Inaudible, (Un)heard:

Repurposing Media Technologies to Speak Across and Beyond Time and Distance

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Abstract

How might we speak to the dead? The nonhuman? Can they speak back? And what does it mean to do so? What technologies or devices are required to facilitate this communication? This thesis looks at two devices—the *wind phone* (*kaze no denwa*), a disconnected rotary telephone set inside a traditional booth erected in a garden overlooking the ocean in Ōtsuchi, Iwate Prefecture, Japan, one of the towns most affected by the 2011 tsunami, and *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to Their Mother* (1991), a giant wooden megaphone built by Anishinaabe artist Rebecca Belmore in response to the 1990 "Oka Crisis" or Kanehsatà:ke Resistance. The first, the *wind phone*, was initially built by Ōtsuchi resident, Itaru Sasaki, to speak with a cousin who died of cancer. Following the tsunami, however, it became a means for others to speak to the dead and has even inspired the creation of other wind phones in various locations around the world. The second device, the megaphone, was toured to various Indigenous communities, and sites of land disputes, transported in Belmore's van across 'Canada.' Since then, it has been used as part of many other ceremonies and protests, as well as a few museum exhibitions; it was recently installed at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts [MMFA]. Instead of being aimed at the government, however, the megaphone was turned towards the land itself, in Belmore's words, "so that [Indigenous] people could speak to our Mother, to the Earth." In examining these two devices, this thesis shows how communication with the dead and "other-than-human kin" can be made possible through the repurposing of these analogue communication technology. Dually displaced, in function and location, the telephone and the megaphone, I argue, are reimagined as instruments of affective labour, alternate technological innovations that carry voices across immeasurable distances and establish lines of communication with absent interlocutors who refuse to or cannot listen (under common understandings). As such, while mobilizing the

common use, function, and physical form of each technology, they reinterpret the practical nature and put the forms to different use.

Résumé

Comment pouvons-nous parler aux morts? Aux non-humains ? Peuvent-ils nous répondre ? Et qu'est-ce que cela signifie de le faire ? Quelles technologies ou quels dispositifs sont nécessaires pour faciliter cette communication ? Quels lieux ? Des rituels ? Des cérémonies ? Comment le fait de parler à ces interlocuteurs peut-il animer ou enchanter leurs corps et, en retour, conférer aux morts et aux non-humains un rôle actif ? Cette thèse s'intéresse à deux dispositifs : le téléphone à vent (kaze no denwa), un téléphone rotatif déconnecté placé à l'intérieur d'une cabine traditionnelle érigée dans un jardin surplombant l'océan à Ōtsuchi, dans la préfecture d'Iwate, au Japon, l'une des villes les plus touchées par le tsunami de 2011, et *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan : Speaking to Their Mother* (1991), un mégaphone géant en bois construit par l'artiste anishinaabe Rebecca Belmore en réponse à la "crise d'Oka" de 1990 ou résistance de Kanehsatà:ke. Le premier, *le téléphone à vent*, a été initialement construit par Itaru Sasaki, un habitant de Ōtsuchi, pour parler avec un cousin décédé d'un cancer. Après le tsunami, cependant, il est devenu un moyen pour d'autres personnes de parler aux morts et aux disparus et a même inspiré la création d'autres téléphones à vent dans divers endroits du monde. Le second, le mégaphone de Belmore, a été fabriqué à la suite de l'utilisation par le gouvernement canadien de la puissance militaire contre le peuple mohawk au Québec. Il a ensuite fait l'objet d'une tournée dans divers lieux de protestation (et a ensuite été installé au Musée-des-Beaux-Arts de Montréal [MBAM]). Cependant, au lieu d'être dirigé vers le gouvernement, le mégaphone était tourné vers la terre elle-même, selon les mots de Belmore, "afin que les peuples [autochtones] puissent parler à notre mère, à la Terre." En examinant ces deux appareils, cette thèse montre comment la communication avec les morts et les non-humains est rendue possible par la réaffectation de la technologie de communication téléphonique analogique. Déplacés à la fois dans leur fonction et

leur emplacement, le téléphone et le mégaphone sont ici réimaginés comme des instruments de travail affectif, des innovations technologiques alternatives qui transportent les voix à travers des distances incommensurables et établissent des lignes de communication avec des interlocuteurs absents qui refusent ou qui ne peuvent pas écouter (selon les conceptions communes). Cependant, chacune de ces technologies remet en question ce que signifie écouter et qui a accès à l'écoute. Il s'agit de l'audience, des destinataires ambigus des appels téléphoniques, et des demandes exprimées par le mégaphone.

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Can the past be heard in the present? What or who speaks or makes a sound?

—Jacques Khalip, "'The Archaeology of Sound': Derek Jarman's Blue and Queer Audiovisuality in the Time of Aids"

…am I hearing voices within a voice ? but isn't the truth of the voice to be hallucinated ? isn't the entire space of the voice an infinite one ?

—Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice"

Introduction

Speaking to and Listening for Indeterminate Audiences

I open with questions around sound, hearing, and voice in the epigraph to frame the questions that follow: How might we speak to the dead? And what about the nonhuman? Can they speak back? What does it mean to do so? What technologies or devices are required to facilitate these types of communication? What locations? Rituals? Ceremonies? How can speaking to these audiences animate or enchant their bodies and in turn grant the dead and the nonhuman agency? This thesis looks at two devices—the *wind phone (kaze no denwa)*, a disconnected rotary telephone set inside a traditional booth erected in a garden overlooking the ocean in Ōtsuchi, Iwate Prefecture, Japan, one of the towns most affected by the 2011 tsunami, and *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to Their Mother* (1991), a massive six-by-seven-foot wooden megaphone built by Anishinaabe artist Rebecca Belmore made for Indigenous people to speak directly to the land. The first, the *wind phone*, was initially built by Ōtsuchi resident Itaru Sasaki to speak to his cousin who died of cancer. Following the tsunami, however, it became a means for others to speak to the dead and the missing and has even inspired the creation of other *wind phones* in various locations around the world.[1] The second, Belmore's megaphone, was built as a response to the 1990 "Oka Crisis," also known as

[1] For example, one was built behind a hospice in Port Moody, British Columbia and another in Old Chelsea, Quebec, one on the Appalachian hiking trail in New York, another in Tahara, Aichi Prefecture, Japan, and numerous others in various locations.

the Kanehsatà:ke resistance.[2] In 1992, Belmore toured the megaphone to various Indigenous communities, and sites of land disputes, transporting it in a van across 'Canada.' Since then, it has been used as part of many other ceremonies and protests, as well as a few museum exhibitions; it was recently installed at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts [MMFA]. During the megaphone's tour in 1992, Belmore explained that, instead of aiming the megaphone at the

[2] I put "Oka Crisis" in quotations to indicate as some indigenous people and allies believe that the use of crisis does not exemplify the unjust, uneven, and disproportionate use of force used against Indigenous resistance fighters in this instance and throughout history. Referring to this event and its ongoing repercussions as the resistance at Kanehsatake or the Kanehsatà:ke Resistance centers the defenders of the land as opposed to the term crisis which makes it seem more like an even battle. During the summer of 1990, the Oka municipality proposed to expand a golf course onto Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) land in Kanehsatà:ke, Quebec. The expansion would place the golf course on top of their traditional burial grounds and also entail tearing down sacred Pines. When the Kanien'kehá:ka people rejected and protested this plan, the government of Quebec and the government of Canada responded by sending the provincial and national police force and shortly after using military power against the Kanien'kehá:ka land defenders and the traditional "Warrior" society. For a comprehensive description and analysis of this event, see Audra Simpson*, Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*, directed by Alanis Obomsawin, Montreal: National Film Board, 1993; and Ladner, Kiera L, and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, eds. *This Is an Honour Song: Twenty Years Since the Blockades, an Anthology of Writing on the "Oka Crisis*," (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Pub, 2010).

government, the megaphone was turned toward the land, "so that [Indigenous] people could speak to our Mother, to the Earth…"[3] In examining these two devices, this thesis shows how communication with the dead and the nonhuman can be made possible through the repurposing of analogue communication technology. Dually displaced, in function and location, the telephone and the megaphone, I argue, are reimagined as instruments of affective labour, alternate technological innovations that carry voices across immeasurable distances and establish lines of communication with absent interlocutors who refuse to or cannot listen (under common understandings). As such, while mobilizing the common use, function, and physical form (to an extent) of each technology, they reinterpret the practical nature and put the form to different use.

In what follows, I analyse how communication with ambiguous or indeterminate audiences is made possible through repurposed, common-place technologies with ambiguous or indeterminate audiences, and how such modalities of communication challenge the meanings of voice, hearing, listening, and audience. Repurposing these technologies allows for a mediation that is not otherwise available, which in turn, allows for intertemporal and intermedial communication. What happens when the response to one's call is inaudible yet affectively experienced? Can the voice be sensed otherwise? What about interactions with the nonhuman?

Relations with the Dead and the Nonhuman

I use the terms the dead and the nonhuman to distinguish the audiences, and at times

[3] Rebecca Belmore explains this in the 1992 documentary, *Speaking to Their Mother*, directed by Marjorie Beaucage, which follows her and the megaphone on a tour to various protest sites.

speakers of concern in this thesis, from the living human interlocutor or a group of living humans as audience. These devices mediate relations with the dead and the nonhuman (for example, the earth) respectively, though I do not wish to equate the meanings of each term. While I am concerned with the dead and the nonhuman, my goal is not to conflate or neatly define the two concepts, though at times, they overlap, especially with regards to the spirit realm. Nevertheless, each object (the *wind phone*, and Belmore's *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan*) has their corresponding contexts and epistemologies.

The dead refer to the beloved, primarily human dead, or those who are no longer considered living and breathing. This term encompasses the spirit realm, as well as ancestors, particularly loved ones, which contains various meanings across different epistemological and phenomenological frameworks. While I use this as general term, there are times where it does not encompass the speakers, nor the listeners in question, who, while not dead, are not granted agency to speak or to listen by common standards.

By nonhuman, I am referring to "other-than-human relations," through the lens of Indigenous epistemologies, in particular, epistemologies where relations with the nonhuman are considered as equally important to relations among humans.[4] Dylan Robinson discusses the way certain contemporary Indigenous performance art practices address "ancestral and other-than-

[4] The term "other-than-human relations" comes from Dylan Robinson's essay "Speaking to Water, Singing to Stone: Peter Morin, Rebecca Belmore, and the Indigenous Epistemologies of Indigenous Modernity" from the anthology, *Music and Modernity among First Peoples of North America* (Middleton: Wesleyan University, 2019), 220-239.

human publics."[5] In *Land as Pedagogy*, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson discusses Nishnaabeg traditions of "learning *with* and *through* the land," or "aki."[6] This epistemology of the land, and 'other-than-human relations,' is intertwined with the spirit realm and, as Simpson puts it, "originates in the spiritual realm" so it also encompasses the dead, and the ancestors; the passing of knowledge is shared "through dreams, visions, ceremony and through the process of gaaizhi-zhaawendaagoziyaang – that which is given lovingly to us by the spirits."[7] In these relations with the land and the nonhuman, conjured through "dreams, visions, ceremony," this learning and knowledge sharing requires such practices because the land " is the place where [their] ancestors reside, where spiritual beings exist, and where the spirits of living plants, animals and humans interact."[8] Between human and nonhuman, living and dead interconnectedly, the land is "both context and process."[9]

Voice

In most common Western understandings, voice is considered a marker of both

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[5] Dylan Robinson, "Speaking to Water, Singing to Stone: Peter Morin, Rebecca Belmore, and the Indigenous Epistemologies of Indigenous Modernity," 2019, 220-239.

[6] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, "Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3, No. 3, 2014, 7.

[7] Simpson, "Land as pedagogy," 10.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., 7.

individuality and vitality.[10] One prevalent idea in "Western metaphysical and linguistic traditions," Amanda Weidman explains, "is the idea of voice as guarantor of truth and self-presence, from which springs the familiar idea that the voice expresses self and identity and that agency consists in having a voice."[11] Recent scholarship on voice, challenges and complicates this entanglement; I am also invested in dismantling the conception of voice as synonymous with identity, while acknowledging that the voice is a "sonic and material phenomenon and a powerful metaphor, and this is what makes it complex and interesting."[12] Weidman explains: "the assumed linking of a voice with an identity or a single person overlooks the fact that speakers may have many different kinds of relationships to their own voices or words, or that a single 'voice' may in fact be collectively produced."[13] What happens when, as Weidman suggests, the voice is thought of as "collectively produced," unknowable?

In the introduction to *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality,* Nina Sun Eidsheim discusses "the acousmatic question," where a listening body is incited to ask: *"Who is*

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[10] See Amanda Weidman, "Voice" in *Keywords in Sound,* eds. David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny, (Durham: Duke University Press: 2015); see also *The Oxford Handbook of Voice Studies,* eds by Nina Sun Eidsheim and Katherine Meizel, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[11] Amanda Weidman, "Voice" in *Keywords in Sound (*Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 233.

[12] Weidman, "Voice," 233.

[13] Ibid., 237.

this?"[14] She explains how the naming of the concept originated through the composer Pierre Shaeffer, who "defined it as 'acousmatic, adjective: referring to a sound that one hears without seeing the causes behind it.'"[15] Eidsheim explains that the "acousmatic situation arises from the assumption that voice and sound are of an a priori stable nature and that we can identify degrees of fidelity to and divergence from this state."[16] Eidsheim rejects the ideology of "the voice as a cue to interiority, essence, and unmediated identity."[17] However, according to Eidsheim "we ask that very question not because a possible ontology of vocal uniqueness will deliver us to the doorstep of an answer but because of voice's inability to be unique and yield precise answers."[18] "Voice's inability to be unique and yield precise answers" is precisely what allows the devices I discuss to repurpose the function of the telephone and the megaphone.[19] The incertitude of the voice opens a realm of possibilities for hearing the imprecise trace of another (human or nonhuman). On the one hand, voice and identity are commonly (and metaphorically) conceived as one and the same, (i.e. "truth claims" regarding "the voice as a cue to interiority, essence, and unmediated identity"); on the other hand, as Eidsheim argues, the voice cannot "yield precise answers." Technologies that allow the living to speak to the dead, or the nonhuman and vice

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[14] Pierre Schaeffer is known as the creator of "*musique acousmatique*" also known as "musique concrete."

[15] Nina Sun Eidsheim, *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 1-2.

[16] Eidsheim, *The Race of Sound*, 2.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., 3.

[19] Ibid.

versa, use this ambiguity affectively to hear and feel the presence of the other whether it be the dead or the nonhuman.

Building on these theorizations of voice, I consider what this means for an unidentifiable audience, flipping the acousmatic question to ask: is it acousmatic if it's inaudible? What about in situations where the audience is ambiguous and cannot vocally respond (in a literal sense)? I am interested in who the voice is directed toward, especially when the return cannot be heard. If, as Eidsheim posits, we can never know the answer to the question "*who is this?*" then speaking to an indeterminate interlocutor favours the functioning of these technological devices.

Technology, Speaking to the Dead

Technology can, indeed, play a role as a medium for the reciprocal relation between the speaker and the audience. In cases where the audience (and at times the speaker) is unknowable, mediation via technology is operationalized for communicating with the dead and the land (or nonhuman). Whether the technology invites those using it to speak out or to listen, I am interested in how the audience is established for the speaker. Each of these technologies challenge what it means to hear and to listen and who (or what) can access hearing and listening. I am defining technologies through Jonathan Sterne's definition as "repeatable social, cultural, and material processes crystallized into mechanisms."[20] According to Sterne, "to study technologies in any meaningful sense requires a rich sense of their connection with human

[20] Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 8.

practice, habitat, and habit."[21] Both the technologies repurposed in my analyses—a telephone and a megaphone—are reimagined to function beyond the respective analogue technologies, appropriating their use while reinventing it to create a bridge across time.

Telephones, telegraphs, phonographs, gramophones, and other audio communication technologies have long been linked with speaking to the dead.[22] Many retellings focus on sound recording's connection to death where the voices of the departed are recorded and the audience for these recordings are living people (or other loved beings). The connections between instantaneous communication technologies and the dead can be traced, in part, to the emergence in the 19th century of both the telegraph and the Spiritualist movement, whose origins are often tied to a claim made by the Fox Sisters in 1848 that they could hear mysterious noises and raps in the night in their family home in Hydesville, New York. Many believed they had opened a telegraph line to the spirit world and even referred to this type of communication as "spiritual telegraphs."[1] The Fox sisters claimed they were speaking to a spirit named "Mr. Splitfoot," a peddler who had been murdered in the area five years prior. In the first week of contact, they questioned the spirits, instructing them to respond with "one tap for yes and two taps for no," just

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[21] Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 1.

[22] For a broader discussion of the history of haunted media and the cultural associations with media and haunting, see Jeffrey Sconce, *Haunted Media: Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), Molly McGarry *Ghosts of Futures Past: Spiritualism and the Cultural Politics of Nineteenth-Century America*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008) and John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

like a telegraph. After the Fox sisters were separated, the rappings are said to have continued, with the spirits eventually tapping the alphabet in Morse code. As word spread about these strange communications, so too did the frequency of *spiritual telegraphs*. Spiritualists became interested in emerging technologies and how they created communication pathways to the Spirit world.[23] While the Fox sisters admitted this was a hoax, the association between the spirit realm through media technology contributed to the belief that the telegraph could connect to the spirit realm.

The role of the telegraph in Spiritualism speaks more broadly to how communicating with the dead became thinkable ,in part, because, as Sterne explains, "once telephones, phonographs, and radios populated our world…the voice became a little more unmoored from the body, and people's ears could take them into the past or across vast distances."[24] When phonographs, and later, gramophones emerged, for instance, they were at times portrayed as a way for the living to hear "the voices of the dead," as in the famous Francis Barraud painting that would become the RCA logo.[25] Titled *His Master's Voice*, the painting shows Nipper, Barraud's late brother's dog, listening with ears perked to a gramophone while sitting atop the shiny wooden surface of an enclosed wood container that, to many (including me), resembles a coffin

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[23] For a lengthy discussion of this, see Sterne's "A Resonant Tomb" from *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 281-333.

[24] Sterne, *The Audible Past,* 1.

[25] At the time, this was (and still is) compared to how photographs can preserve an image of a departed loved one.

(see fig. 1). As Sterne observes: “When we see a dog listening to a gramophone, we understand that the important issue is the *sound* of the voice, not what was said, since dogs are known for heeding the voices of their masters more often than their words.”[26] This idea persists, for example, when people listen to the voicemail messages of their lost loved ones.

Fig. 1 *His Master’s Voice,* painting by Francis Barraud, 1868.

Seen as a means to preserve the essence of the died, the phonograph was even compared to embalming. “The connection between phonography and embalming is interesting,” writes Sterne, “because, in many ways, attitudes about the voices of the dead are extensions of attitudes

[26] Ibid., 303.

about the bodies of the dead…sound recording was also presented as a way of protecting its present and future auditors from the experience of decay.[27] The devices I examine likewise address attitudes towards the voices and bodies of the dead. However, as non-recording devices, their goal is not to preserve but to transmit voices instantaneously across indeterminate distances and receive voices that may at times be ineffable. In this way, these technologies represent a contradictory example to sound recordings that invites immediate 'live' communication.[28] Instead of hearing a recording of the voice of a loved one, the ambiguity of their voice and presence is left to the those using these devices.

Alternative engagements with the dead allow a 'sensing of the dead,' and a kind of reciprocal "enchanted" relationship. In her ethnography of American home funerals, Alexa Hagerty follows families who eschew professional embalmers and opt to prepare the bodies of their loved ones for final viewing themselves. In these home funerals, Hagerty notes, "the dead body is enacted as possessing a fading spark of agency" and thus animated "against the grain of medical and scientific conceptions of the corpse as inert object." Raising "questions about the forms of care and communication available between the living and the dead," home funerals,

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[27] Ibid., 294.

[28] By live, I mean momentary, instantaneous, and spontaneous communication, however this is not to say live communication must always be spontaneous. There is no play-back or recording involved in the functioning of either technologies. Although, videos and audio recordings have been made of people making calls and participating in ceremonies, the actual functioning of the devices does not rely on recording, and in fact requires that there be no recorded sound played back.

Hagerty argues, have an "enchanted view" that "disrupts common assumptions about North American conceptions of death: that death is a biological event rather than a social process; that consciousness ends at death; that corpses are material artefacts."[29] "The enchanted dead are the beloved dead," she explains, "In the act of exchanging care with the dead, friends and family create a space that is not medically mapped, an alternative epistemological register, a space 'beyond the limits of geography'. At this threshold, the corpse reveals itself as imbued with personhood and agency, as affective, sacred, enchanted as requiring soft speech.[30]

Hagerty concludes her essay referring to the 'enchanted' dead as "requiring soft speech," thus, indicating the potential for a continued consciousness when treating the corpse as more than an "inert object."[31] Indeed, I engage with Hagerty's notion of enchantment. The repurposed technologies summon enchantments that move "beyond the limits of geography" to maintain a relationship the dead, and the other-than-human that embraces a consciousness and agency of listening, sensing, and feeling care, beyond the last moment of breath. Or, for the nonhuman, who does not take a last breath, they can be enchanted into a conversation, as possessing the agency to hear and to listen**.**

Hearing and Listening for the Inaudible Audience

What does it mean to hear? Who is heard and not heard? Who/what has access to hearing and listening? The devices I analyse engage with audiences who are not often considered as having a capacity to hear or to listen have agency to hear and listen.

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[29] Ibid., 440.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., 440; Ibid., 428.

Crucially, while each device allows speakers to vocalize to an absent or indeterminate audience/interlocutor, they are equally concerned with allowing the speaker to *hear* and *listen for* the absent or inaudible audience, which in turn shifts the meanings of hearing and listening. To engage with this interrelation, it is helpful to engage with the varying theories of hearing and listening. Though hearing and listening are undeniably different, theorizations of these concepts differ among sound studies scholars. With regards to hearing, Sterne explains:

> The simple act of hearing implies a medium for sound, a body with ears to hear, a frame of mind to do the same, and a dynamic relation between hearer and heard that allows for the possibility of mutual effects. Hearing is all these things: it is human nature and human history, deeply personal and irreducibly intersubjective, environmentally grounded and stretched toward transcendence.[32]

Sterne highlights the "dynamic relation between the hearer and the heard" and the mutuality of this relation.[33] Both chapters in this thesis explore scenarios where the hearer does not necessarily have a "body with ears to hear" and whether/how this constitutes hearing nonetheless. In each of the chapters however, the object I discuss, and the affective environments they generate, are "deeply personal and irreducibly intersubjective, environmentally grounded

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[32] Jonathan Sterne, "Hearing," in *Keywords in Sound,* eds. David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny, (Durham: Duke University Press: 2015), 65.

[33] Sterne, "Hearing," 65.

and stretched toward transcendence."[34]

According to Jean-Luc Nancy, "hearing operates as the seat of subjectivity and intersubjectivity: 'to be listening will always, then, be to be straining toward or in an approach to the self.'"[35] However, as Sterne suggests, Nancy's approach does not work "for those who do not or cannot hear and must approach their selves by other means, without the benefit of the openness to others that is the basis of his theory of intersubjectivity."[36] Sterne's contestation of Nancy, such that listening and hearing do are not the "seat of subjectivity and intersubjectivity" favours both the functioning of both the devices I discuss in this thesis, as each device redresses what it means to hear and to listen as well as who has can be considered a "hearers" and whether or not a subjectivity is needed in order to hear.

Listening, on the other hand, implies deliberate intention and attention to hear something. It is sensorial, affective, and socio-culturally specific. As Sterne puts it, "listening requires hearing but is not simply reducible to hearing."[37] Tom Rice explains that "listening practices are generally not regarded as technologically determined but as malleable and capable of being

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[34] Ibid., 65.

[35] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Listening,* trans by Charlotte Mandell, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 6, quoted in Sterne, "Hearing" in *Keywords in Sound,* Novak, David, and Matt Sakakeeny, eds, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 66.

[36] Sterne. "Hearing," 66.

[37] Sterne. *The Audible Past*, 19.

developed, directed, and refined through engagements with technologies."[38] This understanding of listening that is not tied to technological determinism prevails in both the devices I analyze.

In Dylan Robinson's book, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*, he suggests a framework that "conceptualizes the space of sonic encounter as a space of subject– subject relation," which entails "moving away from a conceptualization of the listener as the sole subject in the act of listening" and "reorients this act toward the life, agency, and subjectivity of sound within Indigenous frameworks of perception."[39] Robinson theorizes different types of listening relevant to ones' positionality especially in Indigenous/settler contexts. He coins the term, "hungry listening," which he introduces as follows:

> As a form of perception, "hungry listening" is derived from two Halq'eméylem words: shxwelítemelh (the adjective for settler or white person's methods/things) and xwélalà:m (the word for listening). shxwelítemelh comes from the word xwelítem (white settler) and more precisely means "starving person." The word emerges from the historical encounter between xwélmexw (Stó:lō people) and the largest influx of settlers to the territory during the gold rush.[40]

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[38] Tom Rice, "Listening," *Keywords in Sound.* Novak, David, and Matt Sakakeeny, eds. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 102.

[39] Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), 16.

[40] Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 2.

Robinson warns against the all-too-familiar one-way dialogue that "hungry listening" entails. He suggests that settler scholars acknowledge and abandon "hungry listening" towards a "critical listening positionality" which "seeks to prompt questions regarding how we might become better attuned to the particular filters of race, class, gender, and ability that actively select and frame the moment of contact between listening body and listened-to sound."[41] As a settler, I am committed to engaging in a "critical listening positionality" in my research practice. Additionally, I aim to "address positionalities of the listening encounter (how we listen as Indigenous, settler, and variously positioned subjects), but also to guide…larger questions around the ontological and epistemological stakes of what listening is" through the analyses that follow.[42]

Chapter Summaries

In Chapter One: '"If you're out there, please listen to me": Voicing and Listening through the *Wind Phone* (*Kaze no Denwa)*," I discuss the functioning of the *wind phone.* Its creator, Itaru Sasaki, named it *kaze no denwa*, the wind phone, for its purpose is to let the wind 'carry' the voices of the living to their missing and deceased loved ones. Providing a location, medium, and ritual through which voice is substituted for physical remains, the wind phone uniquely responds to the difficulty of mourning in the wake of natural disaster. As a technology of mourning, the wind phone provides a space where visitors can reconcile their altered relation to the dead. What takes place is a renegotiation of mourning, where rhetorical devices like apostrophe and prosopopoeia, along with nostalgic media (the rotary telephone), summon the dead and give

[41] Ibid., 11.

[42] Ibid., 2.

them voice, all in the psychically and spiritually dense confines of a phone booth. Taking on multiple forms, the wind phone offers an interactive experience which is not necessarily available through traditional material objects and rituals associated with mourning. It differs in that its purpose is to provide a place and an apparatus for people to transmit messages to the dead as well as to listen for and sense their reciprocal, (absent) presence. Through its site-specific attributes, the wind phone allows visitors to confront (and sometimes disavow) the absence of the dead through the nostalgic performance of a rotary telephone call.

In the second chapter, '"[Hearing] Political Protest as Poetic Action" from Meadow to Museum: Rebecca Belmore's *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan*: *Speaking to Their Mother* (1991)," I discuss how Rebecca Belmore's artwork, *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama Mowan: Speaking to Their Mother* turns "political protest" into "poetic action."[43] Belmore's goal, as she describes it, was to "stage the ultimate protest, because [settlers] don't listen any way."[44] I trace the use of the giant wood megaphone in two different settings—a meadow in Banff (1991) where she held an inaugural ceremony, and its installation in the 2021-2022 MMFA exhibition, "How long does it take for one voice to reach another?"—and compare how the megaphone is operationalized in these two distinct locations. Whether in the museum, or in an outdoor

[43] Rebecca Belmore, "Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan Exhibit." Rebecca Belmore, May 15 2022, https://www.rebeccabelmore.com/exhibit/Speaking-to-Their-Mother.html.

[44] This comes from an interview with Belmore in Beaucage's 1992 documentary *Speaking to Their Mother*.

Indigenous ceremony, echo is a crucial element of the megaphone's sonic capacity.[45] In ceremonies, the experience of echo transforms the art object into a practical tool that reimagines protest as something external to settler colonial understanding. In the museum, this echo rests dormant, but in-so-doing, it maintains its function as a tool for protest. In the case of *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan,* the listening practice challenges the common colonial assumptions that privilege human listening.

[45] Iris Sandjette Blake has written extensively on this aspect of the artwork. My analysis seeks specifically to compare how this heuristic operates in the outdoor ceremonies, and more importantly, in the museum. For a more complete discussion of echo in Belmore's *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan* as well as *Wave Sound* (2017), another of Belmore's sound artworks. see Iris Sandjette Blake, "Decolonial Echoes: Voicing and Listening in Rebecca Belmore's Sound Performance," *Performance Matters* 6, no. 2, (2020).

Chapter 1.

"If you're out there, please listen to me":

Voicing and Listening through the *Wind Phone* (*Kaze no Denwa)*

Overlooking the ocean, near the town of Ōtsuchi, Japan, a white telephone booth containing a disconnected rotary phone sits within the Bell Gardia Kujira-Yama garden. Itaru Sasaki, its creator, named this booth *kaze no denwa*, or, the *wind phone*. Sasaki built the *wind phone* in 2011 to 'call' his cousin, who had recently died of cancer. He built the wind phone for personal use; however, after the March 11, 2011 earthquake/tsunami which claimed the lives of nearly 20,000 people and left around 2,500 missing, the *wind phone* unexpectedly became a destination for others mourning the loss of their loved ones. In the documentary, *The Phone of the Wind: Whispers to Lost Families*, Sasaki elaborates on the naming of the phone booth: "The phone won't carry my voice. So I let the wind do it."[46] Over the years, as people travel to use the phone, Sasaki has welcomed them to his garden, where they too can feel the wind transport their voices.

[46] NHK. *The Phone of the Wind: Whispers to Lost Families*. Documentary aired March 11, 2017.

Fig. 2 Wind Phone in Ōtsuchi, Japan. Photography by Matthew Komatsu. https://longreads.com/2019/03/11/after-the-tsunami/

Fig. 3 Inside the wind phone. Photograph by mikinee. https://forecastpublicart.org/wind-telephone/.

As Sasaki's *wind phone* rose to popularity in Japan, it also became popular in other parts of the world, inspiring films, novels, news articles, and other media.[47] Many people journey from around the world to visit the *wind phone*, while others have built and continue to build their own versions, demonstrating a need for dedicated places to maintain sustained relationships with the dead. Each of the wind phones have different cultural contexts, geographical locations, and environments, but their purpose remains consistent: to give people a chance to speak to and feel heard by their departed loved ones.[48]

This chapter examines how the wind phone reinvents the communication technology of the telephone as a technology of mourning that helps the living feel heard by and connected to

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[47] When referring to Sasaki's *wind phone*, I use italics to indicate the specific artwork I am referring to, whereas when wind phone is not in italics, I am referring to the wind phone as a form that has been reproduced in various locations.

[48] For example, one particular reproduction is located in a garden behind a hospice in Port Moody, British Columbia, where employees built a wind phone so that people whose loved ones are dying in the hospice could have a chance to say things and/or feel the presence of their loved ones who are dying or have died. See Akshay Kulkarni, "How an unconnected telephone in a B.C. park is helping people mourn lost loved ones," October 28, 2021, CBC: British Columbia, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/phone-of-the-wind-port-moody-1.6227908. There is another in Old Chelsea, Quebec, near the edge of Gatineau Park that was recently constructed. For more on this, see Simon Smith, "'Wind phone' for grief helps restaurant owner whose husband died of COVID-19," October 22, 2022, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/chelsea-wind-phone-1.6621595.

the dead.[49] Taking on multiple forms, the wind phone offers an interactive sensorial encounter which is not necessarily available through traditional material objects associated with mourning, such as gravestones, statues, plaques, and other inanimate objects. The wind phone differs in that its purpose is to provide a space and an apparatus for people to feel listened to, to listen for, and even to hear the voices (or traces) of the dead and missing. Through its site-specific attributes, the wind phone allows visitors to confront (and sometimes disavow) the absence of the dead through the nostalgic performance of a rotary telephone call.[50] I examine how the anachronistic use of this nostalgic form of media, and the visible disconnection of the phone, work to make the impossible endeavor of speaking to, and more importantly feeling heard by, those who are no longer living feel possible.[51] Through the lack of physical connection to any material phone line,

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[49] I use the term "technology" to emphasize the utility of the wind phone as a tool. In this case, it can also be considered a technology for its innovative reappropriation of the common communication technology: the telephone and telephone booth. It puts this common technology to a use in a different way (reinterpreting the literal material functionality of a telephone).

[50] By site specific attributes, I am referring to the site itself, the disconnected rotary phone, the telephone booth, and its specific use for contacting the dead/absent and only those interlocutors (as opposed to a regular telephone booth with a phone that is connected to a phone line which is used for contacting the living). The site's proximity to the ocean, and to Otsuchi, also add to the site specificity of this *wind phone*.

[51] This is an important part of the functioning of the *wind phone*. According to the *OED*, anachronisms are things that belong to or are appropriate to different periods of time, so the rotary phone here is an anachronistic type of media.

the wind replaces infrastructural elements such as telephone cables, cell phone towers, and other manufactured technologies, swapping calls with the living for calls to the dead and providing an alternative infrastructure necessary to connect to the dead. The functionality of the telephone is in turn reformulated, inviting a sensorial encounter specific to the wind phone–an auditory experience of listening for lost loved ones and speaking to them–while distinguishing its utility from functioning telephones used to call the living.

I discuss Sasaki's *wind phone* and how it has become a form reproduced cross-culturally, in order to indicate the need for a place to maintain a sort of attention, that is not about assimilating the lost object into some kind of ontological certainty, but instead about sustaining attention as an end in itself. Analyzing the wind phone as an emerging form suggests the way it subtly abstracts the telephone as a form; this repetition of an existing technology with a slight but very important difference produces the wind phone as its own technology. Each wind phone invites a sensorial encounter tied to place, where the physical setting allows for a particular sensorial experience, and constitutes a form of ritual in relation to loss.

Providing a location, medium, and ritual through which sustained attention via the act of listening for hints of the absent interlocutor's voice, for some visitors, even replaces the singular event of burying physical remains (for example, when remains cannot be located). Acknowledging the loss of an individual does not mean we cannot listen for, hear, and feel their presence at times. It is, of course, still possible to have a relationship with a departed loved one, though the relationship is markedly different; the wind phone allows a place dedicated to renegotiating this relationship.

Fig. 4 The Phone of the Wind, Port Moody, BC. Photograph by Ben Neams/CBC, October 28, 2021. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/phone-of-the-wind-port-moody-1.6227908.

Fig. 5 *Le Fil du Vent*: Wind Phone at the edge of Gatineau Park in Old Chelsea, QC. Photographed by Jessica Runsiman/CBC, October 22, 2022. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/chelsea-wind-phone-1.6621595.

Apostrophe, Animation, Audition[52]

While the *wind phone* repurposes the telephone, its capacity for connection relies on the quotidian familiarity of a telephone call, which helps visitors to feel comfortable. When the journalist Tessa Fontaine asked Sasaki why people cannot just call their departed loved ones from their personal phones, he explained:

> It's not like anything else. It isn't therapy…It isn't the same as the thing you say to your friend over your second glass of wine about wishing you could talk to your dead mother about something. It isn't praying. It isn't talking to a loved one who also knew the dead. You pick up the phone and your brain has readied your mouth to speak…It's wired. We do it all the time. You don't think what it is you want to say, you just say it. Out loud. Into the phone, which is connected to nothing. From there, there is nothing for your words to do but follow the directives of the thing itself—be carried on the wind.[53]

Sasaki highlights how our brains are indeed "wired" for this connection because of the familiarity of a phone call, suggesting that there is no need for literal wires to connect us; our

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[52] The title of this section is referencing Barbara Johnson's "Apostrophe, Animation, Abortion," in *A World of Difference*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 184-211.

[53] Tessa Fontaine, "The Phone of the Wind: A Pilgrimmage to a Disconnected Phone in Ōtsuchi, Japan," 25 July 2018, https://culture.org/logger/the-phone-of-the-wind/.

imaginations do that work. He asserts that the *wind phone* is "not like anything else," yet the quotidian nature of a telephone call means visitors are "wired" to spontaneously speak into the telephone, showing how the familiar components and the singular purpose of the *wind phone* combine to help visitors carry on a relationship to the dead by providing them a space to feel listened to and, in turn, creating a continuity with those who have passed.

The *wind phone* has become a sort of unofficial memorial—a shrine even—for victims of the 2011 Tōhoku tsunami, despite this not being the site's initial purpose. Like Fontaine, many visitors describe their journeys to the *wind phone* as a "pilgrimage," implying the sacred site specificity of this artifact and its capacity to facilitate direct address in the ambiguous circumstances in which they lost their loved ones. Broadly speaking, since the *wind phone* overlooks the ocean—an indeterminate burial site—its proximity to the site of the catastrophe personalizes the impersonal and strengthens the absent presence so often felt by its visitors. More precisely, the *wind phone*'s proximity both to Ōtsuchi (one of the worst sites of devastation of the 2011 tsunami), and the ocean, allows visitors who were affected by the tsunami to address the specificity of their loss by bringing them near to the site or destruction, while conceding to the vastness of the ocean and using the boundlessness of the wind to carry voices great distances. In other words, the *wind phone* imports the significance derived from the context of place and history, against the backdrop of the ocean's immensity.

Importantly, the *wind phone* is not just a rotary phone sitting in a garden; it is enclosed by a traditional phone booth. The enclosure of the booth allows visitors to envelope and contain their messages for transportation to the dead. The enclosure of the booth allows a concentrated space for apostrophe, the act of addressing an absent person or object, which each of the visitors perform when they make a call on the *wind phone*. In *Cruel Optimism*, Lauren

Berlant discusses apostrophe via Barbara Johnson's "Apostrophe, Animation, Abortion," describing apostrophe as "an indirect, unstable, physically impossible but phenomenologically vitalizing movement of rhetorical animation that permits subjects to suspend themselves in the optimism of a potential occupation of the same psychic space of others, the objects of desire who make you possible (by having some promising qualities, but also by not being there)."[54]

This "vitalizing movement"—the moment where the living can feel a momentary, affective resurrection of the absent other—is precisely where visitors feel the *wind phone*'s uncanny capacity—for the few moments they are inside the booth, they can inhabit the same virtual ("psychic") space, wherein their desired interlocutor can hear them, partly made possible by the enclosure of the booth. Berlant (via Barbara Johnson) describes how, through apostrophe, "a silent, affectively present but physically displaced interlocutor (a lover, a fetus) is animated in speech as distant enough for a conversation but close enough to be imaginable by the speaker in whose head the entire scene is happening."[55] The *wind phone* facilitates this address of an "affectively present but physically displaced interlocutor," by structuring the apostrophic animation of the displaced interlocutor. This allows visitors to connect affectively to a trace (or absent presence) of their missing loved one through entering the same psychic space.

Through apostrophe, the wind phone animates. Johnson expresses the important connection between wind, animation, and apostrophe, conducting a close reading of Percy

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[54] Lauren Berlant, "Cruel Optimism" in *Cruel Optimism,* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2011), 26.

[55] Berlant is paraphrasing Barbara Johnson's "Apostrophe, Animation, Abortion" (1987) in Berlant's *Cruel Optimism*, 2011, 25.

Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," which she describes as "perhaps the ultimate apostrophaic poem, makes even more explicit the relation between apostrophe and animation."[56] She explains how in the poem, "the west wind is a figure for the power to animate: it is described as the breath of being, moving everywhere, blowing movement and energy through the world…parting the waters of the Atlantic, uncontrollable."[57] The *wind phone* uses this figuration of wind to animate the dead; wind is also the source of mass destruction (through the tsunami). As Johnson puts it, "the wind animates by bringing death, winter, destruction," while at the same time it allows for this powerful extension of relation to the dead.[58] She reiterates: "the wind, which is to give animation, is also the giver of death," and asks, "how do the rhetorical strategies of the poem carry out this program of animation through the giving of death?"[59] These same questions can be extended to the *wind phone*. Not only does the *wind phone* bring visitors near the site of destruction, for those who visit to connect with victims of the tsunami, the wind acts doubly as the cause of death and the force of animation.[60]

Among apostrophe and animation, visitors listen—for hints of the voices of lost loved ones and the potentiality of feeling listened to or heard by their departed interlocutors. Accordingly, Berlant describes the condition of hearing in apostrophe and the possibilities

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[56] Johnson, "Apostrophe, Animation, Abortion," 187.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

[60] The wind is, of course, not always a double actor in this sense. However, it remains a powerful animator in every case.

projected in the transmitter of vocal messages: "(T)he condition of projected possibility, of a hearing that cannot take place in the terms of its enunciation ('you' are not here, 'you' are eternally belated to the conversation with you that I am imagining) creates a fake[61] present moment of intersubjectivity in which, nonetheless, a performance of address can take place."[62] Through this type of apostrophe, the *wind phone* permits hearing—a continuity wherein the dead are temporarily present in the imaginations of the visitors. In this way, the moment of intersubjectivity is not "fake," as Berlant claims; rather, I see it more as the virtual presence of the other. Despite the other being "eternally belated," the imagined conversation can take place (in the present), which is why virtual is a more fitting word. If we consider Johnson's description, the wind, as it animates, also creates this moment of virtual presence, even if it must be sustained by the imagination.

Relatedly, Jacques Khalip elaborates on the nature of listening, hearing, and speaking to the dead in relation to loss through his essay on Derek Jarman's film, *Blue* (1993), an hour-long film composed of an International Klein Blue screen for its entirety. This screen is accompanied by an elaborate two-part narrative soundscape, a surreal meditation on his life as he is dying of AIDS.[63] Hearing, listening, address, and mourning are integral to *Blue* and coalesce similarly in the wind phone. Khalip, via Jean-Luc Nancy, explains that "to listen (*écouter*) is decidedly not

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[61] I want to trouble Berlant's use of "fake" here. What makes it fake? Can one not be virtually present in a moment with someone who is not physically there? Does this make it fake?

[62] Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 25

[63] Jacques Khalip, "'The Archaeology of Sound': Derek Jarman's Blue and Queer Audiovisuality in the Time of Aids." *Differences* 21, no. 2 (2010): 73–108.

the same as to hear (*entendre*)."[64] Expanding upon Nancy's discussion of hearing and listening, he asserts:

> To be listening is thus to enter into tension and to be on the lookout for a relation to the self…listening is passing over to the register of presence to self, it being understood that the "self" is precisely nothing available (substantial or subsistent) to which one can be "present," but precisely the resonance of a return [*renvoi*]. For this reason, listening…can and must appear to us not as a metaphor for access to self, but as the reality of this access.[65]

Nancy's understanding complicates the relation between apostrophe and animation while breaking down the process. The reality of access to the self, according to Nancy, is made apparent through listening and feeling listened to, which, paradoxically, provides solace for many visitors of the wind phone. For Nancy, the practice of self is an attention that delinks the listener from an expectation of presence of their own self, and instead, is linked to the absence of presence, and/or loss of presence in the other. Not only is the absence of presence a constitutive part of mourning, it is, through Nancy, also a constitutive part of listening, which, in part, links these two experiences. The absence of the deceased interlocutor reflects on the idea that absence is a constitutive element of the self, which cuts against Ideological priors. In the recorded calls,

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[64] Ibid., 78.

[65] Jean-Luc Nancy, quoted in Khalip, "'Archaeology of Sound,'" 78.

visitors say things like: "*If* this voice reaches you, please *listen*"[66]—importantly here, the caller understands the (im)possibility; by indicating 'if' the interlocutor hears their voice, they request that the interlocutor *listen*, not to hear, but to listen, which is 'decidedly different' than hearing.[67] However, this experience is not always consistent. Another visitor's friend insists that her late husband *heard* her: "He heard you," to which she responds "He heard me so I can keep living," and again, another visitor, who lost his family, (his wife, one year old child, and both his parents in the tsunami), pleas: "If you can *hear* me, please *listen* to me." Finally, a father dials the phone number of his pregnant daughter who died in the tsunami asking: "Can you hear me? I'm here again." To this end, the living can speak to the dead through the feeling that the other is listening, and the living can listen reciprocally for the "resonance of a return [*renvoi*]"[68] (despite the absence of presence of the dead), entering the same psychic space—out there somewhere, "distant enough for a conversation but close enough to be imaginable by the speaker."[69] Visitors can lend voice to the dead, psychically, acknowledging the "reality of access to the self" and in turn acknowledging the reality of access to another's self.

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[66] This translation is by Miki Meek from "597: One Last Thing Before You Go, Act One: Really Long Distance," *This American Life* podcast. It uses the recorded phone calls from the documentary. I chose to use both this translation and the one in the documentary, *The Phone of the Wind: Whispers to Lost Families*, where it is alternatively translated as "If you're out there, please listen to me."

[67] *The Phone of the Wind: Whispers to Lost Families.*

[68] Nancy, "The Archaeology of Sound," 12.

[69] Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 25.

Further complicating and expanding on the notion of voice in relation to the wind phone, some visitors enact prosopopoeia: "a rhetorical device by which an imaginary, absent, or dead person is represented as speaking or acting."[70] I consider this to be an extended aspect of animation. Robert Pogue Harrison describes prosopopoeia as "a type of personification, a giving of face and voice to that which, properly speaking, possesses neither"; he continues:

> While it is true that we speak with the words of the dead, it is equally true that the dead speak in and through the voices of the living. We inherit their words so as to lend them voice…The living do not have a constitutive need to speak as much as to hear themselves spoken to, above all by the ancestor. We lend voice to the dead so that they may speak to us from their underworld—address us, instruct us, reprove us, bless us, enlighten us, and in general alleviate the historical terror and loneliness of being in the world.[71]

Visitors to the wind phone invite their loved ones to speak through and to them through prosopopoeia and animation. Through the indication that the other is listening, and at times responding and interacting, the callers can confront their loved one's absent presence. One mother claimed she could "keep on living" since her son had heard her message. Without his

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[70] *Oxford English Dictionary,* s.v. "prosopopoeia," August 20, 2022, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/153015?redirectedFrom=prosopopoeia#eid.

[71] Robert Pogue Harrison, *The Dominion of the Dead,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 151.

own voice, he urged her to continue living through the alleviating act of prosopopoeia. As Harrison suggests, the living have a need to *hear themselves spoken to*, more than to *speak*. This need, to hear themselves spoken to, and to feel heard are crucial aspects of the mourning self. It is also the crux of this installation, and perhaps why and how it has become a popular technology of mourning, not only in Japan but in different locations and cultures. When you lose someone, you also lose access to feeling heard by them; the wind phone reintroduces this part of a relationship through animation. Accordingly, one of the *wind phone's* frequent visitors named Sachiko Okawa, often calls her late husband, who she was married to for 44 years. In one call, she tells him, "I'm lonely…Bye for now, I'll be back soon."[72]

Like other technologies of mourning, the *wind phone* "rupture[s] the conventional relations of person and address," as well as temporal experiences of speaking and listening in a way that is similar to obituaries, although through aural form, rather than written.[73] Khalip begins "'The Archaeology of Sound': Derek Jarman's Blue and Queer Audiovisuality in the Time of Aids" with a lengthy quotation from Eve Sedgwick's "White Glasses" where she discusses the complicated nature of this rupture of conventions in mourning sites:

> The most compelling thing about obituaries is how openly they rupture the conventional relations of person and of address. From a tombstone, from the tiny print

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[72] Mari Saito, "Japan's Tsunami Survivors Call Lost Loves on the Phone of the Wind," Reuters, March 5, 2021.

[73] Eve Sedgwick, "White Glasses" from *Tendencies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 264 quoted in Khalip, "The Archaeology of Sound," 73.

> in the New York Times, from the panels on panels on panels of the Names Project quilt, whose voice speaks impossibly to whom? From where is this rhetorical power borrowed, and how and to whom is it to be repaid? We miss you. Remember me. She hated to say goodbye. Participating in these speech acts, we hardly know whether to be interpellated as survivors, bereft; as witnesses or even judges; or as the very dead…in the panels of the quilt, I see that anyone, living or dead, may occupy the position of the speaker, the spoken to, the spoken about.[74]

Visitors to the wind phone perform transmutations of address, too, such that "anyone, living or dead, may occupy the position of the speaker, the spoken to, the spoken about." Through apostrophe and the animation it invites, the wind phone recasts the positions of the "speaker, spoken to and spoken about." As Khalip explains, "speech vexes the voiced act of commemoration and redirects [Sedgwick] within the sonorities of the departed."[75] Perhaps, then, the prevalence of apostrophe and prosopopoeia in relation to mourning indicate the desire to speak directly to and with the dead in mourning. This desire is not addressed through other technologies of mourning or is a secondary function of these technologies. The *wind phone* provides an enclosed space and a medium through which to directly address the dead and through which the positions of speaker and addressee can interchange and transfigure.

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[74] Ibid., 264.

[75] Khalip, "The Archaeology of Sound," 74.

Wind, Infrastructure

Each wind phone is unconnected to electricity and phone wires. The physical disconnection enables the connection to the spirit world as it is deliberately disconnected from telecommunications infrastructure, which facilitates the specificity of this phone's function: calling the dead. As Sasaki explains "the phone won't carry my voice. So I let the wind do it."[76] This generates the alternative purpose of the wind phone, taking it out of the realm of its usual function and redirecting calls to the dead via its disconnection. The metaphor of a cut land line is also significant: there is no visible difference between a connected and a disconnected mobile phone, whereas a disconnected land line is material and visible. The cut land line is a metaphor for the person in mourning, whose intimacy is ruptured through loss.

Instead of phone lines, electricity, and built aspects of functioning telephone infrastructures, the wind acts as the apparatus's infrastructure and serves to maintain a different kind of connection. My formulation of infrastructure stems from various thinkers. Influenced by Deborah Cowen (among others), I see infrastructures as "collectively constructed systems that also build and sustain human life," systems that "endure and bind us to one another's pasts, presents and futures" and "implicate us in collective life and death."[77] The wind phone is intentionally disconnected in order to set up a spiritual infrastructure, which I see as the existing realm of spirits and the connections and relations between the spirit world and the living world, where, the connections to pasts, presents, and futures indeed endure and are bound through an

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[76] *The Phone of the Wind: Whispers to Lost Families*

[77] Deborah Cowen, "Infrastructures of Empire and Resistance," Verso, January 25, 2017. https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3067-infrastructures-of-empire-and-resistance

alternative structure, in this case, the wind. Put plainly, the phone is intended for the non-living or unreachable only, thus it must be connected to nowhere, denied of its typical function in order to access the spiritual realm, or spiritual infrastructure. In Berlant's words, "[infrastructure] is the living mediation of what organizes life: the lifeworld of structure;" that is to say, while infrastructure builds structures, the structures also build us.[78] In this case, the "living mediation" is complicated, wind is not entirely living, but it animates in a livening manner. Berlant asserts that infrastructures include "all the systems that link ongoing proximity to being in a world-sustaining relation."[79] The boundless wind, in contrast with the confined telephone booth, promotes the wavering of the boundary between living and dead. A telephone call is intended for a specific destination; but in this case, the destination is beyond the living.

To expand on the infrastructural elements of the wind phone, I draw on Susan Leigh Star, who writes that infrastructure "becomes visible upon breakdown."[80] In relation to the wind phone, it is the intentional breakdown that makes the infrastructure function and makes it both

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[78] This is a reference to Berlant, "The Commons: Infrastructures for Troubling Times," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 34 vol.3, (2016), 393-429, and Cowen, "Infrastructures of Empire and Resistance," who writes: ""We" build infrastructure, and it builds "us.""

[79] Berlant, "The Commons: Infrastructures for Troubling Times," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 34, vol.3 (2016), 393.

[80] This claim is made by Susan Leigh Star, "The Ethnography of Infrastructure," *American Behavioral Scientist* 43, vol. 3, (1999), 382. It has been contested by some infrastructure scholars, however, in this case, I find it a useful assertion.

invisible (the wind) and audible (voices in the wind). Building on Star, Brian Larkin defines infrastructure as: "built networks that facilitate the flow of goods, people, or ideas and allow for their exchange over space. As physical forms they shape the nature of a network, the speed and direction of its movement, its temporalities, and its vulnerability to breakdown. They comprise the architecture for circulation, literally providing the undergirding of modern societies, and they generate the ambient environment of everyday life."[81]

Larkin also defines infrastructure as the "matter that enables the movement of other matter….things and also the relation between things."[82] Contrastingly, queer Indigenous scholar Anne Spice contests the "tacit assumption that infrastructures, as "things and also the relation between things," are inanimate, are not alive."[83] In "Fighting Invasive Infrastructures: Indigenous Relations against Pipelines," Spice traces the Canadian government's discourse surrounding oil and gas as "critical infrastructure," which "naturalizes the environmental destruction wrought by the oil and gas industry while criminalizing Indigenous resistance."[84] They argue that in Indigenous ontologies, infrastructures are living and, therefore, merit a different approach. Spice references Freda Huson, the spokesperson for the Wet'suwet'en pipeline resistance camp in Unist'ot'en territory in British Columbia, who "calls attention to the

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[81] Brian Larkin, "The Politics and Poetics of Infrastructure," *Annual Review of Anthropology 42* (2013), 328.

[82] Larkin, "The Politics and Poetics of Infrastructure," 329.

[83] Anne Spice, "Fighting Invasive Infrastructures: Indigenous Relations against Pipelines," *Environment and Society: Advances in Research 9*, (2018), 42.

[84] Spice, "Fighting Invasive Infrastructures," 40.

salmon, the berries, and the bears that form "[Indigenous] critical infrastructure."[85] Spice asserts that "this living network is not an assemblage of "things and relation between things," but rather a set of relations and things between relations."[86] Spice's alternatives to Western formulations of infrastructure provide insight into the differing systems. Their understanding of Indigenous infrastructures that require "caretaking, which Indigenous peoples are accountable to" provide a way of considering the relations available through the wind phone, which "are built through the agency of not only humans but also other-than-human kin."[87] Correspondingly, wind phones can, perhaps, be understood as invoking "a set of relations and things between relations," the apparatus and the wind being the animators of these relations (and things between relations). It can also be seen via Larkin as "things and relation between things"—the things being the living, the dead and the apparatus itself, and the relations being everything that goes on in between.

By transmitting the voices of the visitors and their perceived interlocutors, the wind as an animating infrastructure carries the messages out of the realm of the living, out of the realm of efficiency and logistics, and into the realm of the spiritual, the ghostly, the dead. It also elicits a ghostly transmission in the psyches of the visitors. The wind phone allows for a substitution, where the loss of a loved one's voice is addressed through the voicing of their loss, ultimately giving visitors an opportunity to begin to narrate and account for this loss.

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[85] Ibid, 42.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

Hearing the Past in the Present

"Can the past be heard in the present? What or who speaks or makes a sound? How do lost voices of the dead contribute to the time of the present?"[88] The wind phone suggests possible answers to these questions. Inside Sasaki's telephone booth, a framed poem reads: "Who will you call, at the phone of the wind, you will talk to them from your heart, if you hear the wind tell them how you feel, surely your thoughts will reach them."[89] The nostalgic rotary phone plays a role in connecting the voice of one alive in the present to the voice of another who is no longer living, performing a metaphorical, temporal manipulation in the time of the present. The temporal paradox of listening for voices of the past through a medium (the telephone) that requires immediacy while simultaneously using an anachronistic rotary telephone provides two key functions for the wind phone. The nostalgia of the rotary phone and the phone booth harken back to the past, whereas the telephone allows visitors to connect instantaneously with their loved ones. Together, these elements of the wind phone suspend the experience of temporality—being heard presently by those who are no longer living in the present, thus, revisiting the past in the present. This can be compared to early experiences of sound recording, though it is markedly different. Sound historian and media theorist, Jonathan Sterne, discusses the history of the relation between sound recording and death culture, referring to sound recording as a "resonant tomb." Sterne explains:

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[88] Khalip "The Archaeology of Sound," 76.

[89] Saito, "Japan's Tsunami Survivors Call Lost Loves on the Phone of the Wind."

> Is this the ultimate and shocking power of sound reproduction—that it finally set the voice free from the living and self-aware body (if only for a few moments)? This is the tale often told about sound reproduction. In this formulation, death appears as a philosophical limit case for sound reproduction, and sound recording becomes a philosophical index for sound reproduction in general. The reasoning goes like this: when recorded, one's voice was abstracted from one's body, and, once so abstracted, the voice could be preserved indefinitely on record. The ultimate case of this scenario is, of course, the voice's persistence through recordings after the death of the speaker. [90]

Sterne makes an important distinction between sound recording and sound reproduction. What is interesting about the wind phone is its departure from sound recording; in fact, the recording would disrupt the function all together. If "the recording is…a resonant tomb, offering the exteriority of the voice with none of its interior self-awareness," as Sterne suggests, what is this technology that is purposefully not recorded, or in ways not resonant? The loved one's voice is not so much a repetition as a re-production, in the sense that hearing is about feeling the presence or the trace of the other. That is to say, the *wind phone* reproduces differently—it is obscured or distorted as opposed to being a recording like a voice message for an answering machine. The spontaneity and unpredictability of what each individual will feel and hear, where sound recording is not part of the process, allows for the spontaneity of the voice's "interior self-awareness." Why travel to a booth near the sea to speak into an unconnected phone and listen for a trace of a lost loved one? Especially if you have access to multiple recordings of this person?

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[90] Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 290.

Sterne argues, "*the voices of the dead* is a striking figure of exteriority," he explains how "speech is traditionally considered as both interior and exterior, both "inside" and "outside" the limits of subjectivity."[91] This is "because it comes from within the body and extends out into the world, while, "in contrast, the voices of the dead no longer emanate from bodies that serve as containers for self-awareness."[92] Visitors desire the imagined interiority, spontaneity, and lack of repetition that comes with the wind phone. In this way, the wind phone allows for a kind of re-invitation of the other's self-awareness by invoking the voices of the dead through spontaneous phone calls.

While the process departs from recorded sound, it invokes a kind of nostalgia through the use of the rotary phone. Eugenia Brinkema describes why some "theorizations of nostalgia (*nostos* [to return home]; *algos* [pain]) are so reminiscent of those of grief".[93] Brinkema shows the potent connection between nostalgia and grief, leading to an understanding of why a nostalgic rotary phone makes a powerful technology of mourning. Sasaki's nostalgic rotary telephone harkens back to the original uses for telephones as simple devices connecting the voice of one individual to the voice of another, instantly, however long the physical distance. Departing from the modern-day multipurpose use of smartphones, the wind phone embraces the nostalgic use of a rotary phone as a technology for intimate connection. While acknowledging both the individual and collective grief brought on by a natural disaster, the wind phone represents a bridging of individual loss, by nature of the physical limits of the space, and

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[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Eugenie Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 57.

collective loss, by way of its accessibility and wide appeal as a technology of mourning. The wind phone suspends how we experience time and communication where visitors are invited to embrace the temporal enigma of hearing the past in the present. In the case of the wind phone, the anachronistic use of the rotary telephone acts to alter the visitor's experience of temporality, suspending the delivery, dislocating subject, object, and time.

Since their respective inventions, the telephone and the phonograph have been associated with the supernatural and have on numerous occasions been considered technologies that can communicate with the spirit world.[94] This could be in part because "the telephone facilitated the hearing of a voice physically absent to the listener," so it left space for the uncanny, while as sound historian Jonathan Sterne explains, "the phonograph took this a step further by dramatically facilitating the audition of voices absent to themselves."[95]

Famously, the first person to use a telephone in Japan exclaimed, "Ohh, it's just like hearing the voice of a ghost!"[96] When telephones were first introduced in Japan, people who did

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[94] For more on this topic, see Molly McGarry's *Ghosts of Futures Past: Spiritualism and the Cultural Politics of Nineteenth-Century America*. University of California Press, 2008. *A Simpson book in the humanities* or Jeffery Sconce's *Haunted Media: Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television.* Duke University Press, 2000 or Sterne's *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction.*

[95] Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 290.

[96] Kerim Yasar, "Vocal Cords and Telephone Wires," *Electrified Voices: How the Telephone, Phonograph, and Radio Shaped Modern Japan, 1868-1945*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2018, 47.

not have their own telephones would travel outside their homes to engage in a practice called "*yobidashi denwa* (telephone summons)"—emphasizing the feeling of a sort of magic when 'summoning' another through the telephone.[97] The process sometimes involved going to the office multiple times in order to reach the intended receiver. Despite the cumbersome nature of *yobidashi denwa*, there was still demand for these calls; users "wanted, simply, to hear one another's voices even when one or both parties didn't have a phone installed."[98] The wind phone, in ways, mimics this summoning of the distant presence of a departed loved one, however, the wind phone obscures the voice, or the expectation of what visitors expect to encounter. Yasar highlights the history and cultural significance of orality in Japan and how the voice is often used synonymously with identity. He explains:

> The voice itself straddles the boundary, as Michel Chion has noted, between materiality and immateriality. In other words, technologically mediated listening over long distances offered users pleasure derived…both from technological magic and from the sensual medium of the human voice.[99]

While *yobidashi denwa* emphasizes the appeal of listening to a technologically mediated voice over a long distance, the wind phone produces a "technological magic" through the use of wind as infrastructure, obscuring and redressing the "sensual medium of the human voice" over long

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[97] Yasar, "Vocal Cords and Telephone Wires," 46

[98] Ibid., 47.

[99] Ibid., 30.

distance, and even across the barrier of the living and dead.[100] The idea of the human voice as a "sensual medium" helps account for the sensorium associated with the wind phone. A replacement takes place, where the senses are attuned to traces of departed loved ones, aided by the wind's animating capacity.

Yasar explains how "residual traces [of an individual's voice] remain only in the memories of mortal bodies."[101] To hear a loved one's voice or feel/hear a trace of their voice, then, indicates that they are reachable, through recognizing their absence. So perhaps, it is memories or traces that the visitors speak to and want to feel heard by. Trace, according to Jacques Derrida, "is not a presence but the simulacrum of a presence that dislocates itself, displaces itself, refers to itself, it properly has no site—erasure belongs to its structure."[102] Akira Mizuta Lippit expands on Derrida's notion of trace, defining it as "an erasable sign and sign of erasure that erases as it signs and is in turn erased already."[103] That is to say, the voice is associated with mortality as well as vitality, which is key to the functioning of the wind phone—visitors are aware that they are listening for voices that they literally cannot hear, though there are substitutions for their voices, the animation force of the wind for example, that allow the

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[100] Ibid., 47.

[101] Ibid., 22.

[102] Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Jacques Derrida, Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 26, quoted in Akira Mizuta Lippit, *Atomic Light (Shadow Optics)* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 54.

[103] Lippit, *Atomic Light (Shadow Optics)*, 54.

visitors to hear a representation of their presence. Importantly, in the context of using a rotary phone in a phone booth, the unique sound of someone's voice in present time actively indicates that they are alive.

In cases where physical remains cannot be located, people still feel it is necessary for living loved ones and the remains of the deceased to be ceremoniously "reunified."'[104] For example, a mother of three, who lost her husband, is recorded in the booth, and translated in *This American Life: One Last Thing Before I Go* podcast:

> I feel like you're still alive–somewhere. Over the phone, we always said to each other, are you alive? Yes, I'm alive. It was our password between the two of us, wasn't it? I can't ask you that anymore. Come back. We, all four of us together, we will be waiting. Bye.[105]

For this woman, the fact that her husband's body was never found creates the sense that he may be alive, out there somewhere. On this regard, Harrison notes:

> the work of getting the dead to die in us, as opposed to dying with our dead, is all the more arduous if not impossible when the dead body goes missing, given the

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[104] Harrison, *The Dominion of the Dead,* 147

[105] Miki Meek and Ira Glass, "597: One Last Thing Before I Go, Act One: Really Long Distance," September 23, 2016, in *This American Life*, produced by WBEZ, podcast, MP3 audio, 22 minutes, https://www.thisamericanlife.org/597/one-last-thing-before-i-go-2016/act-one.

> almost universal association between corpse and person among human beings and the fact that mortal remains are never a matter of indifference where bonds of love and kinship exist.[106]

For some visitors, the wind phone allows the commencement of the "work of getting the dead to die in us," though as Harrison notes, this work is exceedingly difficult when letting go of the missing. In Harrison's conception, this release is the very work of mourning– "Just as burial lays the dead to rest in the earth, mourning lays them to rest in us."[107] At times, the work of mourning through the wind telephone is the intimacy of feeling that wherever a loved one may be, however far away, the living can continue to feel a connection, even after the dead are made to die within the living. When mortal remains are swept up by the ocean or obscured by piles of debris—like in the aftermath of the 3/11 earthquake and tsunami—the impossibility of laying the dead to rest is immensely difficult to grapple with. The loss of remains complicates the process of mourning and maintains, or at least acknowledges, the temporal suspension of those mourning the missing. Furthermore, in this case, mourning does not mean letting go or "letting the dead die in our imagination" but precisely the opposite: visitors maintain some kind of a relationship with their departed loved ones through the phone booth, ultimately letting the dead live in their imaginations and in these site-specific conversations. Visitors can sustain their attention but also concentrate their desires through this site-specific

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[106] Harrison, *The Dominion of the Dead*, 147

[107] Ibid., 50

memorial/communication technology.

Conclusion

As I have demonstrated, the wind phone, as a technology of mourning, provides a space where visitors can reconcile an altered relationship to the dead, particularly in the case where there are no physical remains of those who have passed. Repurposing the telephone, a common communication technology, wind phones allow a place for people to externalize their grief and connect with traces of their lost loved ones. Since the *wind phone* overlooks the ocean, not far from where the town of Ōtsuchi suffered immense loss, the site specificity foregrounds the important and intimate details of personal loss and sets it against the indeterminate scene of the waters, allowing for a sort of confrontation of the ambiguity of loss. What takes place is a renegotiation of mourning, where overlapping rhetorical devices, like apostrophe, prosopopoeia, and animation, along with nostalgic media—the rotary telephone—summon the dead and at times give them voice, all in the psychically and spiritually dense confines of a phone booth connected to nothing but the wind. The absent presence or trace of a departed loved one now becomes possible, palpable, as if the dead were really speaking through the wind phone.

Chapter 2.

"[Hearing] Political Protest as Poetic Action" from Meadow to Museum: Rebecca Belmore's *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan*: *Speaking to Their Mother* (1991)

"How long does it take for one voice to reach another?" This was the title of a group exhibition held at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) from September 11, 2021 to February 13, 2022. The exhibition, as described on the MMFA website, "unfolds thematically, delving into the notion of voice not only as a sonic phenomenon but also as a culturally elaborated metaphor: a site where discourses and ideas, communities, and connections are made manifest and challenged through embodied practice."[108] When visitors enter the exhibition, the first object they encounter is an intricately built, two-metre-wide wooden megaphone titled *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to Their Mother* created by the esteemed Anishinaabe artist Rebecca Belmore. The megaphone rests alone at the entrance of the exhibit—a rounded, white-walled room with open passageways on either end leading from the museum to the rest of the exhibition (see fig 1). A mild cacophony of sounds surrounds the serene object: layered sound recordings from past ceremonies play and visitors chatter as they funnel through the space. This is a stark contrast to the ceremonies *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan* was

[108] "How long does it take one voice to reach another?" Montreal Museum of Fine Arts/Musée-des-Beaux-Arts Montréal, May 10, 2022, https://www.mbam.qc.ca/en/exhibitions/how-long-does-it-take-for-one-voice-to-reach-another/.

intended for—ceremonies where the megaphone is used as "a functional tool" [109] for Indigenous participants to "speak to [their] Mother, to the Earth…and not be afraid to speak out."[110] Thirty-one years ago, the first time the megaphone was used, on July 27, 1991, *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan* was carried by a procession of sixty people into a mountain meadow in Banff National Park "where Aboriginal speakers, invited by [Belmore] addressed the land and their relationship to it by speaking into the sculptural device and having their voices echo across the landscape."[111]

The artwork was created as a response to the "Oka Crisis." During the summer of 1990, the Oka municipality proposed to expand a golf course onto traditional Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) land in Kanehsatà:ke, Quebec.[112] The municipal government proposed to expand this golf course on top of their traditional burial grounds, which would also entail tearing down sacred Pine trees. When the Kanien'kehá:ka people rejected and protested this plan, the

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[109] Wanda Nanibush and Rebecca Belmore. "An Interview with Rebecca Belmore." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3, no. 1, (2014), 213–217.

[110] Rebecca Belmore. *Speaking to Their Mother*, directed by Marjorie Beaucage, filmed 1992, vimeo, 26:13, https://vimeo.com/99999913.

[111] Rebecca Belmore, "Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-Mowan: Speaking to Their Mother: Daina Augaitis and Rebecca Belmore in Conversation." *Rebecca Belmore: Rising to the Occasion*, edited by Daina Augaitis and Kathleen Ritter (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 2008), 41.

[112] The settler colonial name for this town is "Kanehsatake" or Kanesatake but I am choosing to honour the Indigenous spelling of the name.

government of Quebec and the government of Canada responded by sending the provincial and national police force and, quickly thereafter, mobilizing military power against the Kanien'kehá:ka land defenders and the traditional "Warrior" society. This culminated in a 78-day standoff between the Canadian military and the land defenders, which came to be known in the media as the "Oka Crisis", now preferably referred to as the 1990 Mohawk or Kanehsatà:ke resistance.[113] Over the course of this summer, many protests erupted across Canada speaking against the government's use of military force against Indigenous people defending their land in Kanehsatà:ke and elsewhere across 'Canada.' Following the outrage of this summer, in 1992 and 1996, Belmore toured the megaphone to various Indigenous communities, sites of land disputes and protests, transporting it in a van across Canada. She describes how, by the time she brought the megaphone to Kanehsatà:ke during the 1991 tour, it had "[become] a quieted symbol, a visual reminder of all the protests that took place in this country during the hot summer of 1990."[114]

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[113] As mentioned in the introduction, for a comprehensive discussion of Kanehsatà:ke Resistance, and for more on the history of settler-Indigenous relations on these lands, see Audra Simpson*, Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*, directed by Alanis Obomsawin, Montreal: National Film Board, 1993; and Ladner, Kiera L, and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, eds. *This Is an Honour Song: Twenty Years Since the Blockades, an Anthology of Writing on the "Oka Crisis*," (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Pub, 2010).

[114] Belmore, "Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-Mowan: Speaking to Their Mother: Daina Augaitis and Rebecca Belmore in Conversation," 41.

I begin with these examples of *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan* in contrasting contexts—the inaugural ceremony in Banff and the group exhibition in a fine arts museum three decades later—to highlight how the artwork affects and is affected by its environment. I focus on how *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan* shifts from/between either/both mobile tool for protest and art object depending on its location and positioning. As a tool of protest, I argue, the piece reinvents the standard technology of the megaphone by shifting its function away from a particular style of protest that sees amplification as a means to be heard, towards one that presents "political protest as poetic action" directed towards the land itself and not at those who would not listen.[115] As a museological object, *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan* similarly removes the megaphone from its original function. I argue, however, that in so doing it appropriates the colonial logic of the museum itself—its removal of the use value of its acquired objects—to render the silence as which Indigenous voices are heard. In both cases, echo, a central element of megaphone technology, remains key to its function, albeit in different ways. On the one hand, in the outdoor space of the ceremony, echo works to integrate voice and land, thereby blurring the boundaries between human and environment. On the other hand, in the museum space where the megaphone is rendered mute, echo operates precisely through the silence of disuse, the echo of an absent echo that persists, unheard, amid the cacophony of the exhibition space and which thereby demonstrates the use value of a megaphone that voices no demand and yet "speaks directly to the issue" by way of poetic action.

[115] Belmore, *Speaking to Their Mother*, directed by Marjorie Beaucage.

Fig. 6 Rebecca Belmore speaking into *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-Mowan: Speaking to Their Mother.* Banff National Park, 2008. Photo Sarah Ciurysek. https://www.mbam.qc.ca/en/articles/how-long-does-it-take-for-one-voice-to-reach-another/.

Fig. 7 Rebecca Belmore's *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to Their Mother* installation at MMFA exhibition, "How long does it take one voice to reach another?" MMFA: Montreal, Photograph by Annie Fafard, 2021. https://www.mbam.qc.ca/en/articles/how-long-does-it-take-for-one-voice-to-reach-another/.

In the Meadow

> In Banff, I was able to find an incredibly beautiful acoustic environment where the voice echoed up to nine times. For those who spoke, this effect conceptually integrated their own voices with the land. This magnificent experience of an echo made all who were gathered profoundly aware of the body as nature. Beyond its physicality, what was important about the megaphone was that it magnified and extended the voice through the "landscape." The art object became merely a functional tool; the essence of the piece was the voice and its reverberation across the land.
>
> —Rebecca Belmore, "Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-Mowan: Speaking to Their Mother: Daina Augaitis and Rebecca Belmore in Conversation"

I open my analysis with the above quotation as it demonstrates the original intent set forth by Belmore for *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-Mowan* to be a "functional tool" for Indigenous people to "speak to our Mother…and not be afraid to speak out."[116] As Stó:lō scholar Dylan Robinson puts it, in "[Belmore's] interventions, song and oration are not merely aesthetic; they operate within a performative tradition that Western theory would call 'speech acts'…. As 'song acts' and 'oratory acts', they continue the work that our songs and oratory do in ceremonial

[116] Rebecca Belmore. "Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan Exhibit." *Rebecca Belmore*, May 15, 2022, https://www.rebeccabelmore.com/exhibit/Speaking-to-Their-Mother.html.

contexts—they communicate with our ancestors, honor our families, and affirm sovereign rights."[117]

Belmore explains that "asking people to address the land directly was an attempt to hear political protest as poetic action."[118] She claims that speaking to the land on the part of the speaker allows the listener to *hear* poetic action, transforming political protest into poetic action in both the speaking and the listening body. She redefines political protest, such that, protest is often defined as speaking to and against institutions, whereas here, by addressing the land, she is turning away from the institution all together and speaking to a body (the Earth, who is not considered a hearing body by settler hegemony), and the issue, such that colonization has taken land away from Indigenous people. What does Belmore mean by "poetic action"? She explains that it is simply "poetic because we were speaking directly to the land" and it is "political because of the long history of others working to silence the sound of our voice echoing off of this land."[119] This distinguishes protest through the megaphone from hegemonic understandings of

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[117] Dylan Robinson, "Speaking to Water, Singing to Stone Peter Morin, Rebecca Belmore, and the Ontologies of Indigenous Modernity," in *Music and Modernity among First Peoples of North America,* eds. Robinson, Dylan, and Victoria Lindsay Levine, (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2019), 238.

[118] Rebecca Belmore, "Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan Exhibit." *Rebecca Belmore* website, accessed May 2022 https://www.rebeccabelmore.com/exhibit/Speaking-to-Their-Mother.html.

[119] Rebecca Belmore, "An Interview with Rebecca Belmore," Interview by Wanda Nanibush in *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society 3,* no. 1, (2014), 215.

protest. Though Belmore uses a megaphone, which is traditionally tied to protest and mass public communication, she repurposes the megaphone to alter the significance and assume the object as Indigenous. Poetic action is also tied to voice and ceremony addressing the land and the potency of turning away from the state. What does speaking to the land do, and for whom? Belmore had originally intended to aim the megaphone at the government to demonstrate her anger, but she decided instead "to speak directly to the issue, to the land itself, as [they] have always done."[120] Here is one way in which speaking to the land *is* protest—creating an environment in which Indigenous people can speak directly "to the issue," as opposed to the one causing the issue, in a way that is relevant to Indigenous culture and ignores the government "who don't listen anyway."[121]

In a typical protest, megaphones amplify in order to make people heard, this is the logic behind amplification; for Belmore, amplification is not about being heard by a governmental body or any other institution, nor is it about direct communication. Instead, Belmore's megaphone extends and magnifies the voice, transfiguring it as a medium: "for those who spoke, this effect conceptually integrated their own voices with the land."[122] This implies that the megaphone and its positioning amplify *while* creating echo, altering the medium of the voice and its capacity for echo and integration. In the above passage, Belmore describes how the "beautiful acoustic environment" in Banff allowed the "voice [to echo] up to nine times." The megaphone

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[120] Belmore, "An Interview with Rebecca Belmore," 215.

[121] Belmore, *Speaking to Their Mother*, 1992.

[122] Belmore, "Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-Mowan: Speaking to Their Mother: Daina Augaitis and Rebecca Belmore in Conversation," 42.

both "*magnified* and *extended*": two terms that imply a material physicality of voice (extending), and a visual component (magnifying), that would not generally be associated with a megaphone's capacity for sound transmission. In this case, the experience of voice is multisensorial. Here, echo is conflated with the transfiguration of the voice and the voice oscillates between forms, extending, magnifying, and transfiguring, while the object itself is reverberating across forms from art object to communication device to functional tool. As Belmore puts it, "the essence of the piece was the voice and its reverberation across the land"—that is to say, *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-Mowan* is a tool for protest *because* of its capacity to transfigure the human voice.

This "magnificent experience of echo" transformed the art object into "a functional tool" by reimagining protest to account for something outside of the settler colonial understanding. The echo here is not about demands being amplified and thus being heard by the institution, the traditional logic of political protest that the megaphone iconographically represents, for Belmore intentionally turns the megaphone away from the institution and ignores it. Instead, the echo takes place between the speaker/the people and the landscape and is thus put in the service of hearing each other and the land itself, and in viewing "the body as nature."[123] Amplification may remain part of the object's utility and purpose here; if so, however, it is only insofar as it works to "extend" and "magnify" calls to embrace Indigenous relations to the land and even to abandon Western ideas of what a hearing subject is.

Writing on the role of echo in *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-Mowan*, Iris Sandjette Blake notes that echo "occurs when sound reflects and returns to the voicing body as the act of

[123] Ibid., 42.

listening."[124] Requiring "a time lag between what is sounded and what is heard," it is "the sounding of a relation between times that is also a relation between spaces."[125] In other words, echo is a temporal and spatial phenomenon, where speaking and listening create a sort of sonic rebound between the "voicing body" that brackets the event as both speaker and listener. In this sense, the spatiotemporal relationship of echo influences how the artwork's function and meaning differs depending on its positioning. In Blake's configuration, the echo is material and fundamentally rooted in a political reality:

> While colonial logics enclose on the body as contained (and human), on space as property, on time and performance as linear, and on voicing and listening as discrete, the echo disrupts the power and directionality associated with colonial epistemes of voicing and listening that assign "voicelessness" to Indigenous communities protesting for the decolonization of their lands…Under the analytic of the echo, listening becomes the "return" of voicing, a reminder that the past-ness of the past is not settled; rather, the reverberations of the echo mark "past" events as ongoing.[126]

By marking past events as ongoing, protest can happen outside of colonial logic and exclude institutions by refusing to address them directly. Blake highlights a key difference between

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[124] Blake, "Decolonial Echoes: Voicing and Listening in Rebecca Belmore's Sound Performance," *Performance Matters* 6, no. 2, (2021), 10.

[125] Blake, "Decolonial Echoes," 10.

[126] Ibid., 17.

amplification and echo: the latter only crosses time minimally as sound necessarily does, whereas echo can be understood as the return of voice, demonstrating a reciprocity only present in echo. Further, the use of megaphones at typical protests mimics this return of voice in the form of call and response chants, but here, Blake points out a much older voice that can be returned by the echo, an echo that works for someone who is listening, and moreover, knows *how* to listen. Moreover, listening, Blake explains, "is never just about a single sense or a desocialized materiality; rather, listening and voicing are always connected to the social-historical context that produces the conditions to listen, to voice, and that has conditioned understandings of what it means to do so."[127] Regarding *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan*, the past's persistence demonstrates how the material nature of Belmore's sculpture and its echo upend Western logics of voicing and listening as well as the divisions between human and land, situating the megaphone's sonic capacities as vital to its efficacy as a tool for protest, and in turn, allowing "political protest" to transform into "poetic action."

Marjorie Beaucage's documentary, *Speaking to Their Mother* (1992), follows Belmore's visit to the Protectors of Mother Earth Wiggins Bay Blockade. The last ten minutes of the twenty-six-minute documentary show various people speaking Cree into the megaphone, with no translation—there is an indication that translating the words would generate a loss in meaning. Instead, Beaucage demands the viewer experience the orations, affectively, without needing to understand their meaning because it misses the point; Beaucage asks viewers to "hear the rhythm and love of the Land in the language…feel the emotions, not the words;" highlighting the distinction between the affective experience and the words themselves, while demonstrating the

[127] Blake, Ibid., 17.

intended audience of these iterations—the land.[128] Multiple Indigenous languages were spoken at each of the tour's stops, many, if not all of which, Belmore herself did not understand, affirming the affective capacity of the sculpture and its purpose to speak to the land.

On this stop at Wiggins Bay on the 1992 tour, Belmore describes participating in "a real protest" organized by Cree elders to protest the clear-cutting of land in their territory. Belmore describes how, at one point in the four-day visit to the blockade, "during a media visit by the CBC television network W5, some of the elders in the camp who were not official spokespersons chose to speak through the megaphone instead of talking directly into the cameras."[129] For Belmore, this shows how the megaphone operated on two registers at the same time. On the one hand, participating in a "real protest" (being a tool for protest), while on the other hand, as poetic action, speaking to the land. In other words, protestors refused to speak to the colonial institution, the government, and the media, and inherent in that refusal, was an alternative form of protest.

Belmore, along with a youth collaborator, created "a dead wood forest" out of pieces of dead wood found at a clear-cut at the Protectors of Mother Earth Wiggins Bay Blockade. In the documentary, she explains that positioning the megaphone toward the destruction of the clear-cut forest was to ask what the once standing forest needed. In this case, the people at the protest

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[128] Belmore, *Speaking to* Their *Mother*, 1992.

[129] Rebecca Belmore, "Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-Mowan: Speaking to Their Mother: Daina Augaitis and Rebecca Belmore in Conversation," Interview by Daina Augaitis, in *Rebecca Belmore: Rising to the Occasion,* edited by Daina Augaitis and Kathleen Ritter, (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 2008), 46.

were, indeed, speaking to the dead—though the dead here are the trees, the earth. The trees, along with all other aspects of the nonhuman world are granted equal esteem as the human dead and this permits a kind of remembering that "is not a form of nostalgia but rather an action of making [Indigenous] traditions present across a range of contemporary forms."[130] Positioning the megaphone towards the clear-cut allows the speakers to consult the dead trees as part of the land to ask what it needs and wants for the future, whereas, as Belmore contends, the people who enacted the killing of the trees, did not ask. Here, and more generally, the artwork "enacts healing for those not physically present…and provides necessary forums for Indigenous peoples to aurally affirm kinship with other-than-human relations."[131] Wherever the installation is placed, its positioning matters, and reinforces Indigenous "kinship with other-than-human relations."[132]

In the Museum

What happens when this artwork/sculpture/tool/instrument is placed in an institution like a museum? How, then, does this positioning matter? How do the poetics of the voice change across these sites, from ceremonies in Indigenous communities to a museum? How do the attributes of "echo" change in such a space?

Kate Morris claims that the work of the megaphone is not about "the constructed object

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[130] Robinson, "Speaking to Water, Singing to Stone," 239.

[131] Ibid., 239.

[132] Ibid., 239.

itself but the ceremonial acts it engenders."[133] That is to say, the material bodies that surround the object, whether human, animal, plant, or otherwise, influence and determine the capacity of the object. Cree scholar Gerald McMaster explains how "Belmore created an opportunity for everyone to speak without prejudice…to the universe" and "at the moment of enunciation, everything and everybody—the animals, the grass, the wind, the rocks, the sun, the mountains—are witnesses to the address."[134] In this case everything and everyone present is a witness, including non-human elements.

While bringing the megaphone into the museum complicates Morris' claim that the impact of the megaphone is "the ceremonial acts it engenders," when the megaphone is placed in the museum, its past is carried with it, even in the confines of this institution, which carries its own context and history. Indeed, the museum supresses ceremonial acts, so the allusion to them and intentional exclusion of visitors, who are merely permitted to observe the object, affirms who these ceremonies are for and where the megaphone intended to be directed. Morris, via Belmore, discusses the importance of the megaphone as a tool—one which is influenced by its surrounding material "bodies," which is still the case in the museum. While the ceremonial "oratory acts" cannot be conducted, and therefore cannot be witnessed and are not invited to be witnessed in the museum, an exclusion of its visitors takes place. The objection to being

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[133] Kate Morris. "The Embodied Landscape," in *Shifting Grounds: Landscape in Contemporary Native American Art*. (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2019), 145.

[134] Gerald McMaster "Towards an Aboriginal Art History," in *Native American Art in the Twentieth Century: Makers, Meanings and Histories*, edited by W. Jackson Rushing III, (New York: Routledge, 1999), 91, quoted in Morris, "The Embodied Landscape," 145-146.

absorbed into the institutional context, seeing as the megaphone continues to be an important tool, allows it to perform a kind of refusal to be read by a visiting audience.[135] Instead of being incorporated into ceremony, the visitors, remain visitors, and can merely witness the potentiality of the giant megaphone, its massive presence, and its dormant use. In this way, the megaphone is performing an alternative form of protest, refusing to allow the visitors to speak, refusing to speak to visitors, and refusing to the institution.

In the confines of the museum, the appearance of the megaphone-as-object indicates visually what is lost in function: in outdoor settings under the sky and among the rocks and trees—settings for which it was originally conceived—the megaphone appears as an integrated whole, a force that vibrates with the natural world around it. Consequently, in the stark whiteness of the museum, a voice cannot be absorbed by its surroundings, there are no mountains against and through which a message can be reflected or absorbed, no connection between body and land, the megaphone is severed from its body, dismembered in a sense, and in this way the echo is absent.

The absent use and the potential for auditory disruption (and over-amplification if someone were to speak into the megaphone) in the museum reaffirms its role as a tool for decolonial protest, asserting its exclusive name "speaking to *their* mother," excluding and othering the visitor, and indeed, establishing their place as visitor as opposed to a participant in

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[135] Refusal has been theorized by many Indigenous scholars including, but not limited to, Audra Simpson, Leanne Simpson, and Glen Coulthard. Dylan Robinson's *Hungry Listening* (2020), 21-24 also contains a comprehensive discussion of refusal in the context of sound studies.

ceremony. By placing the installation in the museum, it reasserts its position as a voicing device for Indigenous people, and affirms that, since settlers "don't listen anyway," the artist also will not permit them to listen because the megaphone rests dormant. Submitting to the un-use of the object in the museum, Belmore works to "transform colonial space into decolonizing space," in this case, by rendering the megaphone mute in the museum.[136] For example, if someone were to speak into the electric megaphone at the base of the giant wooden megaphone, it would undoubtedly startle the museum goers and disrupt the ambient buzz of chatter in the museum and likely cause physical discomfort to those in the vicinity. The latent potential of the object reaffirms to the visitor what megaphones are typically used for—being heard. This latent sound demonstrates the out-of-placeness of the object, signaling the transformation from a tool for protest into an inert object. In other words, its dormancy and denied use value are more obvious—the listener is both nudged to speak into the megaphone, in the same way that, say, an unplugged telephone would ask to be plugged in, while the visitor is also prohibited from doing so.

The object is, thus, doubly displaced: from its use and its intended positioning and location. Sara Ahmed discusses what happens to objects that are taken from the communities that made them and displayed in museums: "We could think of museums as where objects are stripped of use and put on display," she writes. "The word *strip* points to the violence of this

[136] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, "I am the Artist Amongst my People," *Canadian Art*, July 11, 2018, https://canadianart.ca/features/i-am-the-artist-amongst-my-people/.

history: it derives from the West Saxon *bestrypan*, meaning to plunder."[137] In Ahmed's formulation, transporting an art object into a museum is a violent move, she describes this as plundering, a word that has great significance in colonial history. Ahmed discusses the replication of the violence of history, when colonizers take objects, often forcefully and without consent, away from the communities that built them and put them into museums. However, this is different from Belmore choosing to put her work in a museum and by doing so deliberately allowing her work to be stripped of its use. *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan's* positioning in the museum mimics this colonial process of plundering, while challenging it. In other words, for *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan*, it is this very 'stripping of use' that highlights the purpose of the megaphone in the museum. The megaphone transforms into an object for admiring, it becomes inactive. The silence of the megaphone echoes off the white walls, and appropriates the strategy, which puts on display the museum's colonial logic, mobilizing this stripping of use to create an absent echo of its dormant use. This is where the dormant echo, or echo's absence allows for a continuation of the object as a tool for protest—moreover, it continues to function by paradoxically not functioning as a megaphone, while its silence affirms its capacity as a tool for protest.

The noise in the museum makes the quiet of the megaphone even more potent; if conventionally a megaphone is supposed to override the noise, here, the silence overcomes the noise of the surrounds. Ambient noise in the museum affirms the task of the artwork: speaking to the land, to the mother, and not to the government, or to the visitors in the museum. In a short

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[137] Sarah Ahmed, *What's the Use? : On the Uses of Use*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 33.

essay on the multitude of hearing subjects in the museum, entitled "In Museums, There is No Hearing Subject," Jonathan Sterne and Zoë De Luca discuss the myth of silence in the museum, noting that while "the silent visitor standing still in front of an exhibition and gazing intently…has been a representative image of the museum experience," museums are in fact "often noisy and cacophonous places."[138] This observation helps consider the sonic nature of the "How long does it take one voice to reach another?" exhibition—an exhibition about sound that generates a noisy environment (albeit ambiently), and how the potency of the object's silence increases in the museum. This cacophony of voices, mixed with recorded sounds, and multiple sound exhibitions creates a scattered focus, one that contrasts the directed locutions of the ceremonies. This mixture of ambient noise works to further silence the instrumentality of *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan*, in turn, ironically upholding the functional and aesthetic submission to unuse.

In the exhibition, recordings of the ceremonies play, but no one is listening, which, again, is the point of the piece. It endorses Belmore's decision to turn to the land, which is precisely why she made a piece speaking to "their mother," to the land, because no one is listening. The available avenue to be heard does not work, and when in the museum, the megaphone's dormant function and silent echo perform the way in which this is so. The megaphone sits in the museum, voicing no demand, yet speaking directly to the issue. Amidst the hum of noise, when the

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[138] Nikos Bubaris, "Sound in Museums—Museums in Sound" in *Museum Management and Curatorship* 29, no.4, (2014): 391 quoted in Jonathan Sterne and Zoe De Luca, "In Museums, There Is No Hearing Subject," *Curator: The Museum Journal* 62, no. 3 (2019): 301.

megaphone is rendered mute in the museum, it mobilizes the stripping of use, to allow the absent echo to persist, ultimately maintaining its poetic action.

Return

Embodying and repurposing the megaphone, *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan* functions as a powerful tool for protest, even while it is intentionally not voicing a demand. With regards to the megaphone, amplification is the logic, however, Belmore shifts this logic to become about something other than being heard; instead, it is about allowing Indigenous people to speak to the land and "not be afraid to speak out."[139] The artwork highlights a structural condition in which Indigenous voices are un-hearable to colonial governing bodies. In so doing, it prescribes a way to make demands while also making it impossible to make those demands to settler governing bodies, which again, highlights a structural condition.

Despite being removed from its intended setting when installed in the museum, *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan* behaves similarly to how it does in ceremony: deliberately distancing itself from the traditional use of a megaphone, its relationship to nature, and its incomprehensibility to the settler audience. To return to Belmore's description of the ceremony in Banff, and return to the echo, I want to consider how "the art object became merely a functional tool" when it began its 1991 tour. In this way, the megaphone went from art object, to tool, then in the museum, to art object again (all the while remaining a tool for protest) and so on, creating a reciprocal and ongoing oscillation between physical forms, like the functioning of echo as present and dormant in each respective location. As Belmore puts it, when experiencing

[139] Belmore, *Speaking to Their Mother*, directed by Beaucage.

the echo— "the essence of the piece was the voice and its reverberation across the land"— despite its being placed in the museum, and its positioning changing, reverberation remains its essence.[140]

[140] Rebecca Belmore, "Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-Mowan: Speaking to Their Mother: Daina Augaitis and Rebecca Belmore in Conversation," Interview by Daina Augaitis, in *Rebecca Belmore: Rising to the Occasion,* edited by Daina Augaitis and Kathleen Ritter, (Vancouver: Vanvouver Art Gallery, 2008), 42.

Concluding Notes

"All Temporalities at Once—and Not"

When it comes to speaking to the dead and the nonhuman, the technological devices in this thesis facilitate communication and animate or enchant the audiences they speak to, giving the dead and the nonhuman agency to respond, and providing space for the past to be heard in the present. Khalip asks, "How do the lost voices of the dead contribute to the time of the present?"[141] One such way the devices in this thesis—the *wind phone* and Belmore's *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan*—respond to the question of space and temporality, as tools of communication with the dead and the nonhuman, is by operationalizing listening, which, according to Khalip, "has no preconditions because it occurs within a "sonorous presence" that isn't simply a naive presentism, but a complex temporality that is all temporalities at once—and not."[142] In the first chapter, where the ambiguous audience cannot, under common understandings, listen, the *wind phone* provides a space and an apparatus for a reciprocal listening to take place, in a "sonorous presence" where it is, indeed, bridging across time from the present to the past to converse with the dead. In the second chapter, where the settler audience *can* listen but refuses to listen, the task of listening is turned toward the personified Mother earth, because the settler audience "don't listen anyway."[143] So, instead, the Indigenous

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[141] Khalip, "The Archaeology of Sound," 76.

[142] Ibid., 90.

[143] Belmore *Speaking to Their Mother,* dir. Beaucage, 1992.

participants in the ceremonies do "as they have always done" and speak to the land.[144] As Robinson explains, "remembering here is not a form of nostalgia but rather an action of making our traditions present across a range of contemporary forms."[145] Here, the tradition of speaking to the land allows speakers to hold parts of the past in the present to converse with "ancestral and other-than-human publics."[146]

To return again to Khalip's questions from the epigraph: "Can the past be heard in the present? What or who speaks or makes a sound?" [147] The objects in this thesis imply that the past can indeed be heard in the present, whether via speaking directly to the land, and maintaining relations with "other-than-human kin" or through speaking to and listening for the inaudible voices of the dead through the wind phone. While the sounds may be inaudible, they are heard nonetheless, and the space of the voice, as in Barthes's question, is indeed "an infinite one."[148]

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[144] Belmore. "An Interview with Rebecca Belmore," Interview by Wanda Nanibush, 215.

[145] Robinson, "Speaking to Water, Singing to Stone," 239.

[146] Ibid., 228.

[147] Khalip, "The Archaeology of Sound," 76.

[148] Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," 184.

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