary perspectives. Dichotomies such as mind/body, theory/practice, passion/reason, and *logos/phoné* expose their limitations when confronted with the phenomenon of the voice. In this sense, we urgently need alternative approaches that emphasize the lived experience of *being* and *doing* voice in the world, in order to apprehend its implications and challenges.

### The Performative Paradigm and Vocality

To build an understanding of the voice beyond its communicative function—that is, beyond its role as a vehicle for meaning—we must attend to its phenomenological condition while simultaneously denaturalizing it, to conceive of it as a mode of experiencing and relating to the world. Freya Jarman-Ivens (2011) suggests that "the voice has a performative function more than it

is a direct marker of a stable, fixed, or inherent nature” (p. 19). The performative paradigm thus emerges quickly in the author’s reflection, as it helps to bring forward the experiential, dynamic, and constructed character of the voice, while also allowing us to situate it within normative frameworks (of gender, class, race, etc.) through which it unfolds. In this regard, Nina Sun Eidsheim (2012) asserts that “voice is never heard in a state prior to the impact of cultural, social, and other outside forces” (p. 13). Thus, as an embodiment and a mode of relating to the world, the voice is always situated and conditioned by its immediate reality.

Eidsheim (2012) further adds:

Considering voice as action rather than as sound affords us a productive entry into this important undertaking. The first intervention enabled by such a conception is the possibility of disentangling vocal timbres from the notion that they are innate rather than constructed (p. 20).

This de-essentializing exercise is crucial, as it distances us from the idea of identity and enables us to think of the voice beyond the standardized standpoint of disciplines that wish to study it under a linguistic paradigm. Instead, it allows us to focus on how the voice behaves within its relationships—or, as Adriana Cavarero (2005) points out through her notion of reciprocity, “destined for another’s ear, the voice implies being heard; indeed, it implies reciprocity” (p. 114). This demands that we recognize its inherently relational nature.

Within this framework, the voice possesses a performative character whose features depend on the temporal, spatial, classed, gendered, racialized, and disability processes in which it participates. Moreover, its performativity is revealed through its relational quality. In line with this, some authors have posited that the voice occupies a space between presence and absence (Dolar, 2007, p. 70). For authors such as Val Flores (2013), this *in-between* materializes in the question that arises from doubt: “Perhaps the voice is that fold of the inside—yet is the inside itself a fold of an exteriority?” (p. 130). In this sense, to think of the voice as performative also entails entering a paradigm that understands it as embodied not only in its human nature, but above all in its relations and in the environment in which it unfolds:

A posthuman phenomenology of voice does not depart from the perspective of the individual, human subject neatly self-contained in its own skin, but thinks the lived embodiment of ‘voicing bodies’ as fleshy, more-than-human, and transcorporeal. ‘Lived experience’ and our ‘breathing embodiment’ thus extend beyond the confines of individually bounded human bodies, opening up the potential for

rethinking ‘voice’ as a moving, transcorporeal process rather than a ‘thing’, essence or property of an individual self (Chadwick, 2020, p. 3).

But what does it mean to stop conceiving of voice as isolable and fixed, and instead to understand it as dynamic and phenomenological? This question is particularly relevant when our concern is rethinking how we support processes of vocal production rather than analyzing the voice itself.

To situate ourselves within the performative paradigm, we must recall that the concept of gender performativity was articulated by Judith Butler in the 1990s, among other reasons, to claim a place within feminist movements that mobilized the category *woman* through an identitarian logic—that is, appealing to “the white, heterosexual, cisgender, middle-class woman.” The performative paradigm made it possible to denaturalize the idea of “gender” as something essential or biologically determined (Butler, 2002, p. 18). Moreover, it elevated “woman” not only in its supposed universality but to render visible all the lives marginalized by its normalization: lesbians, Black women, Chicanas, *travestis*, migrants, low-income, among others (Butler, 2009, p. 335). Butler’s contributions thus enabled the emergence of theories located in the foreclosure or abjection of the norm.

Queer/*Cuir* theory, for its part, has been both an active witness and has allowed identities ignored by gender normativity to find a legitimate place within epistemic and practical fields. In this regard, trans\* authors have developed the idea of understanding our existence through a series of technologies that allow us to appear within gender (Preciado, 2002). From this perspective, to *practice* gender is to constantly negotiate with the norm, at the risk of being rendered more or less precarious. Concerning masculinity, Jack Halberstam (2022) notes: “Masculinity is the repertoire of behaviors that we tend to associate with men or that we demand of male bodies but, obviously, it doesn’t stay fixed to the male body because we live in a very diverse cultural context” (online, n.p.). Consequently, “masculinity must not and cannot and should not reduce down to the male body and its effects” (Halberstam, 2008, p. 23).

However, this alliance between the performative paradigm and queer/*cuir* theory has often failed to center humans in its analysis. In this regard, authors such as Karen Barad acknowledge that: “Performativity has been essential to queer theory. And yet, performativity has been figured (almost exclusively) as a human affair” (Barad, 2024, p. 42). The cost for the Queer community has been a delay in frameworks and practices that imagine new

performativities and, in our case, *vocal performativities* that might liberate vocal production from normative boundaries:

Rethinking ‘voice’ as part of an invigorated qualitative praxis means departing from the recognition that our sonorous soundings are deeply fleshy and relational phenomena. Thinking voices with/through the figuration of ‘breathy embodiment’ acknowledges the entanglements of our speaking and communicating bodies with other bodies (plants, factories, motor vehicles, algae, forests, oceans, bacteria) as well as the violent and toxic socioaffective atmospherics of oppressive power relations (Chadwick, 2020, p. 3).

Alternatively, taking up Freya Jarman-Ivens’ (2011) invitation, when asserting that the queer/cuir emerges: “Resisting that model of stability—which claims heterosexuality as its origin, when it is more properly its effect—queer focuses on mismatches between sex, gender and desire” (p. 21). To think of this disjunction as a “healthy option,” among others, is one of the key principles we may attribute to the performative paradigm in its connection with the vocal phenomenon.

Building on these ideas, we must ask ourselves how performativity might be applied to sonic phenomena such as the voice. Dolar (2007), for instance, highlights the “performative force” of voice in specific contexts where its efficacy is not related to the meanings of discourse but rather to its enactment (p. 132). In this sense, and moving toward the trans\* masculine voice in transition, we might ask: which repertoires of masculinity become fractured, and how does the voice sonically express the denaturalization of gender?

A clue can be found in a certain voice anatomy manual:

In our society, and with reference to spoken voice, there is a preference for lower-pitched voices (as can be observed in many female radio broadcasters or television presenters who deliberately darken their voice), because they seem more authoritative or because they have a more sensual appeal (Torres & Gimeno, 2011, p. 31).

If we take this observation at face value and we imagine modes of care—particularly in relation to gender transition—it is worth asking: How can we value, analyze, and care for the voice in its dissonance with the gendered body? How might we approach the vocal phenomenon as integrated with the corporeal? How might we activate and promote repertoires of masculinity that dismantle dominant models of the masculine within vocal performance?

What relational strategies might health professionals deploy to decouple themselves from the gender binary? How can one effectively support a vocal transition that is performed in spaces beyond the clinical practice? Which aspects of temporal, geographic, class, racialized, or physical variation should be considered when envisioning a trans\* masculine vocal transition?

If we begin to understand that, as a performative phenomenon,

The voice, as an interspace, is a place inhabited and experienced—a productive engine of relationality, of word-forces that change states, that establish and inscribe meanings within connective webs, of *sayings* that do; the voice, as it vibrates, constitutes me: it sounds who I am becoming, it makes me as it is being made (Vilas, 2021, p. 185).

Then, as an early conclusion and considering the questions arising from the relational demand of the performative paradigm, it becomes crucial to rethink processes of voice care not from the expectation of vocal production, but rather from listening and experimenting.

### “Mi Querido Diario Trans” (2023–25) and the Emergence of My Trans\* Voice

*Mi Querido Diario Trans* (2023–25) is an ongoing project that gathers publications from my Instagram profile, as well as audiovisual records and a live performance (*Remanente*, Gómez Tapia & Montecinos, 2025), presented at two festivals earlier this year—“Festival Crisálida” and “Festival Encarnadas y Audaces.” As an artist and researcher, in developing this project I have asked myself how to create an archive of the emerging memories of my transition (not just hormonal, as that aspect came later, but, above all, relational), dismantling the logics of the Archive while simultaneously questioning how to incorporate masculine repertoires into my non-binary gender performativity, resisting the identitarian dimension into which such an attempt might otherwise solidify.

In my transition process, I have come to understand and govern my experience under the premise that masculinity does not belong exclusively to the realm of cisgender men. Within the biomedical discourse (specifically, in the context of my hormonal transition), I embodied the consequences of deliberately disobeying my sex-biological assignment. For a time, that correspondence was betrayed by the performance of my voice. However, soon, my voice was no longer heard at all. As my process became medicalized, I became a clinical file, and it was the doctors’ voices that spoke for me.



I remember the first time I consulted an endocrinologist, recommended by my psychiatrist, after months of waiting for an available appointment. She refused to treat me upon learning that I identified as non-binary (and not as a trans man or trans woman). Once inside her consultation room, she told me that just as I had decided to identify as a non-binary trans person, she allowed herself to decide not to treat people like me. I lost months of waiting. Later, through word of mouth among trans\* friends, I finally found endocrinologists willing to see me—but not without first demanding a letter from my psychiatrist certifying that I did not suffer from any "mental illness."

Something similar occurred when I tried to access the public health system, in parallel with my privately funded hormone replacement therapy. Following a referral from the primary care center (CESFAM) by a nurse to the hospital's endocrinology unit, I eventually learned—after nearly a year of waiting and only by investigating on my own—that the head of the unit had dismissed my referral without notifying me. The decision, as I later discovered, was justified on the grounds that I first had to be referred by the hospital's psychiatry department. After filing a formal complaint with the OIRS (Office of Information, Complaints, and Suggestions), in which I threatened to pursue legal action against the hospital for denying my right to healthcare—citing the Gender Identity Law currently in force—endocrinology was obliged to schedule an appointment for me. Yet, at that appointment, the assigned professional once again requested a letter from my psychiatrist as a condition to continue with treatment, adding that she would not accept one from my psychologist.

In this case, neither my own voice—over a year into testosterone treatment—nor my psychologist's voice held sufficient authority in the face of a biomedical discourse grounded in physiological paradigms that "cure pathologies." Although the American Psychiatric Association (APA), in its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), replaced "transsexualism" or "gender identity disorder" with "gender dysphoria" in 2013 (APA, 2020, p.46), biomedical performativity and its institutional apparatus still insist in employing pathologizing practices aimed at "regulating gender" according to a normative binary system (man/woman; doctor/patient; illness/health, etc.).

Law No. 21.120 (Republic of Chile, 2018), which recognizes and guarantees the right to gender identity, defines this right as "the personal and internal conviction of being a man or a woman, as the person perceives themselves, which may or may not correspond with the sex and name recorded on their birth certificate" (Art. 1). Invoking this binary law, many trans\* people

can legally change their name—at the cost of having to be legally and obligatorily registered with the gender opposite to that assigned at birth. This was my case. Nevertheless, even after my legal sex was no longer female—and neither was my desire—the biomedical criterion still required that my voice, and my existence, be authorized by the word of a medical-psychiatric peer.

Except for the nurse at the CESFAM who listened to me and ensured that my right to public healthcare was upheld, medical institutions (endocrinologists in particular), trained within a physiological and pathologizing paradigm, were unable to hear me as an intelligible subject of rights. In this sense, Platero's (2009) words are particularly revealing when arguing that masculine performativity in bodies not assigned as such destabilizes the cisgender system because:

They imply a rupture with the idea of masculinity as an exclusively male domain and unsettle the binaries (woman/man; homo/hetero; friend/enemy). The masculinity of women questions two important norms—the heterosexual and the sexual difference—and thus their guardians react to preserve their legitimacy (p.7 [translated from the Spanish version]).

It is telling that the endocrinologists I consulted insisted on obtaining a psychiatric "clearance" certifying my mental health and supervision, and yet none of them referred me to—or even asked—whether I wanted support from a speech and language therapist.

In this regard, and following Platero (2009), we can agree that:

Health, one of life's greatest needs, paradoxically bears the mark of coloniality, of the inscription and management of bodies, of the production of bodies based on supposedly impartial bio-knowledges, with their technologies for manipulating life. Over time, this knowledge has developed vast strategies to monitor and control certain social groups—to organize, discipline, and regulate (Moreira et al., 2024, p.7 [translated from the Spanish version]).

This stands far from the ideal proposed by the World Health Organization (WHO), which defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 2025). The group of health professionals involved in my process seemed far more concerned with identifying pathologies than with caring for me and my experience.

Consequently, and in relation to the difficulties I encountered in trying to access hormone therapy (publicly and free of charge), health professionals embodied the surveillance and legitimacy of the cisgender system, grounded both in their training and in state directives. It did not matter what my voice expressed, because the order of discourse was dictated by those who hold *pharmacological power* (Preciado, 2020) and guard the binary foundations upon which such power is built, as well as by the voice of the State, which defines what is possible and determines what is deemed worthy of care (through law). Through this anecdote, we can see how gender performativity operates across multiple fronts.

In response to the systematic silencing, my performance *Remanente* (2025), created in collaboration with Guillermo Montecinos (Local Variable Studio), emerged. This performance, using technologies such as deepfake and vocal synthesis, allowed me to perform my voice prior to hormone therapy and bring it into dialogue with my voice after experimenting with testosterone. This intertwining of temporalities, rather than emphasizing a before-and-after, aimed to make both sounds coexist, enabling me to re-embody and recognize them as my own; as something that persists as a remnant in my embodied and environmental memory (since part of the audience also recognized both voices as mine). *Remanente*, in this sense, employed my voices and their variations to perform a non-linear, non-individual trans-temporality.

This performance allowed me to rewrite the traumatic episodes of my transition process. Focusing on its various vocalities and temporalities, I was able to self-manage a form of reparation for the pain inflicted by the binary ideology of the medical care I received. Methodologically, regarding forms of transcription, Rachelle Chadwick (2020) advocates for creative modes of mediation, highlighting them as “extremely useful in this regard as they allow for the representation (...) and also allow for a multisensory engagement (by readers, listeners, researchers, audiences) with participants' utterances” (p.5). In this sense, *Mi querido diario trans* and the multiple forms and media through which it has been produced have served to embody my gendered transitions, document them, and reimagine them simultaneously.

## Conclusion

Throughout this paper, I have examined how limited and punitive a binary understanding of “voice” can be, both as a phenomenon of study and as a social experience—particularly in my case as a non-binary trans\* person (experiencing the masculine dimension). The performative paradigm offers both an understanding of how voice behaves and encourages the

denaturalization of its supposed binary sex-gender correspondence. However, the final anecdote I offer highlights that, despite the performative quality of voice in relation to gender, it barely matters whether one inhabits masculinity or femininity, as voice remains subject to conditions of class, authorized knowledge, and subordination, which inevitably render it less intelligible in its disobedience. This stands in contrast to medical performativity as an arm of the State, which safeguards and reinforces the binary system.

While previous studies have described the various forms of violence directed toward trans men (Hernández, 2015), I believe we must ask about gender embodiments that occur outside the binary. The punitive consequences of such disobedience, among other aspects, manifest in significant delays in public healthcare access in Chile, as well as the considerable energy required to demand that such care be delivered.

In the anecdote I recount, it is no coincidence that a nurse listened to me. I am convinced that her humanistic training (as opposed to endocrinological training), combined with her approach to health as “care,” played a crucial role in her capacity to recognize me as valid and authorize my voice. This exception illuminates the performative quality of voice as a relational phenomenon and its deployment within institutional healthcare contexts.

From this, I propose a performative conception of voice that not only addresses pathologies such as swallowing or pitch breaks but also recognizes its environment as integral to well-being. Consequently, voice should be studied from a transdisciplinary perspective, focusing on the phenomenon itself rather than on “proper/improper” speech techniques.

One practical requirement when adopting a performative viewpoint in healthcare would be to have at least an interdisciplinary approach (Zangroniz, 2019, p.210). In this approach, teams composed of speech-language therapy, endocrinology, and nursing professionals, among many other disciplines, could engage in horizontal dialogue, pooling their knowledge to support the process. This would entail that healthcare professionals take on a stance of listening and adding questions to a vocal transition, rather than providing answers. Virginia Zangroniz (2019), who leads *Programa Vocal Saludable* (Healthy Vocal Program) at the Ricardo Gutiérrez Hospital in La Plata, offers some hints: “I began to ask questions such as ‘What is your desire in relation to your voice?’ or ‘How do you feel about your voice?’ or ‘Are you satisfied with your voice?’ These types of questions reached another dimension: that of desire. From that

moment on, the Voice Evaluation Form included a space specifically for desire” (p.206).

Understanding the performative character of voice involves recognizing vocality as an open-ended question, an opportunity to experiment and embrace the unfolding of a process that does not necessarily have a fixed goal. Perhaps the most challenging aspect is that this approach requires unlocking dimensions closed off by biomedical training itself.

I believe some conclusions for supporting trans\* vocal emergence among healthcare professionals can be summarized through the following questions: Are my practices grounded in a Cartesian *cis-tem* that separates body and mind and validates binary—and therefore exclusionary—ways of thinking? In other words, how much do my recommendations for vocalities in transition aim to normalize or complete them? How adult-centric is my voice, given the performative power I inevitably hold as a professional, which either enables or restricts the autonomous exploration of voice in its de-gendered expression? How many outcome expectations (regulatory performative ideals) do I carry regarding a process such as vocal timbre modifications? How focused am I on the result, that is, on vocal production, versus being present in the process of vocal transition to which I am invited?

Gender-affirming therapies have strengthened over time in fields such as psychology. However, as they become more solid, it is also crucial for practitioners to continually ask themselves: What exactly do these therapies affirm? Gender-affirming psychotherapy is one of the responses to this issue; however, it requires self-aware and critical professionals, as it could also inadvertently “affirm arbitrary, limiting, and perhaps inadequate categorizations of the self” (Fassinger, 2017, p.21). I believe it is essential that those providing voice care cultivate this critical mindset and ask: How do we pluralize vocal experience within the performative gender system? How do we affirm that which cannot be named—because the norm casts it into abjection—that which is processual, which is not fixed in the body, that which is ephemeral and does not claim permanence, that which is “vocal performance” and should not be arbitrated?

All these questions demand a political commitment from those working within the so-called “health sciences” as well as from any field of knowledge with an identity-focused or disciplinary tradition. They require practitioners who can activate and mobilize informed, critical, and creative modes of operation. A striking example is Paul Preciado’s speech before the Society of Psychoanalysts at the University of Paris. Amid boos and hostile stares, Preciado (2021) shouts:

I, as a trans body, as a non-binary body, to whom neither medicine, nor the law, nor psychoanalysis attribute the right to speak, nor the possibility of producing discourse or knowledge about myself, have learned, like Red Peter, the ape, the language of colonial patriarchy; I have learned to speak its language, the language of Freud and Lacan, and I am here to address you (p.19).

Raising one’s voice and understanding it in its performative condition requires not only the courage to deploy it, as Paul did, but, above all, the responsibility to enable imagination, sustaining in our work the hope for futures where difference is possible.

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