



The Power of Voice



By Molly Scott

*The voice is the frontier— the demarcation of where
you begin to end and the world begins.*

David Whyte

It is spring, 1987, a gray afternoon. I'm in an apartment in Brussels that I'm using for sessions while I am in Belgium for an experimental workshop in sounding hosted by a friend, Erica, whom I met in one of my Findhorn workshops in Scotland. The doorbell rings and Hannah enters. She is a small, dark-haired woman in her forties, a therapist she says, but always in "trouble" with her voice. She feels she can't use it fully, that it doesn't really belong to her. Her English is good but her voice small and rather timid.

I suggest that we start with some warm up exercises that I've been using for years in my Healing Voice workshops in the United States. We both kick off our shoes, and standing on Erica's multicolored carpet, I start making sounds, suggesting that Hannah follow me with her own voice. I choose a pitch low in my register and then slowly slide my voice up higher and higher into my upper tones and then let it fall down again, swooping like a siren. Suddenly Hannah is on the floor, curled in a fetal position, weeping. And I am down there with her, holding her, wondering what has just happened.

This was the first and last time that I introduced my work in Europe with the siren sound and it signaled to me the extraordinary power that sound has to change states of being across boundaries of language and the coping constructs of self. Sirens in the United States most often herald that help is on the way— fire trucks or police to the rescue. In Europe, for people in my generation and older, sirens signal destruction and the apotheosis of danger.

Hannah's family was Jewish and didn't escape Brussels before the Germans invaded. For three years they had to hide in the basement of an office building, staying in the dark during the day, enforcing the strictest silence, and only venturing outside at nighttime. Hannah was a baby when they went into the cellar, just beginning the exploratory sound play of coming into language. The normal course of vocal discovery, that evolving exploration of babble, gurgles, coos and cries, was silenced and denied her because the sounds endangered her life and her family. Baby Hannah was shushed and muffled and the act of making sound encoded fear in her small body. Every night, and often during the long gray days, the sound of sirens signaling danger became so deeply embedded in her cellular memory that my own voice, replicating the frequencies of that siren sound, sent her to the floor in a paroxysm of terror.

From that first encounter with Hannah, I entered through the direct portal of the body - voice into the somatic trauma field of World War Two in Europe. The sound work that I did there over the next fifteen years in workshops and private sessions took place in countries on both sides of that conflict. Fifty years after the war was over, it still lived as vibrational frequencies in the implicit and somatic memories of the people who came to me—trauma rising through entrained resonance to be expressed and released through the sound of the voice. I was in a

vibrational landscape of stories that were told and untold, beyond direct telling. It was big work, deep work, and became a practice that I have called Creative Resonance/Deep Story.

We are privy to many kinds of “language,” not just words—the language of gestures and glances, smells, touch, and most importantly, the language of frequency, pulsation manifesting as sound. The basic concept of Creative Resonance is that the world vibrates: everything we see, know, think, feel, is vibrational frequency. In this rhythmic web, the frequency of voice is a powerful change agent capable of modulating and realigning our body's energetic systems. So the voice in all its expressions, speaking, sounding, as well as singing, is an acoustical phenomenon— a kind of music— affecting and affected by the energetic bioelectrical vibrations of the world as we know it. In this frame healthy systems are those in which all components vibrate in frequencies appropriate to their function in the system. And just as the healing forces in the body flow to the site of a physical wound, creating new tissue, our bodies signal what they need through their vibrational frequency— a non-verbal symptoms- language of feeling, sensation, and the sigh-moan-cry of embodied vocalization. Working with these energetic clues with our own voices, aligning the frequencies of voice with the frequencies of body feeling, we can jump-start realignment and pattern change throughout our body/mind.

Just as the resonance of a sounding bell is damped by the touch of an intrusive hand, the resonance of our vibrational field is damped by intrusive trauma, by old scars and wounding, and this limitation reflects in our voices. We hear the blocked heart, the contracted anxiety, the draining depression. The good news is that *as the state of our health affects our sound, so the sounds we make affect our health*. We can change the way we feel by the way we use our voices. Proof in point is how the act of singing changes our brain waves and we feel better when we sing.

Sound flows past the guardian gates of the conceptual mind and permeates the whole body, opening access to other kinds of intelligence and wisdom than our small-mind knowing.

When we use our voices in conscious sounding, we are creating neural pathways, expanding our somatic awareness in ways that ordinary communication does not. In Creative Resonance circles, as we let go into the soup of spontaneous sound, something new arises from the seeming chaos of dissonance – another kind of knowing, fertile with possibility. Like the spider, sonically spinning her web out of her body, when we sing and sound at the edge of ourselves, we are making new links, stretching beyond our old stories, and allowing the future to resonate through us into different form. Sounding this way also cultivates our ability to enter compassionately into the realm of another’s experience, creating a sense of an interconnection and non-local spaciousness which transcends personal experience—literally beyond words.

Opening voice translates to many levels. We need more voice in the world. These disrupted and rapidly changing times are calling for more of us to use our voices with intelligence and conscience, to speak and sing out in the service of an interdependent world. As our global problems become more complex and particularly as massive refugee migrations change the mix of cultures all over the world, there is increasing need to find ways to communicate beyond language.

If we truly understand that our thoughts, our hopes, fears and faithfulness, are all vibrational frequencies in the vast music of things, can we consciously use ourselves as the instruments we are, to manifest connections beyond old patterns of conflict and enmity? An open question for open systems.

I propose the possibility that we can free ourselves to new awareness, to dance more deeply into the fertile chaos of our future, and that we come to it singing. As the poet Rumi continues to instruct us from the 13th century,

*We have fallen into the place where everything is music . . .
Stop the words now and let the spirits
fly in and out of your chest.*

Rumi, trans. Barks



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