A Matter of Life and Breath:
The Fitzmaurice Voicework Teacher’s Connection to Audience and Subject Matter

Dissertation Proposal Presented by

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Introduction

To understand voice, we must look at both the literal and the metaphorical meaning of what it is to “have a voice”. The literal voice refers to the sounds we make as humans during expression or communication (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013). The tone or pitch, the texture or timbre of the voice may be adjusted at will, and the chosen sound is full of variables which may be modulated intentionally or unintentionally depending on a given situation, one’s level of emotion, and other factors. Through habitual use and muscle memory, however, individuals tend to select and use a set pattern of voice and speech with little variation (Berry, 1973). People ultimately settle into a comfort zone of communication that becomes what most would consider “their voice”. It is a bandwidth of sorts that works best for the individual within the context of their own community (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013). The metaphorical meaning of voice seems to connect to one’s identity and the agency one utilizes within a given social structure (Rodenburg, 1992). Oddly, however, many people admit that they do not like the sound of their own voice. The struggle between a need to express and an ongoing judgmental state of self-editing is a common feeling speakers of every kind tend to be familiar with (Berry, 1973). This tendency is essentially ego driven, and therefore may be considered selfish. Since a teacher’s primary responsibility is to their students, an unselfish attitude, these two states of being may well come into conflict.

Fitzmaurice Voicework technique is a widely used vocal training technique for singers, actors and speakers in university and conservatory training programs and private coaching sessions around the world. As conceived by Catherine Fitzmaurice,
the work focuses on the individual’s ability and comfort in discovery and utilization of their own voice as a tool for full and healthy expression, often in the face of chaotic internal and external events (Fitzmaurice and Kotzubei, 2014). Fitzmaurice Voicework is a way of dealing with the chaos and uncertainty often associated with performance of any kind (Kotzubei, 2014). Teachers of the work are required to “embody” the work and model the technique for students as they teach (Kotzubei, 2016). This project will examine the experience of certified teachers of Fitzmaurice Voicework as they teach both in and out of the discipline of voice.
Problem Statement

What is the experience of certified Fitzmaurice Voicework (FV) teachers as they facilitate classes both in and outside the discipline of voice?

Statement of Sub-problems:

- How do FV teachers use the technique while teaching?
- How does the use of the technique while teaching influence the communication of material?
- What effect does the use of technique have on teachers’ perceived connection to students?
- How does the facilitator’s embodiment of technique inform students?
Contribution / Impact:

Though studies have taken place formally and informally with regard to Fitzmaurice Voicework (FV) and other vocal and dramatic techniques and their affect on actors, there has been virtually no research done on the experience of those using these techniques while teaching. Linklater technique is perhaps the best covered here, but even with that work, there is little written about the teaching process except by Linklater herself. Likewise, impact studies have been investigated with regards to Fitzmaurice Voicework and its use by actors, but no such research exists on the impact the technique may have on teachers of the work (Fitzmaurice, 2016). As part of the teacher certification process, Fitzmaurice Voicework teachers are taught to “embody” the principles of the technique while teaching it. The utilization of the work as they teach it creates a phenomenological experience for the teachers that may or may not have a direct impact on the students they are communicating with as well the affect it has on the teachers themselves (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013). As a certified FV teacher, my own experience of using the technique while teaching FV as well as while teaching other techniques and subject matter, suggests that some certified FV may do the same. The experience of these teachers as they practice Fitzmaurice Voicework while teaching both the technique itself and other subjects will be my focus. I am curious about certified teachers and how they might identify as using or not using the technique when teaching both in and out of their chosen discipline. I would like to know about their personal experience and their perceived sense of the efficacy of using the technique while teaching, both as a way of modeling the work for students and, presumably, as a way of enhancing their own practice.
I intend to dig into this primary point of interest with interviews, recorded audio and video, written survey questions, and self and subject-observation. I'll compile the data, locate salient themes and information based on the phenomenological experience of the informants (including myself), and create a presentation to share my findings using ethnodrama, combined with a multimedia presentation. The use of ethnodrama will enhance the work as it will provide me an opportunity to demonstrate the technique physically and vocally for my audience, even as I share my findings as a researcher—the very thing I am studying in my participants.

Though Fitzmaurice Voicework has achieved broad acceptance within the theatre training community, it is not well known or widely utilized outside of that arena. It is my hope that a doctoral level study of the work and the experience of teachers who not only teach the technique but also "embody" the practice of the technique would add clarity and definition to both the academy and a broader audience. Again, though work has been done focusing on the usefulness of Fitzmaurice Voicework to actors, my project seeks to expand the research and include teachers whose responsibilities include planned and ad hoc speaking engagements to different sized audiences.

Catherine Fitzmaurice herself has yet to publish a definitive piece of work. As such, she had asked that her students not publish before her. However, in 2016 she lifted this informal moratorium on publishing. Thus, the field is suddenly open, but the volume of work available on the subject is low. I am excited to be one of the first to develop a formalized study of the work and to share it with all who may find it
interesting and useful. My study aims to explore just how the use of Fitzmaurice Voicework while teaching impacts the teachers’ connection to material and audience.
Relevant Terminology

• **Voice**: Voice will be used to refer to both the sounds we make as humans when communicating as well as one’s defined point of view and the ways one is able to articulate that positionality with clarity, authenticity and honesty (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013).

• **Fitzmaurice Voicework**: A vocal technique primarily designed for use in theatre voice training by Catherine Fitzmaurice (Central School of Voice and Speech), but potentially useful as a tool for anyone who uses their voice to communicate. Fitzmaurice Voicework explores the myriad physical, vocal, and emotional benefits of freeing the breath and voice in order to achieve maximum range and authenticity within the context of verbal communication and interpretation. The work is divided into three parts: Destructuring, Re-Structuring, and Play (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013).

• **Destructuring**: a physical process that uses a sequence of modified yoga poses designed to assist in the release of body tension by inducing a tremor and allowing for the discovery of “surprise breath” (the sudden intake of breath we experience when we are inspired to communicate) (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013). Destructuring refers to the act of letting go of rigidity and preconceived notions of what should be in order to allow for what actually is (Kotzubei, 2016).

• **Re-structuring**: the organized use of full, supported breath and clear intentional focus to communicate with a maximum range of vocal expression while remaining present and available to spontaneity (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013). The three components of re-structuring are:
1. The use of a controlled rib swing to create space in the chest cavity and allow the lungs to expand fully
2. The intentional engagement of the transverse muscle to provide vocal and breath support
3. The use of a “focus line” to connect with an audience and deliver a message with intention and clarity (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2014).

• **Play**: The final step adds text or some other form of project to the process, causing a need to explore meaning and intention of language as it relates to us including images it may conjure, intentions it may suggest, and desires it may stir. The result is an interesting and complete mode of communication that clearly imparts the intention of the communicator and the meaning of the narrative in question with full, authentic, healthy voice (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013).

• **The Sequence**: the series of modified Yoga poses used during the de-structuring process to induce a muscular tremor that loosens physical and (theoretically) emotional tension (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013).

• **Focus Line**: The intentional emotional and visual connection between a speaker and his or her audience, through which a clear message is delivered with confidence and clarity (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2014).

• **Emotional Armoring**: A term borrowed from the work of Wilhelm Reich referring to the emotional (and potentially physical) bracing individuals use to protect themselves from painful interaction and communication (Conger, 1988).

• **Thought Centers**: Similar to what are often referred to as the Chakras, these are the
areas of the body where intellectual, emotional and physical information may be derived. By allowing contact with these areas (including the root, the gut, the solar plexus, the heart and the mind), one opens the possibility of new emotional vulnerability and furthers the possibility of honest and open communication (Suzuki, 1995).

- **Authenticity:** Honoring one’s own impulse to express fully about a topic with clarity, commitment and consistency during scripted and improvised moments of communication, including when engaged in the chaotic nature of a classroom setting or a performance. Authenticity speaks to an inner feeling of connection to subject matter that is best described as passion. It is this passionate connection to material that enhances a spoken performance and reads as honest or truthful to an audience.
Methodology

My research will consist of 3 main components:

1. An Online survey of certified Fitzmaurice Voicework teachers (see Appendix B).

2. Interviews with multiple certified Fitzmaurice Voicework teachers including those who no longer practice the technique (see Appendix B).

3. Self-observation as a teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework as well as non-Fitzmaurice-based subject matter.

This will be a phenomenological ethnographic investigation of in-service Fitzmaurice Voicework teachers as they reflect on their experience of teaching both in and out of the voice and speech discipline. I will use interviews, self- and field-observation, and survey analysis to explore the technique and its impact on certified Fitzmaurice Voicework teachers and examine their experience of using the work as a way of modeling the technique for students and assisting in their own delivery of material.

I will conduct the survey and interviews by drawing on the community of certified Fitzmaurice Voicework teachers who participate in an active list-serve and frequently collaborate on projects. Though this list is primarily composed of people who use the work regularly, the same community does have members who no longer practice the work for various reasons. I will do my best to actively engage with both supporters and detractors of the technique and its use while teaching. As a certified teacher myself, I will also draw on my own experience and self-observation as I teach the work and other subject matter throughout the duration of different classes.

Interviews will be an invaluable part of my research. I have already had the
opportunity to interview Saul Kotzubei (Director of the Fitzmaurice Voicework Institute) as part of a preliminary research project I conducted for a class at NYU. Additionally, I correspond somewhat regularly on a less formal basis with Catherine Fitzmaurice herself. Though it was not my intention at the time, this “data” I have already gathered became part of what has ultimately compelled me to continue working on this subject. I intend to use a set of open-ended interview questions that offer the flexibility to shift focus with a given informant should they choose to steer the conversation in a more improvised direction. Approaching the qualitative interview in this manner best suits the exploration of large (and subjective) topics (like authenticity, truth and connection) (Creswell, 1994). By allowing the informant to drive the direction of their responses, I intend to allow for individual expression among the participants. My goal as a researcher will then be to analyze transcripts of the interviews to determine if there are common themes or consistent subject matter.

As I will be working with human subjects, I will take the utmost care to respect and carefully consider the impact of all of the informants involved as well as the variety of contextual applications offered by the content (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, Saldaña, 2011, and Jablon, 2007).

As a mode of presentation after the data is collected and analyzed, I will draw from interviews and observation field-notes to create a written script to be performed as ethnodrama. Ethnodrama considers specific cultural groups and how individuals from those groups experience events or phenomena (Saldaña, 2011). I would argue that theatre teachers and, more specifically, voice and speech teachers comprise a cultural set of their own. Artists of all kinds may be seen as “other” in terms of social
norms and societal expectations of what it means to have a job and live a “normal” life (Bayles & Orland, 1993). Those who teach a specific craft are further marginalized by the judgment that is sometimes placed on them, often couched in passive aggressive humor: “those who can’t do, teach!” And the more specific one gets in terms of the finite nature of a given discipline, we find that there is a vagueness and a constant need to justify one’s existence (Kotzubei, 2016). Further, within an academic theatre department, there is a perceived hierarchy of technique teaching. The further one gets from directing, the less status and import is attributed to the role. In other words, in any given production or department the voice director or vocal coach may well find themselves underappreciated. In fact, it is only the most well funded productions that retain a voice director, and even academic settings tend to combine the job with speech or movement teaching (both disciplines unto themselves). With academic and production budgets constantly in jeopardy, voice teachers are often seen as expendable (albeit with regret), but the same would never be true of a directing or acting teacher within a theatre department. This need to justify one's professional existence places voice teachers in a marginalized category of their own. Here, I wish to be careful to note that voice teachers are not the only professionals to feel this level of marginalization. However, the focus of this study makes their specific predicament relevant, and I intend to investigate the individual interpretations of how a particular technique is used within the practice that bonds them and the level of efficacy it provides (Saldaña, 2011 and Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

As stated earlier, the pool of informants will consist of volunteers from the online list-serve associated with certified teachers of Fitzmaurice Voicework as well as
teachers who no longer associate themselves with the work. I will identify and seek input from professionals in the field who may or may not subscribe to Fitzmaurice Voicework as an effective practice for either teachers or actors. I will use a written survey to begin the process and will follow up with interviews in person, by phone, and via Skype.

Surveys and interviews with certified teachers of Fitzmaurice Voicework will be carefully conducted with care given to allow subjects to steer conversation in new directions should they be inspired to do so (Morgan & Saxton, 2006). My intention is not to advocate for the specific technique, but rather to explore the experience of those who practice the work at the highest level and to learn more about how and why “embodying the work” while teaching is or is not an effective way of communicating with students (Kotzubei, 2016). For this reason, my research will also include self-observation. I will compile field notes based on my own teaching both Fitzmaurice Voicework and other technique classes at the Elizabeth Mestnik Acting Studio. The critical component of the practice of self-observation is the creation of dispassionate distance from the work in order to allow for reflection that deals, almost exclusively, with process and is not consumed with the concept of product (Taylor, 2000). My intention is to place myself in a neutral position of observer from within the context of my position as teacher. I plan to achieve this through recorded field notes and confessional style recordings immediately after teaching, rehearsal, and performance sessions. By employing this post-mortem style of reflective practice, I will strive to maintain my own presence within the context of my teaching so that I am able to collect data while maintaining self-awareness without self-judgment.
Analysis will consist of coding the multiple sources of interviews, self- and general-observational field-notes, video and audio recordings, and survey results to find salient themes. I will connect this information back to found understandings of the technical components of the use of voice as a means of communication, combined with the necessary elements as described by teachers to be effective at reaching an audience.

My own interpretation of the data will be presented in the form of a final performance piece of ethnodrama combined with a Ted Talk-style multimedia presentation for which I will use transcribed interview data and observation notes to devise a script that combines presentational lecture, movement and performance. Ultimately, the work will incorporate Fitzmaurice Voicework as a tool for artistic expression as well as academic communication, thus adding a final component of exploration of the efficacy of using the Fitzmaurice Voicework technique while teaching. In addition, I will include a thorough analysis and conclusion section to illustrate my findings as they relate specifically to the intentions laid out in this proposal.

As I consider my ABR interpretation, I will draw from my own experience and the material I gather from informants to create a presentation and performance script that represents both the ethos and pathos of the data I collect (Barone, & Eisner, 2011 and Leavy, 2009). It is understood that through the process of analyzing written interview transcription and observational field notes the researcher engages in deciphering content that ranges from the simple (who was talking to whom, about what and in what context), to the more nuanced (the ways in which the tone and
intention of the language and delivery of communication tells its own story) (Gilligan, et.al., 2003). I will use interpretive writing and performance to analyze the data, culminating in a final performance piece. This work will draw on ABR pedagogy and theory as an effective means of gathering, analyzing and disseminating findings in qualitative research (Levy, 2009). My approach will be varied with the intended result of achieving further understanding and discovery through the creative process.

Objective research should be a goal of all researchers, but realistically speaking, every human being brings with them a lifetime of experience that shapes the way they take in information and interpret it to form their own conclusions and understandings. Further, personal style influences the ways in which information is shared from person to person, community to community, culture to culture. This is particularly relevant where Arts Based Research is concerned. ABR necessarily and intentionally leaves space for subjectivity. It is through this multicultural, sharing of information and ideas with the perspective and experience of the individual recognized as being an important (and inevitable) element of the interpretation of that information, that new ideas and innovations can be cultivated and realized, creating a possibility of much broader growth and understanding (Leavy, 2009).
Limitations / Delimitations

Perhaps the primary limitation of this study will be the accurate representation of both supporters and detractors of the work. Maintaining access to a diverse population that represents dissonant points of view regarding the efficacy of FV as a teaching method will be a constant project. I am up to it. There may be some concern on the part of participants (including myself) that saying negative things about a prominent and popular member of a relatively small community of voice and speech teachers could be professionally or personally damaging. I will be sure to maintain the anonymity of all informants, and do not intend to use this research as advertising either for or against the technique, but rather as an exploration based on intellectual curiosity and interest. Working with multiple informants, I anticipate challenges and surprises due to the variety of contextual applications (Saldaña, 2011 and Jablon, 2007).

Stance of the Researcher:

I am a certified teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework. Studying this work as an actor and as part of the two year teacher certification course has certainly influenced the way I create, teach, interact with, and interpret art. I recognize that this experience will have some effect on my perspective and has also influenced my own epistemology and positionality. I know that Fitzmaurice Voicework has taught me to release tension in my body. I believe that through the release of tension I am better able to accept myself and my students without judgment. Through the work I strive for the clarity to appreciate each individual brings to a given session. The intensity of the training and the emotional and intellectual journey I have embarked upon through the
practice of this work is one of constant internal searching, analysis, experimentation, and modification. In short, I see the work as an effective tool in my own journey as a reflective practitioner. The act of maintaining awareness of breath and connection to body, is a constant project for me. One of the primary principles (as I understand them) of Fitzmaurice Voicework is to allow one’s self the emotional and intellectual space to become curious about the possibility of doing less (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013). This happens in conjunction with providing one’s self with an open invitation to re-connect with the work when and if the mind wanders from the present moment. I am aware of the fact that this process feels right to me, and I use it constantly as a way of staying centered and present with students, teachers, colleagues, and friends.

I have my own understandings about how Fitzmaurice Voicework has influenced my experience as a teacher of multiple classes including other techniques, basic acting, and script analysis. I am also a certified teacher of the Meisner technique and a graduate of a six-tier improvisational training program, as well as having earned my masters degree in educational theatre with a focus on Shakespeare in the classroom. I will be open about these things throughout the interview process. I am curious about the experience of others and how theirs may be similar to or different from my own. It is through the Fitzmaurice Voicework certification that I have access to the population I will be working with in this study, and it is with that certification that I am fluent in the language used to describe the work. In the presentation of the work, I will be sure to define and explain any specific terms as necessary in order to make the material accessible to all audiences.
Positionality:

Though I consider myself to be somewhat of a pragmatist, I think my worldviews in general, probably fit closest with the definition of Social Constructivism, as I understand it: I believe understanding comes from the inclusion of multiple perspectives, and that the researcher (or citizen) bears the responsibility of seeking out those perspectives and interpreting them within the context from which they are offered (Cordileone, 2016). I recognize and even celebrate the inevitability of subjective thought as being critical to the full exploration of any given subject. I am curious about and interested in the individual's perspective as a way of providing information and shaping broader meaning. Further, I think it is only logical to accept and understand the fact that, while there may be universal truths that do not change with time or space, the prevailing trends of thought, culture, style, art, politics, philosophy, etc. are bound to have an affect on the way individuals (including researchers) see the world. Since these trends shift, so, too, does the perspective and general understanding (Cordileone, 2016).

Objective research should be a goal of all researchers, but realistically speaking, every human being brings with them a lifetime of experience that shapes the way they take in information and interpret it to form their own conclusions and understandings. Further, personal style influences the ways in which information is shared from person to person, community to community, culture to culture. This is particularly relevant where Arts Based Research (ABR) is concerned. ABR necessarily and intentionally leaves space for subjectivity. It is through this multicultural, sharing of information and
ideas with the perspective and experience of the individual recognized as being an important (and inevitable) element of the interpretation of that information, that new ideas and innovations can be cultivated and realized, creating a possibility of much broader growth and understanding.

I include this portion of the proposal as recognition of my own positionality and background in order to establish open communication and honesty with the readers of this proposal. My own experience will inevitably shape the form of the conclusions drawn. However, I truly believe that I have the ability to remain open to the possibility that the outcomes may be different than I anticipate.

**Personal History with Site:**

Having studied personally with Catherine Fitzmaurice and Saul Kotzubei, I am certainly biased as to their skills as teachers. The time I spent training with them has truly shaped my career. Still, I believe I have the ability to be objective and thorough in my research and enquiry of the material and the experiences I observe.
Literature Review

Voice and Breath

Clearly, the voice is a complicated subject with a varied set of definitions and expectations. The actual sound of phonation is just the beginning of the exploration of voice. There is also the sense of empowerment brought by what is sometimes referred to as "finding one's own voice" (Kotzubei, 2016). This sense of self allows one to take his or her place within the social structure of a group and assert an opinion in order to have a say in the outcome of a course of events or activities. This may be associated with the idea of “having a voice” which is to say a vote or a “say” in how or what things will be done (Rodenburg, 1992). Finally, there is a conceptual personal identification of voice as not only establishing agency within a social context, but also discovering one’s authentic self (Morgan, 2012).

Much has been written about the voice and the actor’s need to connect with it through breath and body in order to fully communicate the meaning of text and the emotional state of the character he or she is playing. It would not be practical or possible to examine all other forms of vocal training in this study. My intention is not to conduct a comprehensive comparative study, and I have no intention of setting up Fitzmaurice Voicework as a preferred technique by teachers. I have made this work the focus of my study as I have noticed a dearth of information on the subject, and I wish to be part of what I believe will be a growing volume of academic research on the technique as practiced by actors and teachers. That said, I will attempt to include five other schools of thought for the purposes of the reader’s own comparison and examination. I will look briefly at the work of Arthur Lessac, Kristin Linklater, Roy Hart,
Frederick Alexander, and Sanford Meisner.

- **Arthur Lessac:** Author of *The Use and Training of the Human Voice: A Bio-dynamic Approach to Vocal Life*, Lessac offers exercises and technique designed to enhance the use of voice by exploring physical energy and tension in the body and the intentional or unintentional effects those things have on the sound created. By gaining control of the voice as an instrument, one is able to express fully and interpret text and material accurately in a compelling manner.

- **Roy Hart:** Hart focused on vocal range and the musicality of voice as a way of communicating. His training encourages a strengthening of the voice as a way of expanding the vocal range one comfortably communicates with, allowing for maximum expression of emotional life while interpreting text and information.

- **Linklater Technique:** Perhaps the most popular vocal technique in academia today, Linklater, like Fitzmaurice, focuses on relaxation and full breath as a way of allowing for one’s voice to function at its most dynamic range. Linklater explores a process she refers to as “dropping in” whereby an actor allows himself or herself the emotional and vocal freedom to accept the reality of the circumstances of a given piece of work. This is particularly applicable to Shakespeare’s work.

- **Alexander Technique:** An actor training technique relevant here by virtue of its focus on releasing tension in the body. Finding one’s inner comfort and open vulnerability is seen as a physical task for practitioners of
Alexander Technique. To be comfortable in one’s own skin is paramount for the Alexander practitioner. Habitual tension and discomfort experienced by many is addressed, and establishing a clear sense of calm is at the center of allowing for empowered, authentic communication.

- **Meisner Technique**: An acting technique, relevant for its central tenet of honesty, Meisner defines acting as “behaving honestly in imaginary circumstances.” With this in mind, he asks actors to be prepared with a vivid emotional life based on the circumstances of the script. Once the play begins, however, it is the actor’s job to allow him or herself to be affected by the other actors on stage, responding honestly to their physical, vocal and emotional behavior. Meisner describes this process as the pinch and the ouch: each appropriately matching what came before it in tone and intensity.

The teachings of all of these practitioners are concerned with honoring the impulse of the performer. They each explore ways of using breath- and body-work to release tension and arrive at a place of openness and vulnerability. This search for what might be described as a true actor’s neutral, allows the performer to communicate fully without internally editing content or delivery style. There is no question that each of these techniques has proven effective. Countless students have trained in one or more of them. My study focuses on Fitzmaurice Voicework, but not at the peril of the others listed or the many others available to students. An actor inevitably combines all of their training into a singular and individual practice that has
traces of many techniques. However, for the purposes of my study, I am attempting to isolate what is specific to Fitzmaurice Voicework teachers as they practice that specific technique while teaching.

To my own understanding, Actor Training seeks to teach one how to arrive at an honest performance that is capable of articulating the intentions of the material while connecting to the passion and interpretation of the performer in a way that moves an audience and enhances the understanding of a given theme or subject. To this end, most researchers agree on a need to release bodily tension and achieve unhindered breath in order to discover the fullness of expression and voice (Linklater, 2006; Rotenburg, 1992; Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013). It is also generally agreed that the voice requires breath to support it (Berry, 1973; Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013; Lessac, 1967; Linklater, 1992; Pikes, 2004; Rodenburg; 1992).

Simply put, breath enters the body as the result of an inspired inhalation, which occurs when the individual realizes he or she wishes to communicate (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013). The inspiration triggers the ribs to swing open and upward, creating space for the lungs to expand. When the lungs inflate with breath, they push the other organs downward, creating a rise of the belly (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2014). We, as humans, are born doing this as part of the autonomic nervous system (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013). However, we may also choose to take a breath in order to participate in communication. This is important for anyone who uses his or her voice to deliver content other than spontaneous thought. Material such as text or music is shared on demand, which is to say, an outside force calls for the speaker to communicate. In such instances, the speaker (or singer) still needs to create supported and healthy
sound with wide range and sustainable projection (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013). Fitzmaurice suggests that those who wish to use their voices fully, are able to initiate the rib swing intentionally, thereby signaling the body to complete the breath (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2014). The difference in the way we breathe when we choose to and when we need to is of interest and part of the work to be explored.

The phonation of voice also requires resonance and vibration to amplify sound and convey meaning (Lessac, 1967). This is best achieved with a soft and supple body, capable of allowing the vibration of sound to course through it easily, drawing on resonation from the chest, the throat, the nasal passages, and the skull (Linklater, 1976). However, there are muscle groups and parts of the body where the breath and voice tend to stop, limiting both the internalization of information from the outside world and the vocalization and communication from within the individual (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013). These points of tension essentially block the flow of breath, dampening the vibration and sound in the body, preventing breath, voice and emotion from entering or leaving the speaker freely (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013).

Practical Implications

As a teacher in the late 1960's, Catherine Fitzmaurice recognized the prevalence of actors and speakers with restricted breath that resulted in a lack of vocal and emotional range. In an effort to assist her students in releasing some of the tension that caused this defensive physical and emotional state, she developed a series of exercises to relax the body, free the breath, and open the voice (Fitzmaurice, 2016). Over years of refinement, her work has developed into what has come to be
known as Fitzmaurice Voicework technique and is currently taught to actors and speakers all over the world (Fitzmaurice, 2016).

The idea behind Fitzmaurice Voicework is to stand in the midst of perceived and actual chaos and release some of the tension it causes, essentially overriding the fearful response of fight or flight initiated by the amygdala, and coaxing it into cooperating in a more useful way (Kotzubei, 2016). By using the technique, speakers allow breath to flow freely, granting them the energy and strength they need to deliver an honest performance. At the same time, the technique allows for the release of muscular tension that constricts the body’s natural resonance of the voice and decreases physical comfort and emotional availability. In combination, release of tension, freedom of breath, and an emotionally open point of view, enhances the individual’s ability to communicate fully and function fluidly within the context of an ever-changing environment.

**Neurological Implications**

In the brain, the amygdala responds to external threats and is capable of triggering a fight or flight response (Bailey, 2016). In addition, the amygdala has a memory and is able to recall similar sounds, sights and other sensations it has experienced before. It stores these sense memories and creates planned responses for them, should the need arise (Bailey, 2016). However, the genetic formatting used by a species built for survival is an antiquated system. Modern humans are inundated with external stimuli in today's society. Conflict and potentially unpleasant interactions with the people we share space with, what Shakespeare's Hamlet refers to as "the
whips and scorns of time, th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, the
pangs of despised love, the law's delay, the insolence of office," etc., may be a
nuisance, but rarely does it constitute a threat to our survival.

So, we see that the fight or flight process is over-charged, given the requirements
of the actual events we face as teachers and performers in today's world. The effect
this response has on one's ability to connect to text, voice, and audience is what has
become of particular interest to my work.

The set of muscular activities that prepares the body to endure attack or
extreme physical exertion for the purposes of avoiding death includes abdominal
contraction that tightens and constricts the flow of breath (Bailey, 2016). Since breath
is needed to support voice, this same contraction also prevents the full release of
expression—the very thing the actor or speaker needs most (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei,
2013). At the same time, the amygdala shuts down the part of the brain that allows
vulnerable feelings, leaving room for little else than the decision of whether to run or
fight for one's life. So, at once, the physical apparatus and the emotional availability of
the speaker are both compromised because the primordial brain function of the
amygdala is responding the same way to the uncomfortable feeling of speaking to a
room full of business associates, as it would have done to a T-Rex on the attack.
Given the predisposition to feeling as if we are in mortal danger when confronted with
fear, it is no wonder our speaking voices tend to be pinched, higher in pitch than is
desirable, and uncontrolled.

*Psychological Implications*
As a person grows into adulthood and begins to experience the adversities of a relatively harsh external environment, something changes internally. The human body responds to negative experiences (disappointment, heart break, cruelty, etc.) by bracing itself not only against the perceived physical trauma, but also against the psychological and emotional impact of such events (Conger, 1988). At some point in a person's life, they may have experienced great embarrassment or shame around some part of their own vocal expression (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013). The pain of that embarrassment may then be internalized, and the body may develop a set of responses to deal with such potential pain should it ever present itself again, which it does each time a person gets up in front of a group to speak.

The process of bracing (physically and emotionally), like the process of preparing for fight or flight, creates tension in the muscles. In an effort to work efficiently at its primary function (staying alive), the body learns the fastest route to the protected state of muscle tension. Over time, achieving and maintaining that tension becomes habitual, creating a normal resting stance that includes tension in different parts of the body. For some, this short cut to protection may actually become so efficient that the body and emotional fluidity of expression simply opts to stay gripped and tense, choosing a constant state of protection rather than allowing for the possibility of damage or pain (Conger, 1988). This state of tension is what Wilhelm Reich describes as “emotional armoring” (Conger, 1988). For people who wish to communicate using a full voice with range, volume, and emotional accessibility, this is a problem. Therefore, a method of releasing this tension is called for.

The constant gripping begins to limit the depth of breath and, thus, the fullness of
sound and emotional range we are willing or even able to express. It is as if the human animal has learned that there is a risk involved in expressing oneself fully (Fitzmaurice and Kotzubei, 2013). Essentially, the risk of judgment, ridicule, and heartbreak scares us into protecting ourselves by physically bracing against the outside world and stiffening our bodies to the extent that we literally change the way we breathe and, thus, change the way we communicate (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2013). In fact, in many cases, the individual may simply opt out of expressing their thoughts at all. However, for teachers and performers, the need to speak is not an option but a requirement. Therefore, there is also a need for a way to do so effectively, with openness and authenticity so as to connect honestly with an audience without fear of backlash (Fitzmaurice and Kotzubei, 2013).

For the purposes of my work, I think of the body as being split into 6 segments (including the mind), each one separated by what may be considered a diaphragm (Broomes, 2012) (See Appendix A). In addition to the thoracic diaphragm (commonly related to breath and voice), the alternate diaphragms of particular interest to voice practitioners are the cranial diaphragm (located at point of connection between the spine and the brain); the cervical diaphragm (located above the collar bone, consisting of the tongue, the musculature around the hyoid bone and the scalene muscles); and the pelvic diaphragm (located on the pelvic floor and connected to the root of one’s sex organs as well as the gut) (Broomes, 2012).

At each of these diaphragms, there are corresponding muscle groups where an individual may hold tension, thus stopping the flow of breath, voice, and information from the throat, the solar plexus (or Kokoro), the heart, the gut, and the pelvic floor (or
root) (Morgan, 2012). There are also other common areas of muscular tension found throughout the body including the hips, the stomach, the shoulders, the neck, the forehead, the jaw, the low back, the buttocks, etc. (Linklater, 1976). The muscular and skeletal rigidity caused by tension in these areas diminishes the resonance in the body (Kotzubei, 2006). So, it may be said that muscular tension is at odds with full emotional experience and honest vocal expression.

**Conclusion**

There are many techniques for voice, body, breath, and acting that have proven effective for various kinds of artists and material. This project is not an advertisement or advocacy for Fitzmaurice Voicework specifically. Rather, it is a case study using FV teachers as the model. The foundation upon which Fitzmaurice Voicework is based, draws on mindful mediation, yoga, physical theater, voice techniques, and psychological study, including the work of Reich, Freud, Piaget and others (Fitzmaurice, 2016). The various influences are blended together and adjusted to create a practice-based technique that allows for the release of tension both physically and emotionally, creating space for authentic expression in the face of the uncertain environment teachers are faced with each time they courageously take the stage and share something of themselves.

My proposed topic of research will look at Fitzmaurice Voicework in practice by teachers in and out of the theatre. In many ways, teaching is a form of performance. It is public speaking at the very least, but it is also a sharing of subject matter that is, presumably, something the teacher is interested in and, hopefully, passionate about. Therefore, it would seem valuable to employ a vocal technique while teaching that has
at its core a desire to allow authenticity, provide connection to text, and enhance
dynamic vocal range in order to communicate to the best of one’s ability. This may be
especially true for those teaching voice in order to reap the same benefits as those
one is teaching about. I hope to be at the forefront of a formalized exploration of how
Fitzmaurice Voicework fits into this possibility, to explore the experience of certified
teachers of the technique, and how the use of it may be of interest and value to
people in and out of academia and the theatre.
Method Sample

The following is the transcription from an interview I conducted with Saul Kotzubei in November, 2016. I have also coded the transcription, using the key below as a way of drawing out relevant themes as I have come to understand them with regard to the main principles of Fitzmaurice Voicework. I have made notes in the margins to flesh out my own thoughts and reactions to the text as I re-read it and attempted to process for myself the information shared. This method of transcription and coding is atypical sample of my primary method of data gathering and analysis.

INTERVIEW WITH SAUL KOTZUBEI 11/22/2017
KEY:
ALL CAPS = The integration of voluntary and involuntary nervous system functions
... = The idea of releasing / openness
... = Recognizing and honoring of one’s own experience as authentic Voice
= Curiosity / Discovery / Presence
= The principles of FV as they relate to Teaching

Saul Fitzmaurice Kotzubei III: Your -- not ETA but estimated time of -- that you wanna spend on this?

Interviewer: What time -- it is 1 o’clock certainly no longer than you want to spend.

Saul: No but I’m asking you.

Interviewer: 20 minutes.

Saul: Okay let's do 20 minutes and give ourselves a little more time if we need it.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Saul: But if you want -- if you would eventually take that one up [inaudible]

Interviewer: Yeah, I'm going to because it's part of the process.
Saul: Oh I see.

Interviewer: And my whole rig just imploded.

Saul: You need a different [inaudible]

Interviewer: Stop the tape! No, wait… ok, back at it. Okay so will you state your name for me?

Saul: I am Saul Fitzmaurice Kotzubei Fitzmaurice.

Interviewer: And it's okay with you that you're being recorded?

Saul: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Saul, you have a direct relation to the technique of Fitzmaurice Voicework, can you just explain that to me for a quick second?

Saul: Well it's a direct relation, did you mean is that I'm Catherine [Fitzmaurice]'s son?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Saul: Yeah.

Interviewer: And what's your role now as far as the work goes?

Saul: Two very different kinds of roles, so just my personal role and that I use the work in different ways in my own work and I'm also the director of the Fitzmaurice Institute which is an institute that is in the process of being birth to SUPPORT existing Fitzmaurice teachers all over the world and to train new ones.

Interviewer: Would you describe for me what you see as the guiding principles behind Fitzmaurice Voicework? [00:02:00]

Saul: I can try. You know because it's not necessarily monolithic in the sense that it's just a single entity which is true for all times, it's often a body of work that is relational and is context specific for the needs of that context. Just one of the principles that it's - - in other words, one doesn't always think of it in exactly the same way in every situation. It has to be able to adapt to what's in front of you. So some of the principles are that -- that come out of the reality that we have both inVOLUNTARY and VOLUNTARY parts of our nervous system and that speech combines both VOLUNTARY and inVOLUNTARY aspects of our being, and we want to learn how to recognize and work with the VOLUNTARY and the inVOLUNTARY and harmonize those as effectively as possible.
So that's a very broad principle but it's a really important one. In particular, deSTRUCTURing which is a process whereby we help people learn how to release, how to OPEN to the inVOLUNTARY, how to begin to allow greater sense of flow and to OPEN the breathing and musculature that is associated with speech, that's one part of the work another part of the work is reSTRUCTURing or STRUCTURing in which you begin having OPENed the system to learn how to focus it and activate it in such a way that speech happens efficiently and effectively.

Third piece is learning to do this [00:04:00] in a way that you're actually PRESENT with your own experience and the outside world. Because a lot of people could do something and just be with themselves or they could just be with the outside and deny themselves and to be PRESENT in a fluid way with what is internally and externally while being able to focus on what matters is another piece. That's what I'd call presence in this moment.

The fourth piece is play which really has sort of two different kinds of meanings. One is the capacity in a way it's an integrative aspect to take all of these things into getting back to an impulsive and potentially pleasurable communicative process. The other is, we think about this as really applying this work in different context. So it's for example, not just for actors but we would play with this body of work and work with business people. Or we would work with people who are using it for personal reasons. So we would work with children or any number of other groups. Those are some of the principles, I can go a lot more into the specific relationship with breath just big, big part of this. And what's novel about this work is the recognition of the inVOLUNTARY aspects of breathing, how important they are and then how that then connects to VOLUNTARY aspects. I could talk about how instead of having a focus of creating a "good voice" we want a voice that is really that person's voice. And we wanted to be efficient and effective but we're not looking for a single aesthetic superior voice.

Maybe looking at what inhibits the [00:06:00] freedom of the voice but we are not looking to create the single ideal. Let me just think if there's a few other things that I wanna say. Another one is that the work is highly physical at stages in particular the deSTRUCTURing but also to some extent the STRUCTURing that it recognizes that voice isn't either an abstract thing or something that just happens in the throat and resonators that it is a whole body, whole being process and that the work to help are being OPENed up to get access to the different parts of themselves is in part a physical one. Let me just think if there are a couple of other things that I would want to say about this.

Another part of the deSTRUCTURing which is really a feature of this work that is unusual is tremoring and that tremoring is the waking up of the AUTONOMIC nervous system, so when I said VOLUNTARY and inVOLUNTARY. When I'm talking about inVOLUNTARY I'm largely talking about AUTONOMIC processes and that the tremor
is a very specific way of activating the AUTONOMIC aspects of our nervous system. And using that what is essentially a healing response to perceived stress to help OPEN the body more and OPEN it to vibration, OPEN it to energy, OPEN the breath and OPEN to a capacity to experience life in the moment that you can then bring in to communication.

So having said those pieces, I just wanna think if there is -- there are certainly many other features of this work but those would be the ones maybe I would start with. Now, does that count for you as principles or more parts?

Interviewer: I think there were some of both [00:08:00] in there.

Saul: Yeah.

Interviewer: And especially the way I understand them. Something you said is making -- bringing up another question for me that I'm just curious about how you would answer and we don't have to spend a terrific amount of time on it, but the work itself feels so unique and special to me as both a practitioner and a teacher of the work. But how would you -- I know for myself the ways in which I think it is different from other techniques that I have worked with or looked at, but the -- I don't wanna spell out the specific techniques that I'm thinking of -- but you probably have a few in your mind that you know of Fitzmaurice Voicework being compared to. Do you find a comparison even relevant? Is it worth looking into and if it is, what is the difference between Fitzmaurice Voicework and say the other leading techniques that are out there?

Saul: Comparison could be relevant if it doesn't become a comparison that is based in the desire to show that one is superior to another. That for me is problematic, if you wanna talk about difference and then the value of difference that's great. So in other words I'm not trying to say everything is equal but if -- but that's different from entering a comparison for the purpose of showing superiority.

Interviewer: Sure.

Saul: That said, regardless of what technique we're talking about, one of the main differentiators is the appreciation of the AUTONOMIC nervous system [00:10:00] and therefore of all these inVOLUNTARY processes and their value. So there are techniques for example that are very strong. I'm thinking of Lessac and Linklater very strong at say developing resonance. In the case of Linklater very strong at developing relaxation. And in the case of Lessac very strong at setting up a sense of ease of vocal use and musicality of vocal use. Those points of emphasis are I would say, more side effects in Fitzmaurice than points of emphasis. So for example, resonance which is from my perspective clearly important is not focused on in the same way or to the same degree as it is in Linklater. And or in the same ways that it is in Lessac.
Instead there is a recognition of the value of **Support** so coming to **Structuring**
of having the depth of **Support** and having this channel **Open** that through the
focus line that hopefully results in effective **resonance** and looking for resonance in a
sort of more **organic** way. So not **resonance** specific but doing it through work which
**chakras** and other things like this that those are some differences. [00:12:00] There's
another difference in that this work instead of being highly prescriptive in its nature in
terms of how you use it and this what I was beginning to get at the very beginning.

Instead of saying these are always the same 12 steps that you take, your
always trying to **be aware of who is in front of you and what does this**
person actually need and being highly **responsive** rather than
prescriptive. Now I will say, just to be fair I don't think the other
techniques are always prescriptive, but I would say as a basis the
practice of some of that work can be more prescriptive, right. I **think a**
good teacher of any technique is gonna be **responsive**, hopefully. but I'd
say that's actually such a significant part of the work in Fitzmaurice that
it's a differentiator but not a hard line between.

Let's see, I talked about the sense of having maybe a really good voice
as opposed to somebody **finding their voice**. That piece of it is an important
differentiator and that's complex but valuable. I'm trying to think about something like
Roy Hart. This mixture of **deStructuring** and **reStructuring** is really different
from Roy Hart, I'd say that it sort of gets more mixed in and less clarified as distinct
aspects in Roy Hart. There is certainly some inVOLUNTARY processes that they
welcome and there's some physicality that they welcome.

But it doesn't get delineated in the same way and not as specifically if these are
inVOLUNTARY, these VOLUNTARY let's begin to work with them. It's more just like,
**let's invite the process and then have that process unfold**. Do you wanted though,
[00:14:00] if we're gonna get into this, it might be better for you to then articulate a
difference that you see and I can respond to it about my point of view.

Interviewer: Well the -- I think you've actually covered quite a bit of it. And my specific
line of inquiry is about teachers of the work and the way the work itself
impacts them. And though I would love to have another conversation at
some point about potentially the differences as I see them. You just said
something about a teacher's ability to be responsive as opposed to
prescriptive and to me you are the model of responsiveness that I turn to in
my own head whenever I'm working with a student. How aware are you in
the teaching of the work of the practicing of the work? Does that make
sense [inaudible]

Saul: Do you mean the -- in the way the embodying of the work myself?

Interviewer: Yeah. And even so -- in other words and I think that probably
is a two part question because there's a modeling that's happening but

To Me: This feels true for both teacher and student. The
ability to pivot and change
course without judgment or negative
feelings, just going with the flow of the
experience, is key.

Embodying the
work through
presence and
generosity is how
we share the work.
We show the
power of curiosity
and possibility of
open
communication
without a need to
"get it right". The
honesty of the
search is what
touches an
audience. We are
all searching and
we recognize it
when someone is
sharing that with us
in a sincere way.
This honesty and
the willingness
trumps a need for
perfection.
then there’s also a practical use that's happening that's allowing you to as you say, find and use your own voice.

Saul: Yeah. I would say a couple things about this, the first is that in thinking about embodiment, I’m using that in terms of -- instead of practicing although I would say practicing so I'm talking about practicing as in I learned to practice something. It's one way to develop embodiment. But I'd say embodiment which is really the actualization of the work in oneself. That we're not looking for a perfection of that ever but we're looking to move toward embodying this work and that for me, embodying the work is a big part of teaching the work.

That that providing that model which maybe non verbal meaning it's not even talking about one's own embodiment but just actually trying to be a genuine living representation of the work. It is one of the big ways that we teach. And I think that's incredibly important. I practice different things in order to be able to embody the work. I also try to be gentle with myself in the places that I don’t embody the work very well. And I think that there’s an oscillation to what extent I embody the work.

Let me just think about if there's anything else that I wanna say about that. There’s also a real curiosity about what it means to embody the work. And that curiosity in keeping that alive -- in other words rather than having an idea that I now understand the three things and I can practice them really well. That there is a continual curiosity and quest for what it means to be embodied and present and alive and having one's voice. And so the last piece is about actually finding ones own voice in this. And that's really important for Fitzmaurice teachers.

That there are these principles that hopefully we're all exploring in our ways but the idea isn’t then to take those principles and all become doppelgangers of each other but instead to take those principles to find our unique experience and expression of those principles so that each teacher actually also is distinct from other teachers. And that's also a form of embodiment that instead of becoming the ideal Stepford Wives of Fitzmaurice, we are individual species of plants that grow in extraordinary ways but we're all using photosynthesis, we're all in the ground. You know that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Is that when you say -- so would you -- you've mentioned finding one’s own voice a couple of times. Would you say -- how would you describe -- I think you just did but how would you define it if someone said what does this mean you know to find my own voice?

Saul: Well it means again a few things and it does mean being able to tap into your autonomic nervous system, as well as the voluntary parts of the nervous system. So there’s a mechanical aspect, there is biological aspect, there is a psychological aspect of actually having access to your psyche. There is a feeling aspect, there is an aspect of being present.
but it actually means also getting **in touch with your own impulses as opposed to the set of correct impulses that are somebody else's.**

And so to find your own voice is to also begin to find your own point of view on something. It's to begin to find your own authenticity and not a narrow authenticity, but a wide authenticity [00:20:00] that includes imperfection, that includes contradiction, includes paradox that really includes the fullness and integration of yourself, and your capacity to express that complexity and specificity to others.

Interviewer: That's beautiful. That kind of exploration feels like a natural fit for a room full of actors but as you and I have talked about before, you -- we both practiced this work in some way -- if for no other reason and because we both try in my case to embody the work with students who are not necessarily specifically studying Fitzmaurice Voicework or even acting at all.

Saul: Sure.

Interviewer: What are the differences or how would you describe the experience of your own teaching when it comes to working outside of the discipline of acting, of voice, with potentially pools of people who do not identify as actors?

Saul: Well you know you came and observed the public speaking workshop and that's one example of a group. So these are -- in almost all cases either business people or people who are coming for work related things so they may not be in businesses in cases. Maybe education or something else. But they are all coming there, they're not actors. We're not, quote endquote, teaching Fitzmaurice Voicework but what we are doing is teaching work that is deeply infused with various Fitzmaurice principles. Those principles as they got worked with in that group was A [00:22:00] helping people find their own individual way of presenting rather than simply the correct way of presenting which is highly analogous to finding -- helping people find their own voice.

And 2 to help people be **PRESENT**, 3 to help them **OPEN** up their body and breathing we did 2 and a half warm ups and ideally we would do more than that for a group but we're here in this case what we're trying to be really sensitive to is not offering them things that they can't or they're not ready to digest. So that's a really big principle like I can't just say to people now roll around on the floor and begin to make tons of sound because for most people, it would actually generate shame not **OPENness**. So you really want to -- this is again being responsive to who's in front of you, if you wanna try to help them find what is useful to them in a way that they're willing to accept, not just in a way that I think is correct.

In the case of the workshop there was a fair amount of work where being **PRESENT**, with getting actually really connected to what you're saying which is related to something I didn't talk about but for me is so important at Fitzmaurice is this capacity in working with language to incorporate what actually is in your experience rather than just to go into language the way you think it should be.
said. To be able to incorporate ones own experience in the moment of communication and still focus on what matters which is so much more complex than just this is the way I should say it.

That then gets brought into public speaking and helping people for instance deal with charge which is such a fundamental experience in public speaking and instead of blocking it to actually begin to recognize it, accept it, and third, use it fundamental piece of the presence work in Fitzmaurice Voicework. I think that spirit also in working with people of -- an embrace of differences, instead of forcing people to do things, inviting them to do things to actually get their own variant to actually feel their own desire to work rather than telling people they have to work.

And a spirit of -- and I don't think this is unique to Fitzmaurice but it's certainly within Fitzmaurice hopefully a spirit of a genuine caring whole-Hearted SUPPORT of the student as a way of working with the student to invite their wholeness to emerge as well.

Interviewer: That is -- to me that is I think the most important part of the work as I understand it today is that OPENness to each and every student's CURIOSITY and what they bring to any moment and my own CURIOSITY in that exploration as a gift, really. You know it's -- I feel honored anytime a student is willing to indulge a CURIOSITY with me along for the ride. Because I think it's a very noble thing to ask for, and it's a very generous thing to offer.

Saul: I love that. Yeah, I love that. And as you say CURIOSITY [00:26:00] I know I was talking also about CURIOSITY earlier but it feels to me, I guess really a fundamental part of this work CURIOSITY as well as that sort of a willingness to see a student as whole rather than as needing to be fixed. It's-- people can grow but that's different than the fact that there's something fundamentally wrong with them that you need to fix. There could be, right? In the case of somebody who has got an actual pathology, and you don't wanna ignore that.

But the basic perspective is to find the wholeness and then to find out how to SUPPORT that wholeness not to look at somebody who is fundamentally flawed and to think about for example getting rid of tension rather than hoping to soften tension and invite flow, So you’re using the energy that was boiled up in tension rather than just trying to get rid of it for example.

Interviewer: This has been amazing, it feels like such a privilege to have a conversation with you. Is there anything else you'd like to share about this work with me?

Saul: Well I'm just really happy that you're doing what you're doing. It makes me excited that you're wanting to put your energy and your passion into exploring why this
matters in for you and for the people that you work with and I'm very happy and I feel that through my whole body to get to be small part of that with you.

Interviewer: Thank you. Thank you.

Saul: Did you get some of what you wanted?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Saul: Great. [end]
References

Voice / Theatre


Scientific / Historical Perspectives

Research Techniques


Articles / Video


• Kotzubei, S. 2016. *Interview with Michael Yurchak*. New York University Methods of materials and research course assignment.

Appendix A

Thought Centers or Chakras

Crown - Spiritual
3rd Eye - Perception
Throat - Expression
Heart - Love
Solar Plexus - Power
Sacral - Sex
Root - Survival
Appendix B

Sample Survey / Interview Questions

1. How often do you teach Fitzmaurice Voicework and / or other subject matter?
2. How would you describe the central principles of Fitzmaurice Voicework?
3. How might these principles be useful for teachers (if at all)?
4. Do you use Fitzmaurice Voicework technique while teaching?
5. If so, in what ways does your own use of the work while teaching affect your teaching (positively or negatively)?
6. What role does embodying the work play in your teaching practice?
7. What is authenticity to you?
8. Can an audience sense authenticity?
9. In what ways does the sharing of authenticity on the part of the speaker affect that person’s connection to the audience?
10. Is there anything else you’d like to share about your own use of Fitzmaurice Voicework or the experience of using the work as a teacher?
Curriculum Vitae

Michael Yurchak, MA, EdD Candidate (anticipated Fall, 2017)
935 N Garfield Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91104
myurchak@gmail.com 213.400.3817

Teacher/ Teaching Artist

Elizabeth Mestnik Acting Studio: 2012 – Present
Instructor. Courses taught:
- **Voice**: (on-going program in Fitzmaurice Voicework as well as intensive introductory workshops)
- **Acting Foundations**: (an introductory course with attention to improv, physical theatre, voice, and technique overviews including Alexander, Fitzmaurice, Method, Meisner, and Practical Aesthetics)
- **The Character**: (focused on character development, building original characters through physical, vocal and emotional exploration and applying one’s own sensibilities and choices to the those of the playwright)
- **The Script**: (script analysis and beginning scene study)
- **Advanced Scene Study**: (Fully committed script analysis and partner work)
- **Meisner**: (1st year conservatory students move through a one-year curriculum consistent with the work and methodology of Sanford Meisner and William Esper.

Such A Voice Voice Over Training: 2012 – Present
Coach private voice over students of all backgrounds and levels of education. Courses Taught:
- Sanford Meisner and William Esper)
- **Commercial/Narration Reads**
- **Animation / Character Development**
- **Video Game Performance**
- **Promo / Trailer Announcing**
- **Audiobook Performance and Production**
- **Home Studio Set-Up and Maintenance**

A Noise Within LA: 2016 – Present
Teaching Artist
- Design and conduct long- and short-term residencies with various organizations and school groups to prepare participants for engagement in theatre offerings ANW and in the community at large.

Shakespeare Center LA: 2012 – Present
Lead Teaching Artist
- Design and conduct workshops and residencies in underserved middle and high schools in and around Los Angeles.
- Create and lead a comprehensive 12-week residency in an underserved middle school incorporating an introduction to Shakespeare (*Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and *Macbeth*) with a student created sketch comedy show highlighting the plays and incorporating
interpretive original material. Produced and directed a final performance for parents, faculty and administrators.

**Pasadena Playhouse/California State Theater:** 2014 – Present
Teaching Artist/Curriculum Designer
- Write and conduct pre- and post-show workshops with student groups on- and off-site.

**UCLA:** Spring 2014 – Present
Guest Lecturer
- Offer undergraduate Voice and Movement for non-theater majors. Lead students through guided voice and movement work as a way of developing original performance pieces. Teach Fitzmaurice Voicework.

**Pasadena City College:** Fall 2013
Guest Lecturer
- Guest-taught Voice and Movement class for undergraduate level performance majors. Led an intensive introduction to Fitzmaurice Voicework.

**Westridge School For Girls:** 2012-2014
Guest Lecturer. Former Speech and Debate Teacher.
- Lead annual multi-part Shakespeare workshop exploring text and voice using *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth* as points of entry.
- Taught in-school speech and debate class at top tier prep school; coached and supervised off-site tournaments.
- Coached Valedictorian and Salutatorian speakers.

**Center Theater Group:** 2007 – 2012
Lead Teaching Artist, Middle School Playwriting Program
- Created curriculum and led a team of five CTG teaching artists for a three year pilot program conducted with students from 10 middle schools across Los Angeles in conjunction with five theater companies joining in the process once material was written. The same groups of students stayed with the program across all three years, culminating in performances of student work by the theater companies at CTG. In addition, each student left the program armed with a portfolio of self-generated work.

Project faculty member for the Young Audience Program.
- Served as design and facilitation team member for multi session professional development program for Los Angeles Unified School District teachers and administrators.
- Designed and led pre- and post-show workshops with students at LAUSD schools.
- Led Post-show talkbacks with audiences of all ages at multiple performances in all three CTG theaters.
- Contributed to the writing and production of comprehensive Teacher Resource Guides and student oriented Discovery Guides. Each document was published on the CTG website and distributed to participating schools. Shows included:
Will Geer’s Theatricum Botanicum: 2006 – Present:
Lead Teaching Artist and Curriculum Designer.
- Served as design and facilitation team member for multi session professional development program for Los Angeles Unified School District teachers and administrators. Courses taught:
  - Script analysis and scansion
  - Character development
  - Improvisation / Comedy
  - Stage Combat
  - Movement / Improv / Clown
- Performed as cast member and / or teaching artist in the following productions:
  - A Midsummer Night's Dream
  - Romeo and Juliet
  - Julius Caesar
  - The Tempest
  - Twelfth Night
  - Measure for Measure
  - Hamlet
  - Macbeth
  - Twelfth Night
  - Cymbeline

Classical Theatre Lab: 2008 – Present
Director of Education and Outreach / Board Member
- Created programming and curriculum for a robust menu of educational offerings
- Developed and maintained community relationships
- Performed in Staged Readings and full productions of the following:
  - Twelfth Night
  - Death of a Salesman
  - The Country Girl
  - King Lear

Vassar College / Powerhouse Theater: 2005 – 2006
Lecturer in Acting
- Taught for an intensive 6-week summer program for college students. Classes included:
  - Text Analysis
  - Voice and Movement
  - Character
Roundabout Theater: 2004 – 2006
Teaching Artist Faculty
- Designed curriculum and taught intensive residencies in multiple high schools in and around New York City, leading workshops on the craft of acting as well as its applied use and how acting as an art form can help to illuminate texts and subject matter of all kinds
- Created and led pre- and post-show workshops for school groups attending shows on the Roundabout stages

- Served as member of the teaching artist faculty responsible for curriculum design and teaching students aged 5 – 18, primarily concerned with pre- and post-show workshops, preparing for and debriefing after shows on the main stage

NYU: Symposium on the Teaching Artist: 2006
- Presented original paper: Yes, And: The Power of Agreement in the Classroom
- Led and facilitated interactive workshop for graduate students on working as a professional teaching artist and the applicable dramatic techniques used in and out of the classroom

Writer / Director / Producer

And Then Productions: Sports Robot: 2009
- Wrote, produced and directed episodes of Sports Robot, an original, independent educational series for kids with high profile production team
- Wrote shooting script and separate narrative components
- Created marketing materials for various pitch and production meetings
- Voiced principle animated character
- Managed full crews for all departments of live action television and post production

Broken Lizard Productions: Inner City: 2009
- Co-created animated series based on the human body with prominent independent production company
- Co-wrote eight episodes of web-based series
- Constructed production deals with independent
companies for production roll out and distribution

Facilitator / Consultant:

**A of All Productions:** 2015 – Present
- Partner with large scale clients to design and implement team building and culture building workshops for departmental development
- Co-designed and facilitated multi-component workshops for Student Services and Library Services departments at California State University Northridge

**Improv Innovations:** 2010 – Present
Founder and CEO
- Created an organizational consulting company based on the improvisational principles of support and trust as a foundation for effective collaboration and communication within business culture.
- Lead interactive workshops for professionals centered on discovering authentic voice and feeling empowered to use it
- Help to integrate improvisational techniques and mindset into a business setting in order to activate free innovative thinking within a safe environment, rich with possibility and support

**Business Improvisations:** 2008 – Present
Facilitator / Consultant
- Lead applied improvisational workshops as part of a yearly orientation program for business students at UCLA Anderson School of Management
- Perform a live improv show with other professional actors and students as a final team-building event

**The Madison Consulting Group:** 2004 – Present
Facilitator / Consultant
- Facilitate workshops for high profile companies including Goldman Sachs, Chase Bank, Citibank, Web MD, Visiting Nurse Services of New York, Avon, etc. in the following areas of interest:
  - Professional Presentation Skills
  - Creativity and Innovation
  - Business and Technical Writing
Peter Michael Yurchak  
Topic Proposal Spring, 2017

- Effective Management Styles  
- Conflict Resolution  
- Serve as Private Coach for executives in need of presentational skill-building and vocal confidence

**Actor / Voice Over Artist**

**AEA, SAG-AFTRA Actor:** 1994-Present  
- Perform in every medium of the entertainment industry. Credits include 10 feature films; 11 television shows; over 35 television and internet-based commercials; and countless theatrical productions ranging from Shakespeare to stand-up. Favorite roles include: Dennis Mitchell on *Mad Men*; Edgar in *King Lear*; Happy in *Death of a Salesman*; Polixenes in *The Winter’s Tale*; Claudius in *Hamlet*; and Buddy the Elf on *It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia*

**Voice Over Artist:** 1999 – Present  
- Currently voice recurring roles on *Avatar: The Legend of Korra* (Nickelodeon); *Naruto* (Cartoon Network); and *Trailer Trash* (Lions Gate Entertainment). Have appeared as a series regular on various animated programs for Cartoon Network, Disney Channel, Spike tv, and ESPN 2. Voiced dozens of commercials and promos for radio and television, more than 50 audiobooks, and 45 video games.

**Training:**

**NYU Theatre Practices: Mask & Puppetry,** Puerto Rico: 2017  
- Intensive semester on Mask, Puppetry and Devising with master teachers Deborah Hunt, Rosa Luisa Marquéz, and Nancy Smithner

**Fitzmaurice Voice Institute,** Los Angeles: 2012-2014  
- Completed rigorous teacher certification program and graduated with the higher of two designations: Associate Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework® - Catherine Fitzmaurice, Saul Katzubei, et al

**Elizabeth Mestnik Acting Studio,** Los Angeles, 2013-2014  
- Completed year-long one-on-one apprenticeship in Meisner Technique Teacher Training with Elizabeth Mestnik

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Classical Theatre Lab, Los Angeles: 2010
- Voice Intensive - Adele Cabbot (Designated Linklater Voice Instructor)

Fitzmaurice Voice Institute, Los Angeles: 2010
- Singing Intensive - Saul Katzubei

Shakespeare and Company:
- 2010: Text Intensive - Dennis Krausnick (Designated Linklater Voice Instructor)
- 2005: Voice Intensive - David Demke (Designated Linklater Voice Instructor)

- Voice and Advanced Scene Study - Lynn Singer (Creator of LS Voice Work Technique)

American Academy of Dramatic Arts: 2002 - 2003:
- Professional Training Program: Voice - Kennedy Brown (Associate Instructor Fitzmaurice Voicework Technique); Meisner - Burke Pearson

iO West: 1998
- Six Tier Training Program in long-form improvisation and signature performance piece of Improv Olympic: The Harold – Del Close, Charna Halpern

Education:

New York University, Current: Doctoral Candidate in Applied Theatre
- Anticipated date of completion / degree award fall, 2017.
- Coursework included extensive physical theatre work including clown, Dell’Arte, Viewpoints, and Alexander Technique.

New York University: 2003 – 2004
- MA in Educational Theatre

Shakespeare’s Globe / Royal Shakespeare Company / University of Northampton
- NYU semester: Applied teaching techniques; Shakespeare in the classroom

Colgate University: 1994
- BA in Theatre
Teaching Honors:

2017: Graduate Assistant Fellowship, NYU Puerto Rico
2016: Graduate Assistant Fellowship, NYU London
2015: Ella Mae Mullavey Ader Fellowship in Educational Theatre at NYU
2007: Dana Teaching Artist Fellowship
2006: Roundabout Theater Theatrical Teaching Institute Fellowship

Acting / Voice Honors:

2015: Audiofile Award: Top 10 Recordings By An Ensemble Cast (Battlefield Earth)
2010: AudioFile Award: Top 10 Recordings By An Ensemble Cast (Orders is Orders)
2010: Silver Promax Award (In the Papers Promo on NY1)
2009: AudioFile Award: Top 10 Recordings By An Ensemble Cast (Where Eagles Dare)
2008: AudioFile Award: Top 10 Recordings By An Ensemble Cast (The Iron Duke)
2008: Galaxy Audio Best Audiobook Performance (The Iron Duke)
2007: Silver Promax Award (The Arts Report promo on NY1)