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Towards the attainment of mindful bodily relations in music education

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Abstract

Recent studies of female guitar students in upper secondary school ensemble education suggest that girls behave, and are encouraged to behave, in more immanent ways than boys. They seem to receive less encouragement to stretch their bodies and become full musical human beings. Instead they become the second musical sex. During the course of my work with the problem of how to create space for girls playing the electric guitar in educational settings, I have continually found myself wondering how to create educational spaces and relations in ways that let all pupils, independent of sex, realize ideas, transcend as musical bodies, and become what they already are. If teachers and pupils are interrelated bodies, teachers must be aware of how they use their bodies when it comes to creating space for all pupils to develop and stretch out their bodies. The actions of the music teacher, as a musical body, must be balanced in relation to the other musical bodies in the room, as well as to physical preconditions, goals, visions, and expectations of the students. In this article, I want to delve into the subject of bodily interaction, teachers' responsibilities, and questions of intentional educational bodily relations. The aim is to share my close reading of Young's philosophical thinking regarding gender structures and especially female comportment, motility, and spatiality, and develop a set of prerequisites for intentional bodily (music) educational relations. With a starting point in research-based inspiration and motivation for conducting the current philosophical investigation, I share my close reading of Young's theories regarding female situated bodies. Continually I relate to excerpts from two interviews with female guitar students, exemplifying musical body-relational experiences. Finally I share and reflect upon a developed thinking about mindful bodily (music) educational relations.

Keywords: *mindful relational pedagogy, music education, female guitarists, bodily relations*

In my PhD work (Ferm, 2004), I studied how interaction that made musical experience among children aged 10–12 possible was constituted. In the study, I showed that the interaction between teachers and students that were engaged in teaching and learning music

could be described by five themes: 1) how the teachers related to the incorporated musical knowledge of the students; 2) in what ways the teachers were open to the initiatives of the students; 3) how musical experiences were made possible; 4) how the teachers handled the students' actions; and, finally, 5) what symbols were used in the interactions.

The principal philosophical basis of the study was Merleau-Ponty's (1945/1997) phenomenological thinking, in which human beings are seen as living bodily subjects. But the bodily aspect of interaction in the music classroom only made up one part of the results of my study. Later studies showed, by focusing on female guitar students in upper secondary school ensemble education, that girls behave, and are encouraged to behave, in more immanent ways than boys. They seem to receive less encouragement to transcend their bodies and become full musical human beings. Instead, they become what I call "the second musical sex" (Ferm Almqvist, 2019a; Ferm Almqvist & Hentschel, 2019). Thus, what triggered the need for the present investigation was the discrepancy between the girls' experiences and the prevalent idea of educational relations based on equality.

Although policy documents, on many educational levels, state that music shall be accessible to all, independent of, and indeed secure from, the influence of any factors that may be thought to be discriminatory or unfair, this has not in fact been achieved. Ganetz et al. (2009), as well as Green (2002), show that traditional gender structures are produced and reproduced in professional musical life. For example, Smith et al. (2018) and Bain (2019) show that males are highly overrepresented on the Billboard list (USA), as well as among British artists contracted by distributors. Moreover, Berkers et al. (2019) demonstrate that female artists strongly experience how the Dutch music industry is controlled by male actors, which is something that, in many ways, has an impact on their possibilities as artists. Even musical instruments are still gendered (Hallam & Creech, 2009). Evidence suggests that men who choose instruments that are traditionally coded as female, for example the voice, are provided with abundant opportunities for expression and development, whilst women who choose activities or instruments that are coded as male, such as composing or electric guitar, are diminished and questioned (Armstrong, 2013).

Similar patterns can be found even in music educational settings, (Bergman, 2009; Björck, 2011; Borgström-Källén, 2020; Hentschel, 2017; Ganetz et Al., 2009; Green, 2002, Ferm Almqvist, 2019a; McClary, 1991; O'Toole, 1998; Persson, 2019; Onsrud, 2013). For example, Borgström-Källén (2020) states that the teacher is responsible for what roles are offered and what kind of "becoming" that is encouraged in musical intersubjective educational situations. Based on Connell's and Butler's gender theories, Borgström-Källén shows that relational situations in several music educational rooms where singing, popular music, or improvisation is to be learnt risk sustaining traditional gender roles by reproducing stereotypical gender patterns and power relations. However, such conservation of gender patterns is not as likely in situations where old music is discovered and performed. Instead, such a room seems to encourage equality when it comes to roles, independent of sex.

During the course of my work with the problem of how to create a space for girls playing the electric guitar in educational settings, I have continually found myself wondering how to develop educational spaces and relations in ways that let all students, independent of sex, realize ideas, transcend as musical bodies, and achieve their full potential. I have been approaching this theme from different philosophical angles, while also taking part in ongoing studies on educational relations, leading to the realization that there is still a lot to unpack and address when it comes to equality in educational settings.

If teachers and students are interrelated bodies, it seems that teachers should be aware of how they use their bodies when it comes to creating a space for all students to develop and transcend *their* bodies. Musical bodies can be small and immanent, or big and transcendent,¹ depending on how they move and sound, and what attitude they take. A teacher's musical body (Ferm Almqvist & Hentschel 2019; Leijonhufvud, 2010) can be encouraging, modelling, and trustworthy, or diminishing, correcting, and disciplining, depending on how movement, and musical and verbal expressions, are used. The boundary of a musical body is not the skin; it is extended by instruments and sound. Moods of behaviour, agreed norms, imagination, and expectations, as well as use of language, can encourage musical bodies to transcend in the music room, or they can inhibit them, being both immanent and transcendent. The acts of the music teacher, seen as a musical body, must be balanced in relation to other musical bodies in the room, as well as to physical preconditions, goals, visions, and student expectations.

To be able to say something about music educational relations, one way is to explore educational philosophy. Bergdahl and Langman (2018), for example, emphasize educational postures in their quest for a geometry of educational relations. They hold that former studies of educational postures are based on a patriarchal view of "the economic man." To provide an alternative to this they take Cavarero's recent work on *maternal inclinations* as a starting point. Their work shows how images and metaphors associated with the *posture of rectitude* infuse the scholastic model of the school and testify to a geometry of an inclined subject. In this article, I want to take the metaphor of educational geometry as a point of departure to seek possibilities for a relational perspective that encourages growing subjects independent of sex: a possible "geometry" for equality in music education.

The work of Simone de Beauvoir (1949/2012) and Iris Young's (2005) theories regarding situated bodies have both informed my view of traditional teaching and helped me to reach beyond that model to create possibilities for equal (music) education (Ferm Almqvist 2019a). In my work so far, the bodily aspects of the interaction between teaching and learning have remained somewhat peripheral, at least they have not been primary. Thus, in this article, I want to delve into the subject of bodily interaction, the teacher's responsibility, and questions of mindful educational bodily relations. The specific aim is to develop a set of

1 de Beauvoir's concepts immanence and transcendence will be explored in what follows.

prerequisites for mindful bodily (music) educational relations, by a close reading of Young's philosophical thinking regarding gender structures and especially female comportment, motility, and spatiality. My research question is the following: Can Young's philosophy contribute to a better understanding of how music teachers can use their bodily selves to develop equal relational situations?

The expressions of two female students playing electric guitar in upper secondary specialist programmes in Sweden, which were part of the material collected for my earlier studies (Ferm Almqvist, 2019b), will serve as examples aiming to relate the philosophical investigation to practice. Associative interviews were stimulated by a mind map, where the interviewees' earlier experiences of ensemble playing, the role of the teacher, learning outcomes, different ensemble roles, and thoughts about the future were connected to the phenomenon of the study: experiences of ensemble playing education at upper secondary level. The interviews, which lasted for about one hour each, were recorded and transcribed. For a detailed description of the development of the research material, see Ferm Almqvist (2019b). One of the guitarists played in a mixed, male-dominated band, and the other played in an all-female band. The girls' expressions show a mixture of situations, some of which provide opportunities for them to develop as musical bodies and become musical beings, and some of which don't. The examples imply that educational relations between musical bodies in educational settings can appear in modelling teaching examples, in interaction between teacher and student, and in interaction between students. The main question that I want to address is what characterizes fruitful educational relations in situations where students – seen here as musical bodies – are meant to develop.

In the following, the outcomes of philosophical investigations regarding relational pedagogy are presented, as well as de Beauvoir's (1949/2012) thinking concerning how women come to be. Next follows the actual reading of Young (2005), which is mirrored and motivated by the female voices. Finally, I elaborate on my thinking about mindful bodily (music) educational relations.

Educational relations – from a philosophical perspective

The task that music educators face is to guide students towards agreed-upon goals, and to organize the development of student abilities as defined in programme documents, such as course syllabi and curricula. In addition, everyone who works in school has to relate to generic goals, as expressed in educational policy documents. From a relational perspective, all human beings are seen as related to one another, within and towards the surrounding world. Each human being is seen as an active and thinking subject, whose individual becoming develops in interaction with others, in specific spatial, historical, and social

situations. Also, what is to be learnt, that is, the educational content, becomes meaningful in the meeting with others' experiences, seen from a relational perspective. A human being's inner perception of a specific content, for example a musical piece, develops in external encounters with other students' perceptions (Meyer-Drawe, 1986; Ferm Almqvist & Leijonhufvud, 2017). To make genuine encounters possible, dialogues are needed, which in turn demand curiosity and respect, as well as awareness and openness, when it comes to taking the perspective of others. Society is changing, humans are changing, what an expression in a syllabus means is changing, depending on historical, spatial, and social contexts. Hence the importance of exploring the concept of (music) educational relations.

During the first half of the 20th century the dialogue was placed in the centre for human becoming by philosophers interested in intersubjectivity, such as Arendt, Buber, Merleau-Ponty, and Levinas (Uljens, 2001). The thinking was based on an intersubjective view of the world in which human beings become what they can be in interaction with each other and the world, as thinking, active subjects. A starting point for this to happen is the willingness to take each other's perspectives (ibid.). Within the field of education, it is possible to define a dialogic-philosophical turn, caused by the impetus to emphasize the significance of communication in the shared exploration of what students bring into educational situations. Another incentive is the insight that freedom is twofold; freedom is, on the one hand, defined as transcendental, that is, humans are seen as beings with the ability to take action and learn. On the other hand, freedom is cultural, and develops through cultivation, which makes human border crossings possible (Uljens, 2001). From a relational perspective, teachers are, accordingly, expected to create intersubjective situations in which students both develop content knowledge and, at the same time, are cultivated into their full potential as human beings. Such a view is in line with Simone de Beauvoir's (1949/2012) view of the becoming of women.

In taking Simone de Beauvoir's philosophy as a point of departure, we must realize that human beings are situated bodies. This implies that they are restricted and encouraged in different ways depending on how they see themselves and are approached by others in social, historical, and spatial contexts. Humans experience the world through their body, which makes their perspective of the world subjectively given and impossible to break free from. The human body is viewed as a holistic unity, as a *body-subject*, rather than *body and subject*. This is how the body establishes human experience in the world (de Beauvoir, 1949/2012; Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1997). In de Beauvoir's (1949/2012) thinking, immanence and transcendence are used as theoretical concepts to explain how humans live their lives. As we go through life, we encounter opportunities and obstacles that arise in the form of actual events in specific situations. When humans perceive themselves as constrained, and not expected by the surrounding to transcend in their projects (de Beauvoir, 1949/2012), they become immanent. "Transcendence" can be defined as ongoing action in relation to "immanence," defined as passive repetition. Every human existence includes

both transcendence and immanence. For de Beauvoir, transcendence is synonymous with human freedom. She sees humans as basically free but constrained by the actualities of particular situations; some humans experience more freedom or more opportunities to transcend than others. According to de Beauvoir, women in general have ended up in immanence to a higher degree than men, through power structures that subordinate women and favour men. The very concept of “woman,” de Beauvoir argues, is a male one: woman is always “other” because the male is the “seer”: he is the subject and she the object – the *meaning* of what it is to be a woman is given by men through the “male gaze.” Women can thus be seen as complicit in their own oppression. In existentialist terms, women internalize the male gaze, and with it the expectations of their gender. Women are conscious of how they are observed, and their thinking assimilates this awareness. Thus, women risk ending up striving to live up to this model of the “eternal feminine,” and become just what they are expected to become.

In music educational contexts, these concepts can be used to analyze students’ actions in situations where musical learning is expected. Transcendence would here implicate the choice of actively engaging in musical situations as your own (learning) project with the aim to develop musical knowledge, whereas immanence would be to passively refuse, or engage in musical situations in a more passive way without the sense of running your own project or of aspiring to learn or develop your musical knowledge (cf Ferm Almqvist & Hentschel, 2019). In other words, transcendence, the human need to act in the world, is achieved in an endeavor that moves an individual beyond the present status quo towards an open future. de Beauvoir describes this as a human right (independent of sex) – that is, the right for everyone to become sensitive selves, living as unities of body and consciousness, able to take active responsibility for their own, and others’, lives. Hence, it becomes crucial to underline the role of the teacher in encouraging, modelling, and making space for female transcendence and bodily extension in situated relations in music education, beyond traditions and established expectations.

As stated above, the current philosophical investigation aims to illuminate bodily aspects of relational education, e.g. bodily aspects of the creation of situations in which all students can attain their full potential as musical beings. In their philosophical investigation Bergdahl and Langman (2018) attempt to come closer to what a geometry of an educational relation might look like by shedding light on some of the forgotten bodily, relational, and existential conditions of education that characterize life in schools. The authors suggest that the “maternal pedagogical posture is the posture ... of someone who is aware of an *originary indebtedness* to what and who is ‘other’, ‘after’ or ‘before’” (2018, p. 322). Accordingly, they argue that the maternal pedagogical posture of the teacher is not the straight and upright position of a guard, a doorman, or ‘the master of the house’, who can distinguish in advance “between friend and foe in relation to one’s home” (2018, p. 323). But, they continue, the maternal posture is instead that of someone who continually balances between

being welcoming and being hostile towards more demanding “guests.” Based on that reasoning they make clear that pedagogical work is about knowing when to stand erect, for example as a door-man, and when to “stretch, bend, and lean to the limit of one’s capacity in order to take care of and pass on the things that matters the most” (2018, p. 324). The authors state that such a geometry completes the view of uprightness and how we speak about positions in educational terms, while supporting dimensions of ability and potentiality. They underline that such a geometry:

... can also already be found in the postures of actual teachers and pupils who time and again let themselves be exposed to and get carried away by the subject matter and who ... seem to find something in the world worthy of their shared interest and attention, study and effort, love and care. It is these embodied and sexed teachers and pupils that – precisely because they are *educable beings that are “not one”* – continue to bring life and renewal to the school, offering thereby resistance to what is implied in the masculine logic of the economic man. (2018, p. 324–325)

These thoughts about a geometry of education, the (bodily) balancing act in relation to the situation, “the other,” and the (music) subject content, aim to create opportunities for all students to grow by way of what is known, as well as by what is unknown. Within such balancing in music educational situations, there are gaps where meaning making or, to put it differently, becoming, is possible. In her investigation of educational relations between humans and horses, a study which by its very nature underscores the importance of other modes of expression than the verbal and so puts bodily relations in the centre, Hagström (2018) discovers that understanding what is being expressed should be based on curious listening. She emphasizes that educational listening concerns both the words and what lies beyond them, that is, what is left unsaid. But, since the other is altogether other, a human being cannot even begin to know how the other can be described, Hagström continues. If, for example, a teacher tries to tell a student who she is, then the teacher has already forfeited the opportunities to explore the creative space which lies in-between the determinate and indeterminate. To listen and wonder is what carries the possibility of the space in-between, based on such a way of thinking. Hence, Hagström argues that becoming takes place in the space in-between: in the lived body that stretches out towards the world and sways at the same time as it is swayed by the world, in an imagination that accommodates difference, in the space for wonder, in encountering the Other, in the space in-between, where the teacher is vulnerable and open for someone who is someone else than “me,” and in the educational space in-between relations, where one plus one becomes something wholly other that is impossible to anticipate. Accordingly, it is important to investigate further the shared living that takes form and expression in corporality, for example the corporality of the moment in lived educational relationships.

In light of Hagström's (2018) thinking, from a music educational perspective, it becomes interesting to give further thought to the importance of resistance as a precondition for becoming in the gap between bodily subjects, the in-between, the place of wonder. Such a way of thinking implies that the teacher cannot be too far away, or too close, in the musical bodily dialogue, which also includes respecting the other, and opening up for who the other is and what s/he wants, and what the other can be offered. Based on the above thoughts, a key question emerges following: How might it be possible to create mindful bodily (music) educational relations, constituted by flexible postures and wonder in the in-between, where the musical world is created and investigated, and where it is possible for all students to extend their bodies, achieve their full potential as musical beings, and at the same time reach intended goals in individual ways? Maybe Young (2005), who has investigated gender structures and bodily possibility, can be of help.

Gender structures and bodily circumstances in educational situations

In the following close reading of Young (2005a, 2005b), her thoughts about gender structures and bodily possibilities and limitations, will be related to examples of functional and non-functional relations recounted by female electric guitarists. Although I, in my analysis, draw on examples from female electric guitarists, I want to stress that all students, independent of gender identification, are in focus for a possible thinking about mindful bodily (music) educational relations. Of interest is how the teachers' movements and actions can interact with the students' musical bodies, independent of gender identification, in ways that let students use their bodies in music educational relations to transcend norms and language, and also renegotiate traditions and history – to encourage “the shared living that takes form and expression in corporality” (Hagström, 2018, p. 129, *my translation*). In the following, my ambition is to explore the implications of Young's theories about gender structures and bodily movements in terms of creating music educational relational settings as spaces for wonder, where students get the opportunity to transcend and achieve their full potential as musical beings.

According to Young (2005a), the way people are positioned in structures depends as much on how other people treat them within various institutional settings as it does on their own attitude (2005a, p. 21). She continues by observing that individuals occupy multiple positions in structures, and changes occur mainly as a result of the institutional setting and the position of others. Hence, the ways teachers and students see themselves, and how they approach each other, constitute preconditions for what is possible for them to do and learn. To accept this idea and inculcate it in pedagogical situations makes demands on teachers and students – that they see and understand these positions and structural

patterns, and prepare themselves to be flexible and to accommodate and, at times, initiate change.

We need tools for understanding how and why certain patterns in the allocation of tasks or status recognition remain persistent in ways that limit the options of many women and of most people whose sexual and intimate choices deviate from heterosexual norms. (Young, 2005a, p. 21)

An important conceptual shift occurs, Young continues, when the concept of gender is used as a tool for theorizing structures other than subjects. According to Young (2005a) the concept of gender should be defined as a “particular form of the social positioning of lived bodies” (p. 22), such as musicking students and teachers, in relation to one another within “historically and socially specific institutions.” For example, the music classroom, or processes, such as musicking in specific genres, have material effects on the environment in which people act and reproduce relations of power and privilege. The electric guitar, and related genres and behaviours, constitute a clear example of this. Hence, as Young stresses, the fact that individual persons are “gendered” means that all human beings, including guitar-playing students, are passively grouped according to such structural relations. Thus, choosing the electric guitar is not directly connected to identity; however, the perception and developed behaviours that follow contribute to identities on more or less personal levels. The question is how mindful bodily (music) educational relations can challenge such structures and provide opportunities for variations and possibilities independent of gender identifications. One answer could be openness for and encouraging of musical initiatives.

We can come with suggestions, but the teachers come with songs and then we decide, we decide a lot ourselves, we, the youngsters in the group. “Yes, but how shall we do it with solos? You take the first one, and then you ...” Everyone can play a solo if they want, for how long you want etc. (Girl in female band)

If I relate to what the girls express, and I view the girls as musical bodies situated within ensemble education, the different preconditions needed for them to transcend and follow their ideas become clear. They are limited in some ways and find possibilities in others. The teachers and classmates extend and use their bodies in ways pre-decided by institutional and genre connected traditions. The power relations become visible if we imagine how these musical bodies relate to each other and what spaces for discovery are accessible. Girls who play the instrument are “passively” grouped as quiet and caring, helpful and organizing. All participants in the situation are included in these processes. Bodily (music) educational relations seem to be pre-decided and hard to change. As one of the girls expresses:

I don't know, I just feel, it's hard because it feels like it is hard to change the way of thinking, which almost everyone in the world has, that boys are better at playing; it feels that that is hard to change, but I think that, they must realize what they are up to. I don't know, you must claim space yourself if you feel oppressed, or how to say it, but that is really hard. (Girl in male-dominated band)

According to the girls, boys playing the electric guitar are seen as, and are encouraged to be, "upright men," while girls who play the electric guitar must either learn to become men or to keep and maintain their marginalized position.

One teacher very often says: "You play so nice and quietly," even if we play like the hardest bebop licks in the world. (Girl in male-dominated band)

The division of labour, according to Young (2005b), can explain these kinds of bodily (music) educational relations. "Neo-liberal economic policy movements across the globe have had the effect of retrenching this division where it may have loosened" (p. 22–23). For example, assessment criteria are interpreted through the lens of a patriarchally structured jazz- and rock-influenced ensemble education, which contributes to the above-mentioned gender divided behaviour (Ferm Almqvist 2919b).

The difference between the way the girl in the all-female ensemble experiences her opportunities to extend her musical body, and the way the girls in mixed ensembles experience the same thing, and the difference in approaches between the two, may be explained by what Young defines as the normative heterosexuality of our society. Social "truths" that are constituted within institutions build structures, which give different opportunities to different human beings on the basis of sex, as exemplified below.

I always played third or fourth guitar, if I didn't play the trumpet. And it was also always decided beforehand, who should play the solo. There was no talk about taking turns, or that more than one could practice the solo, and I didn't dare say anything. (Girl in male-dominated band)

This can affect freedom, for example, and force humans to adapt to expectations, instead of following their interests and dreams. This may explain why the girls see themselves as less capable and more susceptible to judgment, and why immanent and quiet musical bodies are encouraged among girls.

Young (2005b) also discusses the way particular professions – such as the military or police – are associated with maleness, and jazz is another such professional area. For example, structures in the ensemble that hinder actions among the girls seem quite resistant to change, according to the interviewees. According to hierarchies of decision – the structuring of state institutions, corporations and other bureaucracies, but we might guess

also popular music ensemble education – some people, usually men, are granted significant privileges and freedom, while others, usually women, are limited, constrained, and subordinate. Such an approach even influences imaginaries of the guitar-playing interviewed females.

If it was one girl and four boys, she would get less space, even if she was equally good.
(Girl in female band)

In an educational situation, the greatest responsibility for change lies naturally with the teacher, who has to face and relate to established unequal structures. “Gendered hierarchies of power intersect with sexual division of labour and normative heterosexuality, to reproduce a sense of entitlement of men to women’s service and an association of heterosexual masculinity with force and command” (Young 2005b, p. 24). Female bodies are expected to conform to a masculine behavioural pattern that has been developed by male electric guitarists and is now expected from all electric guitarists, at the same time as objectification – that someone is seen as an object and not a living human being - seems to be a common response when girls play the guitar in their own way.

It was an audition here at the school of some kind, and a girl in second class played the bass. It was a tour around Scandinavia or something similar, possible to apply to, and she did that. A guy on the board said: “Yes, primarily we search for more of a foundation, or skeleton in the band, we will primarily look at the guys among the musicians.” Then she started to play, and then he started to send kisses in her direction. (Girl in male-dominated band)

The quotation makes clear that we need to investigate and further question how mindful bodily (music) educational relations can contribute to developing equal opportunities for extending and transcending musical bodies in the classroom.

Young suggests that to come further in theorizing the socially constituted experience of women and men, the concept of the lived body could be employed, as it is richer and more flexible than concepts of sex or gender. “The lived body is particular in its morphology, material similarities, and differences from other bodies” (2005b, p. 25). To view teachers and students as lived bodies, intertwined in relations in the music room, could be a starting point for developing mindful bodily (music) educational relations. But the reasons female electric guitarists are being limited when it comes to extending their bodies and running their projects in the music classroom, and especially in the ensemble educational situation, are related to the question about these bodies in relation to the structures mentioned. Therefore, it is necessary to try to understand the question in a slightly broader historical and social perspective. Young’s essay (2005b) “Throwing like a girl: a phenomenology of feminine body comportment, motility and spatiality” seems to be useful in this respect.

The article focuses upon use of lateral space. It concerns “the upright body,” and it is interesting to think about how that kind of body is used by teachers and encouraged among students in music education, as already touched upon above. Young (2005b) questions whether there are specific feminine styles of body comportment and movement. She asks if there is a female bodily essence, or if the way human beings use and develop their bodies is something that is connected to existence. Young refers to de Beauvoir (1949/2012), who denies essential bodily behaviours, and instead underlines that human beings are defined by their situations. “In denying such a feminine essence, however, we should not fall into that ‘nominalism’ that denies the differences in the behaviour and experience of men and women. There is a common basis which underlies every individual female existence in the present state of education and custom” (p. 175–176). As stated above (Ferm Almqvist & Hentschel, 2019), the body is seen as a situation within a situation, which suggests that situations can be created in which students can develop in individual ways, independent of gender identification and sex. The following quotation shows how a female electric guitarist experiences the educational situation as encouraging.

And I had never done that [improvised], like never. And then I was to play some kind of jazz solo and it was really scary. But you get used to it, and then it becomes more fun as well. And I knew some people there. (Girl in female band)

The situation of women within a given socio-historical set of circumstances, despite the individual variation in each woman’s experiences and opportunities, Young continues, has an element that can be described and made intelligible. She emphasizes, though, that this element is specific to a particular social formation during a particular epoch. For example, the social formations constructed in the contexts of ensemble education where the interviews related to in this article were made, take place in the decade of 2010. Hence, the situatedness (Beauvoir 1949/2012) of women (or all human beings, whichever gender they define themselves as) should be seen as bodily movement, as well as an orientation towards women’s surrounding world.

Young (2005b) attempts to combine existential phenomenology with feminist theory, to capture some of the basic modalities of feminine bodily comportment, manner of moving, and relations in space. She states that such an approach brings intelligibility and significance to certain observable and rather ordinary ways in which women in our society typically comport themselves and move differently from the ways men do, independent of physical preconditions. This is needed to understand the girls’ voices in this article as well. Young regionalizes her studies to contemporary, advanced, industrialized, urban, and commercial society. This is where the music education I have in mind also takes place. She moreover focuses on human beings as holistic bodily subjects, and on movements that aim to accomplish a definite purpose and task – for example throwing a ball or performing

a guitar solo. And, referring to Merleau-Ponty (1945/1997), it is the ordinary purposive orientation of the body as a whole towards things and its environment that initially defines the relation of a subject to its world. Young holds that a “focus upon ways in which the feminine body frequently or typically conducts itself in such comportment, or movement, may be particularly revelatory of the structures of feminine existence” (Young 2005b, p. 30). Again, how should ensemble teachers relate to these structures, and how could they handle bodily educational relations, to challenge and break them? In the quotation below, the speaker’s witness clearly shows that such knowledge is needed in today’s classrooms.

Sometimes in the ensemble lesson I feel that, we are two guitarists there, one guy and me, and it’s not a subjective experience, I really try to see it objectively. But he needs to play ... or they ask easier things from him and he gets more appreciation and confirmation, as I have to play slightly more complicated stuff to get the same response ...
(Girl in male-dominated band)

Teachers as well as classmates are part of the environment to which the students’ living bodies relate – an environment where instruments and sound become extensions of these bodily subjects and can strengthen specific patterns of movement. It is thus interesting to see how teachers’ bodily movements influence the movements of students, and how the development that Young suggests could be challenged and changed through mindful bodily (music) educational relations.

It should now be clear that the feminine is defined by Young as a set of structures that delimit the typical ways in which a situation is lived by women themselves. She emphasizes that with this definition, it is not necessary that all women be feminine and, further, it is not necessary that there be distinctive structures and behaviours typical of the women’s situation. Thus, it is possible to say that some women escape or transcend the typical definition of what a woman is in various degrees and respects. It is therefore interesting to see how teachers relate to these structures, and what they are demanded to challenge and change, to be able to create mindful bodily (music) educational relations.

Here, the concepts of immanence and transcendence become meaningful and relevant. de Beauvoir (1949/2012) stresses that accounts of women’s existence in patriarchal societies are defined by a basic tension between immanence and transcendence. The culture and society in which the female person dwells define woman as other, as the inessential correlate to man, as pure object and immanence. Young’s suggestion, though, is that the “modalities of feminine bodily comportment, mobility, and spatiality exhibit this same tension between transcendence and immanence, between subjectivity and being a mere object” (2005b, p. 32). Hence, we have to contribute with tools that can be used to reflect on how music teachers can encourage real transcendence among and between equal subjects independent of sex or gender definition in mindful bodily (music) educational relations.

Here, the girl in the female-dominated ensemble gives an example of on which grounds such teaching with common music making in the centre, can be conducted:

Yes, we are focusing on putting the song together, to make it sound good in the end. But they [the other girls in the female band] should never be picky and say: “No, you can’t do it that way”: It’s like totally free, we just talk about the building of the arrangement, so it goes forward. No, jazz, or to be a member of that group has really changed me as a person, really, it is like ... I can’t really understand it. I think it’s because we improvise a lot. I have been really shy, and now I play solos for anyone. And then like, it’s so cool because, I don’t know, I have become so much more self-confident. (Girl in female band)

Young notices that feminine comportment and body movement in physical activities reveal that these are also frequently characterized by a failure to make full use of the bodies’ spatial and lateral potentialities generally. In addition, the musical body includes sounding or acoustic dimensions (Leijonhufvud, 2010; Alerby & Ferm, 2005). One possibility is that mindful bodily (music) educational relations consist of sound and movement dimensions, as well as a verbal dimension. Musical bodies exist and perform through physical, existential, and acoustic movement – performed by actions, reflections, speech, and music. How the teacher talks, moves, and sounds in relation to the students and the learning context should influence the opportunities students find and are encouraged to develop in terms of movement and transcendence.

Human beings have learnt to use their bodies in different ways, which also involves the way muscles are trained and used. This is as true of how human beings use their bodies in singing or other “light” actions, as it is of heavy lifting. In “Throwing like a girl,” Young (2005b) describes the action as follows: “The whole body is not put into fluid and directed motion, but rather, in swinging and hitting, for example, the motion is concentrated on one body part; and ... the woman’s motion tends to not reach, extend, lean, stretch, and follow through in the direction of her intention” (p. 33). This is interesting, since it can be associated with the ability of human beings to follow ideas and intentions. In the interview material there are examples of how such abilities among females are hindered, instead of being encouraged to develop.

think I play good, I don’t want to do it in any other way, but according to the others I truly play bad. (Girl in male dominated band)

This is because women are not expected to, and – as should be evident from the experiences recounted by female electric guitarists – are not encouraged to, use their whole bodies, but rather are stopped, or at least hindered, from doing so. “The space available to our movement is a constricted space. Women tend to wait for and then react to its approach, rather

than going forth to meet it” (Young, 2005b, p. 34). Young claims that women lack a complete trust in their bodies to carry them all the way to where they aim to be. She concludes that the reason for this is a *double hesitation*, a fear of being hurt and a lack of confidence. This can be recognized among the electric guitar-playing girls as well (Ferm Almqvist, 2019b). This double hesitation, according to Young, means that women who undertake a task are frequently both self-conscious about appearing awkward and, at the same time, afraid of appearing too strong. Ironically, the double hesitation contributes to women’s awkwardness and frustration. It becomes clear that an important task facing teachers is to become aware of how they create bodily (music) educational relations, which release students from such double binds and instead show them what they are capable of.

Young (2005b) brings up some categorical descriptions of modalities of comportment and movement, which might be useful in discussing this further. She suggests: *ambiguous transcendence*, *inhibited intentionality* and *discontinuous unity with surroundings* as aspects of comportment and movement that make sense in music educational settings.

Female *ambiguous transcendence*, Young proposes, is laden with immanence. The lived body as transcendence is “pure fluid action; the continuous calling forth of capacities that are applied to the world” (Young, 2005b, p. 36). Feminine bodily existence, however, risks remaining in immanence, even as it moves towards the world in motions of grasping, or manipulating, like, for example, playing the electric guitar, not least because of how the surrounding environment and setting respond, as well as because of women’s own expectations of themselves.

You know, there are such things that they really don’t notice. When he [the teacher] says that I play nicely. And the other guitarist gets to hear: “God such a good bebop solo” or “Hell, you are good.” (Girl in male-dominated band)

Consequently, women often live their (musical) bodies as heavy loads, which must be carried around and, at the same time, protected. To see the female musical body through this perspective, extended by the physical electric guitar and its sound, explains the challenges of stretching the body out into the room and the situation.

As is also clear from the experiences recounted in the female guitarists’ utterances, they seldom enter bodily music educational relations by their own comportment towards their surroundings in unambiguous and confident manners.

That’s why you practise. To get confirmation from the others – that they should think I could do something (without knowing how much I’d practised). It was important that the teacher gave me cred in front of the boys, so they understood that I could do something, otherwise it was kind of meaningless. (Girl in male-dominated band)

Typically, Young (2005b) underscores, the feminine body underuses its real capacity, both its physical size and strength, and the real skills and coordination that are available to it. The notion of *inhibited intentionality*, as Young defines it, reaches a projected end with an “I can,” and, as Young writes, “withholds its full bodily commitment to that end in a self-imposed ‘I cannot’” (p. 39). “For any lived body,” Young continues, “the world appears as the system of possibilities that are correlative to its intentions” (p. 37). The world appears, according to Young, to be populated by resistances that correlate to its own limits and frustrations.

No, I don't know, I didn't know, or knew about, any girl who played the electric guitar, and I was rather shy and ... I knew ... I thought more like, oh I will play the worst rock solo ... will I be able to handle that? But I decided to try, what can go wrong? I had wanted to do it for so long. (Girl in female band)

Young (2005b) asserts that an “I cannot” may appear to set limits for the “I can” for any bodily existence. This is interesting in terms of the girl who couldn't imagine herself as playing “rock-licks,” but challenged the “I cannot,” and dared try to reach “I can.” Her encouraging teacher and classmates were crucial in the process, which shows how important the teacher's approach and behaviour can be. This indicates that the teacher is responsible when it comes to creating situations where failing is allowed and judging is absent.

Young further takes into account Merleau-Ponty's (1945/1997) thoughts about intentionality and how a moving body brings unity and unites itself with its surroundings. The space that is available for the body in the intended direction constitutes a precondition for how the body sets things in relation to other bodies and itself, based on Young's proposition that the body's movement and direction organize the situation as a continuous extension of its own being. As Merleau-Ponty states: “I do not bring together one by one the parts of my body; this translation and this unification are performed once and for all within me: they are all my body itself” (p. 150). Young categorizes this as *discontinuous unity* – it has to do with how the body relates to itself and its surroundings. Young emphasizes that in movements which demand of the body that it be actively engaged and coordinated “in order to perform properly, women tend to locate their motion in one part of the body only, leaving the rest of the body relatively immobile. The part of the body that is transcending towards an aim is relatively disunited from the parts that remain immobile” (Young 2005b, p. 38). She concludes that a lack of bodily unity is often manifested in women's movements: “The character of the inhibited intentionality whereby feminine motion severs the connection between aim and enactment, between possibility in the world and capacity in the body, itself produces this discontinuous unity” (Young, 2005b, p. 38). This can be seen among electric guitar-playing female students who are not transcending themselves

in, for example, improvisation. What, then, is the task of the teacher who wants to develop mindful bodily (music) educational relations that encourage musical confidence among all students, independent of sex?

If I was the only girl in the group I should never dare. It is hard to say why, it is really individual how people behave, but it feels like boys claim more space. There are two other groups here. With mostly boys. And when we play for them I get a bit unsure what I have to do so they don't judge me. So, it feels good that we are only girls in my group. I don't know why. It just feels better. Safer in a way. (Girl in female band)

The body cannot exist solely as an object; rather it exists in transcendent presence in the world and the immediate enactment of intentions. The three contradictory modalities Young (2005b) defines as constituting female bodily existence have their roots in the fact that, for feminine existence, the body is frequently both subject and object, at the same time and in reference to the same act. This is exemplified by the girl in the female band who doesn't want to perform when the guys are listening, even if she thinks that they play really well. She doesn't want to be judged.

Thoughts for the future: Towards the attainment of mindful bodily relations in music education

Educational relations consisting of musical bodies in educational settings can emerge in modelling, in interaction between teacher and student, and in interaction between students. It has been emphasized that behaviours, agreed-upon norms, imaginations, and expectations, as well as use of language, can encourage or limit musical bodily subjects to extend and transcend in the musical room. The reading of Young's work has suggested some explanations of the ways in which the situations of students in music education can impact how they realize their ideas and use musical space. Young accentuates the importance of the social setting, the relations to and, not least, the response from the surrounding world, in this respect. How can these insights help to develop mindful bodily (music) educational relations, constituted by flexible postures (Bergdahl & Langman, 2019), friction, and wonder at the in-between (Hagström, 2017)? How can music teachers help to create an environment where the musical world is created and investigated, and where it is possible for all to extend their bodies and become their full musical potential, and reach their goals in individual ways?

One important thing for the teacher to do is to approach students in a way that makes them use the physical space that is available to them, independent of sex or gender identity. One task will be to break the habit of many females of creating an existential enclosure around themselves and within the larger space surrounding them, thus constricting their

own space and making the wider space unavailable to them and their “I can.” Hence, teachers’ postures must create space for all students to experience “I can.”

Another challenge is to develop mindful bodily (music) educational relations in which the “space of yonder” becomes available to all students (and thereby disappears), and where discontinuity between aim and capacity is avoided. This is about breaking the habit of inhibited intentionality of feminine mobility. The space of “yonder,” according to Young (2005a), is a space in which feminine existence projects possibilities in the sense of understanding that “someone” could move within it, but not “I.” In situations of mindful bodily (music) educational relations, the space must become available for all kinds of existence – it must become a space which females are able not only to look into, but to move into and take their place. In other words, no spaces of yonder should exist.”

Bodily existence is both spatially constituted and a constituting spatial subject. Insofar as feminine existence lives the body as transcendence and intentionality, feminine bodily subjects actively constitute space and are the original coordinates that unify the spatial field. In addition, the female projects spatial relations and positions, in accordance with her intentions, and this is something which all students should be encouraged by their teachers and classmates to do in educational relations. The responsible teacher has to be aware of the risk of objectifying students, and of maintaining and “leaning on” the male gaze, or of the students’ own habits of making themselves available to judgement.

The roots are in the situation, Young (2005b) concludes, in situations conditioned by sexist oppression in contemporary society. These are the conditions which music teachers should be able to reflect upon, react to, and change. In general, even in 2020, women are to a great extent defined (even if there are exceptions) as physically inhibited, confined, positioned, and objectified. It is more unusual to define females as open, unambitious, and transcendent, as human beings who move out to master a world that belongs also to women, a world constituted by their own intentions and projections. This is what mindful bodily (music) educational relations must own up to. Such a change needs awareness, flexibility, and openness for spaces of wonder in music educational situations.

Author biography

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