

<p>Institution:</p> <p>London Metropolitan University</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment:</p> <p>UoA36</p>
<p>Title of case study:</p> <p>Developing public debate about the human voice</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Anne Karpf's book, <i>The Human Voice</i> (Bloomsbury, 2006), has prompted wide-ranging, national and international public discussion on the role of the human voice today. The study has been published in the USA (Bloomsbury USA, 2006), and translated into German (Luebbe, 2007), French (Autrement, 2008) and Japanese (Soshisha, 2008). Positive reviews have appeared in numerous publications, including <i>The New Yorker</i> and the <i>Times</i>. Karpf has subsequently developed the book's ideas in symposia held in Paris, Stockholm, Rome, Oslo and London, in numerous articles and broadcasts for diverse outlets (including an-hour long BBC Radio 4 programme) and a full-page feature in the <i>Guardian</i>.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p><i>The Human Voice</i> challenges the orthodoxy (Derrida's phonocentrism notwithstanding) that the human voice plays a less significant cultural role than text and image in post-oral societies. It argues, instead, that the human voice remains at the centre of interpersonal and cultural communication, even if we lack a shared public language through which to articulate this. Based on 50 interviews conducted in the UK and USA (between 2003 and 2006), Karpf's study develops an accessible public language through which the important role of the human voice can be discussed, and it raises awareness of the many ways in which what appears to be a 'natural', genetically-determined instrument is, in fact, culturally and historically constituted. Karpf's work also challenges a counter-trend – the 'idealisation' of the human voice, characterised by the widely-disseminated research of Albert Mehrabian, who attempted to quantify the percentage (38%) of verbal message communicated by the voice, and whose findings have become an oft-repeated part of popular discourse. Karpf highlights the shortcomings of Mehrabian's methodology, along with that used by other researchers who filtered out individual differences between voices and voice-listening skills.</p> <p>Karpf proposes that the voice is a medium through which we perform gender and that, as women's social roles have altered, so too have their voices. In the paper titled 'Spoken Like a Woman?: From Prejudice to Androgyny in the Public Voice' (delivered, at Universite Paris-Diderot in 2012 and subsequently published in an anthology), Karpf suggests that while research shows that women's voices have deepened over the past 40 years, and the voices of public men are expected to be more expressive, the voice has not become 'ungendered'. Rather, what is required of the voice has become more complex. In her 2013 paper, 'Speaking Sex to Power?: The Female Voice as a Dangerous Instrument' (delivered at the 'Vocal Folds' symposium organised by Her Noise in Oslo), Karpf traces the historic tendency to equate women's voices with an erotic power that needs to be policed. Karpf developed this theme in her 2013 BBC Radio 4 programme on the broadcast female voice – 'Archive on 4: Spoken Like a Woman' – which chronicled the historical exclusion of women from the airwaves.</p> <p>Alongside this work, Karpf also developed a critique of oral historians' nervousness around the disembodied voice. This theme was central to a keynote address, 'The Human Voice and the Texture of Experience', delivered at the 2009 Oral History Society conference held in Strathclyde. Here, Karpf argued that the rush to transcribe recorded testimony was indicative of a longstanding tendency to devalue the instrument through which oral historians gather their material. In 2011, in a seminar organised by 'Media and the Inner World', Karpf applied psychoanalytic theory – specifically Donald Winnicott's concepts of holding and transitional space, and Esther Bick's theories of containment – to listeners' relationships with the voices of regular radio presenters. Her</p>

paper was subsequently published in a special edition of *The Radio Journal*.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- Karpf, A., *The Human Voice* (London, Bloomsbury, 2006; paperback 2007). Also published in the USA (New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2006). Translated into German as *Frauen reden anders, Manner auch* (Berlin, Luebbe, 2007). Translated into French as *La Voix: Un univers invisible* (Paris, Editions Autrement, 2008). Translated into Japanese (Soshisha, 2008).
- Karpf, A., 'C'est bien une femme qui parle": du préjugé à l'androgynie. La voix dans la sphère publique', in Bernon-Gerth, A.M. et al (eds), *Les Medias a l'Epreuve du Reel*, (Paris, Editions Michel Houdiard, 2012).
- Karpf, A., 'The Sound of Home: Some Thoughts on How the Radio Voice Anchors, Contains and Sometimes Pierces', *The Radio Journal*, Vol. 11, No 1, April 2013.
- Karpf, A. (2013) 'Archive on 4: Spoken Like a Woman', BBC Radio 4, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01q7g6n>
- Karpf, A. (2013) 'Speaking Sex to Power: the Female Voice as a Dangerous Instrument', paper given at 'Vocal Folds', a 'Her Noise' symposium, Oslo, <http://www.nymusikk.no/?p=6789>
- Karpf, A. (2013) 'Fear and Loathing of Women on the Radio', the *Guardian*, February 2 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/tv-and-radio/2013/feb/01/fear-loathing-women-radio>

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Karpf's research on the human voice has generated considerable debate about its important role in diverse settings. The beneficiaries of her work have been both professional voice-users and the general public (her book was discussed by a wide range of websites, phone-in callers and reviewers). The impact of her research is indicated in four ways:

Firstly, the four foreign editions of *The Human Voice* and its recent publication as an ebook demonstrate the international interest generated by her study. She drew on extensive scholarly research and made it accessible, reaching wide and varied readerships and stimulating lively online debate from a diversity of bodies, including the European Institute of Brand Management (www.eurib.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Documenten/PDF/Personal_branding_ENGELS/w_-_The_human_voice_EN_.pdf), the British Voice Association (www.britishvoiceassociation.org.uk/books_TheHumanVoice_AnneKarpf.htm), a *Huffington Post* blog (www.huffingtonpost.com/jane-g-goldberg-phd/importance-of-mothers-voice_b_899514.html) and Polish television.

Secondly, the book was serialised in the *Guardian*, and was reviewed in the *Independent*, the *Sunday Telegraph*, the *Guardian*, and the *Sunday Times*, as well as many foreign newspapers and magazines, including *The New Yorker*.

Thirdly, Karpf's many broadcasts dealing with her research generated discussion about the role and importance of the human voice among many different constituent groups. She appeared on 'BBC Breakfast' on BBC1 (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/breakfast/5359618.stm>), and in 'The Voice', a BBC Four documentary (broadcast four times in 2008) on why the synthesised voice sounds unnatural, as well as in an Australian documentary on the human voice broadcast on the European arts and culture channel, Arte, in 2013. On radio she discussed her research on BBC Radio 4's 'Start The Week', Radio 3's 'Night Waves' and over a dozen phone-in programmes in the USA, Australia and New Zealand. In 2012 a half-hour interview with her about the voice was broadcast on the Australian network ABC's national radio programme 'Lingua Franca', and she discussed intonation with Stephen Fry on his BBC Radio 4 programme 'Fry's English Delight' (www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01m182n). In 2013 she talked about women and radio on the South African radio network SA FM, while she also wrote and presented an the hour-long BBC Radio 4

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programme on the history of women's voices on radio and television – 'Archive on 4: Spoken Like a Woman' – which was listed in the *Radio Times*' 'Top Tip of the Week' and its 'Critics' Choice' (www.radiotimes.com/episode/twhbv/spoken-like-a-woman). The Controller of BBC Radio 4 chose it as 'Documentary of the Week' for a Radio 4 podcast and it was also selected for permanent presence on iPlayer.

Finally, Karpf developed her ideas about the voice in many different symposia and events. These included 'La Voca Humana', a seminar held at Roma 3 University, Rome (October 2006); the seminar series 'Our Speaking Selves' held at the ICA (2009) (www.ica.org.uk/19587.twl); a lecture (now a podcast), 'Bellowed Endearments and Echoes of Resistance: How the Voice Bonds and Unbinds in Smadar Dreyfus's "Mother's Day"', delivered at Magasin 3 Gallery, Stockholm (2009); and 'The Right to Silence' symposium (chaired by Karpf) organised by Electra (a London-based art organisation) at The Showroom gallery (2012) (www.electraproductions.com/email/RightToSilence_II.html).

Testimonials from the Artistic Director of the Norwegian organisation nyMusikk and from a well known writer, broadcaster and Professor have corroborated the impact of Karpf's research on the gendered voice on radio professionals, arts practitioners and broadcasting policy; her work prompting a redress of discrimination against the female voice. The Artistic Director of nyMusikk reported that Karpf's 'Her Noise' symposium in Oslo 'gathered much attention and Anne's talk was especially well received' and, following the event, 'a number of organisations approached the Norwegian Arts Council and the Cultural Department to highlight the discrepancy of female to male composers and songwriters. After many meetings, funding was awarded for projects aimed at redressing the imbalance' (Testimonial from Artistic Director of nyMusikk, 2013).

According to the writer, broadcaster and Professor, 'Anne's work certainly had a sociological impact (it is now difficult, if not impossible, to debate the voice as a communicative medium without hearing her work invoked), but [it also had considerable impact] in awakening radio professionals to the relationship between gender and voice ... In recent years the debate about the role of women in the media has come, in one form or another, to dominate the headlines. Anne's work not only informs this important debate, but has directly influenced the behaviour of media decision-makers. It has had a very real and very productive impact upon the nature of radio talk' (Testimonial from writer, broadcaster and Professor, 2013).

Karpf's research on the human voice led to a £7,000 grant by the Winnicott Trust to research Donald Winnicott's BBC broadcasts, 1943-62. This resulted in an Institute of Historical Research seminar (2013), and a BBC Radio 4 'Archive on 4' programme – 'From Donald Winnicott to the Naughty Step' – which Karpf researched and presented.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 'Lingua Franca', ABC programme, Australian radio, <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/linguafranca/2012-12-08/4401486>
- Lecture and podcast on Smadar Dreyfus, Stockholm, <http://www.magasin3.com/en/?s=anne+karpf>
- Maître de Conférences honoraire en Etudes Anglophones - Sciences de l'Information et de la Communication, Université Paris-Diderot Paris, 7: organiser of seminar in Paris 2010, and co-editor of *Les Média à l'Épreuve du Réel* anthology.
- Testimonial from Artistic Director of the Norwegian organisation nyMusikk, which organised the 'Vocal Folds' hernoise symposium in Oslo, 2013 (available on request).
- Testimonial from Creative Director, BBC documentaries and Features, and producer of BBC Radio 4 programme, 'Archive on 4: Spoken Like a Woman' (available on request).
- Testimonial from writer, broadcaster and Visiting Professor, Birkbeck College, University of London, familiar with Karpf's work on the voice over a long period (available on request).