

**Lesbian Radio Radicals and The Queer Podcast
Revolution: A Political Phenomenology of
Soundwork**

**by
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Abstract

Today online searches for lesbian and queer podcasts return a rich listing of content for our consumption. But how did we arrive at this particular moment? And what makes a podcast or radio show 'queer' anyway? *Lesbian Radio Radicals* and *The Queer Podcast Revolution* explores the cultural and political production of queer feminist soundwork. In conversation with cutting-edge queer and feminist podcast producers and radiomakers across North America, the author invites us to turn a feminist-embodied ear to the past to uncover how gender, race, and sexual orientations are embedded in our everyday media listening practices. Highlighting the voices and experiences of past and present, this research queers our senses across media time and space, weaving its way through the campy sounds of Vancouver Co-Op Radio's *The Lesbian Show* (1979-2014) and CKUT Montreal's *Dykes on Mykes* (1987-2016) and, into the erotic politics of contemporary queer podcasts such as *Queer Public* and *The Heart*. Podcast practices and the frictions of feminist media labour under capitalism are brought into conversation with second-wave lesbian community radio to reveal enduring audibility activism rooted in lesbian feminist politics of erotic power and community care. Ultimately, *Copeland* aims to reveal the crucial role of soundwork in queering feminist media practices of cultural production, perception, and distribution. This work contributes a sound-centred queer feminist phenomenology relevant to anyone interested in cultural sound studies, queer theory, radio and podcast studies, feminist media studies or the study of gender, sexuality, and media in the humanities and social sciences.

Keywords: Gender and sexuality; Feminist media; Broadcast history; Podcast studies; Radio studies; Phenomenology

Dedicated to all the queers, lesbians, and dykes past and future daring enough to take the microphone.

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Table of Contents

Declaration of Committee.....	ii
Ethics Statement.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Dedication.....	v
Acknowledgements.....	vi
Table of Contents.....	viii
List of Tables.....	xi
List of Figures.....	xii
List of Acronyms.....	xiii
Chapter 1. Introduction: Tuning the Temporal Static	1
Soundwork and Techno-logics.....	4
Phenomenology for Queer Feminism	5
Recovering Lesbian Feminisms in Queer Times	8
The Audibility Activism of Queer Feminist Media.....	10
A ‘Historientation’ Toward Lesbian Radio	12
<i>The Lesbian Show</i> : ‘By Lesbians, for Lesbians, about Lesbians’	16
<i>Dykes on Mykes</i> : Montreal’s Lesbian Radio Radicals	18
<i>The Heart</i> : Podcasting Intimacy and Humanity under Capitalism.....	21
<i>Queer Public</i> : ‘a podcast about real-life queer life’.....	22
<i>Warriors, Bards ‘n Brews</i> : Chumcasting Queer Feminism.....	24
<i>Procyon Podcast Network</i> : Reimagining Audio Fiction Labour.....	25
Chapter by Chapter Overviews	27
Chp 2. Queer Feminism and Soundwork.....	27
Chp 3. Listening in to Feminist Phenomenology.....	29
Chp 4. Being a Public Queer.....	30
Chp 5 Kisses through the Static.....	31
Chp 6. Finding Queer Soundwork.....	33
Chapter 2. Literature Review. Queer Cultural Theory and Feminism Toward the Study of Soundwork	36
Introduction	36
Queer Feminism in Culture and Media Studies	38
Queer Cultural Theory and Feminism	39
Intersectionality and Feminism.....	42
Queer Feminist Media Studies for Audio Media.....	44
Cultural Sound Studies: Radio and Podcasting	47
On Radio Studies (within Cultural Sound Studies).....	48
On Podcast Studies (within Cultural Sound Studies).....	50
On Politics of Voice in the Gendered Soundscape	53
Sounds of Subjectivity + Identity	58
Listening Communities and (Counter)publics	60

Soundworks in/as Queer Publics	61
Chapter 3. Methodology and Conceptual Framework. Listening in to Feminist Phenomenology	65
Introduction: The queer story of a box of travelling tapes	65
Phenomenology for Feminist Media Studies.....	67
Orienting an Embodied Feminist Ear Toward Queer Soundwork	72
The Feminist-Embodied Ear as Method: Interviews, Archives, and Reflexive Documentary	77
Listening to the Archives	79
Semi-Structured Interviews	80
Reflexive Thematic analysis.....	81
Feminist Textual analysis	83
Feminist Care or Catharsis? On Audio Diaries as Reflexive Method.....	84
Chapter 4. Being a Public Queer: On Sonic (inter)Subjectivity and Audibility Activism	88
Sonic (inter)Subjectivity in Soundwork.....	92
Audible Exclusions: Sonic Whiteness and Trans Politics.....	95
Audio fragment frustration and the possibilities of glitchy orientation.....	103
Queer Kinship: Soundworks Sonic Dust	105
Conclusion: From Lesbian Visibility to Audibility Activism.....	114
Chapter 5. Kisses through the Static: Producing a Queer Politics of Sonic Intimacy and Play.....	117
Camp Sounds (not the bonfire kind)	118
Queerspeak and Humor: The Play's the Thing	123
Intimacy in Place, but make it Punk	130
Queer Soundworks Punk Roots	134
The Queer Art of Sonic Intimacy	136
Sweaty Conclusions.....	141
Chapter 6. Finding Queer Soundwork: On Feminist Network Labour and Discoverability.....	144
Lesbian Radio as Information Activism	148
Making Community in Sound	158
Disturbing Practices of Discoverability	161
Toward a Queer Feminist Podcast Model.....	167
Epilogue. Call Her by Their Many Names	176
References.....	190
Appendix A. Dissertation Playlist.....	211
Appendix B. Ethics Study Detail.....	217

Appendix C. Participant Consent Form	222
Appendix D. Semi-Structured Interview Instrument	226
Appendix E. Call for Participant Instruments	228

List of Tables

Table 3-1.	What is queer feminist soundwork? Reflexive Thematic Analysis.	82
Table 5-1.	Robin Queen's (1997) Four Stylistic Tropes of Lesbian Queerspeak.	127
Table 6-1.	What is queer feminist soundwork? Themes in review.	187

List of Figures

Figure 6-1.	ON THE AIR.	151
Figure 6-2.	THE LESBIAN SHOW.	151
Figure 6-3.	The Lesbian Show Tape Service.	153
Figure 6-4.	Lesbian Show Recruitment Ad.	155
Figure 6-5.	Lesbian Show Ad in VGCC News.	155

List of Acronyms

CoS	The Coming Out Show
DOMs	Dykes on Mykes
QP	Queer Public
TLS	The Lesbian Show
WBB	Warriors, Bards 'n Brews
WtP	Welcome to Provincetown

Chapter 1.

Introduction: Tuning the Temporal Static

“A few years ago, I found myself in an awkward position. I decided I was a Lesbian, but I didn’t know any other lesbians, and I was unaware a lesbian community existed. When I found out about The Lesbian Show, I tuned in faithfully. The radio, at first, was my only connection to other lesbians.” – Cathy, The Lesbian Show, (1989 or 1990)¹

Community. Lesbian. Radio. Connection. Found. Caught in an ephemeral wash of radio fuzz, Cathy’s words wriggle into my ears and against my skin. Her voice, my ears, our bodies pull time askew. Though Cathy of Vancouver Co-Op Radio’s *The Lesbian Show* is speaking from a different time, their voice extended through my computer speakers becomes part of our contemporary media soundscape, slipping through the temporal static to jump-start affective connection anew. I first heard Cathy’s voice when I stumbled upon *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] in the Archives of Lesbian Oral Testimony at Simon Fraser University. I wasn’t there to listen to TLS (if a website can be a ‘there’). My virtual visit was entirely for another project, but my history with community radio pulled me in. As I sat in my tiny apartment living room listening to these archives of lesbian feminist radio, I could hear the same voices and stories so familiar to my own experience as a lesbian in present-day Canada despite the decades between us. The relationship one can build with voices past is an assemblage of uncanny imagined connections and a closeness without being close. A relationship made evermore complex through radio’s socio-political role as communication technology, mode of entertainment, and household companion. It is a tricky mess of feelings to unpack, but one at the very heart of media phenomenology. Our relationships with media technologies are never neutral. You, the reader, are about to delve into a sound-centred assemblage of histories, experiences, technologies, and media. An assemblage which welcomes you as earwitness² into the world of queer feminist soundwork.

¹ You can listen to this audio clip from Cathy and The Lesbian Show in Appendix A, Audio A1.

² In *The Soundscape* (1977) composer and theorist R. Murray Schafer defines an earwitness as “one who testifies or can testify to what he or she has heard” (p.272).

Queer feminist soundwork is a sound-based media form, typically produced for radio or podcasting, which is perceived or claimed to be part of queer and feminist cultural activism by the public and creator. Drawing on Michele Hilmes's definition of *soundwork*, these media artifacts consist of "three basic elements of sonic expression—music, speech, and noise—to create a lively economy of sound-based commodities and institutions" (2013, p.177). This doctoral thesis, *Lesbian Radio Radicals and The Queer Podcast Revolution*, weaves its way through media past and present to uncover the political, aesthetic, and technocultural principles of queer feminist soundwork. Writing across generations, histories, and changing logics of media and technology, this work contributes an ear-oriented feminist approach to studying media and culture. As you read and listen, you are invited to ask, 'What does it mean to listen back to lesbian feminist radio in conversation with our queer digital present?' 'What embodied and experiential factors are shaping *your* listening?' Despite differences in distribution and contexts of queer life, for many listening to *The Lesbian Show* archives is not so different from listening to a queer podcast today. When tuning in with a queer feminist ear, there is a sense of familiarity with the stories shared. A familiarity always shaped and reshaped by each individual's relationship to feminism and queerness. Each listener's relationship to a soundwork can differ from another's. Here I invite you reader to bring your ear into the world of queer feminist radio and podcasting as experienced and presented by queer and lesbian media makers past and present.

From Allen Ginsberg's 1956 American broadcast of *Howl* on KPFA to the establishment of Canada's first commercial LGBTQ station, 103.9 Proud FM, 'radio' has played a vital role in the communication and construction of LGBTQ+ culture and activism within a historically heteronormative media soundscape (Hollows, Nye, & Godwin, 2000; Johnson & Keith, 2001; Johnson, 2008). Today, as 'diversity' becomes an increasingly valued part of Canada's culture industries (Fleras, 2011; Mannani & Thompson, 2012; Shade, 2014), online searches for lesbian and queer podcasts return a rich listing of shows from across Europe and the Americas. But how did we arrive at this particular moment? And what makes a radio show or podcast 'queer' anyway? In discussion with present-day queer soundwork, this text returns to two historical examples of lesbian and queer women's media in Canada to interrogate the role that radio has played in queer media activism and the formation of counter techno-logics for the circulation of queer desires, experiences and voices through amplified sound. To take up a queer feminist

collectivity to articulate these techno-logics and their corresponding experiential frames, you and I are not alone in our listenings back. Former hosts of *The Lesbian Show* and its Montreal counterpart *Dykes on Mykes*, alongside contemporary queer podcasters, join us throughout this text to provide experiential grounding to the archival materials and theoretical ideas presented here. This work is as much theirs as it is mine. Without their insightful contributions and unapologetically queer soundwork, Canada's media soundscape would be a duller place indeed.

Queer soundwork, specifically radio and podcasts produced for and by queer women, has little been studied in relation to the communication of gender and sexuality. Lesbian and feminist cinema, books, archives, music and visual arts have robust fields of scholarship engrossed in their study. I am indebted to significant contributions such as Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975), Becki Ross' *The House that Jill Built* (1995), bell hooks' *Reel to Real* (1996), Ann Cvetkovitch's *An Archive of Feelings* (2003), Jack Halberstam's *In a Queer Time and Place* (2005), Jose Esteban Muñoz's *Cruising Utopia* (2009), Sara Ahmed's *The Promise of Happiness* (2010), Kristen Hogan's *The Feminist Bookstore Movement* (2016), Cait McKinney's *Information Activism* (2020), Rox Samer's *Lesbian Potentiality and Feminist Media in the 1970s* (2022), and many others. Still, soundwork, like numerous other 'everyday' media, has yet to be justly acknowledged for its contributions to feminist and queer media activism. What Jody Berland notes is often referred to as a "secondary medium," radio (and now podcasting, too) is designed to follow you everywhere and allow your ears to float in and out of listening (1990, p.179). It is to be listened to as secondary or background content while you drive, clean, cook, eat, and even sleep. Nonetheless, whether closely attuned to soundwork or not, when a radio show or podcast contributes to our soundscape, it can drastically transform our experiences in and of the world.³

This media studies research traces shifts in queer and feminist media practices through history along two axes: 1) the creation of sonic space and sonic subjectivity for queer

³ The fields of musicology and music psychology have long studied the effects of music on psychological factors from mood to memory (see *The Psychology of Music* by Susan Hallam, 2019). Sound has also been studied at length in our acoustic environment for its impact on physical and mental health (see *The Effects of Noise on Health* by Stephanie Dutchen, 2022). As a result, it is not such a far leap to understand sounds' equally significant role in shaping cultural understanding, community, and subjectivity.

women and lesbians in the Canadian media context; and 2) the varied features, forms, and constructions queer feminist soundwork takes across a selection of crucial radio shows and podcasts.

Soundwork and Techno-logics

The term 'soundwork' bridges the divide between the study of radio and podcasting within cultural sound studies. Soundworks are "media forms that are primarily aural, employing the three basic elements of sonic expression—music, speech, and noise—to create a lively economy of sound-based commodities and institutions" (Hilmes, 2013, p.177). While I touch on the importance of the term 'soundwork' further in Chapter 2, it is essential to note the distinct shift in focus the term provides. The employment of 'soundwork' rather than 'radio' or 'podcast' allows one to focus on studying radio programs and podcasts as media texts akin to a film, television show or piece of recorded music. Where radio or podcast can refer to the technology, the industry, and the culture, 'soundwork' pulls us into the labour of audio media production: the collective aesthetic, communal, and experiential labour of the people behind the works in question. Of course, broader questions of technology and industry are also thoroughly explored here through the chapters to come. In fact, by addressing these radio shows and podcasts by their specific soundwork form and the experiences behind their production, comparisons between their various industries and technologies become even more apparent. In collapsing temporal differences of the historical period and content distribution, a focus on the term soundwork invites us to question what has changed, if anything, in soundworks' transfer between the radio hearth and the podcast app. Similarly, the term 'techno-logics' is applied to encompass the "medium-specific logics" "that produce and maintain social differences," including gender, race, sexuality, class, and ability within and across technological platforms (Sharma, 2022, p.5). Throughout Chapters 4,5, and 6, the techno-logics of radio and podcasting are critically examined to flesh out how queer feminist soundwork draws on the established norms of radio and podcast media while also adapting those same practices to queer and feminize the media ecosystems they find themselves a part of across varying platforms and geographies.

Phenomenology for Queer Feminism

Akin to the interwoven assemblage of soundwork, this project incorporates methods and theories from across the humanities and social sciences. I apply queer theory, feminist, and phenomenological methodologies to the fields of cultural sound studies and media studies to contribute a balanced articulation of queer feminist soundwork for the engagement of readers from various academic backgrounds. To this aim, in Chapter 2, foundational scholars in queer feminist theory, including Mimi Marinucci (2010), Teresa de Lauretis (1994), Annamarie Jagose (2009), Jennifer Nash (2019), and Jack Halberstam (2005), are brought into conversation with cultural sound studies scholars such as Kate Lacey (2013), Jennifer Lynn Stoeber (2016), Michele Hilmes (2013), and Siobhan McHugh (2016). The literature review chapter provides the theoretical and historical context through which queer feminist soundwork was formed by weaving together radio and podcasting, queer culture, feminist activism, and the history of media and technology across these authors' varied works. In Chapter 3, I apply phenomenology to this context as a methodological foundation for studying queer feminist soundwork as a phenomenon.

Traditional phenomenological thinkers like Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger are widely recognized for their contributions to critical discourses of consciousness, perception, and being. Nevertheless, in recent years they are equally (and justly) critiqued for their universalizing transcendental aspirations. Much like other widely adopted western philosophical methods of inquiry, phenomenology has a problematic history of white male cisgender universalization of experience. Here I instead draw on feminist, queer, Black, and disability studies traditions which engage phenomenology as a critical method for political analysis. Jonathan Sterne (2022) defines this approach through the work of Jody Berland (1984) as *political phenomenology*, a flavour of Husserl and Heidegger's once problematically universalizing method which abandons the transcendental in favour of situating itself "historically, ecologically, and politically" (p.11). Political phenomenology shares this political line of possibility with other critical methods such as ethnography or historical materialism but is unique in its focus on questions of the *self*. Phenomenology in this regard helps me to theorize queer as 1) an identity marker for sexuality and gender and 2) a way of 'being toward' for queering how we understand our relationships to media, culture, and our embodied subjectivity. As this

text argues, understanding queer in this way brings much-needed attention to the possibility of sounds and experiences in radio and podcasting as queer phenomena.

The theorization of 'queer' is often traced back to the political philosophy of Michel Foucault's mid-1970s research on the history of sexuality, followed by Teresa de Lauretis' famous queer theory paper in 1990 as the coalescence of a shift in ideology within Lesbian & Gay Studies. The emergence of Black queer studies has also established the early significance of Chicana feminists Cherrie Moraga (1983) and Gloria Anzaldua (1987) and the writing of Black lesbian authors such as Audre Lorde (1984) on shaping the field. While these roots in sexuality and gender studies are generally acknowledged, the very *queerness* of queer theory has led to a multiplicity of queer theories and understandings of 'queer' within the academy. Queer theory today has been built from a multitude of queer experiences and resistance against "power/knowledge regimes" that aim to define and govern sexuality (Bernini & Basile, 2020, p.112). 'Queer' shifts and transforms with and in relation to the subject. It is an orientation, in both its definitions I articulate here, fluctuating across socially and culturally defined dimensions of identity. As Heather Love (2014) writes in their queer keyword contribution for the inaugural issue of *Transgender Studies Quarterly*:

It is unclear whether queer is best understood as a substantial term with historical links to communities marked as gender and sexual deviants or as a more abstract theoretical term that describes a capacious nonnormativity, political critique, and resistance to identity (p.175).

This lack of definitive meaning or implementation makes 'queer' powerful *and* functional in equal measure as a term for studying lesbian, dyke, and queer feminist media activism.

In asking 'what is queer feminist soundwork?' we are also examining, 'what is the *queer* in queer feminist soundwork?' As I outline further in Chapter 2, this academic formulation of queer theory is built out of and continues to renovate alongside queer, Black, and feminist activism and civil rights movements. Queer as a concept within the academy would not exist without queer movements, before and alongside lesbian, gay, and feminist sexual liberation movements. The approach to queer I take on in this work is embedded in the activist roots of queer theory. As the field has grown, the term queer has been defined as feelings of 'failure' (Halberstam, 2005), 'no future' (Edelman, 2004),

'utopianism' (Muñoz, 2009) and simply 'not heterosexual or not cisgender,' among other antisocial, utopianistic, and politically neutralized orientations. Instead, I approach queer through political phenomenology in its 'disorientation' (Ahmed, 2006) both as identity and as a method or way of being and experiencing the world. Regardless of the claim on queer made across cultural texts, as a reclaimed identity term, queer finds its power lies in its refusal of definition, obliqueness and openness to theoretical and political re-signification across disciplines. While this two-pronged conceptualization of 'queer' as an identity category and a way of understanding diverges from what queer has meant in particular queer theory debates of the term, it also opens up space to explore and address what these antisocial and utopian frictions of queerness mean for a phenomenology of queer feminist soundwork. Within this political phenomenological approach, the embodiment of queer takes focus. In short, the embodiment of queer is how one experiences their queerness and how they perceive or understand queerness in other individuals, objects, and forms through their queer subjecthood. In the study of queer feminist soundwork, the embodied experiences of listening and vocalizing are two key examples of the centrality that queer as identity and mode of understanding plays in recovering the intersubjective commonalities of queer feminist soundwork as a phenomenon.

But what of 'feminist' in this political phenomenology of queer feminist soundwork? Like 'queer,' I approach 'feminist' as a term bound to embodied experience. As I note in the opening acknowledgements of this text, 'Feminist work is collective work that keeps us in constant conversation with past and present feminist thinkers and activists.' Feminism and, in turn, feminists, can also find power in taking up a refusal of one universalizing definition. However, when asked what my foundational definition is, the political aims of feminism continue to require and draw strength from some strategic essentialism. I still find my grounding in the fundamental goals of feminism put forward by bell hooks, where feminism is a movement to "end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression" (2015, p.1). Still, by using the language of sexism without explicitly addressing other ongoing systems of oppression, racism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, ableism etc., attempts to delineate a universalized notion of feminism always seems to fall short. In part, this text turns to soundwork to unpack the nuances, connections, dissonances, and repetitions in how queerness and feminism are understood and experienced in work made by and for queers and feminists. Throughout the work, we explore various

feminisms as they take shape and resound through the soundworks of radio shows and podcasts across the decades. For example, Chapter 3 takes up trans-exclusionary feminism and the whiteness of popular feminism. Chapter 2 provides a more in-depth overview of queer feminism for studying soundwork. While I cannot and could not do justice within these pages to every and all understandings of feminism I find essential to the movement, the strategic essentialism taken on in this work to focus on queer feminisms gives shape and direction to the narrative and the arguments presented toward what I hope can be a humble contribution to queer and feminist history, and the crucial role that sound media continues to play in political activism.

Recovering Lesbian Feminisms in Queer Times

Political phenomenology taken up as a queer feminist practice, allows for lived experiences drawn from interviews, recordings and various shattered pieces found in the archives to shape our understanding of the phenomenon in question while reflexively attending to the gaps, biases, and limits of academic work. We can never know the complete picture of Cathy's experience (as shared in the opening of this chapter) or the experiences of the other soundworkers heard on *The Lesbian Show* from its 1979 inception to its 2010s end. Still, these voices draw us backwards, in search of missing pieces and missing people made marginal, imaginably ourselves missing too. A pull that Cait McKinney and Allyson Mitchell describe as a desire to "unghost" lesbian feminism's "connections, effects, and legacies" (McKinney & Mitchell, 2019, p.16). While these points of connection and meaning-making manifest into the focal point of this study, in listening back, one must also attend to the tensions, traumas, and exclusionary tactics that haunt lesbian feminism and lead to the perception of 'lesbian' as a passé or backward orientation. Lesbian and queer are not 'born this way' orientations in feminist history as popstar Lady Gaga might claim. Queer and lesbian are movements, a political practice, and a way of living that includes but goes way beyond identity and sexual orientation. You can be a lesbian or queer without being a feminist, and you can be a feminist without being a lesbian or queer. Throughout this work, I position lesbian feminism in conversation with queer feminisms and, at times, as queer feminism itself. Sara Ahmed argues that when these terms collide, "lesbian feminism gives us the tools to make sense of the sexism that becomes all the more striking when women exit from the requirements of compulsory heterosexuality" (2017, p.216). Lesbian feminisms offer

an orientation toward refusing singular feminist narratives to reimagine and embrace the complexities of queerness found in experiences like Cathy's in everyday media. Similar arguments are made in the value of Black feminisms, Indigenous feminisms, Trans feminisms, Crip feminisms and other feminisms which engage in a refusal of a universalizing white cisgender womanhood. While this work could focus on any of the feminisms above, lesbian feminism and subsequently, as I will argue, queer feminism is strategically called here to focus on queer and feminist made media which engages in the deconstruction of heterosexuality and patriarchy toward an ethics and erotics of queer love.

While I discuss lesbian feminism and queer feminism in dialogue throughout this work, it is also essential to note some of the core defining features, tensions and contextual differences tangled up in the connections explored between these two feminist positionalities. Firstly, I argue that lesbian feminism and queer feminism both work to decenter the still too dominant white cis male perspective through actions against compulsory heterosexuality and the systems which uphold it.⁴ Here I draw on the work of Adrienne Rich (1986) in defining compulsory heterosexuality as the presumption that women are 'innately' sexually oriented toward men. Taking this further, Rich reflects on their early writing on this topic to say that the aim is not to "widen divisions" within the feminist movement "but to encourage heterosexual feminists to examine heterosexuality as a political institution which disempowers women - and to change it" (1986, p.23). Where lesbian feminism aims to address both patriarchal harms and the harms of heterosexuality critically, the emergence of queer theory in the 1990s brought gender fluidity and sexuality beyond binaries of man/woman/straight/gay toward the development of queer feminism. Still, lesbian feminism has much to offer both queer theory and feminist activism today as we navigate a continuously complex global politics of institutionalized sexism, racism, ableism, transphobia and homophobia.

In *Living a Feminist Life* (2017), Sara Ahmed boldly claims, "in order to build worlds from the shattered pieces, we need a revival of lesbian feminism" (p.213). Here Ahmed invites

⁴ It is important to note that calling out and addressing the trans-exclusionary and racist practices of groups who take up lesbian, feminist, or queer banners continues to be crucial. Further discussions on these histories are unpacked in chapters to come. As I outline further in Chapter 2, feminisms which exclude trans people and do not employ anti-racist practices are not the feminisms this study is interested in giving a scholarly platform.

us to return to lesbian feminism to draw on the movement's inventiveness, playfulness, community focus, and unapologetic desire for a better future now. Similarly, Rox Samer (2022) calls for a renewal of the feminist world building that can take shape through lesbian potentiality. Turning to the feminist media of the mid-1970s, Samer locates lesbian potentiality as "the potential that gendered and sexual life could and would someday be substantially different, that heteropatriarchy may topple, and that women would be the ones to topple it" (p.4). *Lesbian Radio Radicals and The Queer Podcast Revolution* is my humble response to this collective appeal to revive or redux the potentiality of lesbian feminism in dialogue with our queer digital present and future histories.⁵ This text contends with historical lesbian feminist radio activism alongside contemporary queer podcasts to articulate a political phenomenology for queer feminist soundwork. One text can never encapsulate the entirety of queer feminist soundworks' ever-changing practices and experiences. Nonetheless, the themes and concepts offered here aim to contribute to a further understanding of queer feminism's radical sound aesthetics, media networks, and sonic subjectivities for an ever louder joyful queer future.

The Audibility Activism of Queer Feminist Media

In this framework of queer theory, feminism and political phenomenology, radio shows and podcasts which produce queer feminist and lesbian feminist content are political soundscapes. Soundscapes in which we can trace intergenerational shifts in queer women's subjectivities and audio media production that put queer and feminist experiences at the forefront. This is not a history project, but you will find history here. This is not a fantasy novel, but I hope the stories will spark the imagination. *Lesbian Radio Radicals and the Queer Podcast Revolution* is a political phenomenology of queer feminist soundwork and, as such, is also a story of *audibility activism*.

Queer activism has historically been and continues to be inextricably tied up with a politics of visibility. What I call for here is a shift from the default feminist and queer politics of visibility toward audibility activism as one potential route out of the limitations

⁵ 'Future histories' is a nod to the work of Stephanie Dinkins. During the late stages of my writing, they came on my radar as an increasingly influential creator and theorist in my thinking on race, gender, and sexuality in the study of digital technologies. 'Future histories' is a nod, particularly to Stephanie Dinkins's essay "Afro-now-ism" (2020).

of 'representation' discourse within media studies. Queer media studies scholars such as Kara Keeling (2005) and Kate Smith (2020) argue that visibility rhetoric, where representation has simply come to assume visible bodies on screen, can only take us so far regarding advocacy and advancements for historically marginalized mediamakers in the creative industries. Lesbian feminism, as part of the feminist movement, calls for radical transformation through action against heteropatriarchy and toward a reimagined sexual and gendered society. If we pause to think about what this means in terms of sensory experience and production of media, lesbian feminist radio shows like *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] and *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] are focused auditory phenomena embedded in a broader lesbian-feminist culture committed to building 'women's' culture through media, bars, bookstores, restaurants, family structures and more. Just as I focus here on audibility through soundwork, I equally look forward to future studies on lesbian culture through other sensory means and embodied experiences. Here I propose that a shift from the default politic of visibility/representation and toward audibility activism has the potential to draw attention not only to the diversity of bodies we can count on screen or in any media space but also to how their voices and experiences are given space and constructed in the work and behind the scenes.

What I mean by audibility activism will develop as further examples are unpacked throughout the chapters to follow, but to begin let us broadly define audibility activism as the intentional use of sound to promote or intervene in socio-political, economic, or environmental issues toward a perceived better world. As a sonic counterpart to visibility politics, we can understand the politics of audibility as a set of debates and ideologies about how power is formed and enacted through sound and listening. The significance of audibility to queer and feminist media activism has always been there yet overshadowed by the visualphilic tendencies of the western world. While audibility activism is found across a wide array of media, as a sound-forward form soundwork provides a rich ground for studying sound's role in queer feminist activism. How are activist ideologies of visibility translated into the sound-centred world of radio and podcasting? What is made audible as lesbian, queer, or feminist? What is left inaudible as a result?

Regardless of the queer media form we are studying, the political significance of aesthetics becomes apparent when asking such sensory and production-driven questions. In *Cruising Utopia*, José Esteban Muñoz discusses queer aesthetics as evoking a "utopian force" (p.132). Put simply, the very queerness of queer feminist work

lies in its refusal of the current state of gendered and sexual life and its ability to represent the “potentiality of another reality” (Muñoz, 2019, p.134). Where Muñoz draws on the camouflage and ornamental aesthetics of artworks by Andy Warhol and Merce Cunningham, I instead turn to the sonic aesthetics of camp, queerspeak, punk, and erotic play heard in queer feminist radio and podcasting. By bringing contemporary queer feminist soundwork into conversation with lesbian feminist radio of the 1970s and beyond, this work traces this queer sonic aesthetics alongside the production, networks and politics of discoverability which continue to be at the forefront of popular debates in contemporary soundwork industries just as they were at the start of lesbian radio. This set of sonic aesthetics speaks back to the playfulness and potentiality at the root of lesbian feminism, which continues in queer feminist media today.

A ‘Historientation’ Toward Lesbian Radio

In LGBTQ+ radio history, many recall the events of the late 1960s, when the United States Federal Communications Commission (FCC) demanded that Allen Ginsberg’s poem *Howl*, with its homosexual overtones, no longer be aired on Pacifica radio station KPFA-FM. The broadcast of Ginsberg’s work is speculated as the first explicitly homosexual content aired over American radio, opening up the possibilities of queer culture and political activism on the airwaves (Johnson & Keith, 2001). By the 1970s, a variety of public and community radio stations across North America began hosting queer content to target gay and lesbian listeners with shows like *Gaydreams* out of Philadelphia’s WXPB-FM and *Gay News and Views*, said to be Canada’s first regularly scheduled LGBT radio program, out of Kitchener-Waterloo’s CKMS-FM (McLeod, 2014, p.294). Despite this history of queer voices on air, when it comes to cultural research on LGBTQ+ audio media, “one would be hard pressed to find a literature base devoted to queer radio culture” (Johnson, 2008, p.100). It is important to remember that it wasn’t until 1973 that homosexuality was removed from the list of psychiatric disorders by the American Psychiatric Association. It wasn’t until 2005 that Canada legalized same-sex marriage by enacting the Civil Marriage Act. Even in 2022, a long-fought ban on gender and sexual orientation conversion therapy has just become law. Despite these wins, we watch another fight for reproductive rights take over America. On one hand we must acknowledge these hardships of the queer community

that, until recently in North American society, may have hindered scholarly work on this subject.

Nevertheless, when we take a closer look, from the 1970s onwards, there has been continued growth of gay, lesbian, queer and trans studies echoing and building upon the activism and movement building leading up to such events. Within queer media studies, an added factor to consider is the archival challenge of finding and working with audio recordings, when radio as an ephemeral medium often meant re-using tape reels or never recording. Alongside broader impacts of archival audio scarcity and degradation, and the dominance of print culture during this time, for example, within the realm of scholarly feminist theory, we might also reflect on the continued influence and dominance of psychoanalytic and visual analytic approaches developed in early feminist film studies. The popularity of visual psychoanalytic frames such as 'the male gaze' (Mulvey, 1975), for example, over sound aesthetics or frames could play a role in why we continue to see a lack of sound-oriented research within queer studies. There are, of course, sonic exceptions within early feminist film studies, such as Kaja Silverman's *The Acoustic Mirror* (1988), which continue to influence cultural sound studies today but feminist cultural writing on radio and other sound media is sparse at best from the 1970s until the sonic turn in the humanities during the late 1990s and early 2000s. As a media and communication scholar, I look and listen back to queer women's experiences through the archives of soundwork to learn from their successes, imagination and innovation, and failures. Inspired by the work of Heather Love (2007) and Sara Ahmed (2006), *historientation* is a playful term I evoke here to encapsulate the disorienting experience research can evoke when one must be continually orientated backwards through reflexive engagement with historical media and the others experiences of the past. The disorientation of *historientation* in my experience is amplified by the folding across timelines and contexts when a feminist critical approach to situatedness, iteration, and reflexivity is outlined in Chapter 3 on methodologies. Throughout this text, I focus on two foundational lesbian feminist radio shows, Vancouver Co-Op Radio's *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] and CKUT Montreal's *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs], to provide a *historientation* with one ear to the past and two feet in the present.

Less known in LGBTQ+ radio history, Canadian radio shows like TLS and DOMs began to emerge alongside their American counterparts in the 1970s and 1980s. *The Lesbian*

Show in 1979 was followed by *Dykes on Mykes* of CKUT Montreal in 1987. While lesbian feminist community radio takes focus in this work, it is also important to note there were already efforts ongoing prior to establishing community radio licensing under the CRTC to dedicate time on Canadian airwaves to gay liberation programming. All the soundworks featured here are indebted to the tireless media activism of past and present broadcasters and media-makers who made community radio and independent queer media grants and support for digital audio possible. While little historical data has yet to be recovered on LGBT radio before the establishment of community radio, select show examples such as *Montréal Gay* live on in the archives through newsletter and magazine listings as a reminder of what may have been happening across the country. "A program of "free expression" produced by local gays and bisexuals" on Radio McGill before its new licensing as CKUT, shows like *Montréal Gay* can be seen as precursors to *Dykes on Mykes* in establishing dedicated gay programming in Montreal.⁶ Community radio in Canada began in 1974 and 1975 with four stations, including Vancouver Co-Op (CFRO-FM), licensed by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). Campus stations such as CKUT-FM were licensed under the same campus and community radio policy shortly after that (CRTC, 2010). Separate from commercial stations and the national public broadcaster (CBC) and armed with regulatory mandates to reflect "the diversity of the communities served" (CRTC, 2010), these community stations quickly became integral sonic spaces for the inclusion of lesbian and queer voices including Indigenous, French language, and multilingual programming within local Canadian radio soundscapes (NCRA, 2016). The formalization of community radio under the CRTC occurred just as cultural feminism began to hit its peak, with feminist presses, community archives, feminist restaurants, record labels, art collectives, bookstores, and film distributors flourishing across North America. Within Canada, organizations such as the Lesbian Organization of Toronto (LOOT) and the Lesbian Caucus of the British Federation of Women are noted as key groups grown out of lesbian feminist activity spilling over from the US to demand that "feminism is the theory, lesbianism is the practice" (Ross, 1990, p.65). A reactionary politics against the white middle-class heteronormative mainstreaming of feminism and the exclusion of

⁶ See "Gay Radio Talk Show," *Gay: A Newsletter* 1 (January 16th, 1973): 1 for mention of *Montréal Gay*. *Montréal Gay* may be the show that David Shannon and Donnie Rossiter participated in before starting the *HomoShow*, the gay men's program on CKUT alongside *Dykes on Mykes*.

lesbian issues from organizations within the women's liberation movement. Naturally, the community radio space became an exciting techno-tool for the feminist media-makers' toolbox as a space where making soundwork for women by women could become unbound from the high barring costs of radio broadcast equipment or dedicated studio space. Community radio in Canada is distinct from commercial and public broadcasting in providing community-operated and owned stations that serve the local community, including often underrepresented voices. Community stations under CRTC regulations are nonprofit alternative media spaces where shows are led by volunteer community members with volunteer outreach, station management, technical assistance and training from a small team of station staff. Early on, the low barrier to access, aside from training and occasionally membership fees, cultivated a diversity of community programming not heard on commercial and public stations coast to coast to coast. With over 4,500 kilometres between them, *The Lesbian Show* and *Dykes on Mykes* were on air for over 30 years, making them two of Canada's longest-running known English-language lesbian feminist radio shows.⁷

To situate you, the reader, into the historientation required for this research, one ear to the past and two feet in the present, the following five chapter sections provide details on each soundwork included in this study. We begin with *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] and *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] as our two foundational lesbian feminist works. We then move into descriptions of our contemporary soundworks: *The Heart* (Radiotopia & Mermaid Palace), *Queer Public* (independent podcast), *Warriors, Bards 'n Brews* (independent podcast), and *Me & AU* (Procyon Podcast Network). While TLS and DOMs could provide enough data to make up their own dedicated media study, in taking a critical approach to phenomenology, I decenter the traditionally universalizing voice of the researcher (myself) by drawing instead on the voices and experiences of modern-day soundworkers. All themes and findings shared in this dissertation were formulated through interviews with soundworkers behind the following works and from critical listening to select episodes inspired by or listened to in those conversations.

⁷ *Dykes on Mykes*' French language counterpart *Lesbo-Sons*, formerly known as *Funky Gouines* then *La Ballade des Furies*, continues to air on CKUT 90.3FM. For this study, I limited the focus to English-language shows as Francophone lesbian feminism in Quebec holds its unique context and history that I hope to attend more closely to in future research on Canadian queer feminist soundwork. As I write, I have begun correspondence with the Archives lesbiennes du Quebec where a collection of radio recordings is reportedly held.

Additionally, the podcasts included in this study are not just any queer feminist soundworks. As each show outline below will establish, the four soundworks all hold community connections to *Dykes on Mykes* or *The Lesbian Show* through past affiliations or ties to place in addition to their queer feminist aesthetic politics. This political phenomenology of queer feminist soundwork across time and place works to showcase the essential contributions of lesbian feminism, audio activism, and queer culture to how we understand the sonic communication of gender and sexuality through media and technologies. The stories below provide a starting point for the linkages between community radio and podcasting throughout this text. They also serve as a reference point to come back to for each show as you move deeper into the aesthetics, networks, and subjectivities behind the phenomenon of queer feminist soundwork.

The Lesbian Show: ‘By Lesbians, for Lesbians, about Lesbians’

Vancouver Co-Op Radio 102.7 CFRO-FM’s *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] started in 1979, just as the cooperatively-run community radio station began being carried on cable to most parts of the province of British Columbia, Canada. While TLS wasn’t part of Co-Op Radio’s original programming roster when Co-Op went live in April 1975, the station purportedly stated its “commitment to women’s needs and participation” from the get-go and had women’s programming and gay and lesbian programming by 1978 when the station’s CRTC license was renewed including the gay/lesbian *Coming Out Show* and the feminist *Woman-Vision* (Mohr, 1983). Before *The Lesbian Show*, Co-Op Radio’s first gay/lesbian radio program, *The Coming Out Show*, was started by twenty people brought together by a call to organize from Co-Op Radio member Russell Wodell. The show’s name has changed over the years from *The Coming Out Show* to *Fruit Punch*, to *Fruit Salad* and, most recently, *Out and About in Canada* since it first aired on September 7th, 1978. Long-time partners and gay activists Bill Houghton and David Myers led the first eight years of *The Coming Out Show*. The duo also archived and later donated thousands of tape recordings and text materials from their time on the show to the ArQuives (formerly the Lesbian and Gay Archives of Canada) in Toronto, Canada. Their scrapbooks and taped broadcasts allowed for a rich complimentary archival sibling to my research on *The Lesbian Show*. David was also generous in speaking with me and providing additional research materials via email and phone. David’s writings on the

Gay and Lesbian Rights March on Washington on October 14th, 1979, on Vancouver's gay and lesbian history from the establishment of the Vancouver Gay and Lesbian Community Centre in 1979, and the notorious Lesbian Kiss-In at Joe's Café on Commercial Drive in 1990, give further cultural and political context behind the sustained media activism of *The Coming Out Show* and its lesbian feminist counterpart *The Lesbian Show*.

As mentioned earlier, a lesbian isn't always a feminist, and a feminist isn't always a lesbian. TLS was created just one year after *The Coming Out Show* [COS], airing its first broadcast on June 7th, 1979. The two shows were aired back to back on Thursday evenings weekly, making for what TLS co-founder Silva Tenenbien described as some 'awkward' initial years following their move from COS to TLS. In our interview for my feminist radio show *FemRadio* (CJRU, 2018), Silva shared how TLS was sparked out of frustrations with what she experienced as a male-dominated queer space at COS. While the *Coming Out Show* [COS] continued to have lesbian voices and lesbian issues covered in their broadcasts even after TLS was formed, in true lesbian feminist fashion Silva and their fellow TLS collective members desired their own sonic space "by lesbians, about lesbians, for lesbians" (Hughes, Johnson & Perreault, 1984, p.139). In their 1979 manifesto, the TLS collective emphasizes the "political responsibility" and "commitment" involved in taking control of the lesbian narrative from "the straight media." However, they also acknowledge the importance of the "political differences," "experiences," and "personalities" that the collective brings to the show (ibid). While some TLS contributors continued to volunteer with COS, others came and went. Silva Tenenbein, Sherry McCarnan, Gisele Perreault, Ann Russell, and Connie Smith; are the six founding members of *The Lesbian Show* [TLS]. The early collective was predominantly white, coming from working-class and anti-racist feminist activist backgrounds, contributing to the show's particular sound. Long-time Co-Op Radio personality Connie even expanded their efforts to award-winning music-focused women's shows like *RubyMusic* that, alongside TLS and COS, carved out sustained space for queer and women's programming at Co-Op Radio, still reflected today in the diversity of shows on air at Vancouver Co-Op Radio. *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] continued from 1979 until 2014 when it was replaced shortly after that by "Two-Spirited,

Questioning, TransLezBiGay, Queer Community” show *Gender Queeries* (2020).⁸ Whether they realized it or not, the six founding radio radicals of *The Lesbian Show* sparked a potential for queer feminist soundwork taken up by generations. In the following chapters, you will hear from past members of TLS from across its varying decades on the air. While early members like Silva provide insight into the lesbian feminist foundation of the show and its influence on Queer Feminist soundwork aesthetics and practices, members such as artist Meita Winkler and musician Eirene Cloma provide insight into the changing politics of TLS as it collided with the technoculture and post-feminisms of the 1990s and 2000s.

Dykes on Mykes: Montreal’s Lesbian Radio Radicals

Meanwhile, on the opposite side of the country, it would take another eight years before Montreal’s *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] hit the airwaves to add another voice to the lavender reverberations created by *The Lesbian Show*. While McGill University has been home to campus radio since the 1940s, it wasn’t until 1987 that CKUT got its FM license as a campus-community radio station after a successful application to the CRTC, including “95 letters of support from people, clubs, businesses and organizations” (CKUT Time capsule zine, n.d.). DOMs was pitched alongside its gay men’s counterpart, the *Homoshow*, as part of CKUT’s premiere programming roster to service the ‘LGBT community’ (MacPhee & Hogan, 2006). Montrealers Robyn Badger, Voula K., and Minty are remembered as the original voices of DOM’s 1980s formation leading to its recognition as one of Montreal’s best local radio shows in 1990 by the *Montreal Mirror* (CKUT 30th Anniversary Zine, 2017, p.23). The *Homoshow* changed names to *Queercorps* shortly after, and both shows were moved back to back on Monday evenings from their original Tuesday timeslots five hours apart. While DOMs had no formal mandate, the show’s name and archives of lesbian-queer media activism speak back to TLS’s 1979 manifesto with its 1980s Montreal queer punk activist spin.

Just as DOMs was finding its footing as a community radio show in the 1980s, LGBT activism turned its efforts to the AIDS crisis with ACT UP chapters (AIDS Coalition to

⁸ The date *The Lesbian Show* had its final broadcast is unconfirmed, but 2014 is the most likely year, given the timeslot takeover on Thursdays at 7:30 pm (TLS’s last known airtime) by *Gender Queeries* according to Co-Op Radio staff inquiries on my behalf in 2022.

Unleash Power) popping up in cities across North America, including Montreal. Montreal also sees the Quebec Gay Archives established in 1983, followed by Canada's first LGBTQ film festival, image+nation, in 1988, housed at the archive's original 4067 Saint-Laurent Boulevard location. Amidst the devastating loss of community felt by the AIDS crisis, the 1990s bring a counter-queer image to the mainstream via the form of the 'chic' white middle-class lesbian. As a result, By the early '90s, lesbian celebrities such as KD Lang are gracing magazine covers as part of this 'Lesbian Chic' moment while other members of the LGBTQ+ community deal with continued anti-gay violence and prejudice, such as the notorious Montreal Sex Garage Raid on July 15th, 1990. The police raid, where many people were beaten and arrested, led to demonstrations throughout the city in protest. It is out of these tensions between mainstream lesbian visibility, the commodification of identity politics, and continued violence against the queer community that *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] finds its voice on the airwaves. Similar to the reclaiming of 'Queer' by LGBTQ+ activists, 'Dyke' carries a certain anti-establishment politic that by the late 1980s and 1990s 'gay' and 'lesbian' as identity markers do not. A radical self-designation, by the 1970s 'Dyke' was a common American slur with a complicated history said to be rooted in a variety of potential cultural expressions, including the Greek 'dike,' tied to goddess Athena as "man-woman," the verb 'to dike,' "to attire oneself faultlessly for social purposes," particularly with men's attire popular in the mid-1800s (Dynes, 1990, pp.335-336). Though I doubt anyone using dyke as a slur knows much about the term's history, it certainly adds to the reclamation of the term through Dyke Marches and dyke as a political working-class lesbian identity in contrast to 'lesbian chic' representation.

Like *The Lesbian Show's* mandate to create lesbian visibility, *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] focused on lesbian and queer life, particularly within their local community. As MacPhee and Hogan (2006) point out in their research on DOMs, by 2004, an "entirely new crew joined *Dykes on Mykes*" "and they conceptualized the show's target audience differently," departing "from the identity politics practiced by the former generation" (p.3). DOMs had critical conversations about maintaining the shows' distinct lesbian identity and dyke history while also amplifying and bridging queerness and queer identity. As explored further in Chapter 4, as the politics and needs of the queer community in Montreal shifted, so did the media activism of *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs]. The shift in aesthetics and practices led to an interest in online archiving and podcasting the show

during the late 2000s. An interest that I am grateful for as a researcher and assisted in the creation of a *Dykes on Mykes* Fonds donation to the ArQuives (LGBTQ+ archives of Canada) as part of this research project. DOMs members Mel Hogan, M-C MacPhee, and Dayna McLeod are vital names behind the podcasting initiative dating back to 2006 and then brought into digital communion with their online feminist journal *No More Potlucks* in 2009, where the journal site housed “more than 70 hours of archived Dykes on Myke’s radio” in its first launch year (Smith, 2009).⁹ DOMs turn toward the digital podcast space is one of the various catalysts behind the cross-generational and intermedia approach I take to my study of queer feminist soundwork.

While some radio shows choose not to podcast or never could become podcasts because of their historical period of production, others, like DOMs, were interested in the temporal and spatial shifts in listening and audience reach that digital distribution could provide (Hogan, 2018). Cases like DOMs do not neatly fit into radio or podcasting studies but instead slip between the static, offering a bridge between the broadcast and podcast worlds. ‘Podcasting’ entered 2005 as Word of the Year by *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, establishing its pop culture status as an emerging medium outside traditional broadcast media’s regulatory restrictions and gatekeeping. Podcasting’s potentiality creates a powerful pull for individuals interested in media activism through its cultural promise to provide access to soundwork on-demand wherever one chooses to listen in from as long as they have internet access, or the episode downloaded in advance. This pull toward podcasting interestingly parallels the pull toward the potentiality of lesbian feminism that ignited shows like *The Lesbian Show* and DOMs in the first place. Potentiality is a key signification of futurity outlined by Rox Samer (2022) as part of the cultural feminist uptake of the “lesbian” and the promises of lesbian separatism found across feminist media of the 1970s. This potentiality found in queer feminism and podcasting also resonates in the first podcast of four featured in this study: Radiotopia’s *The Heart*.

⁹ *No More Potlucks* was active from 2009 to 2018 at nomorepotlucks.org, featuring writing from a variety of artists, activists and researchers on topics ranging from gendered affective labour and community-building to the aesthetics and politics of porn.

The Heart: Podcasting Intimacy and Humanity under Capitalism

The Heart is an ongoing collection of soundworks about intimacy and humanity founded by Kaitlin Prest and Mitra Kaboli. The two former Montrealers moved to New York to pursue work in the growing public radio podcasting scene in the early 2010s. The podcast is perhaps best known for its award-winning personal documentary approach to topics of love, body politics, sexual abuse, and white supremacy. Over its various changes in team members and network affiliations, it has managed to stay steadfast in this commitment to being, first and foremost, an unapologetically queer feminist soundwork. This commitment to upholding a particular activist bent in their work didn't materialize from thin air. It came from Kaitlin and Mitra's experiences leading up to the creation of *The Heart*, most notably their early roots as collective members in the sex-positive radio art show *Audio Smut* out of CKUT Montreal. The same campus community station as *Dykes on Mykes*. Kaitlin joined CKUT's *Audio Smut* Collective in 2008, just three years after its debut at the station, with Mitra joining just before their move to New York. *The Heart* started first under the moniker *Audio Smut* as an extension of the radio show produced remotely from Kaitlin's New York bedroom. The podcasts soon decided to change names to remove conflict with CKUT and to rebrand the show with a perhaps more 'public radio friendly' emphasis on intimacy and humanity under PRX Radiotopia in contrast to the joyfully sexy smutty queerness of *Audio Smut*.

Similar to *Dykes on Mykes*, the late 2000s brought interest in podcasting to the *Audio Smut* team, who would post their shows online after broadcasting them live on CKUT airwaves. The community radio show turned podcast post broadcast is now a standard part of Canada's campus-community radio system today, with numerous stations including show archives on their website for download or third-party hosting services like Soundcloud or Mixcloud to push out to Apple Podcasts and other podcast platforms. Still, as the podcast industry continues to grow as distinct from its radio sister, particular shifts in aesthetics and production practices become apparent in comparing community radio-born soundwork with podcast soundwork. *The Heart* becomes a unique case study in this collection that speaks to the same tensions between queer feminist politics and the reality of the neoliberal capitalist patriarchal system that independent podcasters trying to make soundwork for a living must navigate. In Chapter 6, questions of what it

means to make queer feminist soundwork under capitalism are addressed head-on in conversation with broader new media discourses of discoverability, networks, and information infrastructure.

I position *The Heart* as part of a more significant shift in queer and feminist activism in the 2000s and into the present that is interested in ways of engaging in an intersectional feminism that centres queer experiences in working to dismantle heteropatriarchal, cisnormative and white supremacist culture. While this may not sound all that different from lesbian feminisms above, the lack of connection many queer women and genderqueer individuals feel to 'lesbian,' often perceived as a limiting, white, or trans exclusionary identity, has shifted the language used to describe feminisms that centre queer sexuality. As I outline further in the next chapter, if we shift the feminist narrative away from trans exclusionary and racist outliers and instead turn to histories of notable radical difference and inclusion, then lesbian feminism is queer feminism just as queer feminism is intersectional feminism. By attending to the resonances between queer feminisms past and present, this work ultimately aims to contribute to imagining more sustained and celebrated boundary-pushing experimental activist media practices for future queers and other communities at the margins. Lesbian feminist histories in media activism provide insight by learning from past successes and pitfalls. The potentiality of queer feminist soundwork is further grounded by the postfeminist neoliberal individualist reality that has come to define podcasting. As a show rooted in the same community radio ethos and literal space as *Dykes on Mykes*, *The Heart* becomes a valuable soundwork at the intersections of community radio's DIY punk culture and community advocacy while also attending to the global digital promises of podcasting.

Queer Public: 'a podcast about real-life queer life'

The second podcast featured in this study engages head-on with the cross-generational shifts in queer politics through its connections to community radio, podcast spaces, sonic practices, and content focused on queer kinship and documentary storytelling. Host and producer Erin McGregor describes *Queer Public* as a podcast about 'real life queer life'. A limited-run podcast series launched in 2019, *Queer Public* [QP] is unapologetically queer, yes, but does not proclaim to be a feminist endeavour. While Erin does not define QP as a feminist work, its queer intersectionality evokes

similar political sentiments against heteropatriarchy, cisnormativity, and white supremacy in other soundworks' approaches to queer feminism. The podcast features almost exclusively lesbian, queer women and genderqueer narratives, highlights queer of colour and youth perspectives, and the podcast team is made up of exclusively queer women, non-binary and trans individuals.

Before entering the world of podcasting, Erin McGregor got involved with *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] in 2010 after taking courses at Concordia University, where DOMs members Mel Hogan and Dayna McCleod were teaching. Erin had left their master's program at Brock university to take some classes, including media production classes with Professor Mel Hogan. Interested in learning more about queer culture across generations and building a mentorship with Mel, Erin joined DOMs for a brief stint, learning how to operate the board, produce and host. In our conversations, Erin noted that radio was always in their life but never what they'd thought they'd do professionally. Today Erin continues to work in the public radio and podcast industries through their work with the Association of Independents in Radio (AIR Media), the *Homoground* queer music podcast, and various other freelance opportunities. In addition to Erin's connections to *Dykes on Mykes* as a former collective member, the queer intersectional approach *Queer Public* talks in decentering gay male and white cisgender stories of queerness places particular interest on this podcast for a phenomenological study of queer feminist soundwork as it is defined throughout this text.

In production and politic, *The Heart* and *Queer Public* both reflect the influences of Canadian community radio and American public radio on podcasting culture. They also speak to the sonic norms that have come to be associated with hi-fi podcast forms and practices. Still, queer feminist soundwork in the podcast space does not always speak to or with the American public radio sound. In Chapter 5 on the queer politics of sonic intimacy and play, our ears return to the West Coast where *The Lesbian Show* once began its lavender reverberations and where yet another queer feminist soundwork has found its political voice.

Warriors, Bards ‘n Brews: Chumcasting Queer Feminism

The Lesbian Show is no longer on air at Vancouver Co-Op Radio. Still, traces of the show’s queer feminist ethos can now be found in a pop culture comedy chat podcast which also calls Vancouver home – the *Warriors, Bards ‘n Brews* [WBB] podcast. Co-hosts and domestic partners Chloe Krause and Sara Gill started WBB in 2016 as lifelong fans of the queer camp cult classic television series *Xena: Warrior Princess*.¹⁰ While the podcast’s shared geographical location (Vancouver) and local queer cultural touchpoints with *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] make it a complementary study, WBB also provides insight into one of the most predominant podcast genres outside of documentary narrative-driven works like *Queer Public* and *The Heart*, the chumcast. A chumcast is a podcast format "in which two or more hosts riff off each other, chatting in a casual or rambunctious manner around a theme, making the listener feel included in a private no-holds-barred conversation" (McHugh, 2016, p.12). Podcast scholars such as Siobhan McHugh (2016) and Sara Florini (2015) note the chumcast as a format with potential for marginalized voices. However, celebrities and comedians ultimately dominate it. The chumcast genre WBB represents is akin to some of the more conversational or banter-heavy segments of the magazine-style radio show format that categorize both *Dykes on Mykes* and *The Lesbian Show*. This format works to Chloe and Sara's benefit. As a self-defined comedy podcast with an active interest in ethics and social justice, the duo record episodes in their East Vancouver apartment, typically over a few drinks, while watching an episode of *Xena* or another piece of queer media. The chumcast format is complemented by *Warriors, Bards ‘n Brews* [WBB] signature style, which Sara describes as "gay chaos" (Krause & Gill, 2021). Though, I'd certainly say in my listening experience, it is quite an organized chaos with thoughtful critique and lively banter set to the linear flow of the episodes chosen media typically playing in the background (with a few exceptions).

As we will explore further in Chapter 5, WBB draws on key tenets of queer feminist soundwork: playfulness, queerspeak, and humour. These tenets echoed from *The Lesbian Show* and DOMs speak to a broader history of comedy and play in queer

¹⁰ *Xena: Warrior Princess* ran for six seasons from 1995 to 2001, starring Lucy Lawless (*Xena*) and Renee O'Connor (*Gabrielle*). The show is a fantasy action-comedy about a warrior princess (*Xena*) travelling around ancient Greece and fighting evil with her bard and 'friend' *Gabrielle*.

feminist activism. While Sara and Chloe are the hosts, producers, editors, and sole creators of *Warriors, Bards 'n Brews*, they also draw on and work with a network of other podcasters, queer community, and feminist thinkers to build the show through their feminist practices of guest hosting, sharing, and kinship. While some queer feminist soundworkers, like Chloe and Sara of WBB, produce their shows independently within an unofficial support network, other soundworkers choose to build up more formal networks. One example is *The Heart's* affiliations with audio art company Mermaid Palace and podcast network PRX Radiotopia. However, aside from the larger podcast network giants like Radiotopia, Gimlet, or Wondery, there is also a burgeoning world of indie podcast networks. One such network featured in this study under the queer feminist soundwork banner is Procyon Podcast Network, the team behind queer coming-of-age romance, *Me & AU* (2020-2021).

Procyon Podcast Network: Reimagining Audio Fiction Labour

Me & AU is a fictional podcast following queer university student Kate Cunningham as they explore an online friendship turned possible romance with a fellow fanfiction writer living across the country. Kate is home in Kamloops, BC, for the summer; meanwhile, Ella, Kate's blooming online friendship/love interest, lives in Toronto, Ontario. The story is a sweet-spoken narrative-driven limited series with light sound design to round out its *Limetown* reminiscent audio fiction format. The Kamloops, BC setting of the *Me & AU* plays into writer/producer Andrea Klassen's experiences living in rural British Columbia and their experiences of making queer connections through online fanfiction communities. Andrea's links to rural British Columbia and how it informed *Me & AU* content brought me back to the importance of rural content and information sharing revealed by members of *The Lesbian Show* [TLS]. I initially interviewed Andrea about *Me & AU* based on the show's queer feminist aesthetics and BC connections paralleled in TLS. Still, as our conversation continued, our discussions of shared labour and queer feminist community within the Procyon Network became a primary focus of Chapter 6, *Finding Queer Soundwork: On feminist network labour and*

discoverability.¹¹ In addition to writing and producing *Me & AU*, Andrea is an active member of the Procyon Podcast Network. The network takes a non-hierarchical labour-sharing approach where network members will help one another with various production and marketing tasks for their various shows. For example, while Andrea is the lead on *Me & AU*, they also co-wrote on the network podcast *Station to Station* and assisted behind the scenes on *The Strange Case of Starship Iris*. Formed out of frustration with the lack of developed queer, female and non-binary queer characters in the audio fiction world, Procyon comprises a core group of seven women and non-binary podcasters from Mexico, Canada, the USA, and Hong Kong. Given their focus on mutual labour, support and promotion, Andrea thinks of Procyon as more of a collective than a network. The network's affiliation with the term 'collective' situates it within a lineage of feminist organizing and shared labour practices that *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] collective embraced. Brought into conversation with the lesbian feminist radio collective work of TLS in Chapter 6, this collective thinking helps to unpack the resonance and dissonance between early lesbian feminist radio networks of the local community and information activism in contrast to queer feminist podcast practices oriented toward global community and content discoverability.

The Heart, *Queer Public*, *Warriors*, *Bards 'n Brews*, and *Me & AU* provide insights into the complex politics of queer feminist soundwork in the podcast digital contemporary. In addition to these insights and shared experiences of what it means to bring queer feminism into conversation with podcast soundwork, each show brings a particular aesthetic compliment to *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] and *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs]. *The Heart* represents the fundamental format of personal essays, with specific attention given to sound design. *Queer Public* showcases the strength of audio documentary as a podcast format that requires intense labour but provides a rich opportunity for human-centred and sound-rich storytelling. *Warriors*, *Bards 'n Brews* echoes the affordances of the chumcast format for celebrating the lo-fi punk and playful aesthetics key to queer feminist camp and comedy. *Me & AU* sheds light on the world of audio fiction and the potential for feminist collective practices in soundwork across continents. These formats and approaches can also be found in the vast archives of TLS and DOMs; both

¹¹ While I do not unpack *Me & AU* in detail in the chapters to come, you can listen to a linked episode of *Me & AU* in Appendix, Audio A2, alongside other select works from the shows included in this study.

experimental community-driven magazine style shows in their own right. It is from the hours of interview recordings and hundreds of hours of recorded shows listened to as part of this project that the themes of audibility activism, sonic intimacy, and feminist network labour emerged to shape the three body chapters of this work. Despite the richness of the conversations and soundings shared, it is essential to acknowledge that these four podcasts and two radio shows cannot speak for and do not intend to universalize the entirety of queer and feminist soundwork or the diversity of content available via podcast platforms at the time of writing. Nonetheless, by slowing down and zooming in to place value on experiences from across generations and soundworks, this work contributes a political phenomenology of queer feminist soundwork in hopes of showcasing the significant contributions of lesbian feminism, radio activism, and queer culture to how we understand the sonic communication of gender and sexuality through media and technologies.

With a familiarization with each soundwork included in this study, the following sections introduce the key themes behind queer feminist soundwork as a phenomenon. Organized chapter by chapter, *Lesbian Radio Radicals and The Podcast Revolution* first works through a history of queer feminism's cultural and theoretical underpinnings in the context of soundwork. From there, Chapter 3 articulates a listening-centred approach to the study of soundwork using feminist media methods and political phenomenology. Chapters 4-6 then take on the key findings of this work by drawing on the radio shows and podcasts outlined above as case studies in the audibility activism, sound aesthetics, and network labour of queer feminist soundwork.

Chapter by Chapter Overviews

Chp 2. Queer Feminism and Soundwork

Radio shows and podcasts which produce queer feminist and lesbian feminist content are a pivotal part of queer feminism's political, cultural, and historical soundscape. In Chapter 2, I articulate the intersections between queer cultural theory, intersectional feminism, cultural sound studies, and media studies central to this project. I draw on queer cultural scholars such as Mimi Marinucci (2010) and Sam McBean (2015) to propose a definition of queer feminism as a feminism that explicitly includes

queer sexual and gender minorities while creating space for discourse and activism surrounding intersectional queer subjectivities and power dynamics across class, race and ability. If queer cultural theory and intersectional feminism are invested in interrogating the systems and structures that perpetuate and uphold racist, classist sexist heterosexual power, then media (in its many forms) becomes an integral site of study. The field of feminist media studies has a rich and continuously growing body of research on radio, podcasting, and sound technologies (see Hilmes, 1997; Ehrick, 2015; Stoeberl, 2016).

Radio and radiogenic media such as podcasting play an integral role in this circulation of queer desires, experiences and voices within our gendered political soundscape. However, further work is needed to coalesce a theoretical foundation for studying queer women's experiences in soundwork production. In this text, I review the intersection of cultural sound studies and feminist media studies to articulate a route toward queer feminist media studies for soundwork. Discussions of voice, sonic intimacy, and the politics of sound from scholars such as Siobhan McHugh (2016) and Richard Berry (2016) are brought forward to revisit the still dominant conversations on the politicization of women's voices set against the tensions of public vs. private experiences of soundwork.

In creating an intermedial media industries approach (Hilmes, 2013) to the study of soundwork, the mapped literature allows for linkages across media forms and time. Temporality and spatiality are particularly important in postmodern and queer theory (Freeman, 2010; Sedgwick, 2003). They are also vital aspects in the study and production of media (Lacey, 2013). By queering our approach to time and space through an expansion beyond a particular temporal constraint around the case studies chosen, this project works to articulate the soundworks of this study within and as a queer public network and trajectory. The concept of queer public networks is founded in the literature of Kate Lacey (2013), Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner (1998) and then later applied to Chapter 6: *Finding Queer Soundwork: On Feminist Network Labour and Discoverability*. By putting the soundwork of the past into meaningful dialogue with the present, a different sort of network emerges. One that allows for feminist and queer media makers to unbind time and listen back as a “potentially transformative part” of place-making and movement formation (Freeman, 2010, p.96).

Chp 3. Listening in to Feminist Phenomenology

Following these discussions on how to articulate queer public networks and the role of feminist media activism and soundwork within that context, intersectional feminist media studies and queer theory are brought into conversation with phenomenology and listening as a method in Chapter 3 - *Listening in to Feminist Phenomenology: Research Methodology and Conceptual Framework*. This chapter focuses on theory put into practice to understand better how queer women's identities are electroacoustically produced and communicated across different historical and cultural contexts. I articulate this approach as a feminist phenomenology for studying soundwork using Alison Harvey's (2019) three-pronged criteria for feminist media critique: iteration, reflexivity, and situatedness. Three terms deeply embedded in feminist activism and theory, I develop Harvey's framework further through new materialist and queer theory provocations for feminist phenomenological research. New materialism and queer theory contribute to a further nuancing of Harvey's approach by extending reflexivity, iteration, and situatedness into the discussion of the intersubjective, intra-active, and performative entanglements experienced through phenomenological research (Ahmed, 2006; Barad, 2003; McGregor, 2020). I apply this methodological ground to a qualitative mixed methods approach of archival research, reflexive thematic analysis, feminist textual analysis and audio documentation toward the development of the *feminist-embodied ear* as a concept for critical listening in practice. Here I argue that listening is a Foucauldian 'technology of the self,' a state of political being. If listening is indeed always political, listening as an embodied practice in feminist media studies must attend to the potential for a feminist-embodied ear to critically question which voices and sounds are present and which ones are missing from the media soundscape.

Pushing back against universalizing individualist approaches to phenomenology, the voices and experiences of fellow queer soundworkers in the podcasting space provide an intersubjective ground for the themes and connection made between queer feminist soundwork past and present. Archival work and semi-structured interviews are implemented to enact this intersubjectivity of experience across media generations. Chapter 3 further outlines how these concepts of queer phenomenology and the feminist-embodied ear can feed into and shape the particular methods of data collection and analysis in sound-forward cultural research. While the archival research stage gives

foundation and historical weight to this work, the conversations with the producers and hosts involved in these soundscapes open further avenues to voices and experiences not contained by the archives. Reflexive thematic analysis, an interdisciplinary qualitative method used for identifying themes, then offers an approach to coding that embraces the same open and interpretive ethos of feminist phenomenology. I apply feminist textual analysis to break down and analyze the production choices within the selected work and their elements of format, form and genre. A method well established in media studies, the feminist textual analysis consists of close reading, or in this case, close listening, to how particular media objects communicate gender and sexuality (Harvey, 2019, pp.39-40). The final method used in this research design is the ongoing reflexive and cathartic practice of audio documentary creation. My audio dairies kept throughout the process of researching, conducting, and writing this work provided space for unfiltered creative play. The sounds and feelings shared through this diary-keeping practice formed the basis for the stories shared at the start of the various chapters in this collection.

Chp 4. Being a Public Queer

Moving from my sonic subjective methods of critical listening and the feminist-embodied ear, Chapter 4: *On Being a Public Queer* attends to the sonic (inter)subjectivity and audibility activism at the core of queer feminist soundwork. This chapter investigates how the queer kinship and queer public politic experienced through listening and producing soundwork is dependent upon and at odds with the form, format, and stylistic techno-logics of broadcast radio and podcasting. In questioning the what and how of queer feminist radio and podcast communications, this chapter articulates the tensions and the possibilities of soundwork as a constructed mode of sounding out queerness in public through its use of queer temporality, transgenerational kinship, and alternative approaches to narrative construction. Navigating the instances of these three queer sonic storytelling elements is rooted in what I term *sonic subjectivity* as a way to articulate the subjective experience of sounds as embodying or representing the self. Whether that sound is your own recorded voice or a favourite song or podcast, sonic subjectivity is that experience of hearing something and yourself, a part of who you are, within it. Explored and defined further concerning queer feminist soundwork in Chapter 4, 'sonic subjectivity' in its broadest sense (*or sensing*) is the sounding of the self. The *intersubjectivity* then comes from how our soundings resonate with each other and are

heard in the chorus - to use yet another sound analogy. Whether face-to-face or through the techno-logics of soundwork, intersubjectivity, or 'how subjects come into being relationally' offers a way to study and articulate how individuals orient themselves collectively toward particular identity markers through praxis and politics. Here I draw on the work of Sara Ahmed (2006) in particular to provide grounding for the rich experiences of sonic intersubjectivity experienced by soundworkers across both radio and podcast space.

Weaving through equal measures of radical and soft feminism moments in the work of *Dykes on Mykes* and *The Lesbian Show*, the history of visibility activism in queer and feminist movements is critically examined through a focus on the audible exclusions heard in the sonic whiteness, and trans erasure experienced in applying a feminist-embodied ear to the radio archives. Queer phenomenology asks us to sit in such discomforts and frustrations experienced in encountering fragmented or "glitchy" orientations to reveal what speculations and new ways of being might emerge (Russell, 2020). Through contributions made in attending to points of audible exclusion, fragmented orientations, and queer kinships across time, this chapter invites us to listen to the varied shades of queer feeling and experience at the heart of audibility activism. Furthermore, it opens us to the question driving the chapter to follow: What does it mean to shift from a politic of visibility/representation toward audibility activism which not only attends to the diversity of voices and experiences but also to *how* those voices and experiences are edited and constructed within the media form?

Chp 5 Kisses through the Static

Chapter 5 - Kisses Through the Static, draws on moments of listening to and talking with soundworkers about the aesthetics and production choices in form, genre, and narrative that make a feminist soundwork queer. There is an unmistakable queer politics of intimacy and play at the very root of queer feminist soundwork. Tracing queer feminist aesthetics across varied temporal and spatial contexts brings with it a reality of how these contexts shape the way a politic is experienced and reproduced. It also makes apparent what stays the same. The different approaches to queer feminist aesthetics of play and intimacy analyzed in this chapter ultimately speak to each show's unique formations of sonic subjectivity and intersubjectivity. From camp sounds to

sweaty conclusions, their playful and intimately powerful productions offer aesthetic tools to challenge conventional approaches to soundwork and call for a transformed valuing of lived experience, and the feminist "personal is political" for people of colour, queer, and trans artists and soundmakers.

From lesbian camp to queerspeak to erotic power, different approaches to queer feminist aesthetics of play and intimacy in soundwork throughout Chapter 5 speak to the unique formations of sonic subjectivity and intersubjectivity shows can carry. Camp, a historically rich and radically queer form of artistic expression, is explored in the radio miniseries "Dykes in Space" aired on *The Lesbian Show* (1983). Drawing on the rich debates on queer camp from theorists such as Susan Sontag (1966) and David Halperin (2012), the sci-fi lesbian camp of *The Lesbian Show* brings sound media practices into the camp conversation. Play and playfulness are key modes through which queer community articulates identity and recognizes queer kinship in others. That play could be campy performance, sex and sexuality, comedy, or whatever style of queer play takes shape within the given context. By applying a queer theory of play and playfulness to this study, I argue that a curious balance of play and a communally defined set of guidelines is just as key to the production of queer soundwork as it is to sexual expression and identification. While "Dykes in Space" evokes a campy politic of play which embodies a particular queer time in feminist history, the *Warriors, Bards 'n Brews* [WBB] podcast instead applies a playful DIY queer punk reading to the arguably equally campy *Xena: The Warrior Princess* television series. The term DIY can evoke a wide range of media, from the 1930's sci-fi zine, to 80's punk music, to feminist zines of the 1990s. What all of these DIY media share is an ethos, which Amy Spencer (2008) puts simply as "the urge to create a new cultural form and transmit it to others on your own terms" (p.8). Whether deliberate or not, this DIY aesthetic in the WBB podcast places the show within this legacy of DIY punk culture, which creates a constant fluctuation for the listener between playful provocation and sonic intimacy.

While the hosts of *Warriors, Bards n' Brews* bring awareness of the patriarchy-smashing queer punk politic embedded in queer feminist soundwork, the erotic politic so key to queer feminism's sex-positive ethos and which is central to podcasting's common conceptualization as an intimate medium is perhaps best illustrated through the work of *The Heart* podcast. I analyze selections of *The Heart* against Audre Lorde's concept of erotic power to round out Chapter 5's exploration of aesthetics in queer feminist

soundwork. Lorde infamously argues that through feminism, the erotic can provide a deep connection with another person, self-connection, and awareness of your capacity to feel joy outside of heteronormative and 'virtuous' notions of marriage or the afterlife. The ethos of power in the erotic drives the aesthetic construction of *The Heart* as a continuously recycled example of podcasting's 'intimacy' across podcast studies.¹² The often-invisible labour of producing sound media is exposed by attending to the queer politics of intimacy and play in queer feminist soundwork. While Chapter 5 attends to the labour of aesthetic production across close listening of select works in this series, chapter 6 addresses the collective labour and challenges involved in making soundwork discoverable.

Chp 6. Finding Queer Soundwork

Moving from the labour of aesthetics to the labour of networks and discoverability, the final body chapter in this work zooms out again to a larger picture of the networks that uplift *and* the systems which oppress queer feminist media soundwork past and present. Chapter 6 - *Finding Queer Soundwork* moves back and forth across history to address the tension between the liberatory possibilities of podcasting and the reality of discoverability and financial stability for queer feminist soundworkers. As I argue, this tension requires re-evaluating how historically marginalized communities approached such media practices. Following the work of Cait McKinney (2020) on lesbian feminist media technologies, Chapter 6 explores lesbian community radio as a vital form of what McKinney terms *information activism*. As Cait McKinney (2020) outlines, the term information activism describes a rich history of individuals and social movements across North America who, out of frustration at the lack of documented lesbian history and out of a desire for information, started generating that information themselves. Information activism is a community-driven activist practice across archives, telephone hotlines, newsletters and various communication technologies. I position lesbian community radio as part of these more extensive networks of information activism in the 1970s onwards to uncover the various efforts these soundworkers took to articulate and distribute their work as part of broader lesbian feminist initiatives to create

¹² See Chapter 4 "In Bed with Radiotopians" for more discussion of *The Heart* and podcast intimacy as part of Martin Spinelli and Lance Dann's *Podcasting: The Audio Media Revolution* (2019).

lesbian visibility and community across geographical distance. Close analysis of archival newspaper clippings in conversation with the experiences of former lesbian radio hosts and producers bring forward critical reimaginations of how these radiomakers queered technological practices toward a politics of accountability, safety, and discoverability. Through these analyses, this chapter positions radio as an information technology which carries a feminist potential to provide safety and care in what conversations are broadcast and how or where we can listen.

Shifting between pre-internet era radio and the digital world of podcasting brings forward questions of datafication, temporality and differences in listenership. We must also attend to these shifts to gain a better picture of queer feminist soundwork across generations and decades of media activism. Podcast platforms such as Apple Podcasts and Spotify are data collection driven. As a result, the platforms collect and store information about the user, which the user also often carries on their person via the smartphone, rematerializing the one ephemeral queer soundwork of queer radio into an item of potential risk to some members of the community. While the discoverability of radio shows like *The Lesbian Show* was part of a rich network of newsletters, tape sharing, and dial surfing, queer soundwork in podcasting can be said to have a leg up in its potentiality for awareness across distance. This is all well and good, but only if we can actually find the podcasts that resonate with our communities in the first place. As Safiya Umoja Noble outlines in *Algorithms of Oppression*, algorithms in the age of neoliberalism reinforce oppressive social relationships and enact what Noble terms "technological redlining," new modes of racism, sexism, and discrimination in the digital world. Podcast platform discoverability is compared with the historical practices of lesbian feminist radio to interrogate how the safety of radio listening has been lost in the datafied world of podcast platforms. The search functions and techno-logics of podcast platforms like Apple Podcasts are critiqued through the application of queer theory and feminist information studies toward critical applications and interventions into the world of podcast platforms. Through examples of queer media activism in and outside of soundwork, Chapter 6 invites the podcast industry, podcasters, and coders alike to advocate for infrastructures of discoverability that provide more equitable or even queer customizable interfaces and corresponding algorithms that centre on queer feminist values of safety and community.

The Lesbian Show Collective's 1979 manifesto reads, "The more we talk to each other, work with each other and celebrate together, the stronger we will become" (Hughes, 1984). When I first read this quote, I am reminded of Sara Ahmed's evocative writing of the feminist call to arms in *Living a Feminist Life* (2017). Where the collective writes of becoming stronger together, Ahmed writes of the willfulness feminists require to persist. For Ahmed, the feminist army evokes *the arm* as "a signifier of hope" (p.84). Strong feminist arms become stronger together. They work to support, hold each other close and push back against those who aim to harm. Arms are a reminder of gendered labour politics and the feminist act of refusal in curling a fist rather than lending a hand. 'Whose arms do what work?' becomes a provocation at the intersections of gender, race, and class. "When a hand curls up as a feminist fist, it has a hand in a movement," Ahmed writes (2017, p.85). Where Ahmed sees the arm as a signifier of feminist action, I equally envision a feminist ear. Listening is always political. The ear cannot curl like the hand into a fist, but the ear can bend. Women are stereotypically thought of as 'better listeners,' ready and willing to bend. The feminine ear, often likened to a mother's ear, is presumed as a more caring and willing ear for anyone wanting to be heard. While the ear cannot simply curl and close like a fist, the head *can* turn away in refusal. A feminist does not let just anyone bend their ear.

Listening is a powerful action. It is a quietness equally essential to feminist and queer activism as the act of 'speaking out' or 'up'. Along these same lines, feminist media theorist Rianka Singh (2020) writes about the importance of quietness as political action, the often "illegible, quiet ways" Indigenous, Black, and queer communities engage in care and survival (n.p). When feminist activism in our neoliberal climate is dominated by amplification and digital technologies come with an increased risk of surveillance, political acts in quietness can be revolutionary. In complement to the rhetoric of 'standing up' or 'against', Singh (2020) offers Adriana Cavarero's (2016) theorization of "inclination" as a posture of vulnerability and care equally needed in the activist community. Just as a feminist army is made up of many different arms (literal and symbolic), feminists also lend their ears toward collective action. When feminists persist in listening to others who have not been historically given space to sound, and when queers turn their ears toward anti-racist, anti-ableist, and trans-inclusive practices, one can hear echoes of future possibilities in even the most everyday of media forms. What will bend your ear? Let the resounding begin.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review. Queer Cultural Theory and Feminism Toward the Study of Soundwork

Introduction

Queer feminism has grown from a long history of intersectional feminism, Black feminism, and LGBTQ+ activism (Kang, Lessard, Heston & Nordmarken, 2017). As part of this history, alongside queer activist groups such as ACT UP in the 1980s and Queer Nation in the 1990s, we also see the rise of sex-positive feminism. Sex-positive feminism emerged with scholars such as Gayle Rubin (2012) advocating for sexual politics and sexual liberation as key sites of feminist work to address historically stigmatized sexual identities and practices across communities and media.¹³ On such cultural and historical connections between feminist and queer, Mimi Marinucci (2010) defines the growing positionality of 'queer feminism' in the academy as "the application of queer notions of gender, sex, and sexuality to the subject matter of feminist theory and the simultaneous application of feminist notions of gender, sex, and sexuality to the subject matter of queer theory" (p.105). There is certainly a known history of bias and exclusion against lesbians and transgender people within the feminist canon and a history of racism and classism within queer theory, but third and fourth-wave feminism and contemporary forms of queer theory continue to critique and 'call out' racism, homophobia, and other expressions of oppression through their critical intersectional work (Johnson, 2010; Rault, 2017; Dotson, 2018). As a result, queer feminism has emerged as a political orientation which explicitly includes queer sexual and gender minorities while creating space for discourse and activism surrounding intersectional queer subjectivities and power dynamics across class and race (Anzaldúa, 2009; Johnson, 2010; Adair & Nakamura, 2017) and ability (Kafer, 2013). While lesbian feminism is introduced in Chapter One, these further entanglements between queer and feminist scholarly

¹³ North American 'queer' politics began to emerge in the mid-1980s and 1990s with the formation of the Aids Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) to pressure the US government to develop affordable drugs for people with HIV/AIDS. The establishment of Queer Nation quickly followed in order to challenge homophobic violence and heterosexism in mainstream society.

orientations are drawn out here to articulate the intersections between queer cultural theory, intersectional feminism, cultural sound studies, and media studies central to this queer feminist project. By navigating our way through the vast scholarly ecosystem of queer theory, feminist studies, and cultural sound studies, this chapter's aims are two-fold: to map a theoretical foundation for the study of queer and feminist experiences in soundwork production; and to conceptualize how we might resist generational narratives within queer, feminist, and sound media scholarship toward building counterpublic networks across space and time.

Radio shows and podcasts which produce queer feminist and lesbian content are a pivotal part of queer feminism's political, cultural, and historical soundscape. However, feminist media scholars have historically centred gender and sexuality on a politics of visibility with the voice exercised as metaphor, immaterial and interpreted solely as the words spoken. Yet, the sound of one's voice carries traces of age, sex, gender, sexuality, culture, and many facets of collective and individual identity. As feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero (2005) reminds us, "when the human voice vibrates, there is someone in flesh and bone who emits it" (p.522).¹⁴ Representative of agency, the voice defined solely as 'what is said' ignores the politics of *how* one is saying it. The voices, music, and various sounds that construct radio shows, like the ones broadcast by *The Lesbian Show* and *Dykes on Mykes*, are part of a queer feminist activist soundscape. Through studying such soundscapes, we can trace intergenerational shifts in queer subjectivities and audio media production, which put queer feminist experiences at the forefront, sonically taking up space and queering the media soundscape at large. The cultural study of sound allows exploring the nuances and complexities of the gendered sound/body relationship (Ehrick, 2015). To understand how we arrived at this moment of sonic scholarship, we must listen back to the sonic histories and practices which lay the foundation for the sonic cultures in question. In this case, the histories in question are the foundational literature of queer theory, feminist media studies and cultural sound studies in the study of radio and podcasting.

¹⁴ In "Do Voices Matter? Vocality, Materiality, Gender Performativity", Annette Schlichter examines the ramifications of Judith Butler's notion of gender performativity. Schlichter claims that while Butler's theory is an integral contribution to the study of gendered identity, it ignores the performative aspects of the material voice. From a Feminist phenomenological perspective, Schlichter asks what it means to theorize a body without a voice.

This chapter introduces key themes and questions in queer feminism as an intersectional ground for studying sexuality, gender, and queer experience in media and sound. Within communication and media studies, the field of Sound Studies can attribute its 'first wave' roots to the 1980s and 1990s sound research of film scholars such as Michel Chion (1994) and Rick (1992) (Hilmes, 2005; Kennedy, 2013). Critical of the visual limitations of film sound research, 'second wave' cultural sound studies theorists such as Johnathan Sterne (2003), Emily Thompson (2002) and Frances Dyson (2009) attend to the historical and cultural conditions that underlie listener experiences and aural perceptions of both electroacoustic and acoustic sound. Following these foundational works, contemporary cultural sound studies have grown into a robust interdisciplinary field addressing the relationships between sound technologies and the sonic politics of race, gender, sexuality and digital cultures (Bull & Back, 2016; Chude-Sokei, 2016; Droumeva, 2018; Stoeber, 2016). Human and non-human sonic practices across communication media, technology, and industry are positioned to re-describe the world through sound-centric sensory-driven research (Neumark, 2017; Pettman, 2017). The fusion of cultural sound studies with radio and podcast studies has additionally grown into a unique intersection of its own through the work of scholars such as Christine Ehrick (2015), Kate Lacey (2013) and Sarah Murray (2019). My aim in this literature review process is not to delimit or circumscribe sexual identity but rather to navigate and refine queer feminist discourses of 'identity', and 'subjectivity' concerning sound culture, media, and technology. Ultimately, this chapter advocates for an intersectional feminist theorization of radio and podcasting toward the study of soundwork made by queer feminist and lesbian feminist audio makers *in* and *as* queer public networks.

Queer Feminism in Culture and Media Studies

I would like to open this section with a provocation: queer feminism is intersectional feminism – or at least it ought to be. Queer theory and intersectionality are both mythologized to have grown out of critiques of the universalizing discourses of 'Woman' in 'Second-Wave Feminism'. Theorists in both fields have substantially addressed the tensions between queer theory and feminism and the 'whiteness' in both queer and feminist studies (Johnson, 2010; Rault, 2017). Queer theory in reaction to binary notions of gender and exclusions of sexual diversity (see Marinucci, 2016; Butler,

1999/1993; de Lauretis, 1991), and intersectionality as grown out of Black feminist work on addressing race and gender as structures of oppression (see Nash, 2019; Crenshaw, 1989/1991; Collins, 1990).¹⁵ As Annamarie Jagose (2009) writes in their critical rethinking of the uptake of anti-identarian discourses in queer and feminist theory, "feminist theory and queer theory together have a stake in both desiring and articulating the complexities of the traffic between gender and sexuality" (p. 172). However, in thinking through this intersection, how are issues of race and class being addressed or considered? Particularly in how we study queer experience and representation across different periods and contexts. Through a mapping of the 'kinship' between queer cultural theory and intersectional feminism, this chapter works to theorize a framework for speaking to and analyzing multiplicities of gender and gendered experience, particularly concerning race and sexuality, from a feminist perspective that critically addresses structures and systems of oppression. The work of Nash (2019), Marinucci (2016), McBean (2015), Wiegman (2012) and Jagose (2009) set a foundation for feminist histories of queer theory and intersectionality to examine how their affinities and differentiations can be applied to the field of feminist media studies. These histories and theories key to queer and feminist theory provide the grounding to critically analyze where sound media is located in discourses of identity formation and ongoing systems of oppression. This grounding is required to approach how queer feminisms have impacted and become entangled in radio and podcasting.

Queer Cultural Theory and Feminism

In queer studies, one of the most notable divisions is how 'queer' is taken up as either identity and subjective experience or as a method. When de Lauretis first proposed 'queer' as a theory in their 1991 article, it was offered as a corrective to what de Lauretis noted as universalizing protocols in lesbian and gay studies that disregarded 'gender and race, with their attendant differences of class or ethnic culture, generational, geographical, and sociopolitical location" (pp. iii-iv). De Lauretis, then still hopeful of the possibility of queer theory to radicalize feminist intersectional practice, asks,

¹⁵ "Quare" studies is proposed by Patrick E. Johnson (2010) as an alternative "theory in the flesh" in light of such critiques of queer theory as a falsely unifying umbrella term which homogenizes and "erases our differences" (p. 3).

Are queer black women and white women, gay men of colour and white, condemned to repeat our respective histories, even as we study, reinterpret, and intervene in them to affect the course of human events? Or can our queerness act as an agency of social change, and our theory construct another discursive horizon, another way of living in the racial and the sexual? (pp. x-xi).

In this same journal, just three years later, de Lauretis gives up on the radical possibilities of queer theory as a critical term in the academy capable of attending to the intersections of gender, race and sexuality. They note how quickly it had 'become a conceptually vacuous creature of the publishing industry (1994, p.297). The lore of queer theory's emergence is widely taken up as a reaction to the universal 'womanhood' and identity-based politics that "feminism seemingly depends upon" (McBean, 2015, p.14). However, in de Lauretis' work, they mark the history of queer theory as growing out of a response to "Lesbian and Gay" studies as a predominantly white gay historiography and sociology "with little or no understanding of female socio-cultural specificity" (p. iv). de Lauretis notes a few early exceptions, including Jill Johnston's "Lesbian Nation: The Feminist Solution" (1973) and Barbara Ponse's "Identities in the Lesbian World: The Social Construction of Self" (1978), among others, ultimately pointing to a connection rather than resistance to feminist ideologies. Despite such critiques and the breakages in the history of queer theory, it has seen continual growth in its uptake within the humanities and social sciences.

The threads of feminist intervention in the creation, critique and continual uptake of queer theory positions feminism for contemporary queer/feminist theorists such as Sam McBean (2015) as "more than queer theory's precursor" but "instead its 'present-tense interlocutor'" (p.14). McBean argues that queer theory brought into conversation with feminist theory allows for the ability to problematize or 'queer' linear notions of time and static notions of space which govern the metaphors of generations or waves of feminism that divide and cause conflict within the field. McBean's queering of feminisms past allows for a reconsideration of how feminisms influence each other, allowing for 'lost' or less dominant attributes or ideas in feminisms past to be brought into present and future feminist discourses. While de Lauretis (1991) seems to be talking about queer more explicitly related to identity, McBean chooses to 'queer' feminist time here. 'Queering' for theorists like McBean and Marinucci refers to the process of "complicating something, and it is not necessarily limited to sexual contexts" (Marinucci, 2016, p. xv). In its refusal to be defined and its increasing use outside of queer cultural context, others, such as

Jagose (2009), argue that queer theory has begun to lose some of its sense of political ground. Still, as Jagose (2009) notes, the term upholds a long history of the refusal of normative identity categories and opposition to heteronormativity rooted in anti-identitarian and anti-normative activism within feminist movements and scholarship (p. 160). Following and in tandem with North American queer activist groups such as ACT UP in the 1980s and Queer Nation in the 1990s, a reclaiming of the once derogatory term 'queer' continues to encompass lesbian, gay, homosexual, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit as well as a wide range of anti-identitarian, anti-normative gender and sexualities.

My approach to 'queer' draws on these various discourses to encompass 'queering' as method and 'queer' as identity rooted in a refusal of hegemonic norms around sex, sexuality and gender, particularly for LGBTQ+ communities. In exploring how queer feminist soundworkers are queering our media soundscape, I am less interested in queer as an identity and more interested in how media is perceived and experienced as 'queer' by its producers. What I mean to articulate are some of the varying ways 'queer' and 'feminist' ideologies are encoded and decoded through sound production techniques, labour, and sonic aesthetics that destabilize hegemonic norms of sex, gender, and sexuality. Queer theory invites queering as a method but one that is necessarily linked to queer activism and identity. Queer and feminist can both be understood as an identity. However, what is more important to this work is recovering a set of ideologies which underlie each activist approach to provide a basis for how to study and produce soundwork which aims to decenter the still too dominant white cis male perspective and compulsory heterosexuality of our media ecosystem. The political importance of identity markers such as Black, lesbian, and woman must continue to be brought into conversation with queer political experience and theoretical conceptualizations if queer cultural theory has a hope of cultivating its critical approach to addressing structures and systems of oppression without further de-politicizing 'queer' or limiting what can be defined as 'queer' lived experience. As I explore further with intersectionality, the current 'introspective turn' in feminism (Nash, 2019) may have the potential to bring new (or rather old) dimensions to the ways in which queer cultural theory is interested in what lies *in between* and in the process of becoming in gender and sexuality studies to bridge innovative conversations across representations and experiences of race, class and culture for the future.

Intersectionality and Feminism

Similar to queer theory, 'intersectionality' has experienced a steady uptake in both popular and institutional feminist discourses, even finding its way into the Merriam-Webster Dictionary in 2017.¹⁶ Intersectionality is one of the most important contributions to feminist scholarship. It is "part of a cohort of terms" rooted in Black feminism to analyze and address the "interconnectedness of structures of domination" (Nash, 2019, p. 6). Intersectionality's origins are often attributed to Kimberlé Crenshaw's key texts on the subject; "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics" (1989) and "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color" (1991). Arriving at a similar historical point in feminist discourse as queer theory and the establishment of many women's studies programs within the western world, critical investments in intersectionality similarly became a framework to address the failure of the feminist universal 'women' "to adequately represent the diversity collated within its majoritarian frame" (Wiegman, 2012, p.302). For Crenshaw, intersectionality is an analytical approach rooted in Black women's experiences. It is simultaneously a theory, politics and doctrine to bring "justice to the forms of violence that operate in raced and gendered ways in black women's lives" (Nash, 2019, p.9). In short, Crenshaw's coining of the term intersectionality came to encompass ongoing conversations in feminism that reveal how racialized women's experiences of discrimination are erased under the broad umbrella of 'woman'.

In activist and academic communities alike, concerns have arisen over how successful the application of intersectionality has been in working to address sexual orientation, race, gender, etc. The question arises, 'how can one ever address the 'etc.' of it all?'¹⁷ Out of this concern, theorists such as Jennifer Nash (2019) and Robyn Wiegman (2012) encourage a rethinking of intersectionality "not [as] the dissolution of all hope for a 'we'

¹⁶ Merriam Webster's definition of intersectionality intriguingly excludes any note of Black feminism, homophobia or transphobia: "the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups." <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intersectionality>

¹⁷ Adapted from reflections on 'feminist utopia' and the 'etc.' in Jennifer C. Nash's "On Difficulty: Intersectionality as Feminist Labor" (2010) http://sfonline.barnard.edu/polyphonic/nash_01.html

that can survive women's political overreach" but rather as a way to draw attention to not only the complexity but particularity in women's experiences (Wiegman, 2012, p.302). While pointing to intersectionality's ability to address critical locations of difference and experience, Wiegman takes a step back to evoke consideration of what may be condensed, displaced or erased in such 'progress' narratives as a sort of all-inclusive 'utopian' feminism. Both scholars propose what Nash terms an 'introspective turn' to address how development and new formations of feminism adapt, exclude or re-inscribe feminism's past. In their 2019 text "Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality," Nash takes on the institutional history, debates and use of intersectionality and Black feminism within feminist practice and the institutionalization of women's studies. "These are introspective times in women's studies" writes Nash (2019, p.13). Here Nash (2019) addresses a series of collections and introspective calls to action from scholars such as Wiegman (1999) to address the 'institutional project of academic feminism.' In taking on an introspective approach to their feminist work, Nash (2019) examines intersectional feminism's "racialized attachments and narratives" (p.13) as well as the erasures and "debates about intersectionality's imagined goal" to capture and account for the "etc. of it all" (p.15). They work to re-imagine Black feminism and intersectionality outside of the "property claim" stakes that can haunt and divide "identity-driven feminism," and toward a more affective approach which reckons with the deep historical engagements with Black women's contributions to feminist labour in dialogue with a process of "letting go" to allow for forgotten practices and experiences to re-emerge alongside new formations (p.138).

What becomes clear through a mapping of the histories and kinships between queer cultural theory and intersectional feminism is the dual discourse at play. Both terms (queer and intersectional), in their efforts to reconfigure the identity pieces of the feminist puzzle into a more experiential and affectively grounded environment, also run the risk of becoming a catch-all umbrella that only works to further displace and fracture feminist work. Still, queer cultural theory and intersectionality within feminism are proven by theorists such as Nash (2019), Jagose (2009), and Marinucci (2010) as continuously valuable frameworks for attending to the different nodes and intersections of identity politics, subjectivity and corresponding structures and systems of oppression. By drawing on a strong history of LGBTQ2A+ and Black activist ethos, this approach to feminism also attends to the problematization and deconstruction of such established

notions. How queer and intersectional approaches to feminism continue to contribute to and redefine the field begins to emerge through such an introspective turn (Nash, 2019). It only takes a brief look at the icons which Black feminism, intersectional feminism, and queer feminisms share; such as Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherríe Moraga, Audre Lorde and Chela Sandoval, to acknowledge how queer of colour critiques and experiences have always been and continue to be central to critical knowledge transformations within the feminist academy. They have also always been central to the translation of feminist politics into media activism. Nash's (2019) call to take on an 'introspective turn' is responded to in this thesis as a way to reckon with historical engagements with lesbian feminist soundwork and how queer feminist practices emerge through a process of "letting go" to allow for new as well as forgotten practices and experiences to emerge (p.138).

Queer Feminist Media Studies for Audio Media

If queer cultural theory and intersectional feminism are invested in interrogating the systems and structures that perpetuate and uphold racist, classist sexist heterosexual power, then media (in its many forms) becomes an integral site of study. Questions of cultural representation and identity construction are of great importance to studying LGBTQ and feminist media. The fundamental inquiries of feminist media studies, "Who represents? And 'Who is represented?'" continue to be crucial questions of power and privilege (Banks, Joseph, Stamp & White, 2018, p.3). Here my understanding of 'media' draws on Lisa Gitelman (2006) to define media "as socially realized structures of communication[...] and where communication is a culture practice, a ritualized collocation of different people on the same mental map, sharing or engaged with popular ontologies of representation" (p.7). The communicative, structural and culturally shared¹⁸ aspects of media are of particular importance to the feminist study of how media represents, is coded or decoded,¹⁹ and circulated with gendered experiences at intersections such as race, sexuality, geography, and age.

¹⁸ Culturally shared also relates to conceptions of 'imagined' publics related to media texts and their circulation, see Warner (2002) and Lacey (2013). For how sex and sexuality are mediated by publics, see Berlant & Warner (1998).

¹⁹ Stuart Hall's (1980) 'encoding/decoding' is a theoretical approach to understanding the different ways audiences are presented messages through production, format, distribution, marketing etc.

Thanks to feminist theorists such as Michele Hilmes (1997), Christine Ehrick (2015) and Jennifer Lynn Stoeber (2016), the field of radio studies and, more recently, podcast studies has seen a growth in more intersectional feminist approaches to media history and analysis in the past few decades. Key texts in queer radio history, such as *Queer Airwaves* (Keith & Johnson, 2001), tend to take on a broad LGBTQ2A+ umbrella approach. Other collective works such as *Women & Radio* (Mitchell, 2000) bring gendered *and* queer experiences forward through select chapters. The expanse of intersectional work growing within film and visual art studies has yet to take shape in the field of audio media studies. However, a promising few notable texts arise as pointing to potential growth of intersectional and queer work within feminist audio media studies. For instance, Regan Fox (2008) discusses how queer podcasters or "Qpodders" perform their identities through sonic drag at intersections of gender, race, and sexuality. Working to address structures of oppression in dialogue with women's experiences across age and sexuality, Lisa Yuk Ming Leung (2018) analyses the role of online radio listening within communities of queer women and the elderly as a "subversive act against the government" and a "social strategy against the harshening political reality and social division" in Hong Kong (p.511). As Banks et al. (2018) point out, there is an importance in a collective notion of 'Feminist media studies' and 'feminists' as a public 'we,' though intersectional and wide-ranging. While much work still needs to be done to uncover intersectional histories in audio media and to bring more intersectional and queer approaches to studies of media texts more broadly, feminist media studies seem to continue redefining and expanding approaches. For Marinucci (2010), Queer Feminism is "the application of queer notions of gender, sex, and sexuality to the subject matter of feminist theory, and the simultaneous applications of feminist notions of gender, sex, and sexuality to the subject matter of queer theory" (p.105). While this prioritization of queer gender and sexuality can lead to productive contributions of queer textual readings and queer histories as select works above have shown, it can also lead to equally universalizing notions of queerness and the erasure or exclusion of subjective experiences across intersections of race, class and dis/ability and age. In the study of queer feminist media, how researchers approach study recruitment, analysis, and writing must continuously address this interrogation of universalization.

and in turn, how those messages can be decoded or interpreted differently depending on the audience member/listener/spectator politics, background, and personal experiences.

If queer is taken up in its more radically political sense as a disruption, “unusual or unexpected, as a pejorative slur against those who violate - or are perceived as violating - the heterosexual norm” (p.33), it is certainly possible to bring queer theory into conversation with more intersectional approaches as realized in cultural studies (see Puar, 2007, 2012; Ahmed, 2006).²⁰ While queer theory works to disrupt binaries of “female and male, feminine and masculine, homosexual and heterosexual and so on” in practice, it must also work in tandem with intersectionality to question and deconstruct the processes of these binary formations and the structures which uphold them (Marinucci, 2016, p.34). What Marinucci (2016), among other queer and intersectional feminist scholars may find through an ‘introspective turn’ is the still very applicable work of Gayatri Spivak (1996) on ‘Strategic essentialism’, “whereby groups with mutual goals and interests temporarily present themselves a united front, while simultaneously engaging in ongoing and less public disagreement and debate” (Marinucci, 2016, p. 109). If the current moment of rising homophobic and transphobic hate crimes across the globe (with higher stats for women of colour) being covered in the news is any indication, essentializing language still plays an essential yet dualistic role in simultaneously oppressing and working to address how particular people are targeted and oppressed in society. While essentializing language like ‘homosexual’ and the LGBTQ+ acronym may erase or homogenize, they can also mobilize the community and allies to advocate for improved laws and regulations that address folks’ different socioeconomic and lived experiences.²¹ A single article or book may not be able to take on the “etc. of it all.” However, through continued collective knowledge building and a shift away from universal approaches to feminism and gender studies, there is still much

²⁰ Jasbir Puar's (2012) concept of 'assemblages' could be a valuable route for further exploration. Where "assemblages encompass not only ongoing attempts to destabilize identities and grids, but also the forces that continue to mandate and enforce them. That is to say; grid making is a recognized process of agencement" (p.63).

²¹ This brief note was first spurred regarding the global news coverage of the homophobic assault of two women on a London, UK bus in June, 2019 which spurred a series of news articles on homophobic and transphobic hate crimes in the UK as well as additional articles addressing stats and experiences in other countries including the USA and Canada. See “Homophobic and transphobic hate crimes surge in England and Wales” (June, 2019) in The Guardian for an example of the articles that followed the coverage of this crime: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/14/homophobic-and-transphobic-hate-crimes-surge-in-england-and-wales>

to realize and much to contend with at and in between the intersections for the future of feminist media studies. Media (in its many forms) is an integral site of study for queer and intersectional feminisms invested in interrogating the systems and structures that perpetuate and uphold racist, classist sexist heterosexual power. In particular, community-made media has always been central to redressing situations of universalization through sharing stories of queer experiences. Yet soundwork, specifically radio and podcasts produced for and by queer women, have little been studied in relation to its queer and feminist activist contributions. My goal in mapping out these various histories and contemporary debates is to provide a sense of the knowledge sharing and movements which have led to the production of queer feminist soundwork from lesbian radio radicals to the queer podcast revolution.

Cultural Sound Studies: Radio and Podcasting

Radio and radiogenic media such as podcasting play an integral role in this circulation of queer desires, experiences and voices within our gendered political soundscape. They are also crucial to forming community and collective identity by providing media education for community members and sharing queer and feminist stories and information not heard or challenging to find elsewhere. The second-wave feminist movement and LGBT activism around the 1969 decriminalization of homosexual acts in Canada and the Stonewall riots in the United States that same year gave rise to a crusade of feminist and lesbian-focused radio shows on women's voices and experiences. Particularly queer women's voices emerged out of a desire for visibility around women's sexuality outside of heterosexual norms and male-centred 'homonormativity' (Duggan, 2002). Although cultural sound studies is a vastly interdisciplinary field of research, as I have briefly mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, for this study, we focus on the broadcast media sub-fields of radio and podcasting. Here I am particularly interested in how cultural sound studies can help articulate radio and podcasting's aesthetic and political cultures of sound production.

Throughout the following chapters, this work proposes that Queer Feminist soundwork carries particular aesthetic choices, political values, and network functions through its application of radio and podcasting techno-logics. To make such claims, an in-depth reading of radio culture and podcast culture, always with an ear for the queer, is needed

to bring the queer and feminist theories at the root of queer feminist activism into the study of soundwork. The goal of reading radio and podcast studies through a queer and feminist lens is twofold. First, to articulate the shifting relations between the two mediums, particularly regarding sonic subjectivity and the interactions between listeners and producers found in queer feminist soundwork. While the term sonic subjectivity has been used in a few select past texts, it has long lacked a definition that can assist in the phenomenological study of sound and subjecthood.²² I define 'Sonic subjectivity' broadly as the sounding of the self. It can encompass acoustics and electroacoustics, including body sounds (e.g. vocalizations, body movements) and sonic cultural representations (e.g. music, soundscapes, sound media) understood by the subject as an extension of their subjecthood.²³ Sonic subjectivity is explored further in Chapter 4 – *Being a Public Queer*. The second aim of this sub-section in the literature review is to develop an informed theory of radio and radiogenic sonic space to frame intergenerational shifts in the communication and construction of queer subjectivity and intersubjectivity across networked media publics.

On Radio Studies (within Cultural Sound Studies)

As the first established mass communication medium, radio has a long history as a topic of study concerning audience, industry and broadcast regulation (Summers, 1939; Cantril, 1940; Lazarsfeld & Kendall, 1948). In the past two decades, radio studies has seen a resurgence in academic research alongside the emerging field of cultural sound studies within the humanities and social sciences (Hilmes, 2005). The field has produced a healthy assemblage of cultural-historical research which anchors radio and radiogenic media to pivotal historical events²⁴ and 'mundane' experiences of everyday

²² For example, the chapter "Sonic Subjectivities" by Ruth Herbert in *The Routledge Companion to Sounding Art* (2016) thoughtfully explores the multisensory relationship between sound art and subjectivity. However, it does not define its title provocation nor address a refusal to define it.

²³ This early development of the theory of 'sonic subjectivity' follows the phenomenological tradition of Merleau-Ponty and Husserl in positing 'subjectivity' not as an "I think" but rather as an embodied "I can" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.159), a 'knowing-body' that acts and/or expresses their experience of and existence in the world. Further theorization and development of this concept are needed. Sonic subjectivity could also open further avenues into the exploration of the sonic intersubjectivity involved in the continuous construction of culture and corresponding cultural texts.

²⁴ In particular, historical events in the development of the public sphere, modern mass communication, and standards for media literacy.

life (Lacey, 1996; Hilmes, 1997; Douglas, 1999; Verma, 2012). The field situates the radio medium not only as a technology or industry but as a community, a culture, and a social practice (Hilmes, 1997; Fauteux, 2015). Today, contemporary cultural radio studies continue to ask what 'radio' means within the digital media landscape of modern-day communication (Lacey, 2018). The term 'radiogenic' has emerged to refer to non-radio texts that are particularly suited to a radio broadcast or utilize the distinctive qualities or conventional aesthetic of radio, e.g. podcasting (Lacey, 2013, p. 93), as radio studies expand into digital, podcast and other alternative forms of audio media research.²⁵

Historical, philosophical and cultural sound studies analysis of voice (Chion, 1999; Cavarero, 2005; Ihde, 2007; Neumark, 2017), listening publics (Douglas, 2004/1999; Loviglio, 2005; Lacey, 2013), and music and identity (Kassabian, 2000; Frith, 2011; James, 2015; Eidsheim, 2019) continue to intersect with cultural radio studies as a growing global field of research (see Loviglio & Hilmes, 2013; Föllmer & Badenoch, 2018). As Lacey (2008) asks in their reflection on a decade of radio studies, "in our eagerness to let radio have its day in the academic sun, [have we fallen] into the trap of emphasizing radio's distinctiveness over its similarities and connections with other cultural forms?" (p.22). The strategic placement of radio studies within the broader interdisciplinary field of cultural sound studies addresses this question head-on. Furthermore, in advocating for the use of the term 'soundwork' throughout this dissertation, it is crucial to understand the debates that have led scholars like Michele Hilmes (2013) to advocate for its use continuously. Radio studies positioned as a connected node within cultural sound studies opens discussion of radio's cultural history and interconnectedness with other media forms, from podcasts and sound for film to sound art and virtual reality soundscapes. The term 'radio' encapsulates the broad and shifting boundaries regarding technology, institutions, content, and communities. Nevertheless, the question of 'what radio is' continues to be of importance in attempts to

²⁵ Take, for example, the transition of the *Journal of Radio Studies* (1997-2007) to the *Journal of Radio & Audio Media* (2008-current) with expanded areas of research interest: "formats and programming, new technology, policy and regulation, rating systems, commercial and noncommercial networks, radio history, management and innovation, personalities, popular cultures, uses and effects studies, propaganda, social movements, advertising and sales, market concentration, Internet and satellite radio, podcasting, alternative formats, diversity, gender and international radio" (JRAM, 2018 Aims and scope.)

delineate the field of radio studies (Lacey, 2018; Berry, 2016). Within a broader cultural sound studies context, these debates question what 'radio' represents and may come to represent culturally within individual communities or sonic worlds in relation to changing platforms, formats and industry practices.

On Podcast Studies (within Cultural Sound Studies)

Podcasting has seen steady growth in popularity, production and scholarly writing since its inception in the mid-2000s (Berry, 2006; Llinares, Fox & Berry, 2018). However, there are still questions as to its definition and the parameters of the field known as podcast studies with its ambiguity regarding industry, infrastructure for distribution, practices of listening and content production as a radiogenic medium (Berry, 2016; Markman, 2012; Llinares, Fox, & Berry, 2018). In relation to cultural sound studies, podcasting is a relatively new field of research with a growing number of publications addressing the relationships between the medium and the cultural study of race (Greer, 2017; Valdez, 2017), sexuality (Fox, 2008), and digital listening communities (Markman, 2012). In this respect, podcast studies in relation to radio studies provide a broader community of scholars interested in the political and aesthetic techno-logics that soundwork offers concerning larger questions of community formation, identity politics, and social change. Regarding aesthetics, podcasting is perhaps best known for its association with 'intimacy'. While the term is a contentious and sticky one we will address in Chapter 5, it is difficult to deny that intimacy of podcasts as content primarily listened to via headphones (McHugh, 2016) has opened new avenues for historical and cultural sound studies analysis of voice (Jorgensen, 2021; Copeland, 2018), music (Cwynar, 2015a; Cwynar, 2015b) and aural cultures (Llinares, Fox, & Berry, 2018) that echo the continued underpinnings of cultural radio research as noted above. Positioned either as a sub-field of radio studies or a distinct field of its own (Berry, 2018), the growth of podcasting within North America following the tradition of music personalization, file sharing and internet radio, opens new avenues for the study of audio media cultures within our contemporary digital era (Bottomley, 2020; Cwynar, 2015a).

To bridge the divide between the study of radio and podcasting within cultural sound studies, Michelle Hilmes' (2013) term 'soundwork' provides a media industries approach

which draws attention to the interconnected functions of media as economic activities and representations across a variety of technological platforms and experiences. Hilmes defines Soundwork as "media forms that are primarily aural, employing the three basic elements of sonic expression—music, speech, and noise—to create a lively economy of sound-based commodities and institutions" (2013, p.177). There is a political significance to using the term soundwork over simply radio and podcasting. Soundwork pushes back against the separation of the two audio forms to focus on the similarities in production, and the differences. Soundwork helps to delimit the particular form of interest here away from ideas of radio as Top 40 music shock-jock content to instead turn to story-driven content also produced for podcast distribution, such as audio documentaries, talk shows, magazine shows, and audio fiction. Focused on aurality and the foundational ties to radio embedded in this notion of soundwork, Hilmes later refines the category as a "sonic construction" which employs voice, sounds of actuality, and music to create "meaningful audio experiences that can be heard, understood, and analyzed as distinct purposed texts" (2020). In further defining soundwork in this way, Hilmes excludes music and raw audio, such as live music recordings and speeches, in favour of story-driven audio media such as radio shows and podcasts, which apply production techniques of selection, structure, sequencing, pacing and dynamics. What is less evident in Hilmes's definition of soundwork, yet central to how the term is taken up in sound studies, is how it further accentuates the labour politics of creative audio production. This accentuation of labour in soundwork as sound-*work* will grow in significance as the following chapters engage with the various invisible labours behind queer feminist soundwork.

Soundwork as a term helps to center the study of radio and podcasting not only on the labour of audio production but on the history of DIY digital practices that led to podcasting as a medium understood as separate from its radio sister. Podcasting emerged out of a DIY entrepreneurial precedent set by early web 2.0 blogging practices, which Sarah Murray (2019) defines as "visible entrepreneurial work of the networked, branded self [and] a commonplace digital practice that blends self-expression and creative enterprise" (p.304). Similar to the blog as a self-representation through online journaling practices or the selfie as a visual self-representation, Murray also establishes intimate soundwork as a project of reflexive selfhood. Here soundwork is positioned as a sonic presentation of "self-in-process," a sonic construction the producer uses to "stake

claims" to a particular notion of "authenticity and intimate connections to listeners" (Murray, 2019, p.302). Such articulations of sonic construction are at the heart of how individuals understand their sonic subjectivity.

While Murray's work (2019) offers illuminating insight into the neoliberal individualism rooted in the aesthetics of podcast soundwork, the addition of 'intimacy' as a fixed term in their expansion of Hilmes 'soundwork' into 'intimate soundwork' harkens back to a larger phenomenon taking shape in the field of podcast studies. One in which intimacy has come to characterize podcasting without due attention given to the nuanced ways listener *and* producer experience intimacy. The act of producing soundwork is not always an intimate one. In fact, to exclusively tie the labour of creative audio production to intimacy may run the risk of romanticizing podcasting in the same vein as entrepreneurial labour seen across the creative industries. Where work is a 'labour of love', a passion turned into precarious work that we must eat, sleep and breathe (Gill, 2014; Anderson, 2019).

Within an intersectional feminist approach to the study of media, soundwork can provide a theoretical ground to draw attention to the gendered politics embedded in audio media industries' labour practices and production techniques. Interestingly, this 'labour of love' dilemma of the entrepreneur is the exact articulation of soundwork Murray aims to unpack in their writing on podcast collectives, where the work of intimate soundwork is "the work of producing the self [through soundwork] paired with creative independent production and the entrepreneurial expectations of new media economies" (2019, p.204). Such an approach is much needed as the podcasting space follows the same fate as its radio sister toward a more formalized and commercially dominated industry. Nonetheless, both approaches, that of Hilmes and Murray, point toward soundwork's entanglement in concepts of self and the role of sound in creating connections between producer and listener. The intention and techno-logics behind those connections may differ. However, more broadly, the fascination with the politics of voice and sonic subjectivity has long haunted the field of cultural sound studies, and for good reason.

On Politics of Voice in the Gendered Soundscape

The sound-intimacy connection between radio and podcasting is closely tied to the politics of voice. A politics that relates back to Chion's (1999) work on the fetishization of voice in film, when the voice ceases to be "identified with a specific face[...] It appears much less stable, identified, hence fetishizable"(p.174). The voice as political is also discussed by Dolars (2006) as having a deep connection to how political institutions operate and, in turn, a deep connection to power, e.g. churches, courtrooms, electoral debates, and university oral defences (p.107-112). I want to take up this issue of fetishization concerning politics and power to consider further why it is crucial to conceive of the voice as an extension of an embodied subject and to question the fetishization and objectification of voice, particularly for queer, racialized, and women's voices in soundwork. With these concepts of fetishization and power in mind, we can further consider how a politics of voice is discussed regarding radio in the work of Susan Douglas (2004) and Michele Hilmes (1997). We can then contrast these readings to how podcasting is framed by notable podcast scholars Richard Berry (2018) and Siobhan McHugh (2016) as changing the conversation regarding the presentation of 'voice' and listener/subject intimacy.

Take, for instance, the discussion of racism and whiteness in early American radio among two notable feminist radio historians. While Susan Douglas (2004) echoes Michele Hilmes's (1997) discussions of the predominance of masculinity and masculine voices in American radio, Douglas also criticizes Hilmes' claim that American radio has played a major role in perpetuating racist stereotypes and "a national norm of whiteness" (p.xix). Douglas claims, "it is easy to castigate the industry for its long history of intransigent racism," but there is a more complicated historical record which Hilmes does not fully address. Douglas continues to state that surrounding the white ridicule of Black culture are experiences of mixed feelings of "envy, desire, and imitation" of Black culture among white publics (p.18). This note by Douglas seems to feed back into the same conversations of appropriation and consumption of the other, which Hilmes notes in their work. There is undoubtedly an appreciation involved in imitation and stereotyping, or what Douglas (2004) notes as "the popularity of "racial ventriloquism" (p.18), but that does not address or repair the lack of actual Black representation, voices, culture and variety of vernaculars on the American airwaves. Within this politically fraught history of

radio voice spanning from the 1920s onwards, some particularly normative radio vocal presentation styles begin to emerge outside the radio drama and 'vaudevillian' formats as well. Douglas notes how broadcasters on national radio networks "had to calibrate how they would speak so that they appealed to as wide a range of socioeconomic classes and geographic regions as possible" (p.12). Claims that women's voices on air were "flat or shrill" or "too high pitched to be modulated correctly" were (and sometimes still are) commonplace in the early radio industry (Zakharine, 2012, p.209). Early public debates such as these about women's voices on air were not only a result of social biases around what vocal qualities were best suited for radio but a result of scientific discourse which claimed that higher frequency vocals such as a soprano singer (read as women's voices) would suffer distortion and imperfect transmission over radio broadcast (Bell Laboratories, 1927). As a result, for talk radio and news broadcasts, in particular, a standardized approach to word choice and tonality toward what in American society - during radio's early development in the '20s and '30s - could be understood as a 'voice of authority' begins to emerge as a mainly masculine voice 'of reason.' In contrast, the more 'taboo' fetishized 'feminine' voices were relegated to radio dramas and select 'women's programming' (McKay, 2000).

Rosalind Gill (1993) notes in their analysis of UK male broadcaster's viewpoints on women in radio, "it is tempting to suggest that the only way a woman can succeed is by sounding like a man" (p.148). This belief can be paralleled with the misconception of radio as a "color-blind" technology when American radio history has shown that sounding anything but 'white' on the radio has had widespread repercussions for producers of colour (Stoever, 2012). The standard to which all other voices were (and some would argue still are) held is one of a white anglophone male voice. Women's voices and marginalized voices that do not fit this patriarchal mould are characterized as 'noise' in the system. As Lacey (2013) writes, "if the promise of perfectible sound" – read perfectible also to note how white masculine voices are the desired signal throughout history – "has characterized much of the public discourse about mediated sound, then running through those debates is the problem of noise - noise as disturbance and interference, as sound out of control" (p.72). Noise habitually characterized as 'uncivilized', 'untamed', 'inarticulate,' runs parallel to discussions of racialized, women's, and queer bodies to exoticize, police, or simply exclude their voices from 'civilized society' and the power Dolar (2006) notes the political voice to carry. Jennifer Stoever's

(2016) work on the “Sonic Color Line” echoes these same connections between race and noise that Lacey invites us to consider. Stoever outlines how the sonic colour line “codifies sounds linked to racialized bodies” – here insert radio voice – to ‘noise’ as sound’s ‘unruly’ “Other” (p.14).

While Stoever (2016) and Lacey (2013) do well to note the negative correlations between race and noise, and the problematic racist media history it unfolds, it is also essential to consider how noise can be framed as ‘warmth’ and ‘character’. For example, the use of ‘noise’ as an effect laid over the top of digital recordings for a ‘vintage’ or ‘retro acoustic’ aesthetic (Lacey, p.90). Focusing on audio production as a practice, we must then consider how the producer, listener and our listening ears drive the standard disciplines of editing, mixing, and narrative work. As Stoever writes, “the listening ear ... normalizes the aural tastes and standards of white elite masculinity as the [default and] singular way to interpret sonic information” (2016, p.13). A sonic accomplice to Laura Mulvey’s ‘male gaze’ theory (1975), the listening ear represents a long history of normative western listening forms of perception, producing and articulating discernment between ‘whiteness’ and ‘blackness.’ Ultimately, in a white patriarchal capitalist society, the surveilling, disciplining, interpretive listening ear decides what is “normal, natural, and right” and filters out the rest (Stoever, 2016, p.7). The gendered and racialized aspects of the listening ear are similarly brought forward in Dylan Robinson’s conception of hungry listening – or “settler colonial forms of perception” (2020, p.15) – which superimposes a normative positionality grounded in extractivist-colonial violence onto our experience of the world. This “tin ear” of settler colonialism identified by Robinson (2020) blocks out culturally significant sounds leaving the listener with a dulled perception of their soundscape, particularly regarding the understanding of Indigenous song and sound practices. In giving a name to these oppressive listening practices, Robinson invites us to reflect on hungry listening in our own practices and how we might “open the tin ear with a can opener” to move toward a more self-reflexive listening positionality (p.45).²⁶

²⁶ A portion of this page is an excerpt from a forthcoming edited chapter on podcasting practice co-authored with Hannah McGregor and Katherine McLeod. The chapter titled “The Kitchen Table is Always Where We Are: Podcasting as Feminist Self-Reflexive Practice” further addresses some of the key ideas on feminist self-reflexivity discussed here.

To subvert the power of the white elite masculine listening ear and its hungry colonial listening, we must first become aware of complicity in our own listening practices. A process we will return to in our discussion of methods to come. In this shift in thinking about 'noise' and, in turn, a rethinking of what voices are valued and given power within media, I would like to move into discussions of how podcasting is framed as a medium with a more intimate, or rather 'warm' and 'inviting' character, particularly how podcast voices are discussed by both scholars and podcast producers alike. Maybe a transition here is just to state that the assemblage of production choices, aesthetics, and identity, etc. in the "soundwork" of radio has continuity across the radio and podcasting formats.

Podcast studies is still a relatively new sub-field within cultural sound studies. Aside from the "Podcasting" collection from Llinares, Fox and Berry (2018) and select media studies works on the podcast phenomenon 'Serial' (see McCracken, 2017), much of the writing is primarily concerned with delineating the field of podcast studies and the particular structures and cultures of production which designate podcasting as a media form of its own. In their 2016 evaluation of podcasting as a new medium and its association with 'radio,' Richard Berry posits the "highly personal listening environment" via headphones, along with a variety of vocal "delivery styles" and flexibility in digital content access outside the temporal bounds of live radio, provides "grounds to consider that podcasts are capable of a deeper level of intimacy" than their radio counterparts (2018, p.13). Berry further posits that regarding listener/host relationships, "podcasts engender a sense of hyper-intimacy, where listeners feel deeply engaged with both the process of listening and the material to which they listen" (p.14). Although Berry is working here to distinguish podcasting from its radio roots, the intimacy found in a variety of vocal delivery styles is not necessarily new or unique to podcasting but harkens back to vocal and format styles of radio drama and long-format talk radio (Bottomley, 2020; Merrick, 1997).

McHugh's (2016) empirical study of podcast and audio producer commentaries on the resurgence of non-fictional audio storytelling "post-2014 podcast boom" echoes many of the same connections between 'voice and intimacy' and 'voice and variety'. In conversation with McHugh, notable American podcast producer Julie Shapiro of PRX ²⁷

²⁷ PRX (Public Radio Exchange) is a digital distribution platform for radio programs and digital audio content, which is in charge of distributing some of the most popular shows and podcasts, such as NPR's *This American Life* and *The Moth*. PRX is also affiliated with the podcast network Radiotopia which is currently home to popular shows including *99% Invisible* and *Ear Hustle*.

comments on a “talkier, more casual, less rigorous” production culture and podcasting presentation, noting that producers and hosts can be “more playful, more experimental”, “we’re really keeping an ear out for original fresh content (2016, pp.70-73). The ‘talkier’ chumcast or chat genre duos found throughout podcast feeds today certainly play into this “playful” sonic aesthetic. Australian producer Claudia Taranto echoes Shapiro’s sentiments, further stating that “for a podcast you are talking into an ear canal – it’s a smaller space so you must be more familiar and relaxed” (McHugh, 2016, p.71). Without explicitly stating it, what Taranto and Shapiro seem to be alluding to is a podcasting culture which provides space and is actively looking for voices and stories that provoke, challenge and provide a multiplicity of voices within a broader audio media and radio broadcast industry. It is interesting to note the lack of connections to community-based radio here. Maybe it is the lack of Canadian perspective or the close connections between major podcast networks and public radio, but some of these more playful and more experimental attributes listed as differentiating podcast voices from radio ones are found in early community radio work. As outlined in my introductory chapter, women have long turned to community radio as an experimental creative space for communities excluded from mainstream broadcast to find community and kinship.

While Berry (2016; 2018) and McHugh (2017) bring new discourses to the table surrounding the current conceptions of podcast voice and its ties to intimacy, there is an apparent lack of discussion around the power and politics of voice concerning race, gender, sexuality, disability and class other than in brief passing (see McHugh, p.71). Such discourses have only just begun to surface in podcast studies, where a glut of content awaits any keen researcher interested in attending to these intersections (see Florini, 2015; Valdez, 2017; Copeland, 2018). It is important to note that these are not necessarily new conversations. Rather, they are discourses grounded in earlier works of feminist media scholars such as Frances Dyson (1994), which can be re-articulated in new ways to discuss shifts in digital technology and media cultures. “It is not difficult to locate the voices excluded from radio,” writes Dyson (1994), “look to any race gender or cultural group which poses a threat and listen to their voices on radio. The most consistently excluded or derided voice is feminine” (p.181). Some perceive podcasting as a potential frontier for more diversity and multiplicity of voices. Still, rethinking how ‘voice’ is conceived in theory and practice is required to understand the further impact of such changes across broader media infrastructures. While podcast scholars such as

Christine Mottram (2016) note that podcasting is "not about achieving the traditional Western aesthetic of the low, deep voice," the medium's attachment to the complex concept of authenticity continues to call into question who is most perceived as authentic in ways that translate into robust listenership (p.66). As Freja Berg (2022) points out in their study of Danish women's podcasting, examples of hosts being "publicly criticized" as "immature" and "incompetent" due to the sound of their higher-pitched conversational tone continue to permeate the media industry (p.98).

Suppose media is a "socially realized structure of communication" as media theorist Lisa Gitelman posits, and as much of this essay alludes to (2006. p.7). In that case, we may already be experiencing a cultural and societal shift toward a desire for various vernaculars and voice qualities. Nonetheless, podcasting as a new media culture and distribution model seems to have a unique opportunity outside the confines of traditional broadcast models to create different listening publics and audio formats. Through further consideration of 'voice' within radio histories and podcast futures, continued experimentation, and new re-formations of whose 'voices' hold power within our global media soundscape can take place.

Sounds of Subjectivity + Identity

While the gendered discourses of listening and voice outlined above paint a rather bleak sexist and racist politics embedded in the media industry, if we are to articulate what sort of aural shifts need to take place, there is still an intrinsic value in theorizing sound with 'the self' toward a more nuanced understanding of subjectivity and identity politics. Here I will begin our discussion on listening and subjectivity with a brief critique of the work of musicologist Simon Frith (2011). The study of soundwork requires attention to the music choices made across different shows, networks, genres, and forms. How is music used to articulate identity? How do our music listening practices articulate identity? And to what aim? Concerning music and identity, Frith draws on the work of Judith Butler (1990) to position "listening as a way of performing" (Frith, 2011, p.110). Frith is particularly interested in understanding and advocating for listeners to engage with music across different genres and cultures. While Frith (2011) does *not* contest that music finds its roots in particular cultures, such as hip-hop connections to the African diaspora in America, he does seem to take issue with what he deems "new

assertions of cultural essentialisms [...], for example, only African-Americans can appreciate African American music" (p.108). While he argues that identity is built upon external rather than internal forces (i.e. society and culture), his language begins to sound less like respective subjective experience in identity formation and more like cultural appropriation when he states that identity "is something we put or try on, not something we reveal or discover" (p.122). Although Frith makes a valid argument that becoming a part of a particular music community can, in turn, shape your identity, other forms of identity, e.g. race, gender, sexuality, are performed whether one chooses to or not and are often not afforded the same 'luxury' of being able to temporarily 'try on' said identity marker.

What Frith (2011) does well in this text is a clear statement for listening across genres and styles as a way to "participate in imagined forms of democracy and desire" (p.123). Frith's act of democratic listening here certainly establishes the same sort of community and public aspects of listening that Stoeber (2016) and Robinson (2020) advocate for, but Frith, unfortunately, does so from an implicit position of privilege when he writes, "in taking pleasure from black or gay or female music I do not thus identify as Black or gay or female (I don't actually experience these sounds as 'Black music' or 'gay music' or 'women's voices')" (p.123). While I agree with Frith that "music is the cultural form best able to cross borders" – fences and walls as well as races and nations (p.125) –the subjective experience of listening is a process of coming to understand 'the self' that must be addressed. Further discourses of listening subjectivity are needed to critically examine music and sound media more broadly in relation to identity and culture. Here I posit that theorizing a concept such as 'sonic subjectivity' may work well for this purpose. Sonic subjectivity is a term to encapsulate the sounding of the self, which can then be broadcast out for intersubjective resonance with others. It can encompass acoustics and electroacoustics, including body sounds (e.g. vocalizations, body movements) and sonic cultural representations (e.g. music, soundscapes, sound media), which are communicated by the subject as an extension or construction of their subjecthood. The connections between music, voice, noise, and identity are certainly not new topics of research, but, as I will briefly discuss later in this chapter, radio and podcasting offer a unique media space where all of these sonic intimacies collide. Whether it is listening to a live basketball game or your favourite K.D. Lang song, or say an interview with your

favourite feminist filmmaker, audio media play a crucial role in how we experience sonic subjecthood and come to understand our relationship to communities and publics.

Listening Communities and (Counter)publics

Following the work of Michael Warner (2002) on publics and counterpublics, Kate Lacey (2013) defines "public" as "a self-creating and self-organizing space that exists by virtue of being addressed" where media become vital players in the role of enabling the formation of a 'public' or 'publics' "as an imagined community with an intersubjective horizon" (p.14-15). By conceptualizing listening publics concerning sound media such as radio, listening "literally makes sense" of the media content as particular genres, formats and constructions of media literacy (p.183). This 'sense making' then integrates the listener into particular 'imagined' social and cultural publics. If "music constructs our sense of identity through the direct experiences it offers of the body, time and sociability" and toward an ability to emplace ourselves in alternate cultural narratives (Frith, 2011, p.124), certainly radio, in Lacey's perspective does the same. Listening as *Erfahrung* (German) 'to experience' but also to hear or to learn about something, built on *fahren* (German) 'to travel,' positions media listening for Lacey (2013) as a way to build community and to travel or 'listen out' to a multiplicity of texts as a political act. If 'listening out' is crucial to democracy and potentially to forming counterpublics, why do our current media systems tend to travel us to exclusively normative and predictable sites? Lacey (2013) points to how public radio broadens 'travel' with mixed programming. At the same time, much of contemporary media continues to pander to what radio historian Susan Douglas (1999) calls 'safe, gated-in listening' (p.121). While Lacey finds promise in public radio, the 'imagined' national listening public radio that infrastructures such as the CBC (Canada), BBC (UK), and ABC (Australia) serve mean that many counterpublics still require sonic spaces outside these large public broadcasters to participate in political listening acts with racialized, sexual minority, feminist, radical and other often categorized as 'minority' or 'oppositional' publics.

As Lacey (2013) is primarily concerned with what it means to be a member of a listening public in a more macro sense, the subjective and embodied experience of listening is secondary in their work. As a result, the more nuanced analysis of listening counterpublics is overshadowed by national listening public discourses. Here I draw on a particular example from Leung (2018) though in brief, of work that brings attention to

listening counterpublics and their importance to national listening publics. On 'closeted' participation in the post-Umbrella Movement, Leung positions online radio listening within communities of women and the elderly as a "subversive act against the government" and a "social strategy against the harshening political reality and social division" in Hong Kong (p.511). Here Leung conceptualizes 'closeted listening' and 'closeted participation' as a mode for political community building and sustaining counterpublics during a divisive era in Hong Kong. Their study participants note a safety in 'cruising' online programming for diverse political voices while also feeling a level of removal through 'political voyeurism' depending on the listener's experience and reception of the show (Leung, 2018, p.520). Here listening as a political act offers a way to be a part of the counterpublic movement between peak moments of political rallies and public protest. In a way, what Leung brings forward here through discussion of experiencing levels of removal, and the feeling listeners have of being 'closeted' participants is quite a different understanding than Frith (2011) or Lacey (2013) theorize on 'listening out' across publics or 'trying on' an identity through music listening. Leung's (2018) work reminds us that we all belong to many communities and publics, which shift our listening positions and the techniques we may apply. I would further argue that the subjective listening ear shifts or re-oriens along with us as we move between these mediated spaces, cultural contexts, and the different expectations of format and social patterns in what we listen to. Acts of listening become a sort of 'aural' code-switching in this logic. It is this emphasis on 'listening' across different spaces, publics and contexts with subjective sonics that cultural sound studies must continue to cultivate.

Soundworks in/as Queer Publics

In navigating our way through the vast scholarly ecosystem of queer theory, feminist media studies, and cultural sound studies, my aim is to coalesce a theoretical foundation for studying queer women's experiences in soundwork production. My study invites resistance to generational narratives towards conceptualizing a queer public network that spans space and time. A network rooted in queer kinship, feminist activism, sonic subjectivity and the power of sound. An intermedia or media industries approach (Hilmes, 2013) to the study of soundwork allows for linkages across media forms and time. Temporality and spatiality are of particular importance within postmodern and queer theory. In the early 2000s Sedgwick pointed to "a tendency to underattend to the

rich dimension of space" within queer and gender discourse (2003, p. 9). Following this sentiment, the theorization of time and space has been added to the folds of queer theory by discussing queer counterpublics and queer orientations (Berlant & Warner, 1998; Ahmed, 2006; Halberstam, 2005). Echoing this turn toward space, the current 'introspective turn' in feminism (Nash, 2019) similarly calls for a slowing down to observe the world around us both spatially and with the past. As Queer Feminist Gayle Rubin puts it about engaging with Queer Studies, "the more I explore these queer knowledges, the more I find out how much we have already forgotten, rediscovered, and promptly forgotten again" (2012, p.347). LGBTQ+ rights in North America have progressed leaps and bounds in past decades, but with increased representation comes a forgetting of the struggle and diversity involved in queer identity politics.

By queering our approach to time and space through an expansion beyond a particular temporal constraint, this project works to articulate the soundworks of this study within and as a queer public network. Tied to postmodernism, "queer time" is defined by Halberstam (2005) as a model of temporality outside the frames of heteronormative inheritance, reproduction and family, and notions of risk and safety. Enabled by the production of queer counterpublics, "queer space" refers to postmodernist place-making practices grounded in queer people's engagement with the creation of place. The two concepts are used here to articulate new ways of understanding nonnormative experiences and subjects beyond essentializing claims of neoliberal uniqueness and unilateral oppression within queer communities (Puar, 2013).

Queer theorizations of time and place have much to offer the study media, particularly 'new' media and its related technologies, including audio media such as podcasting. As Heather Love (2007) writes in their treatise on the loss and politics of queer history, queer identity is always caught up in both a "looking forward" and "feeling backward" (p.27). The past's loss, trauma, and abjection are valued for providing meaning to current experiences. While at the same time, there is a desire to escape the legacy that comes with gay and lesbian histories. Attending to the past despite the emerging backward feelings can help us see a similar phenomenon in the present. It is also important to note that feelings of joy, love and utopic desires for the future in the queer past must equally be attended to. It isn't only a history of queer damage; these feelings go hand in hand. One cannot exist without the other. Recorded sound provides a rich

ground for studying this "backward-future" queer experience Heather Love describes (p.147). Listening to the past in the present brings forward the persistent reverberations felt across time and begs the question: What might attending to queerly produced soundwork from across different moments in queer activism contribute to broader understandings of queer kinship, techniques of sonic media activism, and the backward turn felt in search of potential futures? As this work aims to demonstrate, bringing historical texts (of the not-so-distant past) into conversation with present queer media addresses Love's call for greater attention to backward futures which *feel* the past while embracing the promise of better queer futures to come.

Queer theory and feminist theory allow for close attention to the gaps and losses present in the structural and lived experiences of lesbians and queers throughout history, from the stigmatization of AIDS to violence against lesbians within the feminist movement. In attending to these structural and visceral gaps in audio media history, there is a certain erotohistoriography or "temporal drag" in positioning the soundwork of *Dykes on Mykes*, *The Lesbian Show*, *The Heart*, *Queer Public*, *Warriors*, *Bards 'n Brews*, and *The Procyon Network* in/as queer publics (Freeman, 2010). As Elizabeth Freeman writes in their work on queer temporalities and queer histories:

Erotohistoriography is distinct from the desire for a fully present past, a restoration of bygone times. Erotohistoriography does not write the lost object into the present so much as encounter it already in the present, by treating the present itself as hybrid. And it uses the body as a tool to effect, figure, or perform that encounter (2010, p.96).

By putting the soundwork of the past into meaningful dialogue with the present, a different sort of network emerges. One that allows for feminist and queer media makers to unbind time and listen back as a "potentially transformative part" of place-making and movement formation (Freeman, 2010, p.96). Articulating a queer public network in/as soundwork means historicizing the media practices, feminisms, and collectivities early queer feminist community radio shows relied on in conversation with the particular postfeminist neoliberal individualism that has come to define podcasting (Murray, 2019). As we will explore in the chapters to come, the soundwork of *Dykes on Mykes*, *The Lesbian Show*, *The Heart*, *Queer Public*, *Warriors*, *Bards 'n Brews*, and *The Procyon Network*, among others, speak to each other across time and space toward renewed understandings of what it means to be a public queer in soundwork, how queerness and play factor into queer approaches in sound production, and how feminist media labour is

situated with a more extensive network of queer information activism. *The Lesbian Show* Collective's 1979 manifesto reads, "The more we talk to each other, work with each other and celebrate together, the stronger we will become" (Hughes, 1984). Soundworks are a uniquely sound-centric site to listen into the many ways that voice, music, and the various sounds we might hear as communicating gender and sexuality speak back to discourses of aesthetics, labour and production taking place across the arts and humanities. This sound-forward feminist research into queer media in Canada aims to demonstrate a renewed need for researchers to recover voices and listen out for histories lost in radio archives and the podcast platform algorithms of our contemporary world. Listening across time and space is key to understanding soundwork's role in shaping and reshaping queer and feminist culture, community, and subjectivity. Furthermore, it is key to further articulating a queer and feminist practice rooted in sound and listening for the study of media phenomena.

Chapter 3.

Methodology and Conceptual Framework. Listening in to Feminist Phenomenology

Introduction: The queer story of a box of travelling tapes

It's a Saturday morning in late October. The U.S. has hit a record-high number of COVID-19 cases as cities across the globe see further lockdown restrictions take effect. I've just moved across the country from Vancouver to Toronto, where restrictions mean celebrating my grandma's 90th birthday 6 feet apart on her snow-covered lawn, zoom chats instead of coffee dates, and lonely days working from home and talking to my cat a little *too* much. But today is a bit different than most. Settling into my new apartment in the city's west end, I sit patiently by the front window, drinking tea and watching the leaves tumble around the eerily quiet city streets. In the monotony of stay-at-home pandemic orders, today I'm expecting a visitor. A friend of a friend with a special delivery. Something I've been anxiously awaiting since I first heard the folklore of a box bursting with *Dykes on Mykes* tapes during my chat with Mel and M-C, former DOMs hosts, earlier in the year. A box of tapes containing recordings of *Dykes on Mykes* radio shows from Deb VanSlet's time on air in the 1980s and '90s. This initial spark of archival possibility only grew from there as I continued my interviews with former show members. Where could the box have gone? Was it still lost somewhere at CKUT radio station, doors locked and studios quiet in Montreal's pandemic lockdown? I finally connected with Deb herself. "I have it!" exclaimed Deb in our zoom chat, and I laughed "oh, perfect." Trying to contain my excitement with little success behind nonchalant replies, I offered to arrange transport for the box to me in Toronto for digitization and safekeeping. At least until we can find a more permanent home for these cherished agents of queer history. Brainstorming courier options in my head, I recalled meeting another former member of the CKUT family through a mutual friend. One Jamie Ross, a fellow queer and talented sound artist who often makes the trip between our two cities.

I notice a car pull up to the curb outside my window. 'Rap-tap-tap.' I grab my audio recorder and head to unlock the front door. There is Jamie, smiling ear to ear with a weathered cardboard banker's box in his arms. I can just make out 'DOMs' written in

faded marker across its lid. We squeal in excitement as the digital tape records our exchange. What precious moments of queer kinship! We stand in the doorway a few feet apart as Jamie recounts the box's journey: The experience of Deb opening their own front door just as we are, arms wrapped around this same box, and how as Jamie walked away with a promise of the box's safe travel, Deb yelled: "*Dykes on Mykes* forever!"²⁸

Accounts like the one above encapsulate how immutably intertwined our methodological approach to research can be with the human connections, intersubjective experiences, and materiality that construct one's object of study. As Alison Harvey writes, "feminist media studies is as much about ways of understanding how media are used, consumed, and produced in a manner marked by gendered subjectivities as it is about *imagining the potential for media* to contribute to a more just and equal world for those excluded within hegemonic systems of power" (2019, p.5, *emphasis my own*). Among Jamie, Deb, myself and past DOMs members, there is a shared perceived value in this box of tapes. Taking a feminist phenomenological view on the account above, perception can be understood as an ongoing exploratory process "from which the intersubjective world of things gradually emerges for the perceiver" (Romdenh-Romluc, 2010, p.17). Indeed, the smell of the plastic cassettes, the hand-written insert notes, the frayed reel-to-reel boxes and the magnetic tape housed inside all evoke a sense of temporal drag rooted in the importance of intergenerational kinship and queer history. However, more than the physical objects inside the box, the embodied experiences these objects represent enact the shared excitement and affective stickiness I've articulated above. The voices, stories, and spaces - the sonic phenomena - recorded on these objects are of particular intersubjective interest here.

Taking an intersectional feminist media studies approach through a new materialist and queer theory-informed political phenomenological framework, this chapter outlines a conceptual and practiced-based foundation to understand better how queer women's identities are electroacoustically produced and communicated across different historical periods and cultural contexts. I articulate this approach as a feminist phenomenology for the study of soundwork using Alison Harvey's three-pronged criteria for feminist media

²⁸ Listen to the audio clip of Jamie's cassette delivery under Appendix A, Audio A3.

critique: iteration, reflexivity, and situatedness. Harvey's framework is further developed through new materialist and queer theory provocations to invite reflection and reorientation of the intersubjective, intra-active, and performative entanglements experienced through political phenomenological research (Ahmed, 2006; Barad, 2004; McGregor, 2019). This methodological ground is applied to a qualitative mixed methods approach of archival research, reflexive thematic analysis, feminist textual analysis and audio documentation toward the development of the *feminist-embodied ear* as a concept for critical listening in practice. Ultimately, this chapter argues for ear-oriented phenomenology in feminist media studies as an equitable and *care*-ful exploration of the perceived use and function of the technologies, voices, sounds, and spaces that construct a relational understanding of queer and feminist audio media phenomenon.

Phenomenology for Feminist Media Studies

Feminist media research is steeped in a rich history of debate on the principles of rigour and ethics in the study of intersectional gender relations and media critique. A history influenced by critical race theory, poststructuralist theory, and queer theory, which have fundamentally shaped understandings of subjectivity and identity as contextually contingent on social and cultural norms. In their work on feminist media critique, Harvey (2019) offers a three-pronged qualitative interpretivist approach of *iteration*, *reflexivity*, and *situatedness* to articulate a feminist ethics of care for the study of media - as text, as people and cultures, and actions and interventions in practice. Taking on a feminist ethics of care means acknowledging and actively working against the history of harm and potential present-day impacts that research can have on society and the individual lives of those involved. For Harvey, this means engaging in research processes that center on practices of refusing the idea of objectivity, questioning universal notions of identity, and engaging in research *with* rather than *for* others. The first prong in Harvey's principles of rigour and ethics, *iteration*, encourages "deep immersion in the materials and phenomena under examination" until the researcher reaches theoretical saturation in their analysis (Harvey, 2019, p.35). Iteration is a practice in dialogue with what you are analyzing, interpretations found through the researcher's theoretical approach, and the social and cultural contexts surrounding the research and the research material. The second prong of Harvey's approach is *reflexivity*. While discussions of reflexivity in research generally speak of a constant

assessment of the relationship between “knowledge” and the “ways of doing knowledge” (Calás & Smircich, 1992, p.240), Harvey's interpretation of feminist media studies invites the researcher to more particularly reflect on their own positionality to and in their work. Thirdly, and perhaps the principle most aligned with phenomenology is *situatedness*. Situated knowledges are fundamental to feminist work as a theory and practice. Gendered and sexual differences cannot be understood without also attending to the surrounding historical and political context. Giving my attention to how queer feminist soundworks in this study are situated within time and place is key to understanding their political and aesthetic choices. It is also essential to reflect on how the particular situated context in which this research is being conducted also shapes the questions and work put forward. For example, this reflexive application of situatedness takes shape in the first-person researcher accounts provided in the chapter introductions found across various sections of this work. Each subject in this phenomenological study brings their own situated embodied experiences to articulate the *essence* of a phenomenon, so I provide a glimpse into mine in response. As a queer feminist researcher, I draw on *iteration*, *reflexivity*, and *situatedness* to carefully and thoughtfully attend to how the individuals included in this study and my own situated embodied reality influence the research at hand.

The three prongs of a feminist media analysis that Harvey succinctly draws out of a history of feminist media critique are the same vital feminist values at work in the phenomenology of feminist thinkers such as Sara Ahmed (2017), Judith Butler (1999), Kristidel McGregor (2020), and Jacqueline Martinez (2014). While Harvey's practical three-pronged approach provides a broad-stroke feminist value system toward more ethical research informed by lived experience, phenomenology is not a methodology offered in depth in their account of feminist media studies methods. Alongside feminist media studies, queer and feminist phenomenologists have articulated the possibilities and limitations of their related field toward a more relational, reflective, or diffractive research approach. Instead, they offer a phenomenology that theorizes subjectivity beyond the universal or essentialist individual and acknowledges research as ongoing entanglement in "a lived, gendered, raced, classed, positioned body encountering a world shaped by discursive and structural forces" (McGregor, 2019, p.509). I aim to articulate here what political phenomenology can offer to feminist media studies as a

complementary philosophical approach to the study of collective meaning in the lived gendered experiences of media phenomena.

As a discipline in its broadest sense, phenomenology is the study of phenomena through lived experience in the body or what early phenomenologist Edmund Husserl calls the 'living body (*Leib*)' (1982). Expanding on the work of Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) draws our attention to this process of describing one's own experiences of phenomena (of what is given) as a method for discovering the structures of experience in general. Phenomenology asks: What is essential to the experience rather than a changeable characteristic? What destroys the identity in question if not present? As a philosophical discipline rooted in the 'living body,' phenomenology moves away from Cartesian dualism toward articulating our subjective experiences, whether individual or collective, as historically situated, culture-relative and essentially embodied. However, the living body that Husserl evokes in *Ideas II* is that of his own and lacks acknowledgement of the multiplicity and difference of bodies and experiences outside what has been critiqued as a white patriarchal and masculinist universalism (Al-Saji, 2010; Sterne, 2022). While this rudimentary understanding of phenomenology in its broadest form provides an initial starting point, the work of feminist phenomenologists such as Sara Ahmed redefines phenomenology beyond its historically limiting concepts of *essence* and *living body* toward a more relational and material phenomenology that acknowledges the ongoing process of diffraction and intra-action in the study of phenomena.

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty deconstructs the embodied experience of perception for phenomenological research, noting that "the word perception indicates a direction rather than a primitive function" (1962, p.12). This attention to 'perception' as 'directed toward something' is what Sara Ahmed invites us to reconsider as 'orientation' in their queer re-orienting of phenomenology as a gendered "form of occupation" (2006, p.27), which asks "what does it mean to be orientated?" (p.1). The concept of orientation itself is a site of encounter - one that is gendered, racialized, and sexualized - across the field of phenomenology from Husserl and Merleau-Ponty to Franz Fanon and Judith Butler. It is in this revisiting of 'orientation' across phenomenology and queer studies that queer phenomenology, conceptualized as method by Ahmed, can activate "an orientation toward queer, a way of inhabiting the world by giving "support" to those

whose lives and loves make them appear oblique, strange, and out of place" (p.179). *Queer Phenomenology* provides a foundational theoretical body of work that enables us to see how our bodies are oriented in the world, encouraging us to be more aware of the rich history and differing perceptions of objects, both strange and familiar, which may cause disorientation or reorientation of the body. Disorientation additionally provides a learning opportunity to re-orient ourselves to see what was in the background, what we could not sense or experience before.

There are certain parallels between Ahmed's concept of *orientation* and Harvey's *situatedness* in their calls to critically address the embodied experiences of power relations in the study of objects, whether that object is a table (in the Husserlian sense) or a media text. However, orientation as a queer phenomenological approach takes this principle of situatedness a step further toward recognizing one's orientation in space and time that results in distinct possibilities or limitations, such as the 'orientation' of 'sexual orientation' within queer feminist soundwork. The addition of *orientation* as an important factor in a feminist ethics of care invites further reflection by the researcher on their own and their subject's orientation to the work. Additionally, it offers up a new phenomenological question to apply to the study of media: 'What does it mean to be orientated?'. A question addresses how bodies and experiences shift and change in relation to space and time. Orientation, similar to situatedness, involves temporality. Yet, orientation's relation to temporality provides a mode of thinking about situatedness beyond the present. Ahmed's concept of orientation invites us to attend to our situatedness in its bent or queered temporal experience. It invites an acceptance of the atemporal feelings involved in studying a phenomenon across many layers of time and place. Where situatedness highlights the present historical and political context in which one's research is taking place, orientation allows one to ask which temporal direction we are bending toward and how that also shapes one's situatedness. Orientation and situatedness help to highlight temporality as a critical aspect in the phenomenological study of media outside the confines of a particular historical snapshot or event. Through attending to how our living bodies perceive the world - *hear* it, *touch* it, *feel* it - feminist phenomenology for media studies acknowledges and ethically works to de-universalize experiences in and of media. This attention to the body in relation to space and time helps further articulate a philosophical approach to the study of media phenomena that

spans multiple generations and geographies, such as the case for this dissertation's subject: queer feminist soundwork.

It is important to note that Ahmed's concept of orientation provides a starting point for studying phenomena across time and space. However, it does not fully account for the role of 'lively matter' in the intra-activity and performativity of queer and feminist media networks. Poststructuralist and new materialist feminism has long called for a more holistic research approach that considers material nonhuman actors (McGregor, 2020). Drawing on Karen Barad (2003) and Judith Butler's (1988) work on performativity, Kristidel McGregor's phenomenological work applies new materialism to expand feminist phenomenology beyond the bounded body and toward a blurred and permeable selfhood. One that attends to how "all bodies, not merely 'human' bodies, come to matter through the world's iterative intra- activity—its performativity" (Barad, 2003, p. 823). This materialist idea of a 'blurred and permeable selfhood' is useful to consider when studying queer and feminist work reflexively. If feminist research is indeed reflexive and situated/oriented, then notions of identity shared by interviewees should be thought of in this way. Understandings of the self are never static but constantly unfixed and influenced by the material world. We are also material (as body). Such embodied materialist considerations encourage further iteration in this study through continued dialogue with individuals and their work and attendance to the particular social and cultural contests surrounding the research material. While my research focuses primarily on human experience, additional attention given to material phenomenology provides a way to study human intersubjectivity, material objects, and discourse as "functioning together to produce a world that is always *becoming*" (McGregor, 2019, p. 510). The feminist phenomenological concept of intersubjectivity is particularly important to this study and any feminist media studies of phenomena. Phenomenologist Jacqueline M. Martinez (2014) describes the phenomenology of communication and media as deeply intersubjective, "and as such, part and parcel of the ongoing flow of cultural meanings and historical circumstances as they directly affect the lives and relationships of people communicatively engaged" (p. 222). Phenomena cannot be understood in individualistic isolation. It is through our repeated encounters with other actors in the world, that particular identifying factors and performative elements come to be collectively understood as an intra-active phenomenon.

Feminist phenomenology practiced from a new materialist perspective, as McGregor (2019) argues, allows the researcher to position “material as active in experience” and “research as entanglement” in a larger network of the phenomena in question (p. 511-12). To better understand the ‘essence’ of queer feminist soundwork as a phenomenon, we must attend to how subjects and objects are articulated through ongoing performance and intra-action (Barad, 2007). For example, with my feminist-embodied ear oriented toward the world of soundwork, nonhuman actors - such as cassette tapes, archival materials, audio equipment, digital software tools, processing effects, radio stations, and home recording studios - are equally entangled in how we might articulate what defines a soundwork within a particular politic or culture. In attending to these intersecting dynamics of orientation and experience, what might a study of intersubjective experience and cultural construction of soundwork across multi-generations of queer radio makers reveal about the history and future of queer representation and gender politics in Canadian media? This is a key question explored throughout this work by bringing feminist and queer phenomenology into dialogue with feminist media studies and sound studies. One that brings this conversation toward further development of how we might articulate the *feminist ear* in its orientation as a reflexive approach in the study of media.

Orienting an Embodied Feminist Ear Toward Queer Soundwork

Feminist phenomenology directs us toward critical experiential questions; what is queer feminist soundwork? How is it constructed? How is it experienced? What are its characteristics? But to put a phenomenology of queer and feminist soundwork into practice, we must first outline our ear-oriented approach. What I term here as an ear-oriented feminist phenomenology is informed by a growing body of literature at the intersection of sound studies and political phenomenology. As both Voegelin (2021) and Sterne (2022) have argued, political phenomenology actively considers how one's positioning in the world shapes our embodied experiences and how that political condition (cultural, economic, geographical, ideological) "opens the world to use in different and not entirely symmetrical ways" (Voegelin, 2021, p.152). While Don Ihde (2007) is a founding voice in the phenomenology of sound, it is scholars such as Steph Ceraso (2018), Salome Voegelin (2021), Jennifer Lynn Stoeber (2016), and Dylan

Robinson (2020), which continue to push my thinking forward on the subject. In *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound* (2007), Ihde outlines a detailed phenomenological discourse for the study of sound primarily guided by his understanding and expansions of the work of Heidegger and Husserl. As a result, while significant in its contribution to sound studies and phenomenology, Ihde's approach again evokes a familiar masculinist universalizing of sonic experience. Political phenomenology refuses such traditional phenomenological absolutes and transcendental idealism. While Ihde notes "an appreciation for the richness and complexity of experience," the real-world diversity of experience across race, gender, class and more is not explored in any detail.

Additionally, Ihde's writing in *Listening and Voice* does not fully address the multisensorial aspects of studying sound, especially regarding the production and consumption of sound media. To address these gaps in Ihde's work, my approach to an ear-oriented phenomenology first draws in part from the sonic phenomenology of Salome Voegelin (2018; 2021). In their work on *Sonic Possible Worlds* (2021), Voegelin engages in a broad articulation of phenomenology for the study of sonic worlds. Particularly interested in the study of sound art and music, Voegelin's sonic phenomenology applies "sonic sensibilities," such as critical listening and composition, to artworks as alternate "sonic possible worlds" to be experienced (p.35). As Voegelin writes:

[It is] the ability to imagine and explore the lifeworld of the soundscape as an alternative world that we visit and come back from with a heightened awareness and a different sense of sound and self with which we can augment and challenge the actuality of the landscape and identity (p.35).

My approach differs from Voegelin in its particular goal of moving toward an articulation of a feminist-embodied ear that does not aim to escape the actuality of our lived experience but rather attend to the role of soundwork in shaping it. In this respect, the feminist-embodied ear attends to the mediated and constructed aspects of soundwork, but always alongside its accompanying multisensory materials from show notes to posters and platforms, with a similarly practice-based approach to the specific technologies of the form in relation to lived experience. Soundwork is not a sound-only media. Therefore, ear-oriented phenomenology should not exclude, nor *can* it exclude, the always multisensory experience of these particular sonic possible worlds.

As I demonstrate throughout the chapters to follow, soundworks' corresponding visual elements, such as show notes, newspaper listings, and the various sensorial descriptions of space and place offered by soundworkers, are critical to articulating queer feminist soundwork as a phenomenon. Since Ihde's writing on the phenomenology of sound, many sound studies scholars have proposed a more multisensory approach to the field. One such scholar is Steph Ceraso (2018), whose writing on multimodal listening has significantly contributed to applying sound-oriented pedagogical practices in rhetoric and writing composition. Ceraso's text articulates multimodal listening as "the practice of attending to the sensory, contextual, and material aspects of a sonic event" (p.6). Written with a student reader in mind, their work moves away from what Ceraso argues is an "ear-centric" single sensory engagement with sonic texts as an overcorrection to the visual and text-based bias of the humanities and social sciences. This fetishization of listening simply results in the same lack of engagement with the complex relationship between sound, bodies, and materials once used to critique exclusively visual methods (2018). While Ceraso is not specifically applying phenomenology in their work, their proposal for multimodal listening is a useful practice in ear-oriented phenomenology to question not only what is heard but how it is heard in relation to bodies, environments, and materials perhaps not present in the soundscape. Phenomenology always already privileges the senses and experimentalism, but in taking an ear-oriented approach, the researcher is encouraged to slow down, to put the ear first and listen closely to audio materials where available instead of relying solely on the faster-paced information intake of text-based works, particularly digital ones. This prioritization of sound is particularly important in the study of soundwork, where much of the aesthetic production and nuance can only be found through close listening to the original work. Unlike text, photography or film, where you can pause on a particular word or scene, soundworks require real-time and repeated listening analysis. Put simply, listening in depth requires our bodies to slow down. It can be a fatiguing process, being seated and listening closely to hours of tape. Yet this real-time engagement with soundwork encourages your eyes and other senses to wander. For example, while listening I am often taking notes and looking at photos or other materials in the archive or on a show's website. Drawing on Ceraso (2018), multimodal listening manifests in my work in this way. Through listening to particular passages of interest or significance drawn out during the research, I unpack them in more detail not only for their particular

aesthetics and production techniques but also for connections to other media, materials, and events across the queer and feminist networks each of these works is a part of.

While Voegelin and Ceraso provide an initial theory for an ear-oriented phenomenology, sound scholars Jennifer Lynn Stoever (2016) and Dylan Robinson (2020) each provide a more critical approach to the listening subject, furthering the concepts of *orientation* and *situatedness* integral to the articulation of a feminist-embodied ear. The feminist-embodied ear must first acknowledge the gendered soundscapes that radio scholar Christine Ehrick argues "contextualize sound and voice as a place where categories of 'male' and 'female' are constituted and by extension the ways that power, inequality, and agency might be expressed via sound" (2015, p.7). Just as Ehrick is interested in the role of sound and voice in the categorization of "male" and "female," we must also consider how "lesbian," "queer," and "feminist" are categorized through sound and voice. In their acclaimed work in *The Sonic Color Line*, Jennifer Stoever offers us the white patriarchal figure of 'the listening ear' to describe what is driving the processes, experiences, and products of racialized sound in American life. A sonic accomplice to Laura Mulvey's 'male gaze' theory (1975), the listening ear represents a long history of normative western listening forms of perception, producing and articulating discernment between 'whiteness' and 'blackness.' Ultimately, in a white patriarchal capitalist society, the surveilling, disciplining, interpretive listening ear decides what is "normal, natural, and right" and filters out the rest (2016, p.7).

The gendered and racialized aspects of the listening ear are similarly brought forward in Dylan Robinson's conception of hungry listening – or "settler colonial forms of perception" (2020, p.15) – which reveals how our experience of the world through what is understood as a normative listening positionality is grounded in extractivist-colonial violence. While one might assume the ear is a neutral vestige, through continued enculturation, into white settler colonialism, for example, particular listening practices become the norm whether conscious of these practices or not. In giving a name to these oppressive listening practices, Robinson invites us to reflect on hungry listening in our own practices and how we might move toward a more self-reflexive listening positionality. A reflective process I have aimed to engage with here. The feminist-embodied ear moves one step further in the spectrum of listening from unconscious repeated practices to the development of a feminist technics of listening. Although

'listening' as a technique and as an approach to scholarly inquiry can be found across a variety of notable contemporary media and cultural studies texts (see Altman, 1992; Chion, 1994, 1999; Hilmes, 1997), here I bring select discourse around the technologies and techniques of listening within cultural sound studies into conversation with larger social, cultural and political interrogations of subjectivity and identity to interrogate how listening can be conceptualized as political and participatory for feminist media studies interested in sound aesthetics and production.

Kate Lacey (2013), in *Listening Publics*, opens their introduction with a discussion of how listening has been overlooked in the conceptualization of the 'public sphere' and the study of media at large. This familiar framing of the cultural hierarchy of the senses in media studies demonstrates a prioritization of the visual, which relegates listening to a passive role in contrast to the communication technologies of speaking or writing. Although many other texts have brought 'sound' and 'listening' to the forefront of media studies prior to Lacey's publication (see Chion, 1999; Dolar, 2006; Sterne, 2003), Lacey's contribution advocates explicitly for a shift in ideologies, discourse, and political practice to locate "listening as a category that bridges both the realm of sensory, embodied experience and the political realm of debate and deliberation" (2013, p.8). Here Lacey positions listening as technology and technique which has the potential to break down central binary oppositions of public/private and active/passive, to recognize the political and social functions of sound media and sound technologies, and to re-distribute agency and power within the public sphere.

I propose that by applying Harvey's three-pronged criteria for feminist media critique in articulating the feminist-embodied ear, this importance of listening individually and with others becomes integral to establishing a richer understanding of queer feminist soundwork as a phenomenon. As Stoeber writes, "The [default] listening ear ... normalizes the aural tastes and standards of white elite masculinity as the [default and] singular way to interpret sonic information" (2016, p.13). Focusing on the soundwork practice of audio production, we can note how this listening ear drives the traditional disciplines of editing, mixing, and narrative work. There is undoubtedly an internalized industry standard of spoon-feeding ideas in podcasting because that's what people expect to hear. It's about familiarity and comfort in repetition. It's how we understand narrative in the sense of audio narrative right now; if we listen to top shows like

Invisibilia, *Serial*, and *This American Life*, that's what we've come to expect audio storytelling to sound like.²⁹ Stoever, Robinson and Lacey ask us to rethink where these listening practices come from and how we might shift our practices by becoming more aware of our sonic embodiment and experiences. To subvert the power of the white elite masculine listening ear and its colonial hungry listening, we must first become aware of complicity in our listening practices. Countering the listening ear, Stoever's "embodied ear" better represents the nuances of our individual and collective listening practices informed by class, sexuality, gender, and race. As Stoever writes, "the listening ear is far from the only form of listening" (2016, p.15). The embodied ear reminds us of the materiality and lived experience that can equally lead us to more subversive and intersectional approaches to listening. In the case of this dissertation, I orient my listening practice through a feminist-embodied ear. By applying a feminist-embodied ear throughout the interview, analysis, and writing stages, I listen out for the ways that my participants listen and incorporate their own listening practices into what makes their soundwork queer and/or feminist. As Lacey (2013) notes, a listening public is made up of listeners inhabiting a condition of plurality and intersubjectivity" (p.8). In the act of listening, the lines between public and private, subjectivity and intersubjectivity are blurred. To approach listening to media in this way becomes in Foucauldian terms a 'technology of self,' a state of political being. Speech, and more broadly sound, is always filtered through the listener's perspective. The first step to reorientating away from the default listening ear and toward a more feminist-embodied ear is acknowledging one's own *situatedness*.

The Feminist-Embodied Ear as Method: Interviews, Archives, and Reflexive Documentary

Learning to listen with a feminist-embodied ear changes what we listen for and how we create soundwork as embodied feminist producers. In fact, the embodiment of feminist listening and creating blurs what might otherwise seem to be clear lines between those roles, emphasizing the relationality of listening and audio-making as an ongoing dialogue and an evolving lesson in listening otherwise. My research applies a

²⁹ A portion of this page includes an excerpt from a forthcoming edited chapter on podcasting practice I co-authored with Hannah McGregor and Katherine McLeod. The chapter "The Kitchen Table is Always Where We Are: Podcasting as Feminist Self-Reflexive Practice" further addresses some of the key ideas on a feminist-embodied ear discussed here.

mixed-method approach by drawing on this concept of the feminist-embodied ear grounded in phenomenology, sound studies and feminist media studies. Intersectional feminism is foundational to this queer and feminist oriented phenomenological research approach to critically question which voices are present and which ones are missing from these sonic spaces (Crenshaw, 1989; Fisher, 2010). The study sites are podcasts, and radio shows labelled lesbian feminist and queer feminist. The study subjects are lesbian and queer women and gender-diverse individuals involved in producing these soundworks. Rather than focusing on a particular historical moment, particular radio show, or queer feminist individual, a multi-sited intra-active network approach to lesbian and queer feminist soundwork provides an intriguing opportunity to engage in intergenerational dialogue. As Sara Ahmed wrote, “to make things queer is certainly to disturb the order of things” (2006, p.161). Rather than follow a linear history in the archive, conducting interviews and producing an audio documentary on the process enables intergenerational dialogue to not only listen for echoes of the past in present audio media but to hear the resonance outside of and in between generations of queer feminist media production. Four methods: semi-structured interviews, listening-centred feminist textual analysis, reflexive thematic analysis and audio documentary creation bring primary archival documents of the 1970s-1990s into conversation with contemporary audio media and the experiences of the makers involved in their production toward a queer feminist intergenerational network of media activism.

Together, these four methods form an iterative framework that invites the reflexivity and situatedness that Harvey (2019) argues is key to ethical feminist media critique. Semi-structured interviews create an iterative dialogue between the researcher and the various participants within their own given social and cultural contexts. The listening-centred feminist textual analysis puts the feminist-embodied ear into practice as a technique rooted in reflexivity, attending to the researcher's positionality while focusing on the experiences and aesthetics embedded in the soundwork. Reflexive thematic analysis is the next iterative stage of analysis, drawing on the interview materials to further develop the significance of shared social and cultural experiences. Finally, audio documentary creation fosters a more creative and fluid space of reflexivity for the researcher that also invites a practice-based connection to the sound-forward technologies of soundwork.

Listening to the Archives

Archival work began before the idea for this project even existed. What started as an interest in *The Lesbian Show* collection housed at the web-based Archive of Lesbian Oral Testimony (ALOT) led to many hours spent in physical and digital archives exploring the work of past lesbian feminist and queer feminist radio makers. It also led to a feminist ethics of care in practice through digitizing hours of *Dykes on Mykes* tapes for this project, then donated to the ArQuives (formerly CLGA) along with my notes and photographs for each tape. Thirty-four cassette tapes, six reels, and one-hundred and fifteen mp3 files were made available to me by former DOMs members Deb VanSlet and Dayna McLeod for study and donation. Between their two personal collections, an intergenerational web of interviews, music, audio art, event recordings and more span from 1988 to 2011. I am eternally grateful for their openness and collaboration in sharing their queer media activism. In addition to the *Dykes on Mykes* collection, The BC Gay and Lesbian Archives at the City of Vancouver Archives and the Archive of Lesbian Oral Testimony (ALOT) were key resources in providing access to the sounds of Co-Op Radio's *The Lesbian Show*. Rounding out the initial corpus for this feminist media study are forty-four audio files (1989-1991) hosted by ALOT, and ninety-four audio files (1976-1996) along with various photographs and newspaper clippings for *The Lesbian Show* hosted by the City of Vancouver Archives. As my archival work went on, I also used the *Kinesis* open collection at the University of British Columbia for additional *The Lesbian Show* related newspaper clippings. While my research focuses on two foundational anglophone shows for this in-depth study, I also came across two francophone shows housed at Archives lesbiennes du Québec which I hope to be able to engage with in future studies. The two additional shows, *Interférences lesbiennes* and *Lesbo-sons* also stand as a reminder of the many other potential lesbian feminist shows across Canada which are not (yet) represented in any institutional or publicly accessible archives. Archives are not neutral, and as with any feminist practice, archiving must be approached with reflexivity in how histories are framed and the crucial role counterarchive spaces such as the ArQuives play in pushing back against legacies of colonialism, racism, patriarchy and heterosexism. The feminist archival work done as part of this project is a small contribution toward including sound-based lesbian feminist media in the Canadian archives. One I hope future community members and researchers can draw on for further interventions into feminist and queer history.

Semi-Structured Interviews

While the archival research stage gives foundation and historical weight to this work, the conversations with the producers and hosts involved in these soundscapes open further avenues to voices and experiences not contained by the archives. From these archival materials, I pulled the names for potential interview participants. I marked select episodes for textual analysis based on what episodes, experiences and events were brought forward during first-stage interviews. For both the first and second stage interviews, a call went out to LGBTQ+ and radio-affiliated community groups across North America for interviewees who had worked on these shows. I reached out via email to a selected of targeted interviewees with publicly available contact information online. For the first stage of semi-structured interviews, I spoke with six past members of *The Lesbian Show* and six members of *Dykes on Mykes*. In these interviews, we also listened together to short audio clips of shows from their time on air to help prompt memories and facilitate discussion on production choices. An additional radio broadcast interview I conducted with TLS founding member Silva Tenenbein in 2018 is also included as secondary data. The value of experience is central to the phenomenological approach, as argued by numerous feminist phenomenologists before me. Interviews, as the primary method in this research design, provide a rich layer of human embodied experience concerning the production and potential cultural impact of lesbian feminist and queer-focused soundwork phenomena.

After I conducted primary interviews with these radio makers, the second round of interviews was conducted with contemporary queer podcast creators found to have a community connection to one of these early shows. Criterion and chain sampling techniques (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.159) were used to identify such network connection cases that meet the criterion of being part of queer feminist soundwork with links to these early foundational radio shows in Canada such as volunteering at the same radio station or being a part of the same larger queer community in the greater Vancouver or Montreal area. The Mermaid Palace audio collective is an example of a case found through criterion and chain sampling of CKUT's *Dykes on Mykes*. *Mermaid Palace* is the new home of *The Heart* podcast (formerly known as *Audio Smut*), produced by Kaitlin Prest and produced initially at CKUT and recently relaunched with their first episode titled "Lesbian Separatism is Inevitable." In its later years, the collective has become more explicit in its queer feminist identity, with their showcase

podcasts, *The Heart* and *Asking For it* (a queer, contemporary take on the Goldilocks tale), both centring on queer and gendered subjectivities. In addition to interviews with members of *The Heart/Audio Smut*, other soundwork targeted for this study include; *Queer Public* – created by former DOMs member Erin McGregor, *Me and AU* –Andrea Klassen (BC-based) of Procyon Podcast Network, and *Warriors, Bards 'n Brews: A Xena Podcast* – hosted by Sara Gill and Chloe Krause in Vancouver, Canada. These second-stage interviews further explore participants' experiences and the two shows' influences across generations of queer media makers. Audio clips played in the stage one interviews were selected and played back for stage two participants based on similarities found during preliminary textual analysis of their work. Select episodes of the podcasts made by these participants were then further analyzed based on the themes found in the reflexive thematic analysis of all interviews.

Reflexive Thematic analysis

An interdisciplinary qualitative method used for identifying themes, reflexive thematic analysis offers an approach to code that embraces the same open and interpretive ethos of feminist phenomenology. For this project, I draw on the six-step framework for reflexive thematic analysis as outlined by Braun & Clarke (2021). Well known for their 2006 work on thematic analysis (TA) taken up by qualitative researchers across the humanities and social sciences from communication to psychology, Braun & Clarke's framework for TA provides a grounding for what they have described as "a poorly demarcated and rarely acknowledged, yet widely used qualitative analytic method" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.77). While TA is "best thought of as an umbrella term" (Braun & Clarke, 2021) for analysis through coding and theme development, paired with a phenomenological approach, TA is an ideal method for working with data such as media and interviews to derive reoccurring themes and subsequently apply those themes to articulate the essence of phenomena among participants (Jason & Glenwick, 2016). To further situate thematic analysis (TA) within Harvey's three-pronged criteria for feminist media critique, Braun & Clarke's re-examination of their early TA framework critically assesses common problems in the method toward a more deliberative and reflexive engagement with TA as a practice which they term *reflexive thematic analysis*. Outlined in six stages, Braun & Clarke's reflexive TA includes:

- 1) Data familiarization and writing familiarization notes; 2) systematic data coding; 3) generating initial themes from coded and collated data; 4)

developing and reviewing themes; 5) refining, defining and naming themes; 6) writing the report (2021, p.331).

The first transcription of each interview was completed with Sonix AI transcription service and then reviewed, edited, and listened to in real-time during the initial familiarisation and notation stage. As I completed and transcribed interviews, they were input into NVIVO data analysis software for coding. Reflexive TA does not rely on a pre-existing coding framework but instead draws on the researcher's subjective skills and situatedness within the research to interpret the data, in this case, interview transcripts into codes. Without a specific codebook, coding is a generative process requiring continued reflexivity on the researcher's part to account for bias through code review and theoretical grounding. Themes do not simply emerge but are derived through the continued review and clustering of codes throughout the analysis process. Themes were named and defined in response to the project's key phenomenological question: What is queer feminist soundwork? The results are as follows:

Table 3-1. What is queer feminist soundwork? Reflexive Thematic Analysis.

Theme	Definition
Queer Feminist Politic	Ethos and practice are grounded in the politics of queer and lesbian feminism.
Embedded in Queer Publics	Geographically and/or ideologically positioned as part of a queer community.
Punk DIY Ethos	Labelled and celebrated as raw, unedited, playful, unprofessional, and/or punk.
Intimacy, Desire, Sexuality	Embraces sex positive feminism and the communication of queer intimacy and desire.
Queer Experience Driven Content	Focuses on queer stories and perspectives.
Connected to Other Media	Positioned as part of (or in contrast to) a larger media system of newspapers, magazines, internet, television and radio.
A Balance of Serious Politics, Camp and Play	Politically grounded in queer activism and feminism articulated through 'serious' news and narrative storytelling juxtaposed with playful and campy experimentation.
Made by Queer People	Purposefully produced by collectives, groups and/or individuals who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community.
Community and Individual Identity Work	Experienced as an ongoing extension and/or laboured distillation of one's subjecthood and community identity.

Named and defined overarching themes are the final output of the reflexive thematic analysis, which provide the thematic foundation for the chapters that follow. The examples used as evidence of this theme come from the interview coding process, and the corresponding textual analysis of the particular episodes and clips discussed with study participants.

Feminist Textual analysis

In the early exploratory stages of listening through the 1980s and '90s episode archives of *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] and *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs], I could already hear parallels to the award-winning queer feminist podcast *The Heart*. The podcast was the focus of a small case study I authored in the *Podcasting: New Aural Cultures and Digital Media* collection around the same time I began exploring the Archive of Lesbian Oral Testimony's TLS collection. As a result, the choices in radio and podcast episodes did not come as one clear set before the other but instead started as a trickle of connections gradually sifted down into complementary sets through the archival, interview and listening phases. Sets and connections, deconstructed in the following chapters, form a unified thematic soundwork collection of community radio shows and podcast episodes that echo one another through their genre, aesthetic, and story choices. Together in dialogue, they work to exemplify the essence of experience at the heart of queer feminist soundwork found in the reflexive thematic analysis.

Feminist textual analysis is applied to break down and analyze the production choices within the selected works and their elements of format, form and genre. A method well established in media studies, feminist textual analysis consists of close reading, or in this case, close listening, to how particular media objects communicate gender and sexuality (Harvey, 2019, p. 39-40). Such an approach pairs well with phenomenology and Harvey's feminist ethics of care by situating the researcher as an embodied actor in the meaning-making of the phenomena in question. Semiotics is applied to interpret how the signs and sign processes exemplify the key themes of the media. As a study which additionally draws on queer theory in conversation with the queer politics of this work, I conduct textual analysis with a question in mind of how these shows are creating alternative modes of cultural production which go against conventional norms through play and experimentation within their chosen form. As Alexander Doty writes, queer textual analyses are only considered 'alternative' if we approach understandings of

meaning "within conventional heterocentrist paradigms" (1993, p.xiv). By bringing textual analysis into conversation with a queer-oriented feminist phenomenological approach to listening, this study engages in the study of media and the interpretation of meaning-making in media beyond the singular notion of queer identity and into understandings of production, experience and networks across the varied temporal and spatial contexts of queer feminist soundwork.

Feminist Care or Catharsis? On Audio Diaries as Reflexive Method

The final method used in this research design is the ongoing reflexive and cathartic practice of audio documentary creation. The intention of creative documentary production as a method is to have a reflexive document of the process of uncovering these lesbian and queer women's audio media histories and connections. Rather than the documentary as a creative output, it is positioned here as a reflexive process-based mode of researcher notation and diary keeping. From Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) to Roxane Gay's *Bad Feminist* (2014), the confessional self-reflexivity of feminist creators has long blurred the boundaries between private and public subjecthood, as well as the division between subjective experience and objective knowledge. At the centre of this feminist work is ongoing attention to how the lived experiences of feminist researchers, activists, artists and communities can continually build, break down and re-build the very politics of feminism. Whether recording audio diaries, crafting audio essays or interviewing feminist thinkers, audio production positioned within the history of feminist self-reflexive practice is a process of feminist sonic 'place-making' (Cante, 2015) or what Sara Ahmed has called 'feminist world making' (2017). Audio diaries provide a place-based reflexive and cathartic mode of research documentation which assist in situating the researcher within an aural-centric subjective world. I argue that such an approach allows for a more equitable and *care*-ful exploration of the perceived use and function of the technologies, voices, sounds, and spaces that construct our cultural understandings of audio media phenomena.

The audio diaries recorded throughout each research stage are an affective audio media archive of my experience listening to lesbian and queer feminist voices as a queer lesbian radio producer, including reflections and findings along the way. Audio diaries

can be personal, contextual, and gritty. Diary entries were recorded before and after each interview, and at key moments in the research process. Interview-related recordings were primarily done in my home office, but other entries vary in location whenever thoughts or events occur. Whether that's in my living room or a taxi on my way to take the tapes I just digitized to the archive, audio diaries provide the place-based context to provide a better sense of where I'm coming from as a researcher. This context is evoked not only through what I'm saying but also in the sense of hearing where I am physically and what I'm going through in the process of creating this work. For me, it's been a really cathartic experience.

There's a certain catharsis in self-reflexive practice, in the kinds of pains, failures, and successes that we go through in creating these works. Audio diaries, as a sound-oriented style of feminist self-reflexivity, provide a dialogic space to grapple with the political and emotional process of studying marginalized, counterculture, and activist communities. Those are processes we need to hear more of in critical humanities research. In this spirit, select audio clips are noted throughout this work and listed in Appendix A. Take, for example, the audio diary clip shared under Appendix A Audio A4. This audio is taken from my post-interview diary entry following my participant interview with former *The Heart* audio producer Mitra Kaboli. In the clip, you hear me describe some initial thoughts on the importance of community radio and the continued hope for a better future that drives Mitra's work. During the interview, we commiserated about their frustrations with the podcast industry at large and listened back to early '90s clips of *Dykes on Mykes* from the same community station they once volunteered at. Holding this kind of space for interviewees, in one sense, brings me such joy and gratefulness, but it can also be very emotionally wearing on my own sense of self and my relationship with the audio industry where I also work. Yes, it's a cathartic space for me to unpack my experience, but it's also a space to reflect on my biases, on not-so-great interview moments, and on what ideas and practices I might want to improve on to represent my participants in the project at large more equitably. By recording these moments, I can also return to them later as additional research materials to see if my initial commentary on key themes post-interview differed at all from listening back or reading through the transcription months later. Again, this ear-oriented process asks us to slow down, resist the speed of "hungry" information processing techniques and take the time to

understand what preconceptions and experiences we, as researchers, are bringing to the work.

Audio diary as a mode of documentation also helped to shape the personal phenomenological introductions to each chapter by allowing me to listen back to my own affective experience and connection to the process in the moment. As Makagon and Neumann (2009) argue, "through sound recordings, researchers can cultivate a different, sometimes deeper, sense of an environment" (p.26). In this case, an environment of experience with queer feminist soundwork. Ultimately, the construction of audio diaries works to maintain the human experience of academic endeavours and media production at the centre of this research design. As a form of audio storytelling, it is closely connected to the kind of work ethnographers do in the field, such as interviewing, observing and engaging in the lifeworlds of their participants (Makagon & Neumann, 2009, pp. 43-44). In the case of this particular research design, the audio documentary process becomes a secondary mode of data collection for future use, which draws more closely on the researcher's participation with the object of study at large. By acknowledging the researcher's role in the research, the documentary process also asks the researcher to continuously acknowledge their potential bias and any divergences concerning their connection and experiences during the research process, from archival research to interviews, to the formation of claims and research findings. While the audio documentary is not a research output of this dissertation, I aim to bring the voices of my participants and their work to the public through a documentary for broadcast following dissertation completion. Informed by this scholarship and the key themes explored, I hope the documentary will also stand apart as a mode of knowledge mobilization for a broader public - an invitation to listeners to hear things a bit differently.

While my audio diary practice works to provide a space of creative reflexivity and situatedness, it is the mixed method approach as a whole which provide the framework this study requires to ethically attend to the complexities of queer feminist soundwork as a phenomenon. This three-pronged approach to feminist media critique (Harvey, 2019) invites the researcher to reflexively attend to the gaps, biases, and limits of academic work. We can never know the complete picture of queer feminist soundwork as a phenomenon. Just as the self is "blurred and permeable" (McGregor, 2019), so too is the consensus of meaning around what makes a soundwork queer or feminist. Still, these

voices draw us backwards in search of missing pieces, and missing people made marginal, possibly ourselves, too. Political phenomenology, taken up as an ear-oriented queer feminist practice, allows for lived experiences drawn from interviews, recordings and various shattered pieces found in the archives to shape our understanding of the phenomenon in question. Pushing back against universalizing individualist approaches to phenomenology, the voices and subjective experiences of fellow queer soundworkers in podcasting and community radio provide an intersubjective ground for the themes and connection made between queer feminist soundwork past and present. These subjective experiences of voice and sound take centre stage in our next chapter. How are queer feminist politics experienced through listening and producing soundwork? What is the role of a soundwork's form, format, and other stylistic techno-logics in communicating queer feminisms? The feminist-embodied ear tunes in with questions of sonic subjectivity and audibility activism.

Chapter 4.

Being a Public Queer: On Sonic (inter)Subjectivity and Audibility Activism

Picture a hot summer evening in Montreal 1991, 7 pm on a Monday to be exact. Deep in the downtown student centre basement of McGill University, the radio fuzz of kissing, chanting, and laughing queers is being broadcast at CKUT 91.7FM. These sounds are an opening collage, a series of recordings from a kiss-in event that day commemorating the local Sex Garage Raid of July 15th, 1990. The Sex Garage Raid, much like other notable police raids on LGBTQ+ spaces past and present, shook Canada's queer community as police instigated gratuitous violence and arrested numerous people. The collage music fades. Hosts Deb VanSlet and Elizabeth Littlejohn ready their microphones. You are listening to *Dykes on Mykes*. Meanwhile, on the opposite coast of Canada, we hear the lavender reverberations of *Dykes on Mykes* in the airwaves of Vancouver's Co-Op Radio located on the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. Aptly named *The Lesbian Show*, this weekly magazine-style show began broadcasting in 1979 to make media "by lesbians, about lesbians, for lesbians" (Hughes, Johnson & Perreault, 1984). It's unlikely Deb or Elizabeth thought I'd be meeting with queer and feminist podcasters over video chat thirty years later to talk about their radio show. Let alone we'd listen to this very same clip of Sapphic protest broadcast that one fateful summer's eve. While decades have passed since Deb introduced their collage on the CKUT mic, echoes of the show's sonic queer politics and desire reverberate into contemporary practices for many queer audio producers. Whether previously aware of these shows' histories or not, listening back evokes a revelatory experience in the sensing of queer history, or as queer feminist Gayle Rubin puts it, "the more I explore these queer knowledges, the more I find out how much we have already forgotten, rediscovered, and promptly forgotten again" (2012, p.347).³⁰

Fast-forward sixteen years later to July 23rd, 2007. The *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] iconic, and for many years mysterious, opening theme clocks in at the 7 o'clock hour. The

³⁰ This opening scene is an excerpt from a forthcoming edited chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of Radio Studies*, editors Michele Hilmes and Andrew Bottomley.

theme is an unexpected dance mix of the second washerwomen's chorus from the Italian opera *La Gatta Cenerentola*, based on the classic story of Cinderella. This choral ditty is no soft romance story, however. It is a collectively imagined sexually charged encounter with the King in which the opera choir sing-shout in Italian, "You're the queen and I'm the king... Yess! Yess! Yess!". The washerwomen create a slapping rhythm of metal buckets and rags to accompany their erotic labouring tale. An odd choice of theme song on first listen if you know the context.

I'm not sure any DOMs members desired to be Cinderella. Nevertheless, these rowdy chants of working women, in this opera turned 80's dance hit of the Montreal club scene, is a fitting sonic extension of the same collective women's power spirit and sweat equity at the heart of DOMs long-standing survival. As the washerwomen's bucket drums fade, *Dykes on Mykes* host Dayna McLeod takes to the mic. Alongside their co-host for the day Jackie Gallant, of electro-rock/queercore music act *Lesbians on Ecstasy*, Dayna begins with some banter on what they've been up to this week and what we can expect to hear on today's show. Following introductions to the guests and members in the studio, Dayna cues up a special recording from the "archives", or as Dayna puts it "plastic bag of tapes that Deb VanSlet gave us". The chanting featured is from the original protest in 1990. At the mention of the music which wells underneath, Dayna shares, "first I thought, oh, it's cheesy, but I kind of got a bit teary when it got to the main part of the music, because I just kind of started thinking about all the people that I know that have been victims of violence. And I would encourage you to take a little moment as well" (2007). This special recording is the same Sex Garage Raid collage that first aired on *Dykes on Mykes* that hot Montreal summer evening in 1991. Listen along to the 2007 clip in question in Appendix A, Audio A5.

We once again hear the voices of Deb and Elizabeth set to that oh-so-familiar lo-fi studio hum and tape hiss pulling us backward to 1991. Deb and Elizabeth discuss the protest events after the raid, including a large passive sit-in outside police station 25, which, despite the peaceful action, resulted in billy sticks being used for bruising and dragging away protesters. Deb notes how lesbian and gay groups came together despite their issues of infighting and difference because "there are bigger things to slay than each other". Elizabeth points out the continued police brutality against the lesbian and gay communities but also against racialized groups, Black and Indigenous communities that

"we must stand in solidarity with". At this point, the playback stops, and we are brought back into 2007 with host Dayna McLeod to talk events for Montreal's LGBTQ+ Pride live over CKUT's airwaves.

In 1995, CKUT moved out of the basement of the Shatner Building and to their still current home at 2647 University on the McGill campus. While *Dykes on Mykes* may have moved out of the underground, the form and feel of the show sustained. The 1991 and 2007 recordings sound uncannily familiar. Whether or not that familiarity might come off "cheesy" at first, as Dayna McLeod notes above, these sounds of queer feminist soundwork evoke a sonic intersubjectivity, a queer kinship extended across time and space, from 1991 to 2007, and you and me, here and now. This chapter works to recover how the queer kinship and queer public politic experienced through listening and producing soundwork is dependent upon and at odds with the form, format, and stylistic techno-logics of broadcast radio and podcasting. In questioning the what and how of queer feminist radio and podcast communications, this chapter articulates the tensions and possibilities of soundwork as a constructed mode of sounding out queerness in public through its use of queer temporality, transgenerational kinship, and *wounded* versus *utopic* narratives. To enact this phenomenological study across its varied decades and spaces, the experiences of soundworkers from *Dykes on Mykes* and *The Lesbian Show* take centre stage to reflect back on being a public queer from 1979 to 2012. Their shared experiences are then discussed with the contemporary work of *Queer Public's* "Atlanta" series (2019). You can listen along to *Queer Public's* "Atlanta" series in Appendix A, Audio A6 and A7.

Soundwork comes in various formats and styles, but all rely on the three key aspects of the audio narrative toolbox – music, speech, and noise- to create meaningful sonic constructions that speak to and often for specific publics (Hilmes, 2013). Whether that public is a nation, a niche podcast listenership, or the lesbian feminist community of 1991 Montreal, soundwork draws on programming techniques of selection, sequencing, and processing in their production. Selection is typically the process of choosing particular audio clips from interviews or other sound materials based on the focus and format of the program. Once clips are selected, producers plan out their sequence to be executed live in the studio or ingested into an audio editing software for processing, editing and playback. Processing techniques such as compression, equalization (EQ), reverb, and delay (among many others) shape the work's sound design and aesthetic

style. These established sonic and storytelling techniques differ based on genres and styles, such as audio documentaries, interview chat shows, investigative journalism, true crime, and fictional works such as comedy or drama. Where an interview chat show might choose to keep vocal processing to compression and EQ to achieve clarity and balance, an audio fiction may instead choose to play with processing techniques of reverb or delay to suggest changes in space or time within a story.

These genres and styles of soundwork are not exclusive to the form but blend and transform in similar ways across television, film, music, and new media. While there are many genres and styles we could first turn our ear towards, the magazine-style radio format of *Dykes on Mykes* and *The Lesbian Show* provides a rich ground for studying soundworks elements broken down into their component parts. The magazine-style show is a well-known format still commonly heard on public radio from CBC radio's *The Current* or *As it Happens* and NPR's flagship show *All Things Considered*. It typically features a mix of interviews, news, and events listings and/or coverage interwoven with music and host banter set to a specific period of time, often a half-hour or hour timeslot in a radio programming schedule. There is typically a theme song and host introduction to open the broadcast, alerting listeners to the particular show they are tuning in to. This practice is also commonplace in talk, documentary, and other narrative format podcasts despite their smartphone or screen platform visual medium to indicate the name and show description. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this magazine format draws on the familiar structure of the paper magazine medium. In some cases, even down to having the event listings or 'classifieds' at the end or back of the assembled form. With a history going back to the 1700s,³¹ the magazine structure provides certain format predictability to its audience. The magazine-style radio show, occasionally categorized as talk-variety and news-talk dependent on the show's tone, has been a long-time radio staple from the 1920s onwards, taking up topics of public affairs, religion, women's homemaker, and more (Munson, 1993, p.26). However, it is not simply the magazine radio structure that is of interest here. In the case of lesbian feminist radio, what is curious is how this predictability allows for some sense of comfort amongst the often-political news and contrasting playful queer material within the shows' varied segments. A familiarity which

³¹ According to Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan, "the first self-described magazine was the Gentleman's Magazine: or Trader's Monthly Intelligencer founded in 1731, which offered a news digest of events" in London, England. (Keywords in News and Journalism Studies, 2010, p.72)

allows any adept radio listener, whether familiar with the show or not, to understand when they might expect the feature interview or event listings in the flow of the show's hour. Moreover, there is a curious dissonance between the normalizing structure of the magazine format concerning the two shows' audible gender and sexuality activisms. Both *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] and *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] were first, and foremost visibility (or audibility) projects working to create recognition and build community through radio. Despite soundworks shifting distribution from broadcast to podcast, this dissonance between radical content and familiar format creates a queer listening experience traceable across all forms of queer feminist soundwork. An affective experience we will unpack here through the ways soundworkers behind DOMs, TLS and contemporary podcasts operationalize these techno-logics in their roles as public queers through what I term here as sonic (inter)subjectivity.

Sonic (inter)Subjectivity in Soundwork

'Sonic subjectivity' in its broadest sense (*or sensing*) is the sounding of the self. It can encompass acoustics and electroacoustics, including our body sounds (e.g. vocalizations, body movements) and sonic cultural representations (e.g. music, soundscapes, sound media), which are understood by the subject as an extension of their subjecthood. When given a choice to select what sounds represent or extend your sense of subjective self, what would you choose? You might first think of your voice in its varied and complex forms. Alternatively, you might think of a favourite song that brings you joy or perhaps one that always makes you feel sexy. Maybe that sound is a recording of your lover's laugh or the sarcastic commentary of your favourite tv personality. Furthermore, how might you sequence or process these sounds to articulate your subjective experience? And how is sonic subjectivity different from identity? Moving beyond the individual and descriptive toward the critical and subjective, these sounds are 'sticky' with affect and memory.

In contrast to identity, the subject, or subjective self, underlines one's relationship to power and agency, past and present. As a result, *subjectivity* emphasizes our perception and experience of the world. Judith Butler writes, "No individual becomes a subject without first becoming subjected" (1997, p.10-11). Sonic *subjectivity* is chosen instead of *identity* to describe this phenomenon following the work of gender scholars such as

Karuna Chandrashekar and Shraddha Chatterjee (2019). While many of my participants used 'identity' as a term of reference in our discussions, they also challenged it as limiting their multifaceted relationship within and toward their soundwork. A former host of *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] in the show's later years agreed that DOMs episodes they hosted "definitely came across" as part of their identity because "identity is caught up in" everything they do but "it is forever changing" (Herrick, 2020). At the same time, this personal connection to the work is entangled in communicating with and for a broader imagined community with shared understandings and resonances with your subjecthood. Identity is haunted by an illusion of wholeness, presumption, and stasis, preventing the phenomenological study of shared experience across diverse individuals. Identity can limit a subject's relation to or fit within an identity leading to fruitless questions of "am I queer enough?" or "am I lesbian enough?" or "am I radical enough?" (Chandrashekar & Chatterjee, 2019, p.117). This line of questioning is a form of 'virtue signalling' limiting our ability to focus on the varied ways individuals emerge into collective relations. I move away from identity and toward subjectivity to contend with the dynamic and often fragmented experiences across the many individuals who identify, once identified, or might in the future identify as 'lesbian,' 'queer,' or 'feminist.'

Soundwork can be an extension of self, but it is also a sonic intersubjective mode of communication. As DOMs soundworker Mel Hogan explains, "*Dykes on Mykes* was just kind of an extension of that world where you just are totally free of really straight people to kind of deal with and have to explain yourself to, you know?" (Hogan & MacPhee, 2020). The "world" Hogan is speaking of is a queer feminist community made up of events, concerts, bands, activists, protests, and spaces that construct Hogan's understanding of what it was to be 'gay' in Montreal during the 2000s. In the same conversation, Hogan's collective member M-C MacPhee states, "we were *Dykes on Mykes*. We really tried to stay true to that [lesbian feminism] as best we could, even if our own politics were moving away from that [...] it was really important for us to support our community" (2020). These experiences shared by Mel and M-C allow us to position soundwork not only as an extension of individual subjectivity but as part of a larger collective understanding of the world and one's political agency within it. Mel's recounts of a critical listening back to their work speak to their own feminist-embodied ear in practice. For Mel, queer politics requires a feminist-embodied ear to continuously be reflexively listening to what sounds are being selected while also applying those

reflections to how they produce the show. As a queer feminist soundwork, *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] is made up of a variety of sounds from music to voice to sound art, and it is also made by so many different embodied subjects bringing with them their own subjective experiences of what it means to be queer or lesbian or feminist for a DOMs listenership. In one sense, soundwork becomes a mediation of sonic intersubjectivity among community within the particular context of a radio broadcast. In another, as recorded media shared online, it reaches far beyond its original intended community and out toward listeners across different moments in time and culture to resonate with. By attending to soundwork's role in sonic (inter)subjectivity rather than identity, we can better deconstruct the particular sounds and practices and the nuanced differences that produce collective understandings of queer feminist soundwork.

With a fundamental cultural and technological understanding of sonic subjectivity, we now dig deeper into its theoretical foundations. The theory of 'sonic subjectivity' follows the phenomenological traditions of Merleau-Ponty and Sara Ahmed in positing 'subjectivity' not as an "I think" but rather an embodied "I can" (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p.159). The subject then becomes a 'knowing-body' that acts and/or expresses their particular experience of and existence in the world. Take my voice, for example. My voice is an extension of my subjective self as an anglo-tongued white queer cisgender woman at present. I come to know this not simply through sonic identifiers and language in my voice but how I experience and perceive those sounds in the world. In this sense, the voice is a sounding out of my subjectivity only when I perceive it as such. The meaning of the voice, whether mediated through the body or audio recording technology, is always filtered by the subjective ear. Approaching the relationship between sound and self through subjectivity allows us to think of mediated sounds similarly. A favourite song or a lover's whisper can still be perceived as a sounding of self because of its resonance with our subjectivity. We hear a song and connect it to a particular memory or feeling or perhaps a collection of memories and feelings. Within the context of communication and media, sonic subjectivity opens further avenues into the exploration of sound as intersubjective. In acknowledging our sonic subjectivity, we can also attend to how we sound out our sonic subjectivity with and for others. We can term this sonic intersubjectivity. My sonic subjectivity as an individual subject who perceives themselves as a lesbian and queer feminist comes in part from my awareness of my vocal characteristics. However, it becomes further established through how those

characteristics are communicated and received by others, for example, via killjoy remarks at the annual family thanksgiving. Additionally, I would argue that as a queer feminist soundworker myself, my sense of self as a lesbian queer feminist is also shaped by my subjective resonances with the sounds of others and, in turn, the sounds I can and choose to mediate back out to the world as a public queer. This sonic intersubjective experience shapes what sounds are and are not audible as signifying a particular community or identity and the modes of production used to communicate these signals with and as part of a listening public.

Audible Exclusions: Sonic Whiteness and Trans Politics

Suppose sounds of self, our sonic subjectivity, is ultimately contingent on its relationship to the sounds and subjecthood of others. In that case, we must attend to both the resonances *and* the audible exclusions heard in the study of soundwork. As noted in Chapter 2, queer feminism has grown from a long history of intersectional feminism among Black feminists and lesbian feminists alike (Kang, Lessard, Heston & Nordmarken, 2017). Alongside acknowledged queer feminist histories of trans exclusion and whiteness, there are also stories of critical intersectional work taking place to 'call out' or 'call in' community members for their racism, homophobia, and other expressions of oppression. Within the frame of sonic subjectivity, intersectional feminism is not simply about identity intersections or representation but also about addressing the sonic infrastructures and practices which uphold racism, sexism, and heteronormativity. In conversation with Mel Hogan and M-C MacPhee of *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs], they paint an image of a queer utopia of community love and acceptance. Mel shares, "I feel like I learned so much just like this deep love for other people, complete and utter acceptance of people. I learned through the queer community that you do not body shame. You do not talk shit about people. I don't know how those rules came to be other than by people like coming together at different events and modelling that for each other" (2020). What Mel explains as a "softer" activism can certainly be heard in the playful host banter and the variety of guests brought on to the show to contrast what Mel say as a more "brutal kind of activism" in certain university and activist spaces "where if you didn't know, or know things thoroughly, you were shamed. *Dykes on Mykes* was softer" (2020). This softer, inclusive, and playful community-centred approach of DOMs brought guests from various classes, races, abilities and gendered experiences. Notable guests such as

feminist pornographer Annie Sprinkle and members of Canadian electropop band Lesbians on Ecstasy would visit or call in on numerous occasions providing a rich sonic intersubjectivity to the world of Dykes on Mykes but also contributing to the same predominance of whiteness that DOMs and other queer feminist media were attempting to push back against.

This is not to downplay the show's significant contributions through showcasing the work of queers of colour and Black feminists and the in-depth dialogues around the importance of race politics in queer feminist activism. In applying my own feminist-embodied ear to the DOMs archives, I found resonance in the voices of Black artists like Awilda Rodrigues Lora, and singer-songwriter Nairobi Nelson of the famed National Film Board documentary *Forbidden Love: The Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives*. While efforts to bring women of colour and trans perspectives to the show were perceived as crucial to the show's queer feminist politic, in practice, the hosts often found their guests being "friends or friends of friends, a lot of them are white for sure" (M-C in Hogan & MacPhee, 2020). Interviewed together, Mel expands on M-C's words, sharing, "we were always hyper-aware that like that didn't quite cut it. We would spend 90 percent of our energy finding the one guest, the one interview that would just be so outside of our bubble, a different sort of take. I would say we fizzled out and burnt out. What appealed to us was actually sort-of impossible on a non-funded [show] with full time jobs/school. Like we couldn't make our politics actually come true" (2020). The utopic vision of queer feminism Mel and M-C strived to make a reality for *Dykes on Mykes* was achieved in some respects but squashed in others by the same intersubjectivity that gave the show its DIY community feel. Despite the show's physical location within a community radio station with diverse groups of volunteers, the primarily white DOMs team during the time Mel and M-C were on air reflected the predominantly white queer community in Montreal in which they found themselves embedded. Through their sonic subjectivities communicated through voice, music and sound, as white queers, the DOMs team, despite best efforts, found themselves upholding to the listener what Lisa Nakamura (2002) calls 'default whiteness,' where all users are assumed to represent the dominant (sex, race, class, etc.) until communicated otherwise. In the case of DOMs, the white sonic subjectivities of their volunteer team became a sounding of 'default whiteness' for queer feminism. How might the show have sounded *differently* had the show found more queers of colour orienting towards it?

Whether face-to-face or through the techno-logics of soundwork, intersubjectivity, or 'how subjects come into being relationally,' offers a way to study and articulate how individuals orient themselves collectively toward particular identity markers through praxis and politics. Orientation, then, is not an identity but the pull toward relations, Relations with others and relations with things such as media and objects which carry or extend these intersubjective connections. Lesbian feminism and, I argue here, queer feminism are only an orientation in the terms set forward by Sara Ahmed (2006), in which orientation is about the acts, people, relations and proximities we invest ourselves in. If we then orient ourselves toward lesbian feminism rather than applying it as an identity 'lesbian feminist,' we can better reveal the tensions, the 'disorientation' in trying to distill queer feminist politics into a singular experience. Ahmed writes, "to inhabit any place is a dynamic negotiation between the familiar and the unfamiliar" (Ahmed, 2006, p.8). The 'default whiteness' of the queer feminists sounded through *Dykes on Mykes* is not the same as articulating queer feminism as white. By attending to how soundworkers orient themselves to and within their work, we can come to grapple with the audible exclusions candidly heard through listening back. Moreover, in listening back, perhaps in the discomfort and frustration of *not* hearing what you aspire to hear in a queer feminist utopia, we can begin to address the reasons behind that silence.

The topic of audible exclusions came up with almost all of the soundworkers behind this study without direct prompts or questions on whiteness, ableism, or trans politics on my part as the researcher. In the world of community radio, sentiments on the limits of networks and volunteer labour were abundant, questioning the particular level of privilege required to have the freedom to volunteer at a community radio station or produce a podcast, let alone to focus on queer or lesbian activism and presentation over other activist-oriented shows on Indigenous rights, trans rights, Black culture, or environmental justice. Privilege is an energy-saving device (Ahmed, 2019, p.308). There is an amount of privilege needed to have the energy and time to take on the labour of community radio or any type of queer feminist or lesbian activism in this context. While on the one hand the sustained existence of queer feminist soundwork pushes back against the dominance of heterosexual patriarchy on the mic, on the other hand, it also creates disorienting experiences of listening and sounding for lesbians and queers that don't fit the 'default' mode.

Audible exclusion is an experience shared by many of the soundworkers I spoke with, including former host of *The Lesbian Show*, Eirene Cloma. Like many of the soundworkers involved in DOMs and TLS, Eirene engaged in activist and queer community beyond lesbian community radio, shaping the sonic subjectivity they brought to the show. Eirene is an army veteran who joined Vancouver Co-Op Radio because they "wanted to channel my energy into something community-oriented," Eirene shared, "I gravitated a lot towards media, alternative media, and wanted to learn more about grassroots organizing, and felt like radio was a great way to find a place for that" (2020). A Polaris Canadian Music Prize nominated kulintang musician in queer Filipino diaspora quintet *Pantayo*, Eirene's interest in queer and feminist music translated into the music choices brought to *The Lesbian Show* during their year on air in 2010-2011. *The Lesbian Show* for Eirene was about:

Creating space for queer folks to produce their own [and] queer lesbian women to create their own content [...] queering radio in itself [by] featuring lesbian and queer women artists, women activists, authors, spoken word artists. Dani [co-host] was big on playing The Gossip, I would try to play like some spoken word stuff like Meshell Ndegeocello. We would try to focus on local bands, I really loved was they were called Neptune at Night, and I think Queer as Funk may have just been getting started too. Dani [also] introduced me to a mixtape called I think it was called Lesbian Soup, [a] '70s feminist mixtape (2020).

My time spent in conversation with Eirene was full of shared sonic subjective resonances found in queer and lesbian music popular during the early 2010s. Both in our twenties at the time, we shared in the queer/lesbian bar scene soundscapes of Toronto and Vancouver, Canada. Queer party soundscapes curated by electropop DJs events with names like 'Lick' burst by the shattered glass of too-full gin & tonics. "Yeah! Lick!" echoed Eirene. I can still hear the slurred renditions of Lady Gaga's "Born This Way" guiding me out to the street as the venue lights come on, signalling a reluctant chorus of shuffling Doc Martens and kitten heels toward the sobering light of day. However, among the reminiscing of our 'queer youth,' what Eirene brought forward as most significant to their about *The Lesbian Show* was the opportunity to spend time with co-host Dani [Danielle] Macdonell. Eirene shared, "I think the most significant part of *The Lesbian Show* was meeting Dani because she had also transitioned later [in life]. The intergenerational interaction [with] Dani being like an older trans lesbian woman. I was kind of like, you know, baby Dyke *L Word* lesbian, twenty-one, twenty-two. And Dani was at the time in her late 40s" (2020). Eirene shared the "different perspective" Dani brought

to *The Lesbian Show* as an older trans lesbian with a long history of grassroots activism and arts organizing in East Vancouver. Dani was involved in queer media activism both as a trans lesbian and pre-transition writing for Vancouver's *Angles* magazine, organizing with the Vancouver Gay Community Centre (now known as Qmunity), teaching in the Kink/BDSM community, volunteering with Co-Op Radio's *The Coming Out Show*, and on the board for the Vancouver Dyke March. Hearing about Dani's impact on Eirene during their time together on *The Lesbian Show* [TLS], I began searching for traces of Dani in the TLS archives, yet Dani is nowhere to be heard.

This deafening silence in *The Lesbian Show* archives from 1999 onwards leaves me wanting for the free flow 'personal anecdotes' Eirene describes Dani sharing on air: "I remember one show she was reading a calendar of events, and there was a party that was like an homage to the hanky codes, and she listed all the hanky codes from the top of her head" (2020). Without Dani's sonic subjectivity in the TLS archives, I turned to search the wild west of the web for glimpses of Dani's subjectivity around the time Eirene shared the mic with them at Co-Op Radio's Downtown Eastside studio. An article in the Langara College student paper in 2013 shows a quarter-page photo of women's studies student Danielle Macdonell looking unimpressed alongside a headline reading "Is Langara really a tolerant place? Transgendered student targeted by campus security" (Akdogan, 2013). Dani recounts being followed by a male campus security officer into the washroom even after explaining she was indeed a student and a woman: "Macdonell feels if she was not a transgendered woman it would instantly be a harassment case" writes the *Langara Voice*. I begin to wonder if Dani left *The Lesbian Show* to take up their studies at Langara. Again, the name Danielle Macdonell emerges speaking out during a Vancouver Park Board motion "aimed at creating more inclusive spaces for trans and gender-variant communities" (Cole, 2013). "I have a recreation pass—I've had one for four or five years," Macdonell states. "I've never used it—I'm afraid of using it. I'm terrified to go to the gym; I'm terrified to go to the public pool" (Cole, 2013). Did Dani share experiences like this on *The Lesbian Show*? What was their experience as a trans lesbian stepping into the show's sonic intersubjectivity saturated with the radial lesbian feminism of the 1970s? Did they feel oriented in the radio studio once filled with the sonic dust of their past self and other queer kin? Or perhaps a discomfort or disorientation in their soundings against the sonic presence

and potential imagined listenership of trans exclusionary radical "feminists"³²? While Dani's sonic subjectivity is missing in its recorded form from the TLS archives, Eirene gives us a hint about Dani's experience through an email Dani shared between them:

There is one email, where Dani talks about stepping down from the show. And, you know, she had expressed that she wasn't sure if her voice as a transgender woman was necessarily reflective of what the show is about. Which I thought was interesting [*read as surprising from Eirene's tone*] and maybe at the time I just didn't clue in to like trends of gender nonconforming, non-binary, non-binariness back then. I think with her being on the radio and like having a deeper voice, I think there probably was some pushback where people were wondering, 'well, why is this voice on air?' So I recognise how there was probably transphobia, or that internalised transphobia on her part of being on air, because of her and her voice specifically (2020).

Significant attention has been given to 'voice' within communication and media studies as both a politically coded metaphor of the written word or creative works and as a material sounding of the body. In both cases, the voice is inextricably tied up with concepts of democracy, social equity, and identity (Macnamara, 2016). Vocalization and the act of listening to transgender voice, as is the case with any voice, are embodied processes bound up in "distinct histories" and "positions" of subjectivity (Ciszek et al., 2021). While trans historians such as Susan Stryker (2008) have highlighted the vital roles of trans people in gay and lesbian rights movements, trans voices like that of Dani have long been excluded from 'mainstream' queer media activist histories. In their work on trans cinema, Laura Horak (2018) outlines the shift we've seen in media studies over the past two decades toward the development of transgender studies into a discipline of its own that "acknowledges trans people as speaking subjects rather than objects to be studied." Still, much academic work on trans voices in the media draws little attention to the embodied experiences of trans soundworkers in the radio and podcasting space (Felton, 2022). Listening to the radio comes with a certain expectation of what voice you might hear on a given station or show. Similar to the sonic experience media theorist Cait McKinney describes regarding lesbian information telephone hotlines (2020),

³² I have placed 'feminist' in quotes here because I do not think anyone should be able to call themselves a feminist if their feminism is trans-exclusionary. While I have yet to come across in-depth discussions of trans politics in *The Lesbian Show* archives, trans-inclusive or exclusive, Vancouver Co-Op Radio does have a history of transphobic activity related to the presence of trans-exclusionary radical feminist Meghan Murphy. Murphy was involved with Co-Op Radio's feminist show *The F Word* from 2010-2012 before launching their online magazine and podcast *Feminist Current*.

"hearing a disembodied but emotive voice at a distance, through a speaker, engenders affective ties to the person speaking, but the pleasure of this intimacy depends on hearing a voice one expects" (p.42). In McKinney's recount of the intimate telephone hotline, we find another example of sonic intersubjectivity at play, similar to the sonic relations of radio. While the voice is received as 'disembodied' over the telephone, it is assumed by the listener that there is a lesbian body extended outward to make that community connection. The listener might envision a particular lesbian body based on the sound of the voice, their interactions, or their presumption of what a lesbian 'is.' Unlike hotlines, radio shows share information without the listeners having to speak back. This one-to-many format allows for a level of anonymity and a wider range of listeners to "listen in" from outside the lesbian feminist community. In one sense, the broadcast format invites an imagined community and sonic intimacy between the broadcaster and listener without the level of direct one-to-one intimacy of a phone call. On the other hand, Dani's worry over their voice being "reflective of what the [Lesbian] show is about" is a glimpse into an affective experience the gendered politics of voice can enact for trans women who might not feel they 'pass' on the radio.

Reflecting back, Eirene shared in my wanting for Dani's voice; the sonic intersubjectivity created through her sharing of queer knowledge, her deep laugh and knowing tone, and her eclectic taste in music from indie rock band *The Gossip* to classic 1970s Women's Music. "I was trying to look at my archives yesterday to see if I had anything with her speaking, but I didn't", Eirene told me, "but I did send you a video that's of her speaking, talking about her story, that [was] basically *The Lesbian Show* (laughs)" (2020). The video in question was produced as part of a community-sponsored series collected at Vancouver Pride 2012, about a year after Eirene left their volunteer position alongside Dani at Co-Op Radio. The video posted by onmyplanet (2012) is composed of a static shot set with a background of rainbow flags with Dani framed from the shoulders up, wearing a black tank top and short silver necklace, their hair in low pigtails, pierced ears and small square glasses. It is unclear whom they are speaking to, yet Dani confidently recaps 'Coles notes style' their life as a street kid turned queer activist. "I found a place in the men's community even though I wasn't interested in sex" shares Dani, but "I met my first girlfriend when I was 27, she was a third-generation dyke and she made the move on me (laughs) [...] it was a huge epiphany for me," but "I still identified as a gay man." Dani's raspy creaky vocal presentation and breathy chuckles weave us through

her journey of dating a lot of "butch women," and their viewpoint of how "transitioning is one of the most selfish things you can do" but "I don't want to die an old man." "Learning to become active in the women's community has been.... a struggle," Dani shares as her face squishes a bit in discomfort during their pause in speech, "I had an interesting reminder last night when I went to an event and was reminded I wasn't welcome there" (onmyplanet, 2013).

Despite these experiences, Dani continued to be an active member of the Vancouver Dyke March board and a stage manager during the post-march festivities held each year at Grandview Park in the east end of Vancouver.³³ Dani would have been about 57 years old when the 2012 Queer Story Archive video was filmed, just two years prior to Dani's passing from complications with melanoma for which there is no mention. Instead, they focus on their vast entanglement in different decades, politics, and identities that shape their subjectivity in relation to the queer community at large. While Dani's connection to Co-Op Radio is only mentioned in passing, their recorded voice in conversation with Eirene's recounts of Dani on *The Lesbian Show* provides much-needed trans visibility (and audibility) to a phenomenology of queer feminist soundwork. Despite being unable to include Dani's own embodied experience of hosting and producing *The Lesbian Show*, I approach the inclusion of their voice through Eirene and the fragments of Dani found through news articles and videos in an attempt to highlight Dani's key contributions to queer and lesbian feminist soundwork and activism. This intersubjective and intergenerational methodology works to remedy missing audio histories where they ought to be by seeking out fragments in community to turn frustration with a lack of 'evidence' into a speculative exploration of "what might have been? and what might be?" (Field, 2022, p.1). Speculation can be a powerful tool for attending to subjects excluded or missing from historical records. As feminist media scholar Allyson Nadia Field writes, "speculation is often borne out of the necessity of, the exhaustion – or unsuitability – of other approaches" (2022. p.1). Speculation here works as a tool in the feminist and queer phenomenological toolbox toward resisting academic

³³ Grandview Park at Commercial and Charles in Vancouver is so well known for its role in queer history that in 2018 the city erected a temporary "Dyke Chilling Park" sign in honour of the Dyke March and Eastside Pride events among many others that take place there each year. The sign gained a huge response online, including a petition to keep the sign as a permanent fixture: <https://www.straight.com/life/1117506/could-east-vancouver-get-permanent-dyke-chilling-park-sign>.

narratives of what counts as evidence and instead moving to embrace the possibilities of fragmented or glitchy encounters.

Audio fragment frustration and the possibilities of glitchy orientation

Queer phenomenology asks us to sit in such discomforts and frustrations experienced in encountering fragmented or “glitchy” orientations to reveal what speculations and new ways of being might emerge (Russell, 2020). Here I first recall my own frustrations in the fragmented experience of searching for Dani. Secondly, I reflect on the potential discomfort, frustration and risk that Dani’s refusal to ‘shed’ their “gay man” as queer trans woman might have stirred for themselves and others within our transphobic, cissexist, and transmisogynistic reality. While this refusal comes with risk, it also demonstrates Dani's desire to communicate, through this refusal, their subjectivity. One that pushes back against Lesbian Feminist histories of static cisgender identity recognition as a "strategic essentialism" and limiting who can orient themselves toward lesbian feminism (Spivak, 1985;1996). While it is unknown whether Dani's refusal to categorize themselves along binary lines of gender and sexuality was purposeful in this way, the contrasting fragments of Dani's subjectivity, in and outside of 'official' archive walls, prompt what theorist Legacy Russell has termed Glitch Feminism (2020). 'Glitch' is commonly understood as an error or "failure to function," but Russell instead positions glitch as a powerful and celebrated "vehicle of refusal" through which we might manifest "new possibilities of being and becoming" (p.14-16). Glitch feminisms embracing the in-between and refusal of societal demands of gender binary on the body is not a new concept but rather a renewal of cyberfeminism toward a further critique of the digital world's impact on our AFK (away from keyboard) lives.

Interested in feminist theories and practices for cyberspace, since its uptake in the 1980s and '90s, cyberfeminism has permeated feminist cultural and media studies work as digital technologies began to integrate into the everyday lives of the general public. With this growth in feminist digital and new media studies along with science and technology studies, the proven problematic utopic disembodied promises of cyberfeminism have inspired novel forms of critical computer-based arts practice and feminist internet studies (Fotopoulou & O'Riordan, 2014) while also producing landmark issues of corporeal erasure and 'identity tourism' (Gajjala & Oh, 2012; Brophy, 2010;

Daniels, 2009). Cyberfeminism has since multiplied into various feminisms – e.g. technofeminism, xenofeminism, data feminism – to attend to the complex relationships between bodies and technologies, which both resist and reinforce structures and systems of power. Glitch feminism is positioned as yet another mode of resistance against the corporeal erasure of digital discourse, drawing attention to the intersectional and embodied embrace of glitches in the system.

"Glitchiness" also finds parallels with Jasbir Puar's (2017) critique of bad and "good queerness," where 'good queers' are understood as those who fall in line with law-abiding notions of 'ideal' citizenship and the white middle-class cisgender status quo. By turning away from such homonational manifestations of an ideal or wholly "good queerness," we can begin to be deconstructed and subsequently rebuild, in a more inclusive manner, what queerness and lesbianism can be (Puar, 2017). In doing so, we can move away from a reductive conflation of queer or lesbian feminism as fixed on relations of sex acts or static stereotypes and toward how the subject comes into being through a rich set of queer and feminist relations. Whether those relations are queer friendships or podcast networks, plant care or radio on the car stereo, these relations factor into the subjects' sense of self within a particular public. Of course, in this case, the relation we are interested in attending to is the production of soundwork. Some soundworkers who participated in this study recognize lesbian, queer, or feminist as part of their identity, while others do not. Approaching lesbian feminism and queer feminism as a politic, a culture, and a praxis allows for a focus on the collective points of sonic kinship, technologic, and aesthetic resonance rather than the identity politics of practitioners past, present and future. Lesbian feminism and queer feminism, in this logic, are interested in attending to the radical potentials afforded by turning away from heterosexual orientations as the default standard rather than prescribing proportionately static identities. While Dani's trans, lesbian, and gay man identities are integral parts of their subjective self, it is the intergenerational queer kinship that Eirene found through their connection to Dani's embodied voice and experiences shared on the mic that activates a particular conception of what it means to be a 'public queer' through soundwork.

Queer Kinship: Soundwork's Sonic Dust

Queer kinship is a theory and practice toward a sense of belonging and connection, separated from traditional familial roles tied to heteroprocreation and gendered hierarchies (Freeman, 2007). Queer adaptation of 'kinship' might initially seem like a queer desire for the familial pursuit of heterosexual futures. However, as Elizabeth Freeman (2007) argues, "kinship matters for queer theory in a way that Judith Butler reminds us that 'bodies matter'" (p.297).³⁴ "Kinship is resolutely corporeal" in its cultural production through repetition and how those repetitions govern the body's limitations and possibilities (p.298). The intentional use of 'kinship' to articulate our corporeal desire to belong as well as "the longing to be *long*," to endure over time beyond procreation, situates social *and* parasocial connections to queer voices in soundwork as intimately tied to the body (Freeman, 2007, p.299). Queer kinship, in this sense, is not exclusive to the world of soundwork by any means. It might be equally enacted through community ties formed through social media, in-person organizing or rally events, friendships, or other various ways one might engage in communication from body to body. Still what the study of soundwork can offer to understandings of queer kinship, is the embodied dimensions of intersubjectivity experienced and *communicated* through mediated-electrified sound. In the case of this intergenerational study of soundwork across different periods of time and understandings of place, the queer temporality of kinship, "of duration not only for otherwise mortal bodies but between bodies otherwise separated in time," becomes even more apparent (Freeman, 2007, p.299). That is to say, when queer desires to belong, or be *long*, are satiated through the sonic intersubjectivity of soundwork, resonances with queer past might also open up a renewed sense of possibility for the queer present and queer futures. Drawing back to the work of Heather Love (2007), this "backward future" orientation applied to queer soundwork simultaneously holds one ear to the past while drawing the other ear to the future (p.147). Even while our ears are stretched through time, our feet remain in the present, a constant reminder of how the histories we hear retain their capacity to shed light on contemporary struggles, fragmentations, and utopic desires. While it is

³⁴ As Elizabeth Freeman (2007) and Judith Butler (2002) both outline so eloquently in their work on queer kinship, it is equally important to note that ethnic, racial, and working-class communities have long histories of "expansive notions of kinship that supersede the genealogical grid, a fact reflected in many ethnographic studies" of community which demonstrate that such approaches are not an exclusively queer kin phenomenon (Freeman, 2007, p. 303).

impossible to truly know the experiences of queer's past, the backwardness tied to queer being alongside desires to be *long* creates feelings of kinship across the varied soundworks showcased in this study.

In the study of soundwork, the sonic subjectivities shared through radio broadcasts and podcasts are made for a connection to an intended public, for sonic intersubjectivity from few to many, even when they can *feel* and *sound* like they are made just for us. While in broadcast radio, the presumption is often that the public is present in the moment listening live within the geographic confines of the broadcast tower. In contrast, podcasts publics are spread across time and space. However, thanks to the urge select members of both *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] and *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] felt to record their shows in whole or in part, many of these once ephemeral broadcasts are now part of our contemporary digital context. From broadcast to tape to mp3, the sonic intersubjectivity once evoked through creating and listening to radio's inherent liveness now finds itself in the on-demand present. The show collections become an unintentional archive of political significance, offering the contemporary ear an opportunity to hear the sounds of lesbian and queer feminisms across the decades. The queer kinship that Eirene felt for Dani through their experiences in the physical studio and through listening to them live on *The Lesbian Show* is one form of sonic intersubjectivity through one-to-one communication. However, feelings of connection and resonance can also be felt across space and time. These feelings can manifest whether we know the soundworker personally or not. In media studies, we might call this affective pull and sense of intimacy felt toward an individual via one-way media – a parasocial relationship. The term was first coined by Horton and Wohl (1956) to describe the “illusion of intimacy” an at-home audience feels for radio or television performers. Yet in thinking through the complexities of queer kinship in relation to parasociality, the term seems to fall short. The kinship built through both real-world and queer parasocial interactions are both significant to maintaining queer public networks. Furthermore, these feelings of kinship intersubjectively experienced through listening to a queer soundwork can help to sustain or ignite our understandings of the self through sound and what we might want to hear more of in the world.

I think of such feelings of queer kinship as sonic dust that (metaphorically) settles onto our bodies and into the cracks and surfaces of the places where we engage in deep

listening to the sonic subjectivities of others. One can imagine this dust plays a part in holding queerness in its backward turn, a weightiness that is barely perceptible until it accumulates in thick layers on our skin. Perhaps so much sonic dust accumulates that it travels into our very guts. It becomes part of the body and the self, stirring feelings of warmth in the belly at the sound of a lesbian voice on the telephone hotline or the laughter of queer kin on the radio. Once queer kinship is felt, it can become hard to shake, a type of visceral haunting where recorded voice has often found itself the conduit. In the case of recorded radio and podcasts, these 'canned' forms of communication can feel awfully *uncanny* in their produced experiences of audible closeness across temporal distance and the familiarity in the stories shared.³⁵ This sonic intersubjective phenomenon came up often in listening back to clips of DOMs and TLS with contemporary queer podcasters. Certainly not in such abstract terms as intersubjectivity or sonic dust, but instead articulated simply as a *feeling* and a *knowing* of familiarity and kinship.

Mitra Kaboli, formerly of *The Heart* podcast, wasn't familiar with the history of the Sex Garage Raids before listening to the 1991 *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] audio collage. Still, she noted that it "*sounds* familiar. It sounds like a tale as old as time" (2021). Mitra's response is a dusty one. After listening to the chants and sweeping music of Deb's collage, Mitra shared that she "knew that it [*Dykes on Mykes*] was a show, but never listen[ed] to it." "I'm like so not curious sometimes," laughed Mitra Kaboli as we began listening onward together to the queer soundings of DOM's Sex Garage tribute. Here Mitra seems to hint at a sonic dust that has lingered from past radio experiences at CKUT Montreal or from simply being a queer in Montreal. At the same time, Mitra's reply of "I'm like so not curious sometimes" reminds us of the dust's ephemeral quality – you can brush it off. Still, the dust lingers in the corners and crevasses until your body becomes sticky through listening again. Headphones on and a nonchalant grin on their

³⁵ This experience of sound media's uncanniness versus its actuality as 'canned' and stored for playback is further explored in Johnathan Sterne's notable sound studies text, *The Audible Past* (2003, chp.6). Sterne outlines the history of the canned recordings metaphor as resulting from recorded sounds evolution alongside the canning industry boom of the mid-1800s. Canned recordings are then equated as not as good as the 'real thing,' just as canned food is thought of as not as good as fresh. Here I push against such cultural understandings of recorded voice as not as 'good' as analog voice. Instead, I argue such debates take away from the multiplicity that sonic subjectivity across its many forms can contribute to dimensions of body-technology relations.

face as Mitra joined me from their New York apartment, the familiarity of the content wasn't the only aspect of Deb's kiss-in audio that caught Mitra's ear. A documentarian and sound designer, Mitra also found herself interested in the form and style of the work: "I'm not that like into audio that much these days but hearing that got me excited a little bit. I was like, oh, yeah. I remember why I like this. I love layering sounds, it's so fun", she laughs, "[but] I thought the kiss-in was a little too noisy for my taste," noting the wet smooches and "Oh baby oh baby" recordings from a kiss-in event in commemoration and protest of the Sex Garage raid featured later in DOMs anniversary episode. Sonic (inter)subjectivity allows for queer feeling to take focus while also orienting us to the sound production choices made in evoking queerness for an intended, or in the case of Mitra and I, an unintended future public. Feeling is used here in the sense of affective practices and their resulting emotions, be it loss, love, or lust, while also attending to the sensorial nature of sound as vibration, which allows voices and sounds to touch us up close yet from a distance.

When Deb produced their Sex Garage Raid Collage and accompanying Kiss-In event feature showcasing a Kiss-In held one year later in protest of the raid, she likely didn't imagine it being re-broadcast on CKUT decades later, let alone listened to by queer soundworkers over Zoom video chat during a pandemic. Listening back to the same clip with Deb a few months before my interview with Mitra, there was an affective weight, a sonic dust, felt in the air even over video as we began to chat. I interviewed Deb with their long-time co-host Elana Wright who joined *Dykes on Mykes* in 1994, about six years after Deb came on the air in 1988. As the clip ends, Deb shares their first reaction, "That made me feel kind of emotional. I have to say that was a really heady time and - it's not that I'd forgotten, but you need your memory jostled every now and again and jumpstarted. And that sure did it." Elana pauses and then chimes in, "that was before my time and maybe it was a show that I listen[ed] to. So, for me, that's like history actually and it kind of adds to the legacy of *Dykes on Mykes* [...] It did feel really significant to have a show that gave voice to this and again, like [in] that long form way. More than just a sound bite" (VanSlet & Wright, 2020). Despite being co-hosts for ten years, the duo brings contrasting experiences of sonic subjectivity through listening back to this 1991 audio excerpt. For Deb, it reawakens an affect tied to a particular time and place. Listening to their voice and the sounds she'd once chosen to extend their intersubjective feelings and connection surrounding the Sex Garage Raids one year later creates a shift

in Deb and Elana's initial response to DOMs show style as "fun" and "entertainment." While the lighter comedic and conversational aspects of DOMs are key to its mission as a Lesbian Feminist audibility activism, these shared moments of community wounds sonified through the radio, equally play a role in producing queer connection and belonging. Deb's collage of protest chants, kissing dykes, and sweeping orchestral music beds sounds out as "wounded vibrations" felt across time in each queer body that stops to resonate (Copeland & Knight, 2021). I first conceptualized *wounded vibrations* to explain "the complex relationship between intergenerational trauma and Indigenous history" heard in the podcast *Missing and Murdered: Finding Cleo* (p.102). Queer and Indigenous wounds are not parallel, though they may overlap for queer Indigenous communities. Still, this concept of wounded vibrations speaks directly to affective and material embodied experience of queer sonic subjectivities. Drawing on Norie Neumark's theorization of how mediated voice and sound can create a "haunted disjuncture," these vibrations remind us that "the past is always already with us" (2017, p.70). Wounded vibrations is a sonic remix of Wendy Brown's "wounded attachments" - how identity construction based exclusively on historical injury (ex. racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, ableism) runs the risk of entrapment in a constant identity of oppression rather than envisioning action or utopic possibilities. While Brown's concept of 'wounded attachments' names the stasis of queer identity, wounded vibrations instead focuses on the intersubjective connections made when one body vibrates another. Such vibrations are not "simply pained emotions but also the circulation of memories and felt affect before happy or sad, negative or positive are constituted. They are the vibrations of past, present and future" (Copeland, & Knight, 2021, p.103). We can think of *feeling* vibrations as an affective practice which in turn can evoke particular emotions in the moment, be it loss, love, or lust that can rush over us or linger long after listening. These feelings attend to the sensorial nature of sound, as vibration, which allows voices and sounds to touch us up close yet from a distance, reconnecting intersubjectivity with the embodied reality of communication regardless of whether the media is the human body or whether the body is extended through media technology. Drawing again on the imagery of sonic dust forming out of the media listening experience, we might think of the continuous accumulation of dust manifested by wounded vibrations floating through the air all around us. When these vibrations are shared via soundwork rooted in audibility activism, they play the dual role of manifesting belonging *and* rousing change through action and

reflection. As the dust settles upon the skin, as you breathe it in, you can't help but feel urged to move or to turn inwards.

Preventing, or at least attempting to avoid, a repetition of past wrongdoings and injustice is a prompt that listeners can take with them through experiencing wounded vibrations or sonic dust. However, wounds aren't the only sonic subjectivity that can be heard in queer feminist soundwork. Queer kinship and audibility activism can also enact what José Esteban Muñoz advocates for in *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (2009). As researchers, listeners, or soundworkers 'cruising' queer feminist soundworks past, we are also engaging with works that "not only allow us to imagine utopia but, more important, whet our appetite for it" (p.48). While the idea of 'utopias' has its limitations and problematics like anything else, Muñoz's encouragement to study queer art and culture through utopic eyes can help to shift queer concepts of self away from the static wounded attachments Brown warns of and instead gaze toward queer futurity not as "an end but an opening or horizon" (Muñoz, 2009, p.91). One such work among many in the world of queer feminist soundwork is the two-part series from the podcast *Queer Public* – "The Atlanta Letters" (November 25th, 2019) and "Atlanta" (December 23rd, 2019). Produced by Erin McGregor with editorial and sound design by Ariana Martinez, these two episodes follow the story of Diane Giles, who "wrote letters to a volunteer on the Atlanta Gay Helpline, a woman she had never met, from May to December 1984" (*Queer Public*, 2019).

"The Atlanta Letters" opens with an introduction from Erin and a big thank you to Ariana for all their work. Set to a soft, slow cyclical and reverberant xylophone-sounding music bed, Erin teases the second episode made in collaboration with Netflix for a limited podcast series called *Prism: Tales of your City*. Erin sets the scene with an opening provocation, "How do we best honour those who have helped us become who we are?" (00:40s, The Atlanta Letters). The ruffling of papers transitions us into Diane reading snippets of her letters to hotline volunteer Vernita on the microphone. This memory of the past quickly pulls us into the present as Diane reflects, "I was at a place in my life that I was beginning to come out internally. I had written the words 'I am gay' out a piece of paper, and I took a match to it. I wasn't even prepared to go any further than that" (01:45s). Ariana's sound design punctuates the image of a struck match and burning paper as the backing track of gritty soulful vocal and strummed acoustic guitar sings,

"you put the peace in my steady breathing, washing the pain down in the river" (Songs Linda Wrote Herself, Linda Bruner, 2010). "Atlanta Letters" opens with these feelings of disorientation and loneliness Diane writes about in her early letters. However, the mood shifts as Erin's host narration guides the listener through Diane's efforts of looking for local gay hotlines in her library and mustering the courage on a Friday night from an Atlanta conference hotel lobby to call The Atlanta Gay Helpline. It's Diane's first time alone "away from home without her husband and child" when she connects with Vernita on the other end of the hotel landline. This weaving of Diane's letter reading, personal reflections, and host narration takes the listener back to 1984 and forward again to Diane's present as we hear their tales of chickening out on entering a gay bar, reading *Ruby Fruit Jungle*, and falling in love. Diane is now 65 years old, being interviewed by Erin, and married to a different woman than her letters to Nita documented, her current wife, Gayle. Without consent from Vernita for this first episode in *Queer Public's* Atlanta series, we only hear Diane's letters read aloud.

While Nita's perspective might provide a richer picture of their connection during this pivotal year of change in Diane's life, the focus on Diane allows for more room for the listener to tune into and vibrate with the particular subjective experiences of Diane sonified, both past and present. While the story focuses on Diane, we must also consider the sonic subjectivities of Erin and Ariana as the soundworkers shaping Diane's voice and experiences into a singular podcast episode. Trained in broadcast interviewing (Erin) and sound design (Ariana), *Queer Public* is a show conceivably palatable to the typical soundwork listener (read heteropatriarchal trained ear) accustomed to the style of popular NPR shows such as *This American Life* or *Invisibilia*. There is a thoughtful balance of loudness between the sonic elements - music, voice, and ambience – along with a clear narrative flow to the story despite its playful approach to temporality. Still, as queers, Erin and Ariana are inescapably entangled in the audibility activism of this queer feminist soundwork, which is clearly heard in their work. Like their predecessors at *Dykes on Mykes*, the duo aim to "make our politics actually come true" by representing queer community not only in the voices presented, but also in the music, stories, and hands behind each production (Hogan & MacPhee, 2020).

Furthermore, their investment in doing justice to their queer kinship felt toward Diane and Vernita brought out a slower, more reflexive and iterative production process not

unfamiliar to my own application of Harvey's (2019) three-pronged approach to feminist media critique. In one of our interviews, Erin shares, "you just never know what is going to end up being a thing, you know? Some of it takes years to shape up. I met Diane from the Atlanta Letters in 2015. I didn't meet Vernita until May of 2019, and the episode came out on Tales of Your City [that] July" (2021). Erin first gained interest in talking more to Diane following a trans-centred story she was chasing about the controversial Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. The festival was held annually from 1976 to 2015 choosing to shut down over Trans exclusionary controversies causing fractures in the festival's community.³⁶ Diane had mentioned to Erin about her story and archive of personal letters in passing, but Erin was focused on their Michfest story at the time.

It wasn't until two years later that Erin dug up Diane's phone number, still curious about Diane's story. Erin reflects on meeting Diane after that two-year gap following Michfest: "My ex-girlfriend and I drove to Kenosha, Wisconsin, on my own dollar and stayed in an Airbnb. I did like a day or two of recording with Diane. That story just sort of felt like my good deed for the year. Like I got to reunite these two women, and [it] just meant so much to Diane. And then just to be able to hang out with like queer elders is just [...] they really, really paved the way, these queer women" (2021). In the second episode in *Queer Public's* "Atlanta" series, we join Erin in the reunion between Diane and Vernita following a slightly different re-telling of Diane's story than is heard in "The Atlanta Letters." Perhaps given the difference in audience, "Atlanta" first being produced for inclusion in Netflix's Prism series, the sonic subjectivities of this episode seem to be extending out to the listener as much more of a typical 'Coming Out' narrative in contrast to "The Atlanta Letters." A swelling upbeat rhythm underscores Diane's recount of 'coming out' for the first time aloud on the phone to Vernita. This joyous moment is sharply contrasted moments later by a downbeat melancholy piano as Erin narrates Diane's plane ride home to her husband and "back into the closet" (07:20, 'Atlanta'). Erin spends time trying to find Vernita to reunite Diane and her after so many decades since their life-changing letter correspondence. We hear Diane's gasps of excitement as Erin

³⁶ The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, often referred to as Michfest, was an annual women's music festival from 1976 to 2015. "Womyn-born womyn" policies started in the 1990s led to Trans action against the festival and criticism from numerous human rights and LGBTQ+ organizations. A new women's music festival doted as "a safe and inclusive space for all women" debuted on the same property as Michfest (known as 'The Land') in August 2022 under the name Fern Fest (<http://www.michiganfernfest.com/>).

gives the news that she has found Vernita. The pair chat over the phone again, just as they did in 1984.

“Atlanta” differs in a few exciting ways from its counterpart “The Atlanta Letters,” not only in the adoption of a perhaps more trope-like 'coming out' narrative focus but also in a normative temporality and story arc that fits the episode into dominant production practices heard in other mainstream audio documentary style works such as *This American Life*. It is not to say that one approach is 'better' than the other for evoking sonic intersubjectivity for the queer community. After all, focusing on subjectivity rather than identity in this chapter aims to highlight various ways that queer soundworkers engage in public queerness through their work. The examples we are spending time with here are just a few of many to be found in the archive, on your preferred podcast platform, and lost to the ether, perhaps only living in memory. Nonetheless, through Diane's letters read aloud, the curated queer music choices, Ariana's rich sound design, and Erin's narration soaking in the queer kinship she felt with Diane, “The Atlanta Letters” exemplifies the power of queer temporality in soundwork to take the listener cruising through queer utopias past.

While queers make both episodes, it is left to the listener whether both are made for queers as the imagined public. Questions of audience, of intended public, shape the production choices made in what sort of sonic subjectivity is communicated through soundwork. These choices in presentation and production of story, voice and sounds can significantly impact the closeness the listener feels to the work – their belonging/belonging and queer kinship no matter how parasocial. It is this feeling or sensing of closeness found in queer soundwork made for a queer public, despite or in spite of radio and podcasting's broad potential public, that calls into question what approach is experienced as more effective or crucial for queer feminism's audibility activism. What types of privilege are required to make work exclusively for queer community? To what extent does audibility activism fall into the same mainstream co-option as Lesbian visibility activism of the 1980s and '90s? And who is erased, excluded or put at risk in the process?

Conclusion: From Lesbian Visibility to Audibility Activism

Rewind back to the late 1970s in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Silva Tenenbein, just a few years before co-founding *The Lesbian Show* [TLS], is at the local credit union to open an account for the Rights of Lesbian Subcommittee of the B.C. Federation of Women. Deeply embedded in a politics of lesbian visibility as a result of her own experiences as well as the experiences of lesbians in being excluded from Feminist Organizations and feeling either invisible to or villainized by the general public, Silva takes up the position as chair of the subcommittee, advocating for its formation to claim space for lesbians under the feminist banner. Silva reflects on this memory of trying to open an account for the subcommittee with me: "We wanted to increase the visibility. I went to the credit union to open an account; the person didn't know what the word lesbian [was] and she spelled it wrong. She spelled it 'lesbane' because she had absolutely no idea what it was" (2018).

In writing about the tensions between *Queer Public's* two-pronged approach to the Atlanta series, I think back to this moment shared by Silva. In "Atlanta," Erin does not need to define or describe 'lesbian' as an identity for a broad listenership in the US/Canada context. In this sense, the visibility activism Silva and many other lesbian feminists across North America were fighting for has come to a head. Today as mainstream media giants like Netflix and HBO are interested in 'diversifying' their content portfolio, queer soundworkers like Erin can pitch queer stories that garner funding and support in ways that the Canadian community radio model cannot. On this sentiment, Erin shared, "I think that more mainstream shows are better about incorporating Queer stories, BIPOC stories into their everyday. You know, it's not just like Black History Month, let's tell all black stories. It's not like that anymore. Now that we're actually quite critical of that model" (2021). Erin's experience here is a stark contrast to former TLS host Cynthia Brooke's reflection on mainstream media and public queerness in the 1980s: "pretty much every [mainstream] news outlet, if they were actually speaking about us, were othering us. And it was also dangerous. A thing [that] is hard for a lot of people to realise [is] that any sort of attention in those times was dangerous. You did not want the attention of the media" (2020). Another TLS host, though a few years later, Vett Lloyd echoed Cynthia's sentiments:

It wasn't okay to be a lesbian then, it was really scary. Something I discovered, even though I'd been officially out for a few years at that point, was there's a difference between being out in your brain and then going down to the Downtown Eastside, to the old building where Co-Op Radio was, walking through a crowd of pretty rough characters - you know, they were always great. I never was hassled - but you're standing around with a bunch of guys there staring at you and you stick out like a sore thumb and then you buzz the intercom on the door. And the person doing the show ahead of you says, 'who are you? What show are you working on?' So you get to announce to the world, your name, and 'I'm here for *The Lesbian Show*'.[...] It was close to 10 years later, that if you heard anything about a pride event on the standard media, the anchors would manage to say gay and lesbian like they were regular words and not as [if they] were spitting out these words that they had to say, spread[ing] their disdain and hatred and discomfort (2020).

What we can read in this quote from Vett above is not simply visibility politics, or a politics of being seen. Sometimes being seen was not the goal at all. Instead, the goal was to be *heard*. By repeatedly speaking 'lesbian' aloud on the streets of downtown Vancouver and over the radio airwaves, the TLS hosts were engaging in an audibility activism against a media soundscape they felt was misrepresenting and causing continued harm to their community. Silva, Cynthia, and Vett's experiences from the show's first two decades, highlight *The Lesbian Show* as taking on a strategic essentialism focused on lesbian as an identity to push forward lesbian audibility in hopes of contributing to a larger movement toward lesbian and gay rights as well as acceptance and tolerance in Canadian society. While lesbian as a static identity has a history of exclusion embedded, the visibility/audibility activist work of these lesbian feminist soundworkers can equally evoke rich subjective understandings of lesbianism, feminism, and queerness across a variety of experiences. These histories should not be reduced to their essentializing events but instead revisited as integral linkages to the possibilities contemporary soundworkers manifest in their own sonic intersubjective offerings. As the next chapter will explore further, among the strategic essentialism of *The Lesbian Show* we also hear a powerful potentiality in the sonic aesthetics of queer intimacy and play with the form that queer and feminist soundworkers are still striving to evoke in contemporary work.

Queer feminist audibility activism, while embedded in the controversial and exclusionary histories of lesbian feminism, also opens up a rethinking and reorientation toward the past to uncover and connect with the wounded vibrations and utopic soundings of queer kinship. Sonic intersubjectivity in practice and in theory, allows soundworkers to draw on

powerful histories of media activism once focused on visibility/audibility narratives while also engaging in a refusal of essentialist notions of gender and sexuality bound up in what it means to be a public queer. In focusing in on subjectivity over identity, we must also resist post-feminist sensibilities to leverage a 'feminist past' to uplift individualist and neoliberalist narratives of 'leaning-in' to our own self-interested future. Rather, here I hope to invite a continued return to the past alongside transgenerational feminist engagement and queer kinship, so we might *perhaps* be able to best or at least slow down the constant 'forgetting again' that Gayle Rubin (2012) cautions as a key problematic of wave metaphors in feminist activism. Still, the question lingers, what does it mean to shift from a politic of visibility/representation toward audibility activism which not only attends to the diversity of voices and experiences in the media ecosystem at large but also to *how* those voices and experiences are edited and constructed? Perhaps the most key question we must ask is, for whom and with what ear are these works being produced? In the chapters to come, we turn our focus toward the aesthetics and the networks that surround and shape such possibilities for queer feminist soundwork. Taking sonic subjectivity forward allows us to draw attention to the varied shades of queer feeling and experience at the heart of audibility activism.

Chapter 5.

Kisses through the Static: Producing a Queer Politics of Sonic Intimacy and Play.

Blond haired and knowing with an infectious raspy laugh, Silva Tenenbein, co-founder of *The Lesbian Show*, first spoke with me over Zoom on a crisp spring morning from their home office in sunny California. When I reached out to interview them for a community radio show, I had no idea the impact their experiences shared would have on my research and my relationship to queer feminist history. Perhaps best known for their kink/BDSM activism and bringing lesbian rights to the B.C. Federation of Women, in the interview, Silva paints a picture of an early *The Lesbian Show* rooted in humour, play and sex-positive activism. Among Silva's stories of organizing women's only dances and leather dyke life in 1979, I ask more about *The Lesbian Show* [TLS], curious as a feminist community radio maker myself to connect over this shared history. What emerges is a story of experimental sound in lesbian visibility – or in this case, audibility - and the power of language. Silva recalls the cheeky fun of the "Lesbian Academy Awards for the most people that you've had sex with in the last year, as judged by the Lesbian Academy. And the person that won ostensibly had sex with the entire softball league [Laughs]" (FemRadio, 2018). It plays out like a movie in my head as I hear an echoed energetic laughter of five women, the original TLS collective, taking phone calls and tallying votes in their Downtown Eastside Co-Op Radio studio. I began to wonder whether these same queer feminist sensibilities could be found in community radio and podcasting efforts within other temporal and spatial contexts. What other sonic aesthetics might be produced through such a queer politic of intimacy and play?

Listening back to our interview from 2018, Silva's generous and unapologetic activist energy moves through their voice and into dialogue with their fellow queer and lesbian feminist soundworkers to evoke an erotic politic of queer sound production. It would be another two years before I attempt to reach out to Silva again and learn of their passing. Entangled in a web of recognition, loss, politic and play, my interactions with Silva echoed the key political aesthetics central to queer feminist soundwork: punk playfulness, erotic power, and radical camp.

This chapter draws on moments of listening to and talking with soundworkers about form, genre, and narrative aesthetics and production choices that make a feminist soundwork *queer*. Tracing queer feminist aesthetics across varied temporal and spatial contexts brings with it a reality of how these contexts shape the way a politic is experienced and reproduced. It also makes apparent what stays the same. What is at the very root of queer feminist soundwork. The different approaches to queer feminist aesthetics of play and intimacy analyzed in this chapter ultimately speak to each show's unique formations of sonic subjectivity and intersubjectivity. Drawing on research interview excerpts, *The Lesbian Show* takes center stage as our opening soundwork for Chapter 5 with their campy sci-fi radio play "Dykes in Space" (1983), followed by linkages recovered in the podcasts *Warriors*, *Bards 'n Brews* and *The Heart*. From camp sounds to sweaty conclusions, their playful and intimately powerful productions offer a set of aesthetic tools to challenge conventional approaches to soundwork and call for a transformed valuing of lived experience and the feminist "personal is political" for people of colour, queer, and trans artists and soundmakers.

Camp Sounds (not the bonfire kind)

Queer media is no stranger to the power of camp aesthetics to evoke a sense of community and connection. To those in the know, camp is much more than *Ru Paul's Drag Race* musicals and Joan Crawford. Camp is a historically rich and radically queer form of artistic expression, style, and sensibility that eludes definition. The elusiveness of camp's definition is partly due to its particular contextual understanding. What is read as camp in one moment can become pop camp or mainstream appropriation the next (Meyer, 1994). Camp has been historically viewed as a gay male-exclusive form of deviant visibility (Neilson, 2016; Richard Dyer, 2002; David Halperin, 2012). From Oscar Wilde, dandyism, molly houses, and RuPaul, still today, gay male politics remain at the center of camp discourse, but as scholars such as Elly-Jean Neilsen (2016) and others note, media produced by lesbians and queers, including soundwork, is chock full of playful and political camp. This is where Nielsen (2016) intervenes to address the crucial ghostly history and political experience of lesbian camp in its erotic, radical and classic forms. Through the articulation of lesbian camp, Nielsen invites a reorienting away from a once binary notion of camp as gay male queer expression and toward its varying "queer manifestations and consumptions" (p.121). While much of the research on camp

focuses on visual aesthetics, the study of camp within queer feminist soundwork allows for a reorienting once again toward how camp is applied as a “queer expressivity” via sound (Meyer, 2010).

While the definition of camp is near impossible to pin down, it may be best understood through its principal qualities: A focus on exaggerations and artifice, tension and play with popular culture, and its fixed roots in queer culture and expression. It is first and foremost a form of critique from the margins that relies on in-jokes for community signalling and expression. Classic camp can, on the surface, appear superficial or crude in its parody and play on contrasts of femininity, masculinity and sexuality. However, a more sophisticated unspoken subtext emerges in learning to recognize these key qualities in conversation with the intricate historical and social context surrounding camp. A case in point is the radio play miniseries “Dykes in Space” aired on *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] in 1983. The radio play is also found on a later 1987 show recording re-aired as part of their best of *The Lesbian Show* episode, perhaps indicating a positive community response and popularity with its campy sci-fi humour. Without any visuals to assist in recognition of camp aesthetics, the producers of “Dykes in Space” instead offer up the popular culture sonic cues and narrative tropes of 1960s space adventures like *Lost in Space* and *Star Trek*, playing off signifiers still recognized today as classic to the sci-fi adventure genre. Listen along to Dykes in Space reference in Appendix A, Audio A8.

“Lezzie queer, lezzie queer, everybody wants to be a lezzie queer,” as Judith Carsello’s iconic lesbian guitar sing-a-long fades us out of the music break, Host Angie takes a deep breath and gives a brief introduction to the two-part sonic queer space voyage cued up in the radio control room. The tape begins to roll, and an orchestral wave of *Pomp and Circumstance, Op. 39* cues the listener toward exploration and extravagance. After a few bars of music to set the tone, we hear the narrator come in (perhaps a fellow TLS member), and they let out a long echoed “Dyyyyykes in Spaaaaace!”. Their tape-delayed intergalactic outcry welcomes us into the continued trumpets and whooshing spaceship sounds of this futuristic Dyke space dreamland. The narrator then announces our space heroes hailing from Planet Dyketan. Canned stadium-size audience applause plays in the background as we meet our leading characters: Captain Queer (played by episode co-host Pat), First Mate Butchy and “the amazing-brilliant Doctor Lesbo!” It is year four thousand and ‘dyketeen.’ We join our fearless ‘Dyke-o-nauts’ as they battle the evil brainwashing forces of ‘heterosecons.’ By the actors’ slight stumbles and pauses in

performance, you get the sense that Captain Queer and their crew are reading a script together in the studio without much practice. At first, their scrappy communal efforts might seem like they should have taken more time to get it 'right.' However, in applying a feminist-embodied ear to the context surrounding the performance, the 'bad' acting and 'cheesy' scripting only add to the campy aesthetic and performative queer play at the heart of "Dykes in Space."

Their amateur sci-fi fantasy is a process and performance in queer communal play and reclamation beyond the sometimes-unkind reality of queer life in a heterosexual dominant world. As Halperin (2012) writes in their analysis of camp's entanglement with gay life, "Camp undoes the solemnity with which heterosexual society regards tragedy, but camp doesn't evade the reality of the suffering that gives rise to tragedy. If anything, camp is a tribute to its intensity. Camp returns to the scene of trauma and replays that trauma on a ludicrously amplified scale— to drain it of its pain and, in so doing, to transform it" (p.200). Camp is a form of self-defence, of getting ahead of the pain and ridicule of being queer in a larger societal context at the time of *The Lesbian Show* [TLS], in which being a Dyke/lesbian could mean losing your job, getting stopped at the border, or beaten by police. Despite the exclusionary histories of camp as a gay male aesthetic, it also provides a community vernacular for articulating a particular style of play which fosters community through recognition and its transformation of pain. As Susan Sontag (1966) observed, camp is always a way of consuming or performing culture "in quotation marks." In the case of "Dykes in Space" TLS members engage in queer feminist worldmaking by simultaneously making fun of dyke culture *and* pop culture science fiction toward a future where dykes can travel through space and live together in harmony on their own dedicated Dyke planet away from earth's heteropatriarchal oppression.

To add to the already established abundance of lesbian camp both in language and space exploration, our dyke-o-nauts quickly realize that the best way to defeat the heterosecons is through playing women's music. In defence against the attack, our dyke-o-nauts play Meg Christian's "Leaping Lesbians," but when the cassette tape gets stuck on fast forward, the crew begins to sing it acapella instead. "Here come the lesbians, here come the leaping lesbians! Bow-de-oh-bow". The listener is left in suspense as to whether their efforts were a success as the narrator tells us to stay tuned to find out whether the spaceship DykeTrek will ever make it back to outer Dyke-o-tron. By the end

of part one, if the listener hasn't cued into the very intentional repetition and reclaiming of 'Dyke', they may not read the space adventure as camp either. Camp signalling and recognition are exercises in community building. The exchange aids in defining who is a part of a community while also perhaps coming off as apolitical or unrecognized by others. Part of camp's undefinable aspect is asking, "What if the right audience for this were exactly me?" (Halperin, 2012, p.189). In tuning in to *The Lesbian Show*, the listener can safely know they will hear stories made by lesbians for lesbians, including campy reclamations of 'Dyke' set in a sci-fi future.

As orchestral music swells, we return to our fearless dyke-o-nauts one week later. The narrator once again lets out an echo rich "Dyyyyykessss in Spaaaaaaacceeee!" and the trumpets sound to cue us to our arrival back aboard the DykeTrek to our dyke-o-nauts a cappella efforts. "Has it succeeded in getting them a music deal with Olivia Records?" the narrator asks. A quick 'Hallelujah' choir effect plays as the dyke-o-nauts receive a pleading correspondence from the heterosecons saying they will leave if the dyke-o-nauts stop singing. A congratulatory message from master control alludes to their next mission against the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, after some singing lessons, of course. The narrator bids farewell to the audience until next time: "we wish you dyke happy travels on your dyke trek and whatever mission you may have," as Tchaikovsky's classic 1812 Overture: Grande Finale plays us out. Our episode hosts then bring us into the break, and cassette side 1 of the *Humour Feature* broadcast recording ends (*The Lesbian Show*, 1983). The camp aesthetics, rooted in both trauma and play, sounded by TLS's sci-fi adventure, bring us toward two central aspects in what makes soundwork queer - wounded vibrations and utopic soundings. Through intentionally processed shouts of "Dyyyyykes in Spaaaaace" and stadium-sized cheering crowds, the trauma experienced by the lesbian community vibrates out as literal processing techniques – reverberation and delay - adding an imagined sense of space and perceived ability to communicate across vast distances. Wounded vibrations are felt in this sounding out of camp aesthetic while, at the same time, the science fiction setting and ultimate success of our dyke-o-nauts play back into queer utopic desires for a better future.

At about 18 minutes in length, the "Dykes in Space" radio play takes up a significant amount of airtime in the one-hour show timeslot. Indicating perhaps excitement and support behind this over-the-top campy lesbian space adventure. 30+ years later, in my

interview with former *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] host Cynthia, it comes up as a favourite in talking about the balance of serious politics and play at the heart of TLS. "We used to do this radio skit called *Dykes in Space*, [yes! *Stacey laughs*] which is a little silly, and loosely based on *Pigs in Space* from *The Muppet Show*. And that was a lot of fun. Right, like that was part of like our whole mission of, let's not take ourselves too seriously" (Brooke, 2020). *Pigs in Space* is a recurring sketch first appearing in season two of *The Muppet Show* (1977) featuring Captain Link Hogthrob, First Mate Piggy (played by Miss Piggy), and Dr. Julius Strangepork aboard the *Swinetrek*. The popularity of *Pigs in Space* grew in popular culture to a peak in 1981 as NASA began a morning tradition of waking their crew on Space Shuttle Columbia with comedy routines and music to help boost crew morale (Fries, 2015). This insight into the Muppet's parody of Star Trek, the driving inspiration behind *Dykes in Space*, provides a further link in the lesbian camp history of this rough around the edges audio play. Perhaps in playing to a popular puppet sketch featuring the very camp figure of Miss Piggy, the TLS crew was attempting to make a further political point on the performative nature of gender and sexuality. As Cynthia continued, "it always felt political, even like I said, when we were trying to be light-hearted. That was political as well" (Brooke, 2020).

Today camp may be seen as more of a joke or simply a fashion style. However, its origins had serious political value during repressive times to 'out' oneself to fellow queers, heal through humour, and build solidarity, "remarkably, all was done so within the hearing range of heterosexual people" (Nielsen, 2016, p.120). In listening back to "Dykes in Space" clips with pop culture chat podcasters Chloe & Sara of Vancouver's *Warriors, Bards 'n Brews Podcast* [WBB], they noted the temporal drag this audio play would evoke if produced today. "You know, all the wordplay is amusing, but then I don't know how long you can sort of beat that horse (laughs). That kinda thing", says Chloe. Sara responds, "I'm sure it had a fan base at that time, though." Chloe, "Yeah, but I don't see that format really being as very popular now." Both shake their heads, understanding, "No, no, no" (Krause & Gill, 2021). The tape hiss, the heavy-handed dyke wordplay, the canned space sound effects, and the orchestral music choices pull the listener into a particular queer time and place. We cannot forget the additional subtextual camp layer the music choice and sound effects evoke as a queer camp reimagining of Star Trek heard in *Pigs in Space* and then relayed into the scripting and post-production choices for TLS. As Chloe and Sara point out, listening back to "Dykes

in Space" haunts the contemporary queer ear into recognizing the power and potentiality such soundwork holds while also critiquing its place within the present tense. As Elizabeth Freeman (2010) writes in their account of queer temporalities, temporal "'drag' [is] a productive obstacle to progress, a usefully distorting pull backward, and a necessary pressure on the present tense" (p.64). While Sara and Chloe could not see themselves putting on this style of campy temporal drag in their own queer feminist soundwork, what did resonate was the sense of playfulness and pleasure in applying a queer feminist ear to popular culture media.

Queerspeak and Humor: The Play's the Thing

Play and playfulness are key modes through which queer community articulates identity and recognizes queer kinship in others. Conceptualized as "a mode of sensory openness and drive toward improvisation", playfulness is a sensibility toward "exploration of different bodily capacities, appetites, orientations and connections" (Paasonen, 2018, p. 537). In the study of queer play, much of the work to date is focused on the relationship between sex, sexuality, and pleasure (see Nielsen et al., 2015; Wignall & McCormack, 2015; Paasonen, 2018). Sex and sexuality certainly play a role in my soundwork focus on play and playfulness. However, there are many ways that playfulness and pleasurable experimentation in play can manifest in soundwork through the application of a queer feminist-embodied ear. Play can be silly, cathartic, humorous, and experimental. It is about connection and imagination. The friction between play and the erotic is indeed key to a particular style of sex-positive queer feminist aesthetic discussed later in this chapter. While in contrast, other moments of play through soundwork evoke comedy as a mode of grappling with the lived realities of queer life. The crucial role of play and playfulness is a historical and long-standing part of radical sexual liberation politics against compulsory heterosexuality found in lesbian and queer feminisms. We can think back to the radical act of broadcasting the Lesbian Academy Awards for the lesbian who had the most sex over the radio, as recounted by Silva Tenenbein of TLS (2018).³⁷ As Lauren Berlant proposes, play "can provide a space

³⁷ It is important to note that while Silva and *The Lesbian Show*, as well as various other shows in this study, embraced a sex-positive feminist approach, lesbian feminism was not immune to the sex wars of the 1980s as individuals found themselves divided when it came to topics of pornography and sexual subcultures such as sadomasochism. For more on lesbian feminism and

of interest within which other rhythms and therefore forms of encounter with and within sexuality can be forged" (Berlant & Edelman, 2014, p.6). By applying a queer theory of play and playfulness to this study, I argue that a curious balance of play and a communally defined set of guidelines is just as key to the production of queer soundwork as it is to sexual expression and identification. Nevertheless, just as sexual tastes and orientations can change over time, so too can approaches to and understandings of play and playfulness within queer feminist media. Both for the individual and within the queer community at large. While "Dykes in Space" evokes a campy politic of play that embodies a particular queer time in feminist history, the *Warriors, Bards 'n Brews* [WBB] podcast applies a playful queer reading to the arguably equally campy *Xena: The Warrior Princess* television series. WBB hosts Sara and Chloe reflected on how their show, in some sense, mirrors the same tensions between serious tone and comedy so key to *Xena* as a franchise:

Chloe: I don't think our podcast has a particularly serious tone, but we do occasionally have serious comments that are kind of, you know, in reaction to whatever we're watching.

Sara: Yeah, I mean, for like a comedy quote unquote podcast, we talk about like ethics a lot of the time –

Chloe: And our whole podcast is through a very queer and feminist lens.

Sara: It [the podcast] kind of mirrors the tone of the show [*Xena*] itself, too...

Chloe: Yeah, it's like the dumbest thing you've ever seen. And then the next episode, you're crying.

Stacey: So true. And then the next episode is a musical (laughter). (2021)

WBB draws on a queer politics of play that grounds us in the present by looking back at a particularly iconic tv series in queer culture at large. While the podcast occasionally veers off to discuss other popular media in queer culture, the core of the show is commentary from Sara and Chloe as a duo or featuring additional guests as they work their way through the entire *Xena* series. While the duo had quite a few favourite WBB episode suggestions that evoke this tension of politics and play, their two-part *Xena* episodes, *The Debt* 1 and 2, stand out to them as expressly important to the formation of

the sex wars, see "Sisterhood separatism and sex wars" by Sophie Robinson in *Lesbian Feminism: Essays Opposing Global Heteropatriarchies* (2019, pp.29-44).

the show's now well-established tone. Chloe shared that "the little initial clips that Sara recorded" as a test pilot for the podcast "was when we were watching *The Debt*. So that one's a bit special for us because that is what sort of launched our entire podcast" (Krause & Gill, 2021). You can listen to this episode of WBB linked in Appendix A, Audio A9.

"The Debt Part One" WBB podcast episode is about mid-way through the podcast's continued four-year run, offering an established snapshot of the show's sound after a few years of settling into their chosen style and format. Chloe introduces some background on the "Racist mystical Asian trope" that the episode and many other episodes in Xena center on. Sara echoes these views as they cue *The Debt*, "shall we start?". We begin to hear the opening scene music playing in the background. WBB invites the listener into a queer and feminist parasocial space from the first sounds heard. The type of dialogue one might otherwise only encounter between friends at the pub or a casual house party. Some established community space where queer cultural commentary doesn't require additional spoon-fed explanation for a non-queer or non-Xena fan individual. The presumption is that in being here, the listener comes with a particular interest in, if not already established sense of a queer and feminist politic. In listening to WBB I can quickly tell I am listening to a queer feminist podcast, but how and why? How does one know whether they are listening to queer feminists or not? Where does this recognition come from? Prior to the establishment of cultural sound studies, for decades, feminist linguists have been grappling with the articulation of queer speech communities beyond the anglophone gay male voice (see for example Moonwomon-Baird, 1983; Morgan & Wood, 1995; Kulick, 2000).³⁸ In early attempts at such articulations, questions like this began to surface: 'if you lined up six heterosexual women and six lesbians, all cisgender of the same race and native speakers of the same tongue, would you be able to tell who is queer and who isn't just by the sound of their voice?' This is precisely the study conducted in 1983 by linguist Birch Moonwomon-Baird. Buried among a general list of social characteristics such as age and educational background, their study embedded a question of sexual preference for their participating listeners. Their results find the strongest correlation between "lesbian" and "Jewish" and

³⁸ See also the Lavender Language and Linguistic Conference, which has run annually since 1993. "The conference claims to be the longest-running LGBT studies conference in the US" (LAVLANG, 2021). <https://digitalcommons.ciis.edu/lavlang/>

no correlation with Southern speakers despite one identifying as a lesbian. While Moonwomon-Baird notes the study was too small for statistically meaningful results, it suggests a stereotyping of what a lesbian can sound like and reinforces that there is no universal "lesbian voice." Moonwomon-Baird suggests that instead of running such a study on a large scale, we ought to turn to how women talk with each other to understand the nuances in queer and feminist speech communities. This makes the study of sound and language in queer feminist soundwork particularly meaningful in questions of identity and community. In contrast to mainstream media representations of feminism and queerness, niche podcasts and community radio are spaces where speech communities can be studied, similar to face-to-face communication but in the form of conversation which invites any listening ear to the encounter.

While the study of gendered language, let alone queerspeak, in podcasts, is still a relatively new endeavour,³⁹ we can turn to other niche queer media studies to get a sense of how we might go about articulating the speech community characteristics that define *Warriors, Bards 'n Brews* [WBB] queer feminist style. A leading researcher in lesbian language, Robin M. Queen's study of lesbian comics, communicates how niche lesbian media often plays on "commonly held stereotypes accessible to queers in general and lesbians specifically" (1997, p. 233). Such characters are created by and for queer community recognition. One such comic analyzed is Alison Bechdel's iconic lesbian series *Dykes to Watch Out For* as an example of lesbian humour through characters "who exemplify stereotypes commonly held among lesbians" (p.234). The humour-focused lesbian language found in comics such as *Dykes to Watch Out For* aids in articulating the diversity of lesbian speech communities at the time. However, in turning to contemporary queer feminist work, "queer" in contrast to "lesbian" includes an expanded and continuous fluctuation in language use for community recognition. As a result, speech communities informed by queer feminism include an ever-growing index of stereotypes, pop culture references, and shifting sets of vernaculars based on the context of the conversation. Perhaps most intriguing in queer feminist speech communities, concerning this project's active listening back methods, is the presumed knowledge of what might be considered common queerspeak and cultural touchpoints in

³⁹ For example, Christine Mottram's 2016 article "Finding a pitch that resonates" takes on the topic of 'authoritative voice' concerning gender and podcasting. See also Freja Sørine Adler Berg (2022) for discussion of African language use in a case study of Denmark-based podcasts.

lesbian and gay history. Queen's study (1997) of lesbian language provides a starting point for describing key characteristics of queerspeak with four stylistic tropes:

Table 5-1. Robin Queen's (1997) Four Stylistic Tropes of Lesbian Queerspeak.

Stylistic Trope	Characteristics
Stereotyped women's language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A large stock of words related to specific interests, generally relegated to "woman's work": dart (in sewing) and specific colour terms - Empty adjectives like divine, charming, cute "Question" intonation where we might expect declaratives: for instance, tag questions (it's hot, isn't it) and rising intonation in statement contexts - Use of hedges of various kinds. Women's speech seems in general to contain more instances of well, y'know, kinda and so forth - Related to this, is intensive use of so; again, this is more frequent in women's speech than men's Hypercorrect grammar (women are not supposed to talk rough) - Superpolite forms (women don't use off-colour or indelicate expressions; ' women are the experts at euphemism) Lack of humour (women don't tell jokes)
Stereotyped nonstandard varieties, often associated with working-class, urban males	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cursing - in' vs. ing - postvocalic /r /deletion (may be regionally marked as well) - Nonnormative consonant cluster simplification - Contracted forms, for instance gonna, oughta, I dunno - Ethnically marked linguistic forms, kapeesh, yo mama - Some vowel quality changes depending on region
Stereotyped gay male language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of wider pitch range for intonational contours - Hypercorrection: the presence of phonologically nonreduced forms and the use of hyperextended vowels - Use of lexical items specific to gay language - Use of a H*L intonational contour (often co-occurring with extended vowels like FAABulous)
Stereotyped lesbian language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of narrow pitch range and generally "flat" intonation patterns - Cursing Use of expressions such as bite me and suck my dick, which are normally associated with men and their anatomy - Lack of humour and joking, especially in terms of sarcasm and irony

What these four stylistic tropes demonstrate within the context of campy queer soundwork like *The Lesbian Show's* "Dykes in Space" and chat style shows like *Warriors, Bards 'n Brews'* [WBB] is how language furthers fundamental understandings of gender performativity in queer culture. These shared understandings, or intersubjective cultural knowledge, are crucial to the aesthetics of camp and play regardless of its media form. In outlining these four stylistic tropes, Queen's (1997) aim

is not to reduce queerspeak down to a limited number of characteristics but rather to demonstrate how wide-ranging it can be. Moreover, why it is so difficult to pin down why queers may quickly recognize one another in dialogue but not be able to express why easily.

The speech community in which WBB finds itself is not exclusively queer, in any case. Queer feminism is undoubtedly tied to queer identity and culture but is also deeply committed to intersectional feminist politics. These feminist ties conceivably play a role in influencing shifts between lay language and feminist theory, the heavy use of gender play language, and the refusal to explain feminist terminology or queerspeak for outsiders in the WBB podcast series. In the context of WBB this translates to a presumption that the listener enjoys casual swearing and 'poop' jokes and also comes to the show with an understanding of cultural terms like queer camp, toxic masculinity, and cultural appropriation. It is a particular approach to feminist comedy and the role of humour in how the podcast conveys its queer feminist killjoy philosophy. While neither Chloe nor Sara identify first and foremost as comedians, their unfiltered chat-cast style parallels the killjoy comedian figures studied in feminist comedy (Gilbert, 2004; Reed, 2011; Balkin, 2020). Comedy may not be the first avenue one thinks of for the queer feminist killjoy. However, for figures such as Margaret Cho, Hannah Gadsby, Wanda Sykes, and our WBBs duo, this tension between unhappiness and queer play in camp brings forward a particular flavour of feminist solidarity through humour. In comedy studies, the role of humour in feminism is highly contested. In *Performing Marginality*, Joanne R. Gilbert writes, "humour is antithetical to action . . . humour renders its audience passive. It disarms through amusing . . . laughter does not constitute radical politics" (p.172). This claim of humour as simply passive amusement situates feminist humour in the same lukewarm bath water that Adorno & Horkheimer prescribe to entertainment media in their harsh critique of the culture industry circa 1944: "Fun is a medicinal bath. The pleasure industry never fails to prescribe it. It makes laughter the instrument of the fraud practiced on happiness" (p.112). However, as comedy scholar Jennifer Reed (2011) argues, to see feminist comedy as passive or lacking action is to distill it down to the same heteronormative subject/object relationship that feminist humour works to push against. By queering the analysis of feminist comedy, Reed (2011) instead offers a reading of queer comedic icons such as Margaret Cho, which refuses normative terms of heterosexuality and encourages recognition of queer and

feminist subjectivity to create "necessary cultural space for social change" (2011, p.765). For the WBB podcast, this approach to feminist humour takes shape through the ways in which Sara and Chloe grapple with issues of colonialism, racism, homophobia, pop culture, and media representation in the *Xena* series.

Turning back to *The Debt Part One* WBB podcast episode, we hear the sounds of a new drink poured and Sara taking the opportunity to describe their chosen drink enthusiastically. Chloe prompts Sara to discuss Xena's levitating queer love affair with Lao Ma and the debt Xena feels that drives the two-part episode set in the Kingdom of Lao, Chin. Sara responds, "They totally banged" but "that was the thing in the '90s, they couldn't show explicit sex scenes between any queer couple." Chloe responds, "well even into the 2000s as well" making connections to the floating scene between Willow and Tara in *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*. Sara and Chloe laugh as Sara adds, "I mean how good is the sex if you're floatin' afterwards?" Their focus then pulls back into the episode playing in the background. The duo then dive into a play-by-play dialogue of what they see on screen and make connections to past Xena episodes, "instead of going after Caesar you have to go conquer Asia like a colonizer..." comments Chloe. In their articulation of the feminist killjoy, Sara Ahmed claims, "There can be joy in killing joy. And kill joy, we must and we do" (2010, p.87). Bouncing from playful commentary on queer censorship to critique of anti-Asian colonial narratives, Sara and Chloe embody the popular figure of the feminist killjoy comedian. Writing on queer and feminist comedian Hannah Gadsby, for example, scholar Sarah Balkin unpacks the 2017 announcement that Gadsby was quitting comedy because of the 'half-told stories' that result from making a punchline out of their own experiences as a gender-nonconforming lesbian for mainstream heterosexual appeal. This is a common example of what Sara Ahmed terms the Feminist Killjoy. As Balkin writes, "despite Gadsby's resistance to identity categories, the more iterations of *Nanette* I saw, the more I felt that she was speaking to the mainstream in ways that shaped and limited its comic and political possibilities" (2020, p.76). Gadsby kills joy through finding the "promise of happiness" in comedy to be not "quite so promising" after all (Ahmed, 2010, p.65). In Gadsby's case, the promise of happiness in being a successful comedian with a Netflix special is squashed by the unhappiness of grappling with topics of homophobia, xenophobia, and gender violence watered down for an easy-to-follow for all heterosexuals' punchline. In contrast to the tensions Gadsby felt in playing a homonormative feminist killjoy for a

general public, Sara and Chloe assume fellow feminists and queers as their listening audience. Their podcast doesn't have the same reach potential as Gadsby's *Nanette*. However, in refusing to play nice for the happiness of others, WBB podcast instead creates a space of solidarity and feminist worldmaking through "recognizing our alienation from happiness" as fellow queers and feminists (Ahmed, 2010, p.87).

Intimacy in Place, but make it Punk

The balance of queer play and feminist politic in WBB podcast powerfully resonates through language and humour. However, in listening between and around their words, the show also offers elements of intimacy and punk ethos through the soundscape of their East Vancouver living room. In bringing a feminist-embodied ear to the analysis of *The Debt Part One* WBB episode, we can hear three keynote sounds found throughout the podcast series: the soft clanking of ice cubes in a partially drank glass with their chosen brew in hand, tiny meows of their cat [Podcat] in the background, and the reverberance of the duos' voices coalescing to provide the listener with a sense of their casual apartment space. Together these sounds provide a sonic intersubjective connection between the listener and hosts. This spatial element of the show is part of what creates such a powerful sense of parasocial connection to Chloe and Sara. While the duo doesn't claim to purposefully play on the sonically homey vibes of their space, in doing so, this soundscape helps situate the duo within a working-class feminist and queer idea of place. An idea I argue is rooted in the same contextual basis of the tropes outlined by Queen (1997) in their study of queerspeak. Just as the language of WBB evokes stereotypes of working-class lesbian culture, the show's soundscape equally works to signify domesticity, working-class practices, and queer cultural signifiers, including Xena background sounds and the notorious Podcat. We can hear the domesticity in the creaking of their living room furniture, in the mixing of drinks and occasional neighbourhood ambience. Working class identity is signified by Chloe and Sara through sounds such as the clanking of beer cans and the lo-fi DIY punk sound of the series.

Sound is always filtered through the listener's perspective. The first step to reorientating away from the default listening ear and toward a more feminist-embodied ear is acknowledging one's own situatedness. This situatedness harkens back to the same

feminist logics Harvey (2019) outlines in what makes good feminist media research. In recording the podcast in their own living space, the sounds of Chloe and Sara's situatedness as working-class East Vancouver queers are ever-present in their episodes. Furthermore, whether intentional or not, the typical lo-fi stereo recording setup of WBB, when using headphones or a two-speaker configuration, positions the listener as if they are sitting right across from Sara and Chloe. The WBB hosts are often heard just slightly to the left and right as if seated side by side on a couch across from you. This choice to record in this way and to leave the recording in its original stereo form is in stark contrast to the traditional stereo radio or podcast mixing technique. A sound likely familiar if listening to professionally produced studio shows, the host's voice is recorded in mono in an acoustically treated sound booth and then mixed into a phantom center. The psycho-acoustic phenomenon of a phantom center is generally experienced when a sound source appears to be coming from a point between two speakers when mixed in stereo. However, on headphones, mixing to the phantom center produces a sense of the host's voice as coming inside the listener's head. This mixing technique to create an internalization of the host's voice is part of what Richard Berry (2016) describes as a 'hyper-intimacy' where the host is not simply heard as only close to you but as part of you. In contrast, WBB's lo-fi stereo soundscape evokes a closeness while keeping the hosts voices ostensibly external. The lo-fi stereo technique of WBB is by no means the immersive spatial experience of binaural, surround, 360 or 3D sound.⁴⁰ Instead, the sheer simplicity of WBB recordings creates a place in the mix for the listener to sit *with* the hosts rather than being talked at by a voice from a mysterious ether. The keynote sounds of 'Podcat' meows, the hum of their ventilation system, the lo-fi stereo punk sound production and, of course, the continuous sounds of Xena playing on their tv as the duo record seated on their living room sofa, work to create a queer feminist style of punk intimacy.

Still, the intimacy felt through listening to WBB is a different intersubjective experience than being co-present in an acoustic environment. Instead, the electroacoustic world of soundwork functions as a "boundary object" between the listener and Chloe and Sara's

⁴⁰ While immersive soundwork production is not addressed in this chapter or text, spatial audio techniques are well established across media, from film to virtual reality gaming. They are increasingly taken up in the podcast space too, as explored in the 2021 article "Telling stories in soundspace" by Abigail Wincott, Jean Martin, and Ivor Richards.

queer feminist world (Cory & Boothby, 2021). In their study of podcasting with migrant communities in Sweden, Cory and Boothby (2021) conceptualize podcasts as boundary object technologies that bridge social worlds and provide "sites of communication and translation between groups" (p.118). The term 'boundary objects' was initially coined by Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer (1989) to explain how objects of scientific inquiry can maintain consistent identity across contexts while acquiring different adaptations based on local use. ⁴¹ While Star and Griesemer are particularly interested in naming boundary objects to explain such phenomenon in the translation of museum objects, they invite broad application of the term claiming, "these objects may be abstract or concrete" (p.393). In response to the application of the term 'boundary objects' across disciplines, Star (2010) later distills the required components down to a set of three: "interpretive flexibility", differing "material/organizational structure", and varied needs or arrangement based "scale/granularity". What Star and Griesemer (1989) were trying to evoke through an articulation of 'boundary objects' was a way to understand translation and cooperation across heterogenous contexts. Boundary objects can inhabit different worlds yet take on different meanings in each despite their consistencies in form. Regardless of the translation of the object, it is still something that is shared and co-operated over.

In Star's 2010 retrospective on boundary objects, they reflect on the inevitable question 'can't anything be a boundary object then?' The simple answer is yes. A boundary object might be a map, a particular species of bird, or a podcast, but Star (2010) is less interested in restricting the possibilities of what is named a boundary object, and more interested in asking whether applying the concept of boundary object is the most useful approach to addressing the questions and needs of the research. For example, positioning the 'podcast' as a boundary object allows Cory and Boothby (2021) to address the political significance of the "synchrony and dissonance" in podcasts produced and listened to by migrants in their community arts group. Podcasts and radio certainly work as boundary objects in the sense that the listener is always still

⁴¹ Star and Griesemer's (1989) proposition of boundary objects critically addresses the Latour-Callon model of interessement, particularly the use of devices by actors for interessement in other actors' translation process to "impose on or stabilize" definitions across networks. Star and Griesemer address interessement, or "the challenge intersecting social worlds pose to the coherence of translations" (Star & Griesemer, 1989, p.389), as taken from the work of Michel Callon (1986) and Bruno Latour (1986).

experiencing the soundwork within their own embodied context, bringing their own interpretations to the table. However, on the other hand, I argue that this boundary is less of a line or division which allows one to cross over into another world and is more reminiscent of falling snow or diffraction of light. The boundary is another way to describe the experience of hitting an affective threshold through listening, where we begin to resonate with the sonic subjectivity of the work. It is again sonic dust at work. Soundworks are not objects you can hold in your hand or gaze at from a distance. Instead, soundworks, when listened to attentively, create a transient recomposition of one's sonic space and sense of place to let the sonic dust fall. Simply put, podcasts are boundary objects when acts of listening become weighty with feelings of resonance.

This “synchrony and dissonance” in soundwork experience helps to explain why one listener might *feel* work is intimate and another does not. Another might hear how the work is intimate to others through its aesthetic and narrative production, but they do not resonate with the intimacy in the same way as the first listener. The sonic dust does not stick or settle. In the cases of queer feminist soundwork, such dissonances might be stories of queerness or uses of queerspeak perhaps understood by a non-queer listener as intimate to another but not to their own subjective ear. On the side of synchrony, the imagined ideal of 'home', and thus the sounds of domestic space despite their variations and exceptions, are more common in their association with privacy, family, closeness, and/or comfort linked to "conceptualizations of intimacy" across a variety of listeners (Durnová, & Mohammadi, 2021). Soundworks' ability to blend with the domestic space and evoke an imagined sense of home through sound can also be traced back to the history of radio soap operas and women's programming. Early women's radio programming aimed to invite “the imagined woman-at-home to do the radical work of re-envisioning the possibilities of reality” with its low-brow aesthetics in contrast to the hi-fi radio targeted toward men during radio soap opera's heyday between 1930 and 1960 (Emmett, 2021). While radio scholars such as Ilana R. Emmett (2021), Michele Hilmes (1997) and Elena Levine (2020) note the historically gendered aspects of radio's relationship with domesticity, the homey intimacy created through *Warriors, Bards 'n Brews* [WBB] podcast additionally draws on DIY punk aesthetics to queer this once established gendered sonic intersubjectivity between hosts and community. The term DIY can evoke a wide range of media, from the 1930s sci-fi zine to 80's punk music to feminist zines of the 1990s. What all of these DIY media share is an ethos, which Amy

Spencer (2008) puts simply as "the urge to create a new cultural form and transmit it to others on your own terms" (p.8). In the world of soundwork, we can trace the DIY punk aesthetics of shows such as WBB back to British pirate radio post World War II. As the British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC] "reasserted dominance over the airwaves", British youth began to crave the rock 'n roll sound of American culture they found themselves exposed to during the war (p.139). To address this growing community of rock 'n roll craved youth, DIY broadcasters took to international waters where they could avoid the red tape and constraints of British broadcast regulation. Despite their eventual termination, pirate radio stations like the iconic Radio Caroline began "transmitting radical new programmes" (Spencer, 2008, p.140) that kick-started decades of independent sound broadcast rebellion to follow from micro radio stations to indie podcasting. We might think of independently produced and distributed podcasts today like WBB as predecessors of pirate radio which apply the DIY punk ethos to the affordances of the RSS feed.

Queer Soundworks Punk Roots

Part of what gave DIY pirate radio its punk rock feel was its lo-fi aesthetic. In contrast to the term 'hi-fi,' 'lo-fi' broadly refers to production techniques in opposition to high production values within the particular media form. Lo-fi is most commonly applied to musical aesthetics but also spans visual art, craft, film, writing, activist practices, social protests, and soundwork. Through recording in a reverberant space with background sound, casual chat and budget equipment, the WBB podcast's lo-fi aesthetic, whether deliberate or not, places the show within this particular legacy of DIY punk culture. This lo-fi anti-capitalist aesthetic largely associated with punk rock can also be heard in the histories of queercore across the US and Canada. Gaining ground in the 1980s as a reaction to the predominance of white male power in the punk scene, queercore, much like the more commonly known Riot Grrrl Movement, declared "civil war" on the punk mainstream. A key difference was that queercore also established itself as a subculture against gay and lesbian mainstreams of disco, divas and folk through the articulation and circulation of "a set of oppositional identities, mediated meanings and social practices for queers to occupy and engage within sub-cultural space" (Nault, 2019, p.2). Similarly, through their queer feminist punk ethos, Sara positions the podcast in opposition to trans-exclusionary white feminist culture and capitalist pop feminism.

Sara expresses that "[the show is] an extension of us. You know, I'm not going to like self-censor too much like my opinions, like whatever. I'm going to go off on TERFs because f*ck TERFs" (Gill & Krause, 2021).⁴² In our conversations on what makes media queer feminist, the duo brought their brash and unfiltered honesty to the table. Sara: "Immediately, I'm just like, What kind of feminism are we talking here? Are we inclusive? Are we intersectional or are we are we just like women are born women and you all can fuck off? If that's the case, I don't talk to you" (Gill & Krause, 2021). This provocative queer feminist approach is applied not only to their use of queerspeak and the soundscape of the show but in each decision made in content, editing, and guest invitations for WBB. Chloe notes in our chat the conscious decision to keep the episodes unfiltered beyond minor edits to remove any odd mess-ups or sensitive information about friends or community.

More broadly, the startling shock-effect provocations of queercore and queer-feminist punk can undoubtedly be heard in the fluctuations between serious politic and humour at the heart of WBB podcast's self-described "gay chaos" (Gill & Krause, 2021). The shock-effect style of queer punk subculture 'queercore' is perhaps most crystal clear in their 2022 episode *But I'm a Cheerleader* (with Andrea Warner, Dina Del Bucchia and Hannah McGregor). This episode featuring three returning guests from the Vancouver feminist scene begins with a characteristic WBB cold open of lo-fi laughter. However, it quickly turns to a roundtable discussion of the joys of watching a hippo defecate. The digital quality of each guest's voice recording varies, only adding to the scrappy DIY sound of the episode. As the conversation flows, it turns from the pleasures of defecation to the topic of fisting and finally to the main event, a critical feminist treatise of the queer camp classic film *But I'm a Cheerleader*. This shock-effect approach common to punk forms is a "deliberate deployment of the outrageous and offensive" to jolt the listener into an instinctual response of shock or disgust and perhaps ultimately to shock the audience out of their typical listening experience and toward a different awareness and potential action (Nault, 2019, p3). Originating in Toronto through queer fanzine

⁴² TERF is a commonly used acronym for 'Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists'. While commonly used, I also want to note how problematic the term TERF can be in perpetuating antifeminist narratives and reducing the wide array of radical feminist histories to transphobic events. If your feminism is trans-exclusionary, then it is NOT feminism. Let's stop giving them the pleasure of association.

J.D.s. by G. B. Jones and Bruce LaBruce, queercore drew on the growing number of queers (including those of colour) involved in punk from the start to push punk politics toward provocatively queer sexual and profane sensibilities. A queerness that queercore historian Curran Nault claims, "has left a subversive stain on [punk] subculture that can still be observed today" (2019, p.2). Queercore ultimately spread across the globe. Including the west coast of Canada, where queer feminist punk acts like Tribe 8, founded in 1991, brought a flavour of "all-dyke, all-out, in-your-face, blade-brandishing, gang castrating, dildo swingin', bullshit-detecting, aurally pornographic, neanderthal-pervert [...] patriarchy-smashing" politic to west coast queer and feminist activism (Wiedlack, 2015, p.39). Perhaps most interesting in WBB podcasts queer punk aesthetic is the dichotomy between these moments of provocation and the soft intimacy felt through the playful banter of Chloe and Sara as long-term domestic partners inviting the listener into their home each and every episode.

The Queer Art of Sonic Intimacy

While Chloe and Sara bring awareness of the patriarchy-smashing queer punk politic embedded in queer feminist soundwork, the erotic politic so key to queer feminism's sex-positive ethos and which is central to podcasting's common conceptualization as an intimate medium is perhaps best illustrated through the work of *The Heart* podcast. Technological changes in soundwork listening practices toward screen-based mobile devices and earbuds have contributed to a shift in vocal performance and audio production practices produced for a personal mobile listening environment. *The Heart* plays with many of the same aesthetic elements discussed so far, including camp and queer punk, but in contrast, offers a more hi-fi sonic approach which plays with the affective elements of intimacy in close listening. Intimacy is one of those words we seem to throw around quite often and sometimes without really thinking about what it means to call something like the medium of podcasting "intimate." Intimacy is often used as a euphemism for the erotic. However, as feminist and queer scholarship has made plain, intimacy may, as Sara Ahmed writes, "gather around" sex and sexuality, but it also exceeds those terms (Ahmed, 2010, p.14). In soundwork, intimacy is created through recognition, repetition and reproduction of physical and emotional closeness in sound production and narrative style (Euritt, 2020). This experience of intimacy and reception is not the same for every listening ear. As Alyn Euritt argues, intimacy in

podcasting is “a continual process of culturally contingent negotiation” (p.34). Even before the listener hits play on an episode of *The Heart*, the artwork, descriptions, and episode titles begin this repetition of the queer erotic intimacy the soundwork aims to share. The podcast artwork features an anatomical neon pink heart set on a flat lavender background. The show is described simply as “an audio art project about intimacy and humanity.” However, the episode titles and descriptions reproduce a more personal queer feminist tone reflected in the lavender tribute their podcast artwork aims to evoke. Such examples of episode titles include “god + the gays” (2017), “Race Traitor: What makes a mom a white mom?” (2020), “Divesting from People Pleasing: Power” (2020), and “Lesbian separatism is Inevitable” (2020). The show is well-known for taking on hyper-personal and political topics from their miniseries *No*, which takes the listener inside producer Kaitlin Prest’s personal sexual journey from youth to adulthood, to the 2020 series *Race Traitor*, where producer Phoebe Unter grapples with how intergenerational white power is normalized in their life. Through repetition of erotic personal storytelling and the reproduction of “closeness” through physical and emotional proximity, *The Heart* ultimately plays with a queer feminist erotic politic of sonic intimacy to counteract the dominance of heteronormative narratives in hi-fi podcasting by engaging with the listener through a queered affective use of sound.

Podcasting often gets deemed intimate because of its association with headphones and private listening, but that is just one of the ways we might listen. Intimacy turns our attention to varieties of closeness, leading one to ask larger questions about race, gender, sexuality, and private vs. public. So, by closeness, I not only mean physically or sonically but also closeness as in connection and the circulation of affect. We can again envision the metaphor of sonic dust. I take my definition of affect from the invaluable edited collection by Jennifer Nash titled *Gender: Love*. Here affect refers to people’s embodied response to being in the world. In other words, affects are the senses that emerge when a person feels something embodied and visceral: the wave of disgust upon encountering vomit, the nervous flutter when getting back a written exam, or the gush of tenderness for a loved one. It is different from emotion, though tied together in how we experience them. It is a bodily intensity that can be circulated from body to body, and from medium to body if we understand the mediated voice or produced text as an extension of the body. This circulation results in subjective experiences and shared or intersubjective public feelings and understandings.

The study of affect is exciting for many feminist and queer scholars because it draws attention to intimate, embodied, everyday life in a way that acknowledges the entanglement between this realm of experience, which we know to be political. Ahmed (2010) argues that "emotions are not simply "within" or "without" but that they create the very effect of the surfaces or boundaries of bodies and worlds" (p. 117). Although Ahmed's language is primarily focused on the body as a surface for this affective 'stickiness,' I argue that their theory of affective economy, this accumulation and redistribution of emotion, holds potential power for discussing sound media. I have written elsewhere, "there is an inherent intimacy in voice-driven soundwork that seems to be soaking in affect. The listener puts on their headphones, presses play and becomes immersed in an affective discourse of human experience through listening and connecting" (Copeland, 2018, p.211-212). As a mediated intimate object, the Heart becomes sticky with affect through its social public circulation. Applying the metaphor of sonic dust, when we press play, some of that affect shakes loose. The affective value, or amount of dusty accumulation, will vary depending on the intersubjectivity between the listener and the soundworks producers and characters. As Ahmed explains "affect does not reside positively in the sign or commodity but is produced only as an effect of its circulation" (2010, p. 120). This affective stickiness of the topics and approach to sound production is key to the 'intimacy' central to The Heart's aesthetic.

In our interview, Kaitlin reflects on how the show has shifted to become even more rooted in the feminist ideology of 'the personal is political.' Rather than peering into the lives of others, Kaitlin notes, "*The Heart* is like it's a team of different people with different identities, all making work about their own bodies and their own lives and their own experiences from their point of view. The idea of the personal is political is very, very, very built into the roots and foundations of the way that we do this work" (Prest, 2021). This personal approach goes back to *Heart* co-founders Kaitlin and Mitra Kaboli's experience with CKUT Montreal community radio show *Audio Smut* where the erotic politic of *The Heart* podcast was first developed. Kaitlin draws the distinction where *Audio Smut* is "a really fiercely like sex positive, like sexuality focused show [whereas] *The Heart* became more about intimacy in the broadest sense of the word. Using art and narrative to kind of like expand what we expect or what we think is normal" (Prest, 2021).

The Heart's inaugural episode for their 2020 relaunch with host/producer team Nicole Kelly and Phoebe Unter (aka PU/NK) is aptly titled for this study, "Lesbian Separatism is Inevitable" (2020). You can listen along to this episode of *The Heart* in Appendix A, Audio A10. The episode is a love letter of sorts to the duo's experience living out their lesbian separatist fantasy at a Dyke Ranch retreat in 2016. An artistic decision heavily influenced by their interest in the aesthetics and politics of lesbian feminism through the works of writers like Audre Lorde and Jill Johnson. "*The Heart* is supported by... you" Kaitlin opens the premiere episode with a love letter to the listener, a thank you for supporting the show. Their recorded voice has a reverberance and movement as if recorded sitting at their desk or kitchen table. Likely with Kaitlin's signature H1 Zoom⁴³ to capture a more "real-life" aesthetic over an anechoic studio booth record. This approach helps create a contrast to the sound of their hi-fi episode introduction voiceover, thick and close, set to *The Heart's* signature haunting intro music beat. Thus begins a love story about friendship, community, utopia, about you. Enter the two voice leads and episode producers, Phoebe and NK. The duo swap the narrator role back and forth throughout the 24-minute 49-second piece, sharing a singular but familiar story of a girl exploring their queer sexuality, from internet searches and chat rooms to college friendships and embracing radical feminism. Their storytelling approach positions "you" as the girl in their narrative. "You book a trip to Mexico alone," "You meet someone," "You are ready." The episode is carefully sound designed but a balanced complement to NK and Phoebe's voices which stand centre stage. Music, archival lesbian activist voices, and background re-enactments of parties with friends slowly fade up and down into silence as NK and Phoebe dip us in and out of their personal erotic evolution across time and into their lesbian awakening. NK and Phoebe share lines from letters written to each other, their voices panning subtly left and right in dialogue. Their liberatory sexual and playful energy shifts as "the summer of 2016 [becomes] one long undulating rage cry," and their letters turn to weighty (sonically dusty) news of explosives at the pride parade, police brutality, the Stanford rapist, Black Lives Matter protests, the Orlando shooting and attending rallies or vigils every other week. Finally, Phoebe breaks through the weight with an invitation: "Dear NK, what if we took our political beliefs to their most extreme conclusion? [*music begins: "Magic Man" by the Heart, guitar solo.*"]"

⁴³ The Zoom H1 is a pocket-size portable digital recorder commonly known among soundworkers and lauded for its discrete portability, ease of use, and professional-quality built-in stereo microphone array.

The narrative fluctuation between feelings of erotic play and sexual liberation to grief and political action echoes the same balancing act heard in lesbian feminist radio shows like *The Lesbian Show* and *Dykes on Mykes*. Returning to Audre Lorde's lesbian feminist essay "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power" provides some context to the particular political and aesthetic approach the Mermaid Palace Collective (the team behind *The Heart*) is employing here. Lorde (1978) argues that while the superficially erotic is associated with female inferiority, where women are made to feel shameful, through feminism the erotic can instead provide a deep connection with another person, self-connection, and awareness of your capacity to feel joy outside of heteronormative and 'virtuous' notions of marriage or afterlife. Recognizing and sharing that power with consent in "our lives can give us the energy to pursue genuine change within our world." The erotic in bodily encounter and in writing a poem for Lorde is one and the same. Both drive a feeling of fullness and power, "for not only do we touch our most profoundly creative source, but we do that which is female and self-affirming in the face of a racist, patriarchal, and anti-erotic society." Taking their erotic radical feminism to its "extreme," we join Phoebe and NK at the lesbian separatist Dyke Ranch. A manifesto is written, we dance by the fire, and our heads are shaved. The buzz of the clippers moves left to right and around the listener's head; as Phoebe says, "they move it across your scalp in long, confident strokes. The pressure sends pins and needles to other parts of your body." By inviting the listener in as the story's lead character, not as an individual but in a fluid assemblage with Phoebe and NK, we are invited to recognize and share in the erotic power of their sexual liberation and become a lesbian separatist along with them.

This repeated and purposeful application of erotic power and intimacy to create the queer feminist sonic world of *The Heart* became particularly clear when co-listening to a clip of *Dykes on Mykes* with Kaitlin Prest. The DOMs clip of radio fuzz-soaked kissing, chanting and laughing queers is an audio collage Deb VanSlet made during a kiss-in event commemorating the Montreal Sex Garage Raid (VanSlet, 1991). Introduced in Chapter 4, you can listen again with us to the sounds of Deb's kiss-in collage in Appendix A, A5. Through its showcase of laughter and lo-fi recording quality, Deb's kiss-in collage embodies a similar amateur playfulness heard in *The Lesbian Show* and *Warriors, Bards 'n Brews* podcast, but in contrast, it takes on a much more emotionally powerful sonic style through use of intimacy in sound production more akin to the soundwork of *The Heart*. The sounds of close-mic'd kissing, and commentary by the

participants on site as to what exactly kissing might sound like on the radio. This close-mic'ing, along with a swoon of chanting from a raid protest rally and a reflection-inducing slow instrumental ballad, further intimate the feelings of community loss, power and intimacy Deb's tribute aimed to share. In listening to the *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] kiss-in collage, Kaitlin echoed the experience of feeling the community connection and erotic power of the work while also critiquing the production techniques applied. Kaitlin retorts:

That's not how you want to record a kiss. You want to record a kiss? You have to hear all the sweet, cute things that they say to each other and [...] their little giggles, you know, like that's something that I have developed a lot over time is like, how do you translate intimacy? You know, the sound of a kiss, it sounds kind of gross, like so how do you how do you record the sound of a kiss that makes you feel like you're being kissed (Prest, 2021).

Kaitlin's creative approach to intimacy is a reminder that while queer feminist soundwork may be rooted in the same politics and spirit, how that politic is evoked through a queer punk ethos, playfulness and intimacy in sound production can differ significantly from one show to another. Kaitlin describes *The Heart* as “punk band goes pro” which speaks to the particular context of creating queer feminist work within their American public radio and podcasting ecosystem: part of a punk culture but one that is at odds with its place within the capitalist market by contractual association with Radiotopia/PRX. In contrast, *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] stands by there being “something great about scratchy raw messiness” in the sound of their show (MacPhee, 2020). This raw messiness found in queer feminist work like DOMs and *Warriors, Bards 'n Brews* begs the question, perhaps such aesthetics are something only available to shows and spaces that refuse to position themselves within the mainstream soundwork world and instead remain within and for their queer and feminist communities.

Sweaty Conclusions

From lesbian camp to queerspeak to erotic power, these different approaches to queer feminist aesthetics of play and intimacy in soundwork speak to each show's unique formations of sonic subjectivity and intersubjectivity. Tracing queer feminist aesthetics across varied temporal and spatial contexts brings with it a reality of how these contexts shape the way a politic is experienced and reproduced. It also makes apparent what stays the same. What is at the very root of queer feminist soundwork.

Similarly, *The Heart's* "Lesbian Separatism is Inevitable" concludes with a reflection on the limits and flawed utopia of lesbian separatism. Drawing on the queerness embedded in the series' politics, co-producer Phoebe Unter reminds the listener that "seeing gender as the primary or only power dynamic to struggle against is a privilege only really afforded to white women. And woman and man don't really feel like fixed terms. So why not fight the binary altogether?" Still, Phoebe's co-producer NK (short for Nicole Kelly) feels they have never really returned from their utopic dream. The familiar magic man riff plays us out.

Soft plosives and breathiness are left in the mix, perhaps as an aesthetic decision in keeping the listener close, in having the pulsing of the plosives felt in your eardrums as we collectively feel and think our way through a history of queer feminism. In listening to this episode, I am taken back to an experience at Third Coast Audio Festival [TCAF], a big radio and podcasting festival in Chicago, USA one windy October 2019. Phoebe and NK were co-organizers of a workshop called "Gonna Make You Sweat" that applied Sara Ahmed's theory of 'sweaty concepts' to the creation of soundwork. Asking, 'How and why does a piece of audio make us sweat?' 'What does it feel like when artists challenge conventional radio and allow their lived experiences to inform their work?' Maybe not so surprisingly, much of the work they played was by producers who identify as queer. What tied all of the shared experimental works together were these same ideas of playfulness and intimacy heard across the works shared in this chapter. Techniques of personal narrative, close-mic'ing, erotic power, queerspeak, soundscapes for feelings of community place, and utopian dreams echoed throughout the workshop geared toward carving space for "POC, femmes, people with disabilities, trans peeps, and queers" to tell our stories (TCAF, 2020).

The workshop was my first interaction with Sara Ahmed's theory of sweaty concepts applied in a listening practice, and what a first experience to have in a queer and feminist community room. Coined by Sara Ahmed (and inspired by Audre Lorde), "sweaty concepts" describe something hard to describe and often hard to experience tied to intellectual labour. Here I borrow a definition from artist Gloria Galvez, where sweaty concepts "for women, people of colour, disabled people, or trans folx (for example), give language to our abstract experiences (experiences that are invisible to dominant groups; experiences for which the dominant group hasn't developed language — because it hasn't had to) and legitimize them" (2019). In an expanded account Ahmed

writes, "more specifically a 'sweaty concept' comes out of a description of a body that is not at home in the world...or a description of the world from the point of view of not being at home in it" (2017, p.13). Queer feminist soundwork is a sweaty concept. It is an aesthetic and political experience that is challenging to describe not only because its politic includes a refusal to pin down a definition but because of the messy assemblage of community trauma, kinship, erotic power, play, and intimacy in reverberation. When our bodies are sweaty, sticky, the sonic dust of queer feminist soundwork clings even harder to our skin. Queer feminist soundwork is sweaty work. It is networks of dusty laboured bodies in resonance.

Chapter 6.

Finding Queer Soundwork: On Feminist Network Labour and Discoverability.⁴⁴

When I made my first YouTube video in 2008, I had no idea the community of rambunctious queers I was about to meet. Growing up in cookie-cutter white suburban Canada, I don't think I even knew what a lesbian was. There weren't a lot of queer characters or stories in the media I found myself in relation with. Not on our family TV. Not on the car radio, nor in the top 40 tracks found on the sleeve of CDs my mom kept under the backseat. I don't think I realized it at the time. The lack of lesbians on TV or that I was one. A kid too caught up in playing Guitar Hero in my parent's basement and working part-time at the mall record shop. I liked hanging out with my 'girlfriends' and braiding each other's hair (something I'm still not good at), but I felt most at home with my best friend Dan. Wirey, sharp-tongued, he knew I was gay before I did. We'd stay up late listening to our favourite indie bands and making magazine collages of our favourite celebrity icons. Angelina Jolie and Katy Perry carefully cut out and pasted to my closet door. The same closet where I'd smoke weed and make out with my boyfriend of the week. Dan and I weren't exactly outsiders, but we never really felt entirely on the inside, either.

One night watching YouTube videos, probably something like Charlie The Unicorn or Tay Zonday (this was 2008 after all), to cheer me up from getting dumped by my now ex-boyfriend, Dan asked if I'd ever watched the *5awesomegays*. I hadn't but I'd heard of Tyler Oakley and thought, sure, why not? The *5awesomegays'* Youtube videos led to Gigi Gorgeous, Davey Wavey, Laci Green, and *TheBeaverBunch*. A teen's queer vlog refuge took shape. We'd meet every night after school and dish out the latest gay Youtube gossip. Dan and I were hooked. We started making our own videos too. I'd post cover videos of my favourite heartbreak songs and Dan started vlogging in response to our favourite YouTubers. One night, one of our YouTube friends Jordan put out a call to start a new collab channel. Just like *5awesomegays* but open to all queers, not just gay

⁴⁴ Chapter 6 is an expanded version of a forthcoming edited book collection chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of Radio Studies* edited by Michele Hilmes and Andrew Bottomley.

boys. If they can do it, why not us? Dan and I submitted our audition videos, and *Stacey and the Sausages* was born. A channel title that hasn't aged well to say the least. Wide-eyed teens post vlogs from different cities, all looking for the same thing. Queer community. A place to play. To be heard. To be whatever version of ourselves we want to be when it might not be safe or feel safe to do so beyond our bedroom walls.

This is not a coming-out story. Thinking back, Dan and I never fully 'came out' to one another in the conventional sense. YouTube wasn't about coming out. It was instead a place for us to always be in the process of becoming and simultaneously be in dialogue with our past selves and others. Coming out is continuous, and as Judith Butler famously asks, "so we are out of the closet, but into what? What new unbounded spatiality?" (1991, p.16). The closet door leads to another space, and the coming out continues. What matters instead is who is there with you and the politics of what is valued and shared. Instead of a coming-out story, this is a story of platform affordances, community discoverability, and the queer information networks that can take shape as a result. This is not to say that Youtube's algorithms and platform affordances are devoid of inequalities or risk (see Bishop, 2018). The platform undoubtedly has its own controversial history of discriminatory practices against LGBTQ+ users who have experienced video deletion, age restriction, and demonetization of content due to the platform's automated algorithms and community guidelines (Rodriguez, 2022). The community-driven logic of my particular queer corner of the platform, in a particular time, worked to connect me to a wider community and into a queer place of possibility outside and within my suburban space.

YouTube was my introduction to queer information networks. However, for each individual, that key media or technology which connects us to community and assists in developing a sense of self is never singular. In the years that followed, the networked communities surrounding queer and feminist radio and podcasting became central to my continual political and (inter)subjective identity construction. From Youtube to co-founding *FemRadio*, a feminist radio collective at CJRU The Scope at Ryerson, to my situatedness within this very research, I also found a greater sense of my 'networked self' online *and* offline (see Papacharissi, 2018).⁴⁵ Through the experiences of queer

⁴⁵ Zizi Papacharissi's concept of the 'networked self' offers a ground to study identity formation embedded in online platforms. Creating "a sense of self that is networked" rests upon the

feminist soundworkers, in this chapter, I will outline how soundwork plays a key role in queer media activism: as entertainment, a public-facing political project, a community space, and part of a larger history of lesbian feminist information infrastructure.

I use the phrase 'queer information networks' to encompass both formal and informal networked communities involved in sharing queer information across various media platforms. For example, a formal queer information network might take the shape of a podcast network like Procyon Network, which brings together various shows and producers to share resources and amplify each other's work. A more informal queer information network might instead remain unnamed with information shared and connections made through the assistance of a platform like Youtube and other various social media, as is the case in my shared experience above. Before Youtube or social media facilitated networks of queer community and information, *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] was part of an early Internet lesbian information infrastructure. For example, former DOMs Host Elana Wright (2020) recalls "hosting the show when the Internet started. Deb would get this lesbian news feed, and she would read out the latest lesbian news from around the world, mostly from Australia for some reason (Deb and Elana laugh)". The experienced scarcity of lesbian information meant seeking out and becoming a part of a larger information network across newsletters, magazines, events and, of course, soundwork. As Elana continued, "there was also a monthly photocopied newsletter with the activities and a bit of content that was circulated, and you could pick up at the gay and lesbian bookstore. But we were the only other source of lesbian info [in Montreal][...] I'd say it was an essential lifeline for Montreal lesbians" (Wright, 2020). Despite concerns that the Internet might kill the radio star⁴⁶, as access to online spaces became a part of queer cultural life, soundworks such as *Dykes on Mykes* shifted between digital and electroacoustic nodes in the network. Nodes that are perhaps better described as translucent overlapping layers when it comes to their online feminist journal *No More Potlucks*. As DOMs contributor M-C MacPhee shared, "we were doing *Dykes*

premises of "Expression and connection, identity is performance, sociability is networked, sense of self is reflexive – liquid, and redactional acumen." (see Papacharissi, Z. (2010, December 10). *A Networked Self*. Ziziweb.

https://zizi.people.uic.edu/Site/Thoughts/Entries/2010/12/10_A_Networked_Self.html).

⁴⁶ Reference to Richard Berry's foundational early work on what podcasting might mean for terrestrial radio, Berry, R. (2006). Will the iPod Kill the Radio Star? Profiling Podcasting as Radio. *Convergence*, 12(2), 143–162. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856506066522>

on Mykes for years while we were doing *No More Potlucks*. So, there was so much overlap between the two. We would book people for, you know, to write articles and to do [radio] interviews” (Hogan & MacPhee, 2020). Fittingly for a time, *No More Potlucks* was also the online home to over 70 hours of archived DOMs broadcasts (Smith, 2009). In terms of aesthetics and production, as explored in *Chapter 3 – Being a Public Queer*, listening to DOMs is not so different from listening to the digitally distributed soundwork of queer podcasts today. What *has* changed, however, is the ability to reach a broader (often transnational) online community as Web 2.0 and beyond shift how queers build their community networks. The possibilities of podcasting in this regard are central to its ethos as a new medium that circumvents traditional models of gatekeeping and can thrive on global niche audiences (Spinelli & Dan, 2019).

As I listened back to clips of *Dykes on Mykes* over video chat with present-day producers behind queer feminist soundworks, these questions of how we find, access, and circulate queer media across different forms became a central theme. Some producers shared concern over access to funding; others spoke of a lack of opportunity for queer and feminist work in the podcast industry at large. *The Heart* podcast was and continues to be an exception, having carved out an award-winning sonic space for queer stories. So, when the show went on hiatus in 2018, it left a void felt by many in the industry. As former *The Heart* producer Mitra Kaboli shared, “I would get pitches every now and then. People would be like, where can I pitch the story about X, Y, Z? It's just like, babe, I don't know” (2021). While queer podcasts with community radio roots, such as *The Heart* and *Queer Public*⁴⁷ have found relative success in the overly saturated podcast market, the cancellation of critically praised American queer podcast *Nancy* (Low & Tu, 2020) in 2020 despite “a loyal core community” has raised concerns over the realities of sustaining any contemporary queer production long term (Rosenthal, 2020). As Erin McGregor (2020) of *Queer Public* expressed, “when their show [*Nancy*] ended, I was like, if they can't even stay on the air, like, how are we going to stay on the air, you know?”. In other words, if an award-winning queer show with prominent U.S. public radio

⁴⁷ Co-creators of *The Heart* podcast, Kaitlin Prest and Mitra Kaboli, were both contributors to the CKUT radio show Audio Smut which the idea of their podcast grew to become rooted in queer feminism with a focus on stories of intimacy and humanity. Erin McGregor, creator of the *Queer Public* podcast: “a podcast about real queer life” (McGregor, 2019), was once a contributor to CKUT's *Dykes on Mykes*.

backing can't make a go of it, what sort of possibilities are left for podcasts centred on queer experiences outside of the powerhouse American industry?

This tension between the liberatory possibilities of podcasting and the reality of discoverability and financial stability requires a re-evaluation of how historically marginalized communities approached such media practices. If the algorithms and platform affordances of our neoliberal age simply reinforce oppressive social relationships (Noble, 2018), perhaps we must put an ear to the past to gain insight into alternative practices of discoverability outside of the corporate-dominated digital podcast world. For instance, in a pre-internet era, feminist and queer newsletters, as Elana of DOMs mentioned above, played a crucial role in how lesbian radio shows and their networks would gain information about and support one another across geographies and cultural contexts. Likewise, lesbian radio provided an essential community in sound for listeners who could not access printed information because of location, lack of access, or perceived and real risks involved in being 'outed' by carrying a queer magazine or attending events in person. What might be revealed about the digital affordances of podcast distribution from a close analysis of these historical ties between soundwork and text-based media? Drawing on the work of scholars such as Cait McKinney (2020) and Kara Keeling (2014), I aim to apply feminist information studies and queer media studies to allow for a richer sense of the complex intermediality and infrastructure surrounding queer soundwork past and present. As McKinney notes in their study of lesbian feminist information activism, "information [is] the object that moves through the application of specific media practices—practices that form nascent publics and shape their demands" (2020, 10). It is this circulation of queer information that creates queer information networks. Ultimately, this chapter advocates for podcast practitioners and media scholars alike to look to lesbian feminist community radio practices of discoverability and network infrastructure as a community-centred site of media activism and sustained world-making possibilities for queer and feminist soundwork.

Lesbian Radio as Information Activism

The soundwork of lesbian feminist community radio is a vital form of *information activism*. As Cait McKinney (2020) outlines, the term information activism describes a rich history of individuals and social movements across North America who, out of

frustration at the lack of documented lesbian history and out of a desire for information, started generating that information themselves. Information activism is a community-driven activist practice across archives, telephone hotlines, newsletters and various communication technologies. McKinney's work on lesbian information activism provides a refreshingly critical approach to how information infrastructure – the technical data-driven systems that make communication and knowledge-sharing possible – is perceived as a predominantly white cis male-dominated power structure founded on figures such as Steve Jobs, Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos. Instead, McKinney offers a queer perspective on "the internet that lesbians built": an internet made up of newsletter databases across the USA and Canada (2020, 33). This includes *Matrices: A Lesbian/Feminist Research Newsletter*, which McKinney uses as a case study for formulating a history of DIY (do-it-yourself) publishing practices and information distribution aimed at marginalized readers who might otherwise be unable to find it. Lesbian Feminist newsletters, such as *Matrices* (1977-1996), among others⁴⁸, provided a range of resources for activist community building and outreach, such as phone trees, archival listings, mailing lists, local telephone hotlines, and reading lists. Rather than traditional for-profit ads, the newsletters often feature classified-style listings, as McKinney discusses further in their book.

The inclusion of community radio advertisements is only mentioned briefly by McKinney (2020, p.60). Yet, the history of lesbian feminist newsletter classifieds is rich with community radio outreach and documentation circulated through these same networks. For example, *The Lesbian Show* frequently posted ads in local queer and feminist magazines such as *Kinesis* (1974-2001) which provided feminist, queer, immigrant, anti-classist, and anti-ablecentrist perspectives on the news through the long-standing women's advocacy organization Vancouver Status of Women. *Kinesis* was part of a larger feminist media network in Canada, including *Broadside* in Toronto (1979-1989) and *Pandora* in Halifax (1985-1994).⁴⁹ With few explicitly lesbian newspapers to advertise for local listeners and potential collective members, TLS's outreach tactics

⁴⁸ For more on lesbian feminist newsletter networks, see Cait McKinney. 2020. "The Internet That Lesbians Built: Newsletter Networks". In *Information Activism*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

⁴⁹ For more on *Kinesis* and the legacy of feminist periodicals in Canada, see Barbara M. Freeman (2012). "One Part Creativity and Nine Parts Hard Work," in *Alternative Media in Canada*, eds. K. Kozolanka, P. Mazepa, and D. Skinner. Vancouver: UBC Press.

straddle the two worlds of feminist media activism and gay counterpublics through notable Vancouver LGBT newspaper *Angles* (1983-1998), published by the Vancouver Gay Community Centre Society. *Angles* included a wide range of materials in their publication, including featured articles, readers letters, news reports, opinion pieces, cartoons, Vancouver events listings, arts and entertainment sections, classified advertisements, obituaries, and photographs.⁵⁰ Turning to the present day, clippings of *The Lesbian Show* community ads now live in the City of Vancouver Archives as part of the BC Lesbian and Gay Archives collection.⁵¹ There are many similarities in form and focus in the ads TLS chose to submit to *Angles* and *Kinesis*. The majority provide a listing of the TLS show topics for the coming month, with two to three-line descriptions starting with the date, the show title, and a short description. Some ads provide a plain language mandate for the show alongside the show schedule, while others seem to omit these details consciously. This hints at an established understanding by most of the local readership in later years on the show's focus and where and when to tune in.

⁵⁰ *Angles* magazine was also formerly known as VGCC News. For more on *Angles* see Alex Spence (2013), *Angles and VGCC News: a subject index to two Canadian periodical publications of the Vancouver gay community*. Toronto, ON: iirg. doi: 978-0-9684588-5-3. *Xtra! West* succeeded *Angles*, later known as *Xtra Vancouver* and then simply *Xtra*, all published by Pink Triangle Press. Pink Triangle Press also published *The Body Politic*, a nationally circulated LGBT magazine where advertisements for *The Lesbian Show* have also been found. *Xtra Magazine* is still an active digital-only publication as of the time I am writing this (April 2021).

⁵¹ In 2013 the BC Gay and Lesbian Archives collection was donated to the City of Vancouver Archives by community archivist Ron Dutton who began the archive in 1976 out of his home in Vancouver's historically gay and lesbian West End. Parts of the collection are digitized and searchable on the Vancouver Archives website.

ON THE AIR

From Co-op Radio's LESBIAN SHOW this month:

Nov. 8: COLLECTIVE PROCESS, Part 2. A few collectives in Vancouver have operated successfully for years. How do they do it? We talk with members of some of these collectives.

Nov. 15: POLITICAL AND NON-POLITICAL LESBIANS, How We See Each Other. Is lesbianism a sexual activity or a political identity? On this show we discuss the similarities and differences in viewpoints.

Nov. 22: LESBIANS IN ISOLATION. Lesbians are subjected to many kinds of isolation, some voluntary, but most thrust upon us by circumstances in which we live. We discuss physical, emotional and political isolation.

Tune in Thursdays, 7:30pm, following the Coming Out show. It is produced by five women - Ann Russell, Sherry McCarnan, Gisele Perreault, Silva Tenenbein and Susan Hewitt - in order to provide a lesbian-feminist voice. If you have announcements concerning lesbians, call the station at 684-8494 between 6-7pm on Thursdays; ideas, questions, criticism or compliments also welcome, but call after the show, between 8-9:30pm Thursdays, or write The Lesbian Show, c/o Co-op Radio, 337 Carrall St, Vancouver.

Kinesis Nov 79 p. 22

Figure 6-1. ON THE AIR.
A listing for The Lesbian Show in Kinesis, Nov 1979, F1433, Box 894-G-02 fld 32, City of Vancouver Archives, Vancouver, Canada.

THE LESBIAN SHOW

December 1. Once again get to know the Lesbian Show by its music, with our newest member, Angie, and her favourite music.

December 8. The Joys of Lesbian Cooking. Learn to saute and flambe your favourite dishes with chef Nadine. Get out your pots and pans.

December 15. Herstorical trivia—amazing herstorical facts and legendary trivia you'll never learn anywhere else.

December 22. Yes, Virginia, there is an alternate lifestyle (but we are going to tell you only one). Christmas lesbian style. Find out the real festive secrets about Ms Claus.

December 29. Dancing Music to enter the New Year. So put on your bcogie shoes and dance the show away.

Angles Dec 83 p15

The Lesbian Show

Figure 6-2. THE LESBIAN SHOW.
A listing for The Lesbian Show in Angles, Dec 1983, F1433, Box 894-G-02 fld 32, City of Vancouver Archives, Vancouver, Canada.

Most notably, these advertisements provide a glimpse into the most important topics within the lesbian feminist community during the 1970s through the 1990s from a Canadian viewpoint, a viewpoint habitually overshadowed by American and Eurocentric lesbian activist history. In a 1979 TLS ad from *Kinesis* (figure 1), the reader is introduced to the newly established radio show, with episodes on how collectives operate, the differences between political and non-political lesbian identity, and the isolation that can come with lesbian life. Perhaps this transparency in how the collective operates and the very politics behind the show worked to build a rapport with their audience that invites parasocial connection, community dialogue and contribution in the same stroke. Similarly, in a 1983 TLS ad for *Angles* (figure 2) the listing indicates the importance of music in the magazine-style show while taking on a more playful tone for the gay and

lesbian community in contrast to the feminist-focused *Kinesis* readership. "Find out the *real* festive secrets about Ms Claus" the *Angles* ad reads in contrast to the serious tone of the *Kinesis* clipping: "We discuss physical, emotional, and political isolation." This type of language shift echoes sentiments in the episode topics chosen for the ad, specifically the topics of political lesbianism and isolation. As Silva Tenenbein, a co-founder of *The Lesbian Show* shared in our interview for *FemRadio* (2018), the show was grown out of frustrations with the male-dominated shared queer space of *The Coming Out Show*⁵² and the simultaneous tensions Silva and others were experiencing with the larger feminist movement of the late 1970s. While *Angles* could be presumed to have a lesbian readership who would get a kick out of the subtext of Ms Claus' secrets, when submitting to *Kinesis* the TLS collective had to additionally consider the potential anti-lesbian feminist readership.

The careful language chosen for the ads featured in *Kinesis* and *Angles* speaks to the TLS collective's deep-embedded awareness of lesbian feminist politics and a conscious effort to speak to a public audience about lesbian politics while inviting other lesbian feminists out of the woodwork and into the radio studio. Two commonly noted limitations of broadcast radio in contrast to the contemporary podcast are the latter's global distribution infrastructure and asynchronous on-demand listening. While *The Lesbian Show* was first and foremost a local show produced for and by the Vancouver lesbian feminist community, as I learned from former TLS host Cynthia Brooke, there was also a culture of tape sharing among lesbian feminist radio shows across the country in an effort to speak across communities and geographical space in ways in which the broadcast towers of community radio couldn't facilitate. "We knew about *Dykes on Mykes* and had managed to get hold of a tape, which I believe we did play at one point. That involved an actual person who used to live there, crossing the country and having a cassette," said Cynthia, "It was just really exciting to know that there were other people doing the same thing" (Brooke, 2020). Imagine it is 1987, and a listener of *Dykes on Mykes* happens to have a show tape with them as they make a move or travel to Vancouver for a visit. Folks at *The Lesbian Show* then get a chance to hear what is

⁵² *The Coming Out Show*, a radio show for the gay and lesbian community, was one of the first shows established on Vancouver Co-Op Radio after it aired in 1978. Silva noted in our 2018 interview that it wasn't just the idea of lesbian visibility that led to *The Lesbian Show*. Differences in what to include in *The Coming Out Show* and conflicts with the 'boys' involved also led to the establishment of *The Lesbian Show* in 1979.

going on in the Montreal lesbian scene and the specific voices behind a similar initiative to their own.

This circulation of show cassettes and knowledge sharing between *Dykes on Mykes* and *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] isn't the only case I've come across in my research. The two shows seem to have a long, mysteriously fragmented history of this type of material knowledge-sharing practice despite the thousands of miles between them. For the most part, the two shows had little awareness of each other outside of these sparse interactions prior to the establishment of internet and social media practices at both stations. However, the material exchange of tapes, newsletters, and community word of mouth helped to create a queer community of sound despite their geographic distance. *The Lesbian Show's* tape service program is another such example of collective efforts in sharing soundwork outside the bounds of their community radio broadcast timeslot and into the larger lesbian feminist information networks of text media. As Figure 6.3 shows below, the TLS tape service program offered interested Kinesis readers the opportunity to order recorded TLS episodes on various Lesbian Feminist topics of interest. It is currently unknown how long the program lasted, but traces of its lesbian feminist information-sharing logic can be found advertised in *Kinesis* from February to April 1980.

The Lesbian Show Co-Operative Radio (CFRO 102.7) is now offering a tape service, through which the following shows can be purchased.

<p>Introductory Show Lesbianism From The Waist Up Our Role Models: Who Are They & Dyke Separatism Lesbian Perspectives on Spirituality What Does a Lesbian Look Like? Lesbians in Prison Lesbian Art and the Art of Responsibility Lesbians and Alcohol 20th Century Lesbian, Part 1, 1910-1950 20th Century Lesbians Part II, 1950-1979 Lesbian Images and the Gay Movement Lesbian Images in Hollywood How Do We See Each Other?</p>	<p>Collective Process Part I: Why They Dont Work Collective Process Part II: Why They Do Work Lesbians in Isolation BCFW Convention Lesbians and the Constant State of Coming Out The Best of the Lesbian Show: June-Dec. 1979 No Theme, Theme Show #1 No Theme, Theme Show #2</p> <p>and our music series, Lesbians and Music: Spotlight on Mary Watkins Heather Bishop Holly Near Linda Tillery Ferron Meg Christian Sireni Avedis</p>
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Send orders to: The Lesbian Show, Tape Service, c/o Co-op Radio, 337 Carrall St., Vancouver B.C. V6B 2J4

Figure 6-3. The Lesbian Show Tape Service.

A listing for The Lesbian Show tape service, Mar 1980, *Kinesis* [Periodicals], University of British Columbia Library, Vancouver, Canada.

The tape service listed above reads like an introductory course on Lesbian Feminism from "Dyke Separatism" to women's music icons like Heather Bishop and Linda Tillery. While it is unknown how long the tape service for TLS lasted in this form,⁵³ the organized efforts of the collective to share their voices and community information beyond the airwaves and to learn of other lesbian feminist radio shows in return is clear. Furthermore, as Cynthia points out, tape-sharing practices among lesbian feminist radio shows also remind the listener of the embodied labour involved in dubbing the tape and either mailing it or bringing it across the country from Montreal to Vancouver or vice versa. This attention to labour and the body is also read in the various TLS recruitment ads in *Kinesis* and *Angles/VGCC News* as shown in Figures 6-4 and 6-5.

⁵³ Based on an analysis of the University of British Columbia Library periodicals collection for *Kinesis* 1974-2001, there does not seem to be any trace of *The Lesbian Show* tape service advertised in *Kinesis* after April 1980.

★ **The Lesbian Show** ★

DON'T LET THE MUSIC DIE: The Lesbian Show, CFRO 102.7 FM, Thursdays 8:30-9:30 pm is Canada's only exclusive lesbian radio programme. We've been on air now into our eighth year. We believe that the lesbian show is an integral part of the women's community.

Our collective at present consists of two active members--we need you to help. You can learn new skills, how to operate, interview, host; meet interesting women and be a part of the lesbian community as it happens.

We need six active members by July or we will have to relinquish our air time, air time we most likely will not be able to get back.

Don't let the lesbian community lose it's voice--help us continue--come down a Thursday evening to 337 Carall St. or phone Mary at 873-9162 after 6pm. Without your hands we will have no voice!



The Lesbian Show Collective is changing the format of the Lesbian Show starting this month. We are trying out a format with regular time slots for news and reviews, music, herstory, drama or literature, calendar and a fifteen minute feature. Although we've had good response to our theme shows in the past, we are looking forward to trying something new. We would like our listeners to take a moment after the show to call us at 684-8494 to let us know what your thoughts are on the new format.

**CO-OP RADIO
102.7 FM
104.9 CABLE**

Figure 6-4. Lesbian Show Recruitment Ad.
A call for new TLS collective members in *Kinesis*, p.29, June 1986. *Kinesis* [Periodicals], University of British Columbia Library, Vancouver, Canada.

Figure 6-5. Lesbian Show Ad in VGCC News.
TLS call for listener feedback in *VGCC News*, March 1982. F1433, Box 894-G-02 fld 32, City of Vancouver Archives, Vancouver, Canada.

These two examples demonstrate the importance of community-engaged practice and cooperation that breaks down the distinctions between soundmaker and listener. In Figure 6-4, the pluralist language of "Our collective" and "Don't let the lesbian community lose its voice" positions the reader as either already part of the show's collective or part of the Vancouver feminist activist community *Kinesis* speaks for. Complimentary to the show's non-hierarchical open-door ethos, the language in Figure 6-5 expresses the collective's active interest in receiving feedback from the community regardless of their involvement with the show to help shape the sound of TLS as the 'voice' of lesbian community. This reflexive and community-centred approach to *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] reflects their politics inspired by and in conversation with a larger network of lesbian

feminist activism taking place during the 1970s and 80s across North America and in the context of *The Lesbian Show* in particular, the lesbian feminist movement taking place in British Columbia Canada. Co-founding member of TLS, Silva Tenenbein, was actively involved in forming the Lesbian Caucus of the British Columbia Federation of Women (B.C.F.W) at the same time *The Lesbian Show* collective was established.⁵⁴ The Lesbian Caucus is widely noted in Canadian lesbian history as a key changemaker in establishing lesbian demands within the feminist agenda (Crett 1986; Ross 1990).

One area of particular interest to the caucus was resisting and reimagining patriarchal labour practices. Out of this interest came *Stepping Out of Line* (1984), a publication from members of the Lesbian Caucus of the B.C.F.W, which generously distills stories and resources from across B.C.'s lesbian and feminist communities for use in lesbian feminist awareness building, workshopping and organizing. The active knowledge and community labour practices of *The Lesbian Show* are used as an example in *Stepping Out of Line*. The TLS collective's original 1979 mandate is beneath a checklist for "somewhere to start" if interested in engaging in media activism through campaigns, speaking back, or making your own lesbian feminist media collective. A provocative closing question in the workbook reads, "Can we understand that lesbians are already everywhere and make it a goal of our movement that none of us are working anywhere alone?" (p. 195). This question is juxtaposed with a photo of a smirking person, presumably a lesbian, showing off an illegible button with the caption "Lesbian Liberation: You Won't Get It Under Capitalism." While not all political lesbians at the time aligned themselves with socialist feminism,⁵⁵ the lesbian feminism outlined in this 1984 workbook published with the "collective labour of Press Gang Printers" deconstructs and gives voice to how lesbianism as a politic of the Lesbian Caucus is linked to gay liberation, anti-racist, *and* socialist movements (n.p). As Beth E. Schneider and Janelle M. Pham (2017) point out in their study of socialist, radical and lesbian feminisms, "ideology, membership, strategies, or goals [...] varied in different parts of the country, in different cultural and political moments, and among women who varied by race,

⁵⁴ In addition to Silva's engagement with B.C.F.W, many past hosts engaged in activist and community-building initiatives outside of *The Lesbian Show*, including; Cynthia Brooke writing for *Angles*, Eirene Cloma as part of Vancouver's queer music scene, and Dani McDonnell's stage manager role with the Vancouver Dyke March.

⁵⁵ See the discussion of lesbian separatism as "incompatible" with socialism and Marxism in Rousseau, 2015.

ethnicity, class, sexuality, and age” (p.2). Embedded in Vancouver Co-Op radio's community-driven and non-profit space, *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] was able to put into practice some of the anti-capitalist and socialist feminist logics of non-hierarchical labour division, community donation, and skill sharing advocated for by the Lesbian Caucus. “The tech training was probably my favourite,” former TLS member Vett Loyd recalls (2020). Vett noted that during their time at Vancouver Co-Op in the 1980s, they were encouraged to try their hand at a bit of everything in the production of the show, from board operation to producing to hosting through a unique mix of structured workshops as well as a more “rough-and-ready” jump in head first kind of learning experience (Lloyd, 2020). Despite the decades between their time at TLS member Eirene Cloma equally recalls an environment of shared labour and knowledge: “...there were like three or four shows that were like queer, feminist and content, and we were all trying to help each other out.” Eirene started out volunteering with *She Boom*,⁵⁶ then joined Dani MacDonell as a co-host of *The Lesbian Show* on air in the 2010s. Silva noted earlier tensions between the *Coming Out Show* and *The Lesbian Show* as a catalyst for the collective's formation. However, Eirene felt that divisiveness fell away in the later years, perhaps partly leading to the dissolution of *The Lesbian Show*. In contrast, *The Coming Out Show* continued under an expanded LGBTQ2+ moniker of *Fruit Salad*.⁵⁷

The TLS collective once stood as a strong example of pushing against gendered divisions of labour and toward lesbian information activism. However, the non-profit status of Vancouver Co-Op Radio, which fostered this space of queer feminist world-making, also meant that members of TLS were volunteering their time rather than being paid for it. Within the reality of trying to live under capitalism, especially as the cost of living in city centres such as Vancouver continued to rise, soundmakers became increasingly burnt out and unable to put the time into producing the highly engaged community-centred queer feminist soundwork without being paid. As Meita Winkler notes, “I think at some point I just thought, you know, as much as I enjoy doing this, I want to be paid for my efforts” (2020). Meita volunteered with *The Lesbian Show* in the

⁵⁶ According to Eirene, *She Boom* was formerly known as *Blue Monday*. It was perhaps what came to replace the popular women's music show *Ruby Music* on air at Vancouver Co-Op when *The Lesbian Show* was established in 1979.

⁵⁷ At the time of writing (Mar 2022), *Fruit Salad* has since changed its name to *Out & About Canada* and is followed by a gender-focused show called *Gender Queeries* in what used to be *The Lesbian Show* timeslot.

1990s just as shows like "*Queer As Folk* were being broadcast on TV" igniting a desire in queer creators like Meita to make a living by bringing queer stories into the mainstream rather than viewing their soundwork volunteer activist labour (Winkler, 2020). Changing queer politics, the rise of homosexuality in pop culture, and the reality of the neoliberal market economy are noted as key reasons behind the high turnover in TLS collective membership and, ultimately, its departure from the airwaves and the lesbian feminist information network. These three factors continue to be hot-button topics of feminist debate in media labour practices today. Despite these difficulties, *The Lesbian Show* found a way to establish itself as a foundational part of lesbian feminist media history and activist information networks for over four decades from 1979 into the mid 2010s. Two of its most significant contributions can be found in how and why the show endured, in their collective practices of community care and discoverability shared across its many members, generations, and reinventions.

Making Community in Sound

In a pre-internet era, the close relationship between community newsletters and lesbian radio was integral to the successful feminist circulation of community knowledge and directly attended to queer politics of safety and isolation. Radio hosts would often read out lesbian print newsletters on air, drawing on key news stories and entertainment tucked between the thin newsprint pages of *Angles* or *The Body Politic*. For listeners who could not access printed information themselves because of location, lack of access, or safety, lesbian radio provided an essential community in sound. Community safety was a key component of lesbian feminist radio for TLS and DOMs. In an interview about their experience as long-time co-hosts of *Dykes on Mykes* during the 1990s and 2000s, Elana Wright and Deb VanSlet were very aware of the production choices and listening practices surrounding each broadcast. Talking about their listenership and the variety of guests they would bring on the show, Elana notes, "20-something years ago, it was different in terms of how closeted people would be" (VanSlet & Wright, 2020). Even though sexual orientation had become constitutionally protected in Canada by 1995, many continued to experience discrimination in their everyday lives.

For this reason, it was important to Deb and Elana to showcase the nuances around queer public and private life not just for celebrity lesbians like Ellen DeGeneres but for

everyday lesbians too. As the 1990s brought forward an era of 'Lesbian Chic' and the sexualization of lesbians that fit mainstream heterosexual beauty standards, with other everyday lesbians missing on screen or cast as villains or tokenized background characters. The refusal to define what a Lesbian sounds like⁵⁸ by showcasing a variety of different Lesbian lives on DOMs was a pushing back against the Lesbian Chic mainstreaming of dyke culture happening during Deb and Elana's time on air. Deb recalls bringing everyday lesbians on the show: a plumber, a hockey player, a doctor, and a dentist. Guests could decide to provide their real name or workplace specifics or use an alias depending on their comfort and safety being on the air. Deb and Elana speak of the importance of frank conversations about everyday lesbian life in the workplace and sharing those common experiences of having to choose to be 'out' or closeted, not only for those on the mic but also for listeners.

As an information technology, the radio's public-facing utility and exclusive sound modality provide a feminist potential to provide safety and care in what conversations are broadcast and how or where we can listen. On air for the better part of a decade, Deb would occasionally get noticed in public for their voice by *Dykes on Mykes* listeners, "I remember one kid even told me that she was so in the closet that she was literally in her bedroom closet listening to the show on the radio" (VanSlet & Wright, 2020). Similar to Elena and Deb's recollection of the safety politics of radio listening practices, Silva Tenenbein, a co-founder of *The Lesbian Show*, shared this memory: "We started to get mail from remote places saying we love your show, and we live in Abbotsford, and we get into a car and keep all the lights off and turn the radio on and listen to your show because we can't afford getting caught in the house" (2018).⁵⁹ Listen to more from Silva on this experience in Appendix A, Audio A11.— Silva Tenenbein of *The Lesbian Show* on

⁵⁸ DOMs certainly was not the only lesbian feminist media activism happening in the 1990s to push back against the mainstream infantilization of the lesbian. DOMs refusal to define what a lesbian sounds like correlates to various visual activist forms at the time as well. See, for example, the short work "What Does a Lesbian Look Like?" by Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Millan (1994). Perhaps unsurprisingly, Dempsey and Millan were also guests on DOMs during the 1990s.

⁵⁹ For more on this quote, see also Stacey Copeland. 2018. "Broadcasting Queer Feminisms: Lesbian and queer women programming in transnational, local, and community radio." *Journal of Radio & Audio Media* 25, no.2: 217.

FemRadio, 2018.⁶⁰ While having a lesbian newspaper or pamphlet physically on your person could cause issues with police or at home for individuals without the power or privilege to safely navigate those interactions, listening to the radio can be an emancipatory act. There is no need to enter a queer physical space such as a bookstore or bar. There is no purchase price aside from the radio, which additionally provides access to other local radio stations, and unless you're planning to deck yours out with K.D. Lang stickers and rainbow decals, there's nothing obviously queer about it if caught on your person. This type of media consumption as an emancipatory practice is at the very root of alternative media's socialist ideology. 'Alternative' media can be defined by its non-institutional, countercultural, emancipatory orientations which media scholars Chris Atton (2002) and Leah Lievrouw (2015) establish as key to community-driven and participatory journalistic practices. Atton and Lievrouw focus their attention on the practices and processes of making alternative media in this regard. However, the act of listening can be just as powerful, just as political.

Listening even in 'private space' can connect you with communities and publics, whether those communities are 'imagined' in the sense of a radio listenership or experienced as 'physical' as in the audience at a live concert. As Kate Lacey notes, a listening public is made up of listeners inhabiting a condition of plurality and intersubjectivity" (2013, p.8). In the act of listening, the line between public and private is blurred. Listening to media in this way becomes, in Foucauldian terms, a 'technology of self,' a state of political being. Speech, and more broadly sound, is always filtered through the listener's own perspective, playing a role in one's own subjectivity, while the social and spatial experience of sound simultaneously opens the listener outward to the stories, places and persons transmitted through their headphones or stereo. While the listener Deb recalls may have been physically isolated in their closet, the act of listening to the live *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] broadcast creates a sense of intersubjectivity, a sense of listening *with* others. The listener can imagine the hosts in the studio, just as they imagine their fellow listeners creating a queer counterpublic in bookstores, bars, cars,

⁶⁰ This interview can be heard in full at: Tenenbein, Silva (Interviewed). 2018. "The lesbian show" [Radio broadcast]. *FemRadio. The Scope 1280AM*. Toronto, Canada: CJRU, March 26, 2018. <https://soundcloud.com/scopeatryerson/the-lesbian-show>. [Interview begins at 16:15].

and bedroom closets (metaphorical or literal) across Montreal and from the edges of CKUTs community radio antenna range.

By positioning radio listening as a potential queer emancipatory act, as is the case of DOMs and *The Lesbian Show* [TLS], we can more fully imagine these rich moments of intersubjective experience curated through the safety of radio's sonic modality and utilitarian interface. In these experiences of safety, discoverability, and community networking, queer feminist soundworkers can find renewed possibilities for queer technological practices in community radio and across soundworks' varied distribution platforms. Still, we cannot deny that the technological factors behind such experiences have changed in the post-internet era and the articulation of queer listening publics surrounding podcasting. Suppose I am to argue for lesbian feminist community radio as a potential model of how to queer technological practices involved in creating community through sound media. In that case, it is equally important first to understand the politics of accountability, safety and discoverability at play in the podcast arena. In comparing podcast platform discoverability with the historical practices of lesbian feminist radio, it is also important to acknowledge how the safety of radio listening is lost in the datafied world of podcast platforms. Podcast platforms such as Apple Podcasts and Spotify are data collection driven. As a result, the platforms collect and store information about the user, which the user also often carries on their person via the smartphone, rematerializing the one ephemeral queer soundwork of queer radio into an item of potential risk to some members of community. Despite these limitations, perhaps what is gained in return is increased availability and access to various voices from across the global LGBTQ community. Awareness of this cost involved in podcast discoverability on the part of the user and the podcast soundmakers requires further reimagining through queer disruption in dominant podcast practices of discoverability.

Disturbing Practices of Discoverability

Podcasting, just like radio, is not explicitly showcased in McKinney's queer account of lesbian feminist media technologies, but this type of soundwork plays a remarkable role in information activism today. While the discoverability of radio shows like DOMs and TLS were part of a rich network of newsletters, tape sharing, and dial surfing, queer soundwork in podcasting can be said to have a leg up in its potentiality for

awareness across distance. This is all well and good, but only if we can actually find the podcasts that resonate with our communities in the first place. As Safiya Umoja Noble outlines in *Algorithms of Oppression*, algorithms in the age of neoliberalism reinforce oppressive social relationships and enact what Noble terms "technological redlining", new modes of racism, sexism, and discrimination in the digital world. How do we find queer podcast content, and what story do the show notes and tags tell before we actually get to hear it? For media scholars such as Michele Hilmes (2013), what was at first sound-only content (radio) has now become visual as well (podcasting). The visual aspects involved in podcasting, such as the show notes and keywords, as well as how the platforms such as Apple Podcasts or Spotify present that information, play a crucial role in how potential listeners discover audio content. It may then come as no surprise that when searching "Queer" on Apple Podcasts in 2019 to explore potential podcasts for this study, my query instead returned results for "Queen" of the British royal family variety (Copeland, 2021). This autocorrect to "Queen" is an erasure, a technological redlining whether intentionally coded or not. "Queer" has since been added as a search term, but disorienting experiences such as this make one wonder what is still being missed or redlined in the algorithmic function of podcast platforms.

As the history of lesbian radio has shown, the ability to customize language for recognition from community is vital to building those very same queer and feminist networks. This is a crucial problematic in what Jeremy Morris (2020) terms "infrastructures of discovery," the network of interfaces, mechanisms and features involved in making content searchable and legible. In their study of podcasting's infrastructures of discoverability, Morris outlines that "ratings and rankings drive particular approaches to content production that emphasize discoverability over other aspects of cultural production" (2020, p.3). In a culture where podcasters are left to guess how Apple ranks and features podcasts, Morris (2020) points to the kind of cases that result, including the dominance of 'please rate and comment on our podcast' audio at the end of many shows, and the 2018 Apple ranking fiasco, where several unknown shows were ranked above consistently chart-topping ones such as *The Daily* and *Serial* due partly to bot-driven subscription gaming the algorithm (Carman, 2018). This optimization approach to podcasting isn't new in the broader scope of media practices, but it requires particular attention considering the platform DIY/amateur invitation that anyone can make a podcast; meanwhile, the actual number of shows the interface

displays is limited by Apple Podcasts' opaque algorithm. Following the uptick of such critiques from researchers and podcasters alike, in 2022, Apple Podcasts added support details on how their search works to pull from the show name, channel name, and episode title, along with data based on popularity and user behaviour. This support page follows an in-depth study by Mark Steadman and James Cridland for *PodNews* in 2021 of indexing across various podcast platforms. Steadman and Cridland found that due to most podcast apps' limitations, podcasters must go elsewhere to boost discoverability, stating, "In-app search is not where you'll be found" (2021). As my examples illustrate, the techno-logics of podcast platforms play a significant role in what content is made discoverable and what communities have access to the world-making possibilities of podcasting. There are over 1.2 million podcasts on Apple Podcasts with at least four episodes (Goldstein, 2021). With such an abundance of content in contrast with the limited search functionalities of Apple Podcasts platform, how *are* these "queer" shows attempting to make their shows discoverable?

It is important to pause here to recall that my work is grounded in queer theory and feminist methodologies applied to the media and information studies to help me theorize queer in two distinct yet overlapping ways. First, as an identity marker for sexuality and gender or what historian Laura Doane in *Disturbing Practices* calls 'queer as being,' indeed a much more commonly used and less radical terminology in mainstream anglophone culture these days. Secondly, 'queer as method' for queering how we experience and understand our relationships to media and culture. This is why queer is a term of particular interest in studying how podcasts are categorized and defined. Not only because of its use as an umbrella term or a term that pushes back against past histories of lesbian or gay culture but because of its roots as a term of disruption, action, and disorientation. Still, there's my concept of 'Queer,' and there's how podcasters actually use it to describe their shows.

When we take a step back and look at trends across title, description and genre in podcasts returned through a search for "Queer" on Apple Podcasts and popular podcast search engine Listen Notes, we start to see how these tools of constraint shape how shows define themselves, and potentially in turn limit how they produce and conceive of

their content.⁶¹ Titles are typically, short and/or punny such as *Queer as Fact* or *Do You Queer What I Queer?*. Others play on popular shows or genres like *A Queer Serial* does with *Serial*.⁶² Many shows include 'Queer' in their title, potentially to make it explicit to the person scrolling through their podcast feed or to try and boost their discoverability on platform searches. This use of queer certainly echoes the long history of LGBTQ+ radio, including *The Lesbian Show* and *Dykes on Mykes* in using obvious terms or a play on words to make their content known. These shows shout, 'We're Here and We're Queer! Come check us out!' We see similar trends forming in the show description too. Many mention LGBTQ+ community and host identity markers like pronouns, race or gender. They use words like 'stories', 'talk', 'people', 'living', 'life', and 'experience'. When according to Pacific Content Research (Misener, 2020), the average show description is 243 characters, these inclusions mean a lot. Still, when it comes to genre, most shows follow the same logic as everyone else, categorizing by large fields like Society & Culture and subgenres that fit their specific niche like Sports, Chemistry or Books.

Interestingly, in my query, very few shows actually place themselves in a 'Sexuality' or 'LGBTQ' sub-genre, perhaps indicating a conscious attempt to 'game' the algorithm and avoid categories considered less explored or showcased to the public (Copeland, 2021). Take, for example, Chloe and Sara's *Warriors Bards 'n Brews* [WBB] podcast. Their show is categorized on Listen Notes under TV & Film. Their show description reads, "WBB began as a Xena podcast, and while we still chat about our favourite gal pals regularly, we also branch out into movies, other TV shows, pop culture, music and feminism. Special appearances from our producer PodCat on occasion" (Listen Notes, 2022). Without "Queer" or specifically "Queer Feminist" in the title or description, WBB does not appear in my search for queer feminist podcasts on Apple or Google Podcasts.⁶³ Instead, I learned of the show through the local podcast community and

⁶¹ Based on a study the author conducted in 2021 which examined 256 shows, a 10% sample of 2556 total, retrieved on podcast search website Listennotes by searching "Queer" (see Copeland, 2021).

⁶² Queer Serial show description reads: "FBI hunts, outlaw drag queens, and not-so-secret societies. Radios, riots, and romance! The true story of American LGBTQ liberation from the beginning to Stonewall." (Apple Podcast, 2021) see Queer Serial website for more: <https://www.mattachinepod.com/podcast>

⁶³ At the time of writing, July 2022, Apple Podcasts does not claim to search channel descriptions, whereas Google Podcasts, Castbox, Listen Notes, Spotify, Stitcher and select other podcast

engagement with the Vancouver Podcast Festival. Chloe and Sara were invited to take part in a panel fittingly titled "Women and Non-Binary People in Podcasting: Creating a Feminist Network" hosted by local feminist podcaster and festival co-organizer Hannah McGregor (VanPodFest, 2019). This style of feminist community network building through an in-person feminist organized gathering is perhaps more akin to DOMs and TLS's lesbian feminist information activism than to the neoliberal practices of discoverability outlined above. A practice again harkening back to alternative media's emancipatory and countercultural orientations, community network building through local podcast festivals and events helps to circulate counter-hegemonic information. Queer soundworkers are very much aware algorithms don't work in their favour, and those who aren't 'in the know' learn quickly through knowledge sharing and barriers faced in attempts toward discoverability. This attention given to the importance of connecting with their Vancouver community over trying to 'game' platform algorithms echoes the interest queer feminist community-driven shows like *Warriors, Bards 'n Brews* [WBB] have in highlighting Vancouver area queers and feminists in their content as well.

Nonetheless, for potential queer community interested in listening to queer feminist work like WBB without having to navigate niche podcast spaces or festivals, there is no podcast equivalent sonic place like Vancouver Co-Op Radio or CKUT Montreal where one knows they will be able to discover queer feminist soundwork outside of the most popular search results on their chosen podcast platform. In contrast, the Heart shows up in searches for "Queer" on Apple Podcasts, current popularity and user behaviour permitting. While there is a plethora of queer podcasts out there to choose from, the issue of discoverability directly affects podcasters' ability to produce queer soundwork as an income source rather than a hobby. While there is a seeming abundance of queer podcasts returned in search results, only a select few are shows queer soundworkers trying to make a living can pitch to. This is a primary issue audio producer Mitra Kaboli, formerly of *The Heart*, sees in the podcast industry today. They expressed concern in the lack of options in where to send queer soundmakers to pitch stories that don't quite fit the homonormative narratives continuing to dominate the mainstream podcast industry. In our interview, Mitra went on to share that their journey with Kaitlin in creating *The Heart* as a show where folks could make even a small amount of money for queer

players and search engines will draw information from descriptions (see also Steadman & Cridland, Jul 2021)

soundwork was a continuous uphill battle saying, “if it wasn't for us, like constantly being in the scene, like in the radio scene, like the podcast scene, I think a lot of like media and radio and podcasts would be largely still mainstream ones would be a lot more conservative than they are now[...] We went through a lot of shit man” (2021). Kaitlin echoed Mitra’s sentiments as well saying, “the influence, like the supremacy of *This American Life* style [of audio storytelling], like that's really that was a really big part of the landscape when I was coming up[...] that's tough realis[ing] that in the first chapter of *The Heart*, like all of our heroes were. Straight white man, you know? [...] they say, you can't dismantle the master's house with the master's tools, the Audre Lorde quote, [but] like the deeper you go into having a global impact or global audience, the more you have to conform with the power structures that are in play that you are fundamentally disagreeing with.” The more Mitra and Kaitlin embedded themselves in the larger American public radio and for-profit podcast network scene of Radiotopia and PRX, the more they felt disconnected from the very queer feminist politic and activist ethos that first brought them to *Audio Smut* and later *The Heart*. Still, in reflecting on the past decade working toward where *The Heart* is situated now at the forefront of queer feminist soundwork, Kaitlin holds out hope that the industry is seeing a promising shift toward more support for nuanced and experimental forms of queer-centered media. Whether that work can also move away from universal narratives of queer identity and toward place-based information activism like DOMs and TLS advocated for is still up for debate:

I'm always asking myself, how am I going to pay my rent? And so, I think you can make local culture. Can you make a living making local culture? Not really like unless, again, there's all these other hoops and power structures that you have to go through to be one of the artists that the Canada Council for the Arts supports, you know, and like the Canada Council doesn't recognize narrative audio as an art form. You know, the CBC supposedly finances that, but like... They're getting a little [better], the fact that they hired me and let me make my weirdo show like that was a pretty big risk for them (2021).

The prevalence of podcasters using fundraising websites like Patreon and a new uptick in podcasts shifting to pay-per-purchase distribution via music publishing platform Bandcamp⁶⁴ offer potential alternative nodes of accessing funds for the production of

⁶⁴ At the time I write this chapter (July 2022), the company behind popular online battle royale style videogame *Fortnite*, Epic Games have just acquired Bandcamp. It is unclear what this might mean for the music platform moving forward: see <https://pitchfork.com/thepitch/bandcamp-epic-games-acquisition/>.

niche queer and feminist soundwork outside the mainstream podcast industry, but the issue remains of discoverability. Suppose queer podcasts are to flourish as digital communal surrogates to connect queer community and spaces across the globe. In that case, further critical action must be taken to consider how marginalized voices and their podcasts are being discovered (or not) across dominant platforms. With paywall options for big platforms like Apple Podcasts and Audible now entering the field, how can we sustain (or reclaim) podcasting's culture of possibilities for sustained community building and queer world-making? Here I propose a queering of the dominant rankings and ratings approach to podcast practices through the application of queer theory and the lesbian feminist politics of DOMs and TLS to disrupt the current infrastructure and move toward a queer feminist podcast model of community discoverability.

Toward a Queer Feminist Podcast Model

Queer theory and activism have much to offer in studying new media and related technologies, including podcasting. Kara Keeling (2014) outlines this contribution in their foundational work on *Queer OS: scholarship at the intersection of queer theory, new media studies, and technology studies*. By attending to *Queer OS*, Keeling seeks to "make queer into the logic of "an operating system of a larger order" that unsettles the common sense that secures those presently hegemonic social relations that can be characterized by domination, exploitation, oppression, and other violence" (2014, p.154). Going back to my experience searching for "Queer" content on Apple Podcasts only to be provided with results for shows on the Queen of England, beyond my initial connections to Noble's work, this experience got me thinking about Keeling's *Queer OS*. Keeling writes, "queer offers a way of making perceptible presently uncommon sense in the interest of producing a new commons and/or proliferating the sense of a commons already in the making" (2014, p.153). What if the corrective function of turning "queer" to "queen" was not an erasure or error in the algorithm but an intentional tongue-in-cheek queer code written by a fellow queer to game the system? In applying the same queer tongue-in-cheek vernacular applied by *The Lesbian Show* in their Ms Claus ads for *Angles*, what other kinds of queer codes could be applied to Apple Podcasts search functions?

While there is yet to be an ideal Queer OS approach to the podcast industry, podcasters and coders alike looking to advocate for infrastructures of discoverability can look to experimental projects outside the world of podcasting. For example, projects such as Queer Technologies *transCoder*, can inspire a more equitable or even queer customizable interface and corresponding algorithm. Queer Technologies (QT) created *transCoder* as a "queer programming anti-language" (Blas, 2010). QT is an organization interested in critical applications and interventions to further queer technological agency. With no functional implementation, the project uses coding language terms such as API, libraries, license, and execution to reconsider how we perceive coding structures as neutral or non-political. As a result, *transCoder* aims to resist the heteronormative ties they claim dominant coding languages uphold by providing an invitation through code language to radically resist and modify how technologies are designed and how they operate. The queer politics of *transCoder* can invite us to revisit how community safety and queer experience were designed into the production approach of DOMs and TLS and the safety possibilities offered by the radio technology itself. For example, the way guests could opt for relative anonymity, and listeners could dip in and out of the show by changing the dials without the risks involved in carrying queer materials on their person or, in the modern case of podcasting, a history of subscriptions and searches on their device. Perhaps integration of queer safety factors into podcast platform design that reflect the advances of radio might include an incognito option to listen to a podcast without a subscription downloaded in your main library or search history similar to the incognito options made available through Google Chrome and taken even further by open-source web browsers like Tor. To help mimic the dial browsing functionality of the radio interface, why not a randomization button to "play something" at random, as was recently incorporated into Netflix (Spangler, 2021). Such applications of lesbian feminist community radio experience offer a starting point for how we might consider designing podcast platforms with queer safety and discoverability in mind. However, these steps continue to feel far from reality given the current prioritization and celebration of problematic figures such as P.J Vogt (Gross, 2021) and Joe Rogan (Reese, 2021).

Following Joe Rogan's debut as an exclusively Spotify-hosted podcast in 2020, many noticed the absence of some of the more controversial episodes featuring racist, sexist, and far-right figures in conversation with Joe. While the platform's move to exclude such discriminatory content is promising, the reportedly \$100 million or more agreement with

the show still signals to queer and feminist podcasters what voices and formats are valued in the podcasting soundscape (Hibberd, 2020). Spotify's initiatives to encourage women of colour podcasters⁶⁵ and LGBTTIQ podcasters⁶⁶ through their Sound Up Bootcamps and their EQUAL hub showcasing women artists and podcasters show a conscious effort by the platform to encourage marginalized podcasters to produce content and affiliate their shows with the platform. Still, further research is needed to uncover whether these initiatives result in more discoverable podcasts and community-rich listener experiences. Podcast platforms continue the segregation of queer and feminist content to special Pride month features and Women's History month playlists rather than re-evaluating how their algorithms may prioritize particular content or exclude it altogether. In doing so, podcast platforms risk mirroring the same hegemonic racist, patriarchal social hierarchies that podcasting's DIY ethos was meant to destabilize. It's a real possibility that posting your podcast to Apple Podcasts and Spotify may still be a necessary step in providing access to your show for a global audience. Nevertheless, in turning to DOMs and TLS we can also begin to reimagine and re-prioritize community-driven platforms such as queer-run digital magazines (the modern newsletter) and local community radio stations where your podcast can be brought into conversation with other shows and other media forms (articles, poetry, etc.) geared towards a similar counterpublic or niche.

Echoes of the lesbian feminist politics found in DOMs and TLS's community radio stations and media networks can further point us to similar models taken up in queer and feminist media collectives such as Bitch Media, Queer Collective TO, or Mermaid Palace. Launched in 1996 Bitch Media was a print and online magazine that sought to bring contemporary feminism into conversation with mainstream media and popular culture. Not to mention they even posted their annual tax return information and political history publicly on their website. Their two long-standing affiliated podcasts since 2013, *Popaganda* and *Backtalk* provided expanded and original conversations within the feminist framework of Bitch Magazine. We may also look to Procyon Network, home to

⁶⁵ For more on the Sound Up Bootcamp 2018 initiative "Amplifying Female Voices of Color Through the Power of Podcast" - <https://newsroom.spotify.com/2018-07-11/amplifying-female-voices-of-color-through-the-power-of-podcast/>

⁶⁶ For more on Spotify's Sound Up Bootcamp 2019 in Germany, see "Spotify Hands the Mic to German LGBTTIQ* Podcasters in Audio Workshop" - <https://newsroom.spotify.com/2019-07-26/spotify-hands-the-mic-to-german-lgbtqi-podcasters-in-audio-workshop/>

podcaster and “ex-journalist” Andrea Klassen’s queer audio fiction series *Me and AU*. “Procyon is actually more of a collective than a network in the sense that we don't do a lot of kind of the traditional network stuff that's more around like advertising. It's more of a sort of mutual labour, mutual support and mutual promotion network” (Klassen, 2021). While Procyon does not explicitly identify as a queer feminist podcast network, the community care and high representation of queer women in their soundworks and collective evokes a familiar feminist politic to the mandates of lesbian feminist radio shows like TLS and DOMs. When asked if their network considered themselves a feminist project, Andrea replied, “You know, I don't think we've ever had that conversation, which is kind of funny, because I would say all of us are feminists and some of us like very explicitly kind of consider that part of our politics.” The queer feminism of Procyon, unlike their lesbian feminist predecessors, is framed as an unspoken pre-established politic. As Andrea shares, “it's just kind of a natural outcropping of two things actually like one of them is that everybody is queer in Procyon (laughs). So we all kind of gravitate towards that stuff.” Perhaps much like my own experience of not having to ‘come out’ in my YouTube community per se but rather simply doing so through engaging in community and positioning myself as a queer networked self.

Still, there is also a postfeminist tinge to Procyon's lack of feminist assertions in how the collective positions and describes themselves. While their mission statement reads “largely-female”, there is no indication of any activist orientation or politic behind this formation. The response from Andrea to my question of queer feminism in their collective - “I don't think we've ever had that conversation” – plays into Rosalind Gill’s (2007) definition of postfeminism as a ‘sensibility’ deeply enmeshed with neoliberalism. Rather than indicating a generation or period of time, postfeminism as a sensibility has led to the reemergence of feminism in popular culture as a “fashionable” identity marker rather than a politic in action (Gill, 2007, p.611). Despite Andrea noting that individual members would identify as feminists, the postfeminist logic of not needing to or even thinking about taking on a feminist collective identity leaves Procyon without clear ties to the feminist podcast community or the potential benefits of modelling their collective organizing after past feminist collective actions rather than trying to reinvent the practice. This postfeminist sensibility in positioning feminist as identity rather than feminism as an intersectional community politic or activism was also echoed by Erin McGregor of *Queer*

Public while drawing out more of the tensions felt about feminism within queer community today. In our conversation on their time as a member of *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] compared to their current podcasting work, Erin reflected back, "identifying as a feminist has not aged well. It has not aged well in this world of like trans and non-binary people. I also really understand the criticisms of feminism as being like super white and like I'm a white lady with a very white name." I've talked at length about the whiteness and TERF hauntings tied to feminism, very much at odds with the intersectional anti-racist and queer feminist activism heard in many of the works here and throughout feminist history. Here one might simply name Erin's comments as part of a postfeminist sensibility, but in doing so the undertone of concern and solidarity among community would be erased. A queer solidarity and community respect which speak back to the fundamental goals of feminism to "end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression" (bell hooks, 2015, p.1). If the work being done by Procyon Network looks and sounds feminist, does it matter that it doesn't proclaim itself as such?

Founded by a group of women and non-binary creatives, Procyon grew from a queer fan fiction Slack channel on podcasts and a collective frustration with the lack of robust queer women characters in audio fiction. "It tends to be more like big space adventures that have a couple of women who are in love or big - no, space adventures actually cover like 80% of it (laughs). It tends to be a B or C plot thing. And there's not a lot there weren't a lot at the time that I could find, like, really compelling queer female romance podcasts" (Klassen, 2021). What started with two flagship shows, *Station to Station* and *The Strange Case of Starship Iris*, has now expanded to include five original shows, thanks to Procyon's labour sharing and occasional cross-podcast crowdfund sharing collective approach. While Andrea noted that funding and pay for their shows "aren't much", the shared labour, including production and marketing efforts, and non-hierarchical model the collective operates under shows a promising remix on lesbian feminist labour politics. In 2019, the network also launched their Rocket Booster programme to assist "first-time audio drama producers on their journey by providing individual consultation for their scripts" (Procyon, 2022).

Possibly grown out *The Heart's* continued struggle to uphold a queer feminist politic in the mainstream podcasting space, Kaitlin's non-profit art company, Mermaid Palace, was formed as another example of feminist collective logic at work in podcasting. "We

operate as a non-profit because creating groundbreaking art is rarely profitable in the strictly capitalist sense", their website reads (2022). Grown out of the successes of the long-running podcast *The Heart* alongside Mitra Kaboli, Kaitlin Prest announced Mermaid Palace in 2019 as an audio and art company rooted in the same queer feminist ethos at the very heart of *The Heart*. In conversation with Kaitlin Prest during the same video chat where we listened together to the lavender sounds of DOMs, Prest shared with me some of the ongoing challenges in running a queer feminist company:

How do I make the policies of this company feminist? How do I resist capitalism in the way I pay people and the way I work with people? How do you make a healthy work culture? That's the new site of my feminism at this point. There's no other feminist audio art company that I can call and be like – 'so how do you guys run your business fairly?' (2021)

Much of this chapter focuses on the issue of discoverability, but this is only one side of the coin. While podcast listenership during its early mainstream adoption in 2014-2015 was still predominantly white, male, young, "college graduates [living] in an urban area," these demographics have drastically changed as the podcast industry exploded into the next decade (Locke, 2015). Increased listenership across racialized communities in the US has even prompted dedicated reports on Black and Latino podcast listeners (Edison Research, 2021). Despite growing diversity in podcast listeners over the past decade, overall consumer preferences are still shown to lean toward what is already familiar to them in the podcasting space thus far, dominated by True Crime and male-hosted news and interview shows (Chartable, 2022). The white patriarchal ear seems yet again to rear its head (or earlobe? Insert choice of ear anatomy here). Without the market showing a demand for queerer and more feminist soundwork, queer feminist soundworkers must find more unconventional, innovative and community-centred methods to make their work sustainable. These tensions between queer feminist activist practices and the reality of also trying to sustain a profitable audio art company bring us back to some of the same reasons that shows like *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] and *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] found themselves in community radio stations. A lack of space, place, and nuanced representation in the media they had to choose from as consumers. The line of questioning Kaitlin brings forward is perhaps one that a hybrid model between community radio and feminist podcasting could help put into practice. While the equipment needed to create soundwork today for digital consumption is relatively low compared to a radio show in the 1980s or '90s, what are we losing in separating from radio's physical locality? What sort of queer soundwork might flourish under community

radio's public funding and localized shared community space, mixed with the global reach and creative sandbox potential of podcasting in contrast to traditional broadcast radio?

Throughout this chapter, I have proposed particular practices drawn from lesbian feminist community radio, which mediamakers and activists might draw forward into the digital present. The work these queer and feminist-centred media collectives are taking up provides exciting potential for future models of podcast production that incorporate lesbian feminist logics. On the topic of discoverability, soundmakers today would do well to follow *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] network-building efforts and reach out to and make lasting information-sharing efforts with other queer and feminist media forms across magazines and blogs, television, coffee shops, and more. Additionally, the feminist activist ethos of *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] and TLS to queer the technological practices of soundworks distribution should be brought into conversation with Queer OS to advocate for podcast platform affordances that introduce queer and playful ways to find content outside of the predictable insights of popularity and user behaviour. Something more akin to surfing the radio dial, perhaps even with the potential to listen in to particular geographies to bring the local back into soundwork discovery. Nevertheless, it cannot go unnoticed that much of the work celebrated in these spaces continues to be concentrated in larger media markets such as Los Angeles, New York City, and Toronto, a problem echoed in the current mapping of community radio stations in Canada (MacLennan, 2020). If the voices of marginalized populations are to be prioritized in our queer feminist media practices, collectives and industry giants alike must expand their focus to underserved areas in Northern Canada, rural, and Indigenous communities to promote local talent and produce original content that centers local perspectives and stories for both a local listener and broader listening public. Partnerships with national public broadcasters, community radio stations, and media collectives may hold the promise for new sustainable models in podcasting that incorporate the lessons of lesbian feminist information activism. Just as DOMs and TLS applied their lesbian feminist politic and experience to make sure queer safety was always at the forefront, soundworkers today must advocate for queer safety in show production and ethics as well as at the level of the podcast app interface. Safety and access should not be a privilege but a right. The podcast industry has a long road ahead to becoming a space rich with inclusive design and accessible user listening experiences

(Gill, 2021). Whatever practices come next, they must equally grapple with the discriminatory infrastructures of giants like Apple Podcasts and Spotify toward more community-centred media activism that listens back while looking forward.

Despite the challenges of discoverability and sustainability outlined in this chapter, podcasts rooted in feminist and queer ideologies are still finding their way into the listeners' subscription box. Information is circulated whether that discovery happens through word-of-mouth podcast sharing, showcases on feminist or queer "top podcast" lists, or simply sheer listener determination to find the content they desire. Similar to their community radio counterparts, though, sustaining a feminist community-driven ideology within the capitalist constraints of platform culture is felt by producers and shows in the short run of shows deemed successful in the queer category. As uncovered in the study of DOMs and TLS, transparency in politics, the production process, and a strong community ethos are integral aspects of lesbian feminist activism. The community network, including queer and feminist newsletters and collaboration with similarly aligned organizations, was key to the longevity and relative success of DOMs and TLS in queer audio activist history. Returning to the demise of the popular queer podcast *Nancy*, perhaps the very professionalism and exclusivity (WNYC network prestige, highly polished sound) for which *Nancy* was celebrated was also its downfall. Rather than mourning the continued loss of queer media institutions like *Nancy*, the application of Queer OS in conversation with an informed understanding of historical queer media practices can help to radically shift the way creators approach the liberatory possibilities of podcasting, including the reality of discoverability and financial stability required for marginalized communities to reach relative success and longevity in media production. While many queer soundworks use community-oriented language in their RSS feeds, further engagement with lesbian feminist practices of discoverability, labour practices, and safety are limited by the current coding operations and interface design on the side of Apple, Spotify or their competitors. In reimagining these practices toward a queer podcast future, I begin to dream of platform features. Future features where the user can opt to have particular podcasts excluded from their listening history to avoid AI-generated ads and suggestions across their other applications, and where users might rename their favourite queer podcasts with a pseudonym to avoid safety risks in subscribing or listening whether it be at home or in public. Through conversation with queer audio makers, and critical analysis of the distribution and production of select

queer and lesbian soundwork, this chapter ultimately advocates for podcast practitioners and media scholars alike to look to lesbian feminist community radio as a model for the formation of a reimagining of podcast practice that can foster a sustainable future for the sonic world-making possibilities of queer and marginalized experience. Community radio certainly isn't perfect⁶⁷ but perhaps in queering the very understanding of how these spaces operate, their intention, and the communities they serve, we can imagine new possibilities for a more sustained media alternative that cultivates community-grown work opportunities and boundary-pushing experimentation through sound.

67 In their analysis of community radio license applications from 2007-2017, Anne MacLennan found the majority of Canadian community/campus stations largely located in the same populous areas of the country where the commercial and network stations are also located. These tend to be the same major metropolis locations where podcast networks are situated as well. Their work also shows that increasing demands outlined in CRTC regulations governing community/campus radio are "generally considered burdensome and are sometimes the primary reason cited for the demise of many stations" (MacLennan, 2020, p.203).

Epilogue. Call Her by Their Many Names

In order to survive what we come up against, in order to build worlds from the shattered pieces, we need a revival of lesbian feminism. Sara Ahmed, 2019, p.303.

June 25th, 2022. I'm standing on the hot sun-baked pavement at the corner of Church and Wellesley, holding a handmade sign that reads "Dykes for Abortion Rights." I'm waiting for my friend and co-conspirator Elena to emerge from the subway station here in the heart of Toronto's Gay Village. Today is the annual Dyke March and Rally, the first official one on these streets since the COVID-19 pandemic meant the cancellation of Pride events two years in a row. You can feel the air of excitement and anxiety in equal measure as the rainbow-washed partygoers and city curiosos descend in flocks to enjoy the bank-sponsored festivities. As I wait, a queer elder approaches me, someone I recognize as a gifted mural artist in the community. "I love your sign!", they exclaim, "can I take your photo?". We chat about the latest maddening news. Today it is the US supreme court overturn of Roe vs. Wade, ending the national right to abortion upheld over the border for decades. The muralist continues on to catch up with their friends for the rally start. Another fellow queer, younger this time, whom I noticed eyeing my sign earlier, musters the courage to approach for a photo as well. Then a reporter. His air reads 'fish out of water' as he asks if 'there will be more of me' at the march today. I'm not sure how to respond. I made my sign that morning alone in my kitchen, but I knew I wouldn't be alone. I carried it with me through the city streets, on buses and trains, to get here. Along the way, there were looks of confusion, solidarity, disgust, and apathy, but in that temporary aloneness, I still knew I wasn't alone. I wasn't responding to a group call, though I later found out there were many. Instead, it was a sign made out of expression and a knowing it would find a dialogue. I knew many dykes, lesbians, and queers would be called to bring their fight to Dyke Day. A collective understanding of what it means to uphold the queer feminist political community actions like the Dyke March embody.

Elena arrives in their super gay t-shirt (it literally reads 'super gay' across their chest), and we make our way up Church Street to the rally where community speakers are amping up the crowd with stories of resilience, queerness, rage and love. I can't quite hear our local queer councillor or that viral TikTok radio host on the makeshift rally

stage. Covering city blocks, the crowd is so dense that our bodies work as sound absorption material, soaking up their voices and soundings. It doesn't matter though. We resonate the crowd's cheers all the way to the back like rolling waves. As I gaze around at the varied facial expressions and bodies around me a sea of midwives, nurses, union workers, political factions, and characters take shape. A queer ecosystem of arms and other various limbs and fixtures holding sister signs to mine. 'Dykes for Abortion Rights' is resounded in 'My Body Not Yours', 'F*ck Your Fetus Fetish', 'Midwives for Reproductive Rights', 'Hoes Before Embryos', and at the front of the pack a larger than life coat hanger and its many human collaborators serving as unofficial grand marshal.

The crowd begins to shuffle forward to the beat of roaring motorcycle dykes and reggaetón music blasting from the back of a pickup truck as their sonic fusion ricochets off high-rise apartments and the glass storefront of the resident homophobic chicken franchise. Shouts of 'F*ck Chick-fil-A' gain momentum as others stop to make out in front of the 'repent and choose Jesus' gay-hating religious protestors lining the march path. We recite our traditional Dyke March chants, including but not limited to 'What do we want? Lesbian Rights!' and 'Hey ho, Sexism has got to go!' as we round the block and near the post-march festivities in Allan Gardens, an urban park with its own complex histories. I join in the chants as the sun beams down on my nocturnal graduate student skin, and sweat begins to create small patches of dark purple through my Lavender Menace tee.

Dykes, queers, and allies spread their blankets and jean jackets down on the soft park earth. I scope out a shaded spot under an old beech tree where Elena and I settle in. The crowd begins to settle, and a member of the opening act, the Raging Asian Women (RAW) Taiko Drummers, takes to the mic. An energy-filled welcome and introduction of their group lead to a question toward the crowd, "How many of you here, this is your first Dyke March?" A roar of 'yeah!' and 'woo!' and a flurry of hands take to the air. It looks to be over half the crowd. During the march, I hadn't noticed how young so many of the marchers were; their faces still seemed so familiar, part of the same communal dyke energy felt each year. "Wow, Wow!" the RAW member laughs with joy at the kind-hearted buzz of the park. I look to Elena, it's not our first march, but we're also young enough not to have been around during that first Dyke March held by the Lesbian Avengers in Washington, DC 1993. Young enough to have never known of the first

documented lesbian march in Canada held a decade earlier in Vancouver in 1981 or the Dykes in the Streets march held later that same year in Toronto.

I know these dyke histories for the first time this year. The very real connections - chants, language, rally practices – and the imagined connections I draw up in my theatre of mind bring a different feel to the march. They also colour my reflection on why so many queers still feel the pull to participate in Dyke Day despite shifts in queer culture toward more gender fluid and queer sexual orientations in refusal of gay/lesbian or man/woman binaries. Despite changing identity politics, expansions in queer language and expression, callouts of TERF and racist ills in queer feminisms throughout the decades, Dyke politics are more than just alive and well; they are thriving. When Sara Ahmed (2019) wrote, "In order to survive what we come up against, in order to build worlds from the shattered pieces, we need a revival of lesbian feminism," I believe they knew lesbian feminism had never truly left the fight (p.303). Lesbian feminism is everywhere. Though not in its same capital 'L' Lesbian visibility activism form central to Lesbian feminism of the 1970s and '80s. Instead, Lesbian feminism has transformed into a rich diffusion of interconnected identities and political standpoints across queer feminisms that all still feel the pull to stand together whenever sexism, homophobia, or transphobia rear their head. The potentiality, the promise of lesbian feminism, continues to reverberate, calling dykes, queers and deviants to action.

Why speak of marches and rallies in a text about soundwork? I hope you take away from this work two-fold; firstly, soundwork has been and continues to be essential to queer and feminist community information sharing and advocacy in both technological *and* political spheres. Secondly, the sounds of queer feminism are everywhere if we listen closely with a tuned ear, and no matter what form we engage with, we can participate in their amplification. That is to say, while this study focuses on soundworks that explicitly claim queer or lesbian feminist activisms, narratives, and/or aesthetics, these queer feminist sonic techniques can be heard across a plethora of other electroacoustic and acoustic communications. You can listen to and share a podcast, and you can even make one or lend support through donations.

Similarly, you can also attend rallies or events to support queer feminist voices with your own voice in a chorus. This is queer feminist sound *work*, whether or not it is *soundwork*.

From protests to community radio to podcasting to TikTok. I can hear queer feminist soundwork techniques in the chants and cheers and music on Dyke Day, and I can hear it in the soundwork of *Dykes on Mykes*, *The Lesbian Show*, *The Heart*, *Queer Public*, *Warriors*, *Bards 'n Brews*, and *Procyon Network*. This is my call to ears.

In this call toward critically engaged listening, it is important to note that along with the generative analysis these select works open up, there are also limitations to what could be addressed in these pages. What is written here is only the start of a larger complex network of stories and experiences in queer feminist soundwork. On a macro scale, this work provides a slice of queer feminist soundwork within the North American Anglophone context. While many of the techno-logics of radio and podcasting are mirrored in soundwork across geographies, cultures, and languages, there is still much to explore regarding how those techniques are subverted or reoriented within different cultural contexts. Furthermore, sonic subjectivity and sonic intersubjectivity are often dependent upon or enriched by cultural touchpoints which evoke collective understandings of queerness or feminist identity. In *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] for example, as discussed in Chapter 5, The Muppets "Pigs in Space" parody of Star Trek was used as the inspiration behind some of the narrative and aesthetic production choices made in their lesbian camp radio drama "Dykes in Space." As a pop culture touchstone at the time TLS broadcast "Dykes in Space," TLS soundworkers could assume many of their listeners, if not all, would be able to make the parody connection. While I've demonstrated we see echoes of this lesbian campiness in contemporary queer feminist soundworks like *Warriors*, *Bards 'n Brews*, further analysis of different language and region-based shows would need to be done to make more robust claims about the significance of camp to queer feminist soundwork and the particular aesthetic and production techniques applied to create a queer campy sound. Such limitations are an essential result of political phenomenology. By refusing traditional phenomenological absolutism and transcendental idealism, political phenomenology instead advocates for a situating of the self historically and politically. There is value in attending to what others deem as perhaps insignificant or too niche. In my experience, it is in these seams, corners, and cracks that we can best learn how the foundation of a structure is made, where it needs fixing, or whether it is worth fixing. Whether that structure is the soundwork industries or more amorphous social structures of power, you can never

know the entirety of a structure alone. It is in this spirit of collective knowledge building that I offer this work.

It is also not lost on me the lack of attention given to the current state of community/campus radio in the soundwork conversation. Shadowed by the shiny newness of podcasting, camp/community radio continues to be relegated (returned) to the basements of universities across the nation. Often stifled by the same restrictive regulations that others once fought so hard to gain in becoming part of the Canadian broadcast ecosystem. As I have argued, this goes beyond queer feminist soundworks and into larger advocacy that must be done to support community-driven and activist media as both the radio and podcast industries see continued formalization and media monopolies take shape. The differences in their distribution and form matter, but in attending to soundworks across both radio and podcasting, my aim here is also to highlight the importance of thinking through the current reality of soundwork labour and media activism when the lines between the radio and podcast industry are murky at best.

Radio shows and podcasts which produce queer feminist and lesbian feminist content are a pivotal part of queer feminism's political, cultural, and historical soundscape. As I argue in Chapter 4 – Being a Public Queer, queer feminist soundwork is dependent upon and at odds with the form, format, and stylistic techno-logics of broadcast radio and podcasting. It opens new conversations on what it means to shift from a lesbian feminist politics of visibility toward audibility activism, which attends to a diversity of voices and experiences and how those voices and experiences are edited and constructed. This focus on the tensions of soundwork production brings forward discourse on the particular aesthetics that re-emerge across queer feminist soundworks in community radio and the podcast space. Chapter 5 - *Kisses Through the Static*, draws on moments of listening to and talking with soundworkers about the playful and intimate aesthetics and production choices in form, genre, and narrative that make a feminist soundwork *queer*. From lesbian camp to queerspeak to erotic power, different approaches to queer feminist aesthetics of play and intimacy in soundwork throughout chapter 5 speak to the unique formations of sonic subjectivity and intersubjectivity shows can carry. While Chapter 5 attends to the labour of aesthetic production across close listening of select works in this series, chapter 6 addresses the collective labour and challenges involved in making soundwork discoverable across pre-internet and digital contexts. Ultimately, I hope this

work helps develop your own critically embodied ear toward hearing, sharing, and producing more intersectional, radical, and boundary-pushing soundwork.

On a more microscale of limitations, there is so much context surrounding the shows featured in this study that I couldn't quite fit into the particular themes and narratives featured. In applying Alison Harvey's three-pronged feminist media studies approach of iteration, reflexivity, and situatedness, I did not take lightly the choices of what histories and experiences made their way into this text. While some conversations left out of this dissertation will no doubt find their way into other articles, presentations, and creative works, I would be reminded not to emphasize the plethora of stories still to be recovered about the networks supporting queer feminist soundwork as a phenomenon in the Canadian media context. For example, while *Kinesis* and *VGCC News* are highlighted in Chapter 6, they are but two of a wide-ranging selection of queer and feminist newsletters, magazines, and listings that helped create the broad network of media activism surrounding *Dykes on Mykes* and *The Lesbian Show*. For example, *The Radical Reviewer*, whose founding member Cy-Thea Sand can be seen in one of the initial documents sent to me by TLS member Silva Tenenbein before this project began. The photo in question also includes TLS member Connie Smith who contributed to *The Radical Reviewer's* first issue. Bookstores, coffee shops, women's centres, and events where collectives like *The Lesbian Show* and *The Radical Reviewer* would meet are also key sites not fully explored in this work, including; Ariel women's bookstore on Richard Street, the Vancouver Women's Bookstore which was hit by arson fire in 1980, and the many events held by Womankind promotions and productions, a group including TLS founding member Gisele Perreault that put-on women's dances and concerts around Vancouver in the 1970s prior to the start of *The Lesbian Show*.⁶⁸

The large crowds at this year's Dyke March in Toronto have me reflecting back on these histories and back to an opening quote from Queer feminist Gayle Rubin I use in the Introduction to this text: "the more I explore these queer knowledges, the more I find out how much we have already forgotten, rediscovered, and promptly forgotten again" (2012, p.347). The weight of this forgetting is something I have only begun to experience

⁶⁸ Some of these histories and detailed connections not featured earlier in the text have only recently come to my attention thanks to conversation with founding members of The Lesbian Show Giselle and Sherry, whom I wasn't able to connect with in my initial rounds of outreach for this project. I look forward to bringing their voices to further work on *The Lesbian Show* to come.

in recovering queer histories through inviting other queer soundworkers to remember, to share, and to reflect. When I started this research those years ago, I dwelled in Rubin's words, in an adamant belief that the 'promptly forgotten' Rubin speaks of led to a fracture in queer community with generations of 'not knowing' the complexities of queer activism's past. But today, sitting in the grass among so many dykes and queers, my feelings have changed. Even if many of these young queers have no historical depth in queer knowledge, they feel the pull to this communal space. They chant and sing and love just the same.

As abortion rights are stripped in the US, it is a reminder of our continued need for queer feminisms, and once again, the dykes and queers take up the call to arms, or in the world of soundwork, the call to ears. Our continued need for media coverage, diversity and inclusion in sexual education, for accessibility and safety on digital platforms all resurface in the face of such abhorrent news. However, one lesbian feminist practice that still needs reviving is dedicated information networks. Mainstream social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook have made it easier for LGBTQ+ activist and media organizations to publish their own content online, making it arguably even easier for audiences to find that content too. Still, in a digital world where content was once king, an overabundance of content drives social media platforms to filter what content you see, and often not in favour of smaller non-profit or less-than-platform-savvy groups without advertising dollars. Instead of 'content is king,' we've now entered the era of context cravings. In the search for 'real' connection, for content that makes you feel something, anything, amongst the endless scroll and fake news debates, some younger groups have turned to alternative social media like TikTok. In contrast, others turn yet again to traditional feminist community-based media practices of soundwork, zines, and newsletters. Now, this doesn't mean queer feminists aren't also using digital platforms to promote and present their work. Soundwork is now a screen-first media after all. When the very structure of platforms "straightens and whitens" queer and feminist movements through their privileging of "dominant spatial tactics," it is time to rethink where production labour is placed, and this doesn't mean starting from scratch.

A presumption that any idea is new is a product of the neoliberal imaginary. It doesn't mean a complete exit from the structures of oppression either. Lesbian separatism has taught us that 'exiting' is a privilege not everyone can wager. Rather, what I mean by rethinking where production labour is placed, is spending some of that labour on

listening back to what worked and why. Instead of reading Rubin's quote above as resulting in a 'not knowing', I now read it as a potentiality for remembering what has been forgotten and building on those knowledges. In their writing on exit, Sarah Sharma (2017) argues that 'exiting' is a male fantasy and a privilege that operates in opposition to care. While Sharma is mainly writing in regard to 'exit' as a gendered political strategy during the context of early discussion of 'Brexit' making news headlines,⁶⁹ here I make the correlation along the social privileges also associated with whiteness and cisgenderness in lesbian separatist movements concerning who was predominantly able to make such an exit from mainstream heterosexual society. This brings forward renewed conversations about the complexities of privilege in radio and podcasting of who has the privilege to engage freely in queer feminist soundwork. Such discussions of privilege regarding who could take risks involved in creating past soundwork open new questions for exploring what queer and feminist soundworkers today and into the future might expand on from the past and what they instead will disrupt, reorient, or reimagine anew.

As I write this epilogue, Robyn Badger, a founding member of *Dykes on Mykes* has just sent me a link to a newly founded *Dyke News* newsletter and film screening series on Vancouver Island. Yes, you are reading this correctly; the founding year is 2022. In my email inbox, Gisele and Sherry, of *The Lesbian Show* circa 1979, correspond about a new documentary called *Ahead of the Curve* (2021), about the story behind the once popular lesbian magazine *Curve* (formerly *Deneuve*) and its founder Franco Stevens. The film is also tied to a larger archival and non-profit initiative currently taking place under the *Curve* name. It seems that today, lesbian feminism is everywhere. Granted as someone who studies queer and feminist media, people tend to think of me when they come across something they think I'll find interesting. However, it is hard to deny the renewal of queer feminist works across various media over the past few years. Media is never made without a public in mind after all. In both these cases, it seems to be contemporary queer publics with interest in lesbian media activist histories and how those histories might inform or map onto the present. This style of unapologetically queer feminist media is the first of two modes of world-building I see taking place as more and more individuals find a collective potentiality in the histories of lesbian feminist

⁶⁹ Brexit was the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union which eventually passed into legislation and put into effect February 1st, 2020.

activism. We might call this world-building style, a renovation. New technology is brought in to provide potential additional modes of communication and accessibility. The walls, pipes, and finishes are assessed for repair, but the bones of the house are deemed good.

Indeed, nostalgia plays a role in this style of lesbian feminist appreciation and adaptation, particularly with the current resurgence of 90's pop culture in the 2020s. In this context, a re-emergence of 'lesbian chic' comes as no surprise. The type of political ties to dyke activism heard at Dyke Marches and in queer feminist soundwork today is not simply a depoliticized mainstreaming of the past, however. We hear this sincerity in the queer feminist aesthetics of *The Heart's* "Lesbian Separatism is Inevitable" (2020) and in the campy laughter of *Warriors, Bards, 'n Brews*. The longing for, and often felt *be-longing* to, the past is hardwired into lesbian feminism. It is an essential practice in doing queer feminist work regardless of the approach taken. Lesbian is, after all, an ode to the pop culture's "first lesbian" Sappho herself. While queer feminist soundworks which turn back toward lesbian feminism with such longing can also be viewed as part of a "larger aestheticized revival of lesbian-feminist history", the format media of radio and podcasting provides a breadth of space through which sound workers can evoke multiple perspectives through the techno-logics of long-form narrative storytelling and multi-tracking afforded through their chosen media. Soundwork in contrast to many digital media forms today, asks the audience to stay in their world awhile, to let it diffuse and add new layers of feeling and possibility to wherever you are now. While social media such as Instagram and Twitter play central roles in the discoverability and marketing lives of soundwork, the content is meant as an enticing draw into their sonic world. If an interested viewer finds their way to the podcast platform of their choice to view the show, the podcast's artwork equally plays a teaser role in drawing the potential listener in. While I have only begun to unpack the labour politics and networked intricacies of queer feminist soundwork in the digital contemporary, such structures deserve further intermedial attention as podcasting continues to hurdle toward a predicted \$4-billion-dollar industry by 2024 (Shapiro, 2022). How will this shape aesthetics?

The second of the two modes of world-building I see taking place as a building out of lesbian feminist media activism into the future is much more than a renovation. We might call this world-building style an expansion rather than a basic home renovation. In this metaphor, we can think of the expansion as an addition added to the original structure of lesbian feminism or as a new building of its own using select pieces from the original to build anew. The structure is deemed not to suffice in its current form and thus needs an addition or utterly new structure to adapt to what is needed. Here we might again think of the "shattered pieces" Ahmed (2019) speaks of in their writing on lesbian feminism. What are those shattered pieces and who did the shattering? One might assume the breakage was unintentional or from external sources, but in my experience, much of the shattering comes from within the feminist movement, and often for a good reason. To find where cracks have made for a weak foundation, or to break down a wall and make room for more feminists – queers, people of colour, transgender – to find shelter. There seems to be a growing feeling in Feminist and Queer theory fields, and from that feeling, a theory that the world is broken, collapsed, and in ruin. While wars rage on across the globe, these are not the ruins that seem to be at the center of such discourse. The pandemic has brought a wave of academic work turning toward ruin as a theoretical space of resistance and refusal. Queer theorist Jack Halberstam (2022) argues, "this is not a world to repair," an anarchist stance drawing on queer and Black science fiction, architecture and abolitionist histories to find renewed potential freedom and desire in 'unworlding.' Similarly, Ann Cvetchovich (2022) embraces the "messiness of not knowing," resisting institutional demands for definitive answers and solutions. Is it burnout? Or are we sick of caring? What is to be done when feminism is in ruins? While critical attention on desires to unworld in abolitionist and feminist anarchist movements, along with the power of refusal against historically gendered institutional labour, can indeed open new visions of feminist worlds to come, this is not the second style I see taking shape in the future of queer feminist soundwork. While some may decide to 'exit' or 'unworld', I still see hope in the feminist world-building potential of repair and expansion over ruin. A potentiality is again central to lesbian feminism's past (Samer, 2022). Such potentiality and expansion are perhaps heard in the new work by former co-founder of *The Heart*, Mitra Kaboli.

On the topic of people sending me queer media, I was also recently sent a link to study participant Mitra Kaboli's latest soundwork release, *Welcome to Provincetown* (2022).

Reading the podcast description, if you aren't familiar with the gay tourism of Provincetown, it does not immediately signal any queerness, let alone a feminist bent to the work. The opening description reads:

Venture into Provincetown, Massachusetts, a two-street beach town at the end of a sand spit, and meet the fascinating people who live there. *Welcome to Provincetown* encapsulates stories of artistry, sensuality, solitude, and serendipity. Listen to the sounds of hopes and dreams being carried through the summer breeze, the feeling of letting go, and the feeling of going all in. This is a place where you can find yourself or lose yourself (*Welcome to Provincetown*, 2022).

Despite the lack of blatant queer or feminist labels, Mitra's signature blend of human portraiture via sound with sound-rich ambiances and an erotics of place comes through clearly in the carefully crafted language of their three-line hook. Headphones on, the series trailer begins to play, and I get lost in the unapologetically queer aesthetics and narratives teased out in just the first few moments of this two-and-a-half-minute sonic introduction. Listen along to the trailer for *Welcome to Provincetown* [WtP] at Appendix A, Audio A12.

Waves slowly lap in the background as Mitra's raspy voice leads into sonic snapshots of the characters we will meet throughout the series - "the new meat on the block," "the bad bitch", and a cautionary "don't fall in love in P-Town, don't do it girl." I can already tell this may be the style of work Mitra hinted toward the last time we spoke regarding my question of what makes a soundwork 'queer feminist':

You know, you can make a show about climate change, but if you're a queer feminist and that's the lens that you are looking at things [with], then it is [queer feminist], you know? Like I don't think you have to necessarily be talking about like sex or gender or sexuality or those intersections at all, so much as like looking at how the intersection of those things effect literally everything else in our lives. (Kaboli, 2021).

In the queer feminist-informed world of *Welcome to Provincetown*, queers aren't positioned as on the periphery; they are Provincetown. The show doesn't focus on the dominant white gay male narrative of Provincetown, but rather invites the listener to follow along with Mitra and various queer women and genderqueer people of colour as they navigate questions of gay culture, labour, housing, art, and environmental justice. What makes this work a bit different than some of the other works studied throughout this text is that it is a queer feminist-informed and centred story without actually selling

itself under the explicit banner of queer feminisms once pivotal visibility politic. The narrative centers on queer lives and politics but without naming that queerness in the show description or centring its queerness on what have now become overrepresented stories of 'coming out' and 'queer trauma.' So, the question is, can we consider *Welcome to Provincetown* [WtP] and other works like it produced by queer feminist soundworkers as part of the queer feminist soundwork phenomenon? And should we? When it comes down to it, aesthetic and narrative parallels aside, Mitra's latest series can still be perceived as audibility activism. It takes on queer human-interest narratives and explores key social justice themes like housing insecurity, LGBTQ+ rights, and climate change through a "softer" feminist activism reminiscent of the kind of feminism *Dykes on Mykes* member Mel Hogan (2020) once dreamed their show would help cultivate for feminist media activism in the future. WtP still draws on many of the same central themes of queer feminist soundwork as a phenomenon. Turning back to the table of themes originally set out in Chapter 3 on Methodology and Conceptual Framework, copied again here as Table 6-1, on initial listen, the case can be made for *Welcome to Provincetown* as a work evoking all of the major themes outlined in this study. While I would argue that its polished sound doesn't read Punk DIY Ethos, the characters featured in the work certainly fill that role.

Table 6-1. What is queer feminist soundwork? Themes in review.

Theme	Definition
Queer Feminist Politic	Ethos and practice are grounded in the politics of queer and lesbian feminism.
Embedded in Queer Publics	Geographically and/or ideologically positioned as part of a queer community.
Punk DIY Ethos	Labelled and celebrated as raw, unedited, playful, unprofessional, and/or punk.
Intimacy, Desire, Sexuality	Embraces sex positive feminism and the communication of queer intimacy and desire.
Queer Experience Driven Content	Focuses on queer stories and perspectives.
Connected to Other Media	Positioned as part of (or in contrast to) a larger media system of newspapers, magazines, internet, television and radio.
A Balance of Serious Politics, Camp and Play	Politically grounded in queer activism and feminism articulated through 'serious' news and narrative storytelling juxtaposed with playful and campy experimentation.
Made by Queer People	Purposefully produced by collectives, groups and/or individuals who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community.
Community and Individual Identity Work	Experienced as an ongoing extension and/or laboured distillation of one's subjecthood and community identity.

Whether shows like *Welcome to Provincetown* [WtP] define themselves as queer feminist or not, one can certainly hear the influence of decades of queer and feminist activist ideology and care layered in its mix. It also provides new avenues of study to listen for these tenets in other works produced with queer feminist politics without explicitly naming them as such. This style of feminist sonic world-building demonstrated in WtP reminds me of how Kaitlin Prest also describes their approach to queer feminism with *The Heart* podcast, “the method is like the Trojan horse, you know? The Trojan horse is narrative and excellent quality, like really high quality, beautifully made narrative cinematic work. And the soldiers hiding inside of the horse is our radical politics” (Prest, 2021). This softer approach does not have the same upfront impact of the visibility politics that shows like *Dykes on Mykes* or *The Lesbian Show* embodied through their show titles and radically queer content. Instead it seems harkens back to the algorithmic reality of the neoliberal capitalist patriarchal system that independent podcasters must navigate to make their work heard through promotion and discovery across larger platforms.

As discussed in Chapter 6, algorithms in the age of neoliberalism reinforce oppressive social relationships and enact what Noble terms “technological redlining” (2018). Given that postfeminism is a ‘sensitivity’ deeply enmeshed with neoliberalism, queer feminist soundworkers like Mitra have developed complex media methods of a subtler or hidden from the surface activist politics that work to infiltrate the ears of a wider public amongst a digital glut of content. When queer feminist soundwork becomes caught up in marketability, in making profit to pay the bills, hiding inside the horse can become a necessary approach. Nevertheless, their work demonstrates how lesbian feminist activism has diffused into varied streams of hard and soft approaches to queer feminist soundwork. In the study of queer feminist soundwork, political phenomenology offers the ability to attend to the experiences and motivations behind these different approaches. The lived realities of trying to make queer feminist work across different contexts of community radio and podcasting speak to the particular challenges soundworkers face against neoliberal corporate diversity, platform discoverability, and community accountability. Sometimes a raised fist is needed to get the job done, a feminist call to arms, but in other contexts, a bent ear tuned to soft lips is exactly what is needed to connect with others, share knowledge, and build community through soundwork. The continued experimentation and variation in both stylistic approaches to queer feminist soundwork excites me about the future of media activist practices.

In speaking with queer feminist soundworkers over the past five years for this project, former members of *The Lesbian Show* [TLS] and *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] shared similar sentiments when they heard the news of their show's eventual retirement from the radio dial. Let us turn back to my conversation with Elana Wright and Deb VanSlet of DOMs. After hearing the original DOMs timeslot was now home to a new intersectional feminist show called Dragonroot, Elana shared, "I feel a little sad that the show's not on anymore, but I feel that would be a continuation of our show. I'm sure. And maybe they're much more trans aware and not as limited, you know in how they see their community?" Deb then responded, "Well, I would never use the word limit limited to describe us, really. [Elana: It's true] but it's just a different time where there's just more, there's always more." Here Deb and Elana recognize the needs of community have changed. However, they have always been in flux, and queer feminisms past and present have long taken on strategic new forms to advocate for equity and social justice for queers and dykes galore. Just as Jennifer Nash argues in debates on Black feminism and intersectionality, 'property claim' stakes can haunt and divide 'identity-driven feminism' (2019). If we are to move toward more effective approaches to intersectional feminisms, we must reflexively reckon with historical engagement and labour in dialogue with a process of 'letting go' to allow for new and forgotten practices and experiences to emerge (2019, p.138). Or, as Jennifer Love (2007) describes it, queer and feminist work must attend to backward futures which feel the past while embracing the promise of better queer futures to come. In this context, Deb and Elana's sentiments echo what is at the root of lesbian feminism, a desire for a radical reconfiguration of society for the future, a backward future which attends to histories of lesbian feminist activism while acknowledging what might be better to loosen our grasp on, and perhaps even let go. From the 1970s to the present, it then comes as no surprise that queer existence sounds and feels radically different today while simultaneously evoking a sense of belonging across generations through continued creative expression, queer kinship, and community building.

Lesbian feminism is everywhere. It is not forgotten. They might go by a different name or many names, but if you bend your ear and listen, you will hear their chants and whispers in lavender reverberation.

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Appendix A.

Dissertation Playlist

Audio A1. Cathy on The Lesbian Show, 1989 or 1990.

Creator/Producer:

Hutchinson, Louise., The Lesbian Show Collective.

Description:

Cathy (Louise's partner) shares a personal testimony for The Lesbian Show. This is an audio clip excerpt from a recorded broadcast (1989/1990) for the Co-op radio fundraising drive [radio broadcast] on *The Lesbian Show*, Vancouver Co-Op Radio, Vancouver, BC, Canada. Run time: 1min.49secs.

Audio is included here as permitted by Vancouver Co-Op Radio and the CC BY-NC 4.0 license originally documented on alotarchives.org. The recording is now archived by Simon Fraser University Special Collections and Rare Books. See Hutchinson, L. (1989-1990). Louise Hutchinson, 1989-1990 [sous-fonds MsC 156-10]. Archives of Lesbian Oral Testimony (MsC-156). SFU Library Special Collections & Rare Books, Burnaby, Canada. <https://atom.archives.sfu.ca/msc-156>.

Filename:

[A1 - Cathy Fundraiser drive clip The Lesbian Show.mp3](#)

Audio A2. Me & AU Episode One.

Creator/Producer:

Klassen, Andrea., Procyon Podcast Network.

Description:

This text document links you to the series trailer, transcripts and provides additional thesis related info for *Me and AU*, a queer audio romance following an online fanfiction friendship sparked by a fictional show called Selkirk. (2020, May 21). Me & AU Trailer

(Ep.0) [Audio podcast episode]. *Me & AU*. Procyon Podcast Network.

<https://www.procyonpodcastnetwork.com>

Filename:

A2 - Me & AU Trailer and Show Information.txt

Audio A3. Jamie's DOMs Cassette Delivery - Audio Diary Entry.

Creator/Producer:

Copeland, Stacey.

Description:

An original audio recording by thesis author (recorded October 23, 2020). Run time: 5mins. This clip is edited together from my audio diary entry logged on the day Jamie delivered the box of *Dykes on Mykes* [DOMs] tapes to my home during the COVID-19 lockdown. This box of tapes and materials was then digitized, documented and donated by the author under the names of two former DOMs members who held these materials: Deb VanSlet and Dayna McLeod. The Dykes on Mykes Fonds are available at the ArQuives (formerly the CLGA).

<https://collections.arquives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions43123>

Filename:

A3 - Oct 23-20 Audio Diary Excerpt Jamie Box Delivery.mp3

Audio A4. Audio Diary Clip - Post-Interview with Mitra Kaboli.

Creator/Producer:

Copeland, Stacey.

Description:

An original audio diary clip (recorded March 24, 2022) by the thesis author, following an interview with audio producer Mitra Kaboli. Run time: 1min29secs. In this recording the author reflects on the interview conversation and main themes they heard in Mitra's responses. Mitra Kaboli was a co-founder of *The Heart* podcast, and the producer and host of *Welcome to Provincetown*.

Filename:

A4 - Mar 24-22 Post Interview with Mitra The Heart Clip.mp3

Audio A5. Dykes on Mykes 2007 Clip featuring Audio from DOMS 1991 Sex Garage Raids Commemoration.

Creator/Producer:

McLeod, Dayna., Dykes on Mykes collective.

Description:

Sex Garage Raid Anniversary and PERVERS/CITE [radio broadcast]. Originally broadcast July 23, 2007 on *Dykes on Mykes*, CKUT 90.3FM Montreal, Canada. The clip selection included here is 01:24-24:20 (min:secs) of the original audio file recorded by former DOMs member Dayna McLeod. This audio is included here with permission from CKUT 90.3FM Montreal. A selection of *Dykes on Mykes* audio recordings, including the full length version of this file, are available by request through the ArQuives (formerly the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives) -

<https://collections.arquives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions43173>

Filename:

A5 - Dykes on Mykes 2007 Clip ft DOMS 1991 Sex Garage Raids Commemoration.mp3

Audio A6. Queer Public – “The Atlanta Letters”

Creator/Producer:

McGregor, Erin.

Description:

This text document links you to the episode audio, transcript, and provides additional thesis related info for *Queer Public* - “The Atlanta Letters” episode. (2019, November 25). The Atlanta Letters [audio podcast episode]. *Queer Public*. <https://www.queerpublic.org>

Filename:

A6 - Queer Public – The Atlanta Letters.txt

Audio A7. Queer Public – “Atlanta”

Creator/Producer:

McGregor, Erin.

Description:

This text document links you to the episode audio, transcript, and provides additional thesis related info for *Queer Public* – “Atlanta” episode. (2019, December 23). Atlanta [audio podcast episode]. *Queer Public*. <https://www.queerpublic.org>

Filename:

[A7 - Queer Public – Atlanta.txt](#)

Audio A8. Dykes in Space Part One on The Lesbian Show, 1983.

Creator/Producer:

The Lesbian Show Collective.

Description:

This clip features a segment from the “Dykes in Space” radio drama as broadcast by *The Lesbian Show*. (1983, October 20). The Humour Feature [radio broadcast recording]. *The Lesbian Show*, Vancouver Co-Op Radio. Clip Selection is 14:29-32:24 (min:secs) of original audio file. This audio file is included with permission from Vancouver Co-Op Radio CFRO 100.5 FM. Full archival recording of The Lesbian Show Humour Feature can be accessed at the Vancouver Archives, <https://searcharchives.vancouver.ca/the-lesbian-show-humour-feature-side-1>

Filename:

[A8 - Clip of Dykes in Space – The Lesbian Show 1983.mp3](#)

Audio A9. Warriors, Bards ‘n Brews – “The Debt Part One”

Creator/Producer:

Krause, Chloe., & Gill, Sara.

Description:

This text document links you to the episode audio and provides additional thesis related info for *Warriors Bards 'n Brews* – “The Debt: Part 1” episode. (2019, July 2). The Debt: Part 1 [audio podcast episode]. *Warriors Bards 'n Brews*. <https://soundcloud.com/wbb-podcast/the-debt-pt-1>

Filename:

[A9 - Warriors Bards n Brews – The Debt Part One.txt](#)

Audio A10. The Heart – “Lesbian Separatism is Inevitable”**Creator/Producer:**

Unter, Phoebe. & Kelly, Nicole., The Mermaid Palace Collective.

Description:

This text document links you to the episode audio, transcript, and provides additional thesis related info for *The Heart* – “Lesbian Separatism is Inevitable” episode. (2020, January). Lesbian Separatism is Inevitable [audio podcast episode]. *The Heart*, Radiotopia & Mermaid Palace. <https://www.theheartradio.org>

Filename:

[A10 - The Heart – Lesbian Separatism is Inevitable.txt](#)

Audio A11. FemRadio - Silva Tenenbein on The Lesbian Show, 2018.**Creator/Producer:**

Copeland, Stacey., FemRadio Collective.

Description:

This audio recording includes the edited radio interview with The Lesbian Show co-founder Silva Tenenbein conducted by Stacey Copeland in 2018. Run time: 23mins38secs. This interview was part of a broadcast and podcast episode of FemRadio. Audio is included with permission from CJRU1280AM. You can listen to the full episode of FemRadio here: <https://on.soundcloud.com/9JHrA>

FemRadio – “The Lesbian Show” episode featuring Silva Tenenbein. (2018, March 29).
The Lesbian Show [radio broadcast]. *FemRadio*, CJRU1280AM The Scope, Toronto,
Canada. <https://www.cjru.ca/show/femradio>

Filename:

A11 - FemRadio - Silva Tenenbein on The Lesbian Show 2018.mp3

Audio A12. Welcome to Provincetown Trailer

Creator/Producer:

Kaboli, Mitra.

Description:

This text document links you to the episode audio, transcript, and provides additional
thesis related info for the trailer to *Welcome to Provincetown*. (2022, May 20).

Introducing Welcome to Provincetown (audio podcast episode]. *Welcome to
Provincetown*, Room Tone; Rococo Punch; WitnessDocs; USA.

<https://www.witnesspodcasts.com/shows/welcome-to-provincetown>

Filename:

A12 – Welcome to Provincetown Trailer.txt

Appendix B.

Ethics Study Detail

Ethics Application Number: 2019s0493 – Version 3: August 5, 2020

Stacey Copeland – REB Application Study Details (SFU) 1. Introduction

Title of Study: The Lesbian Show: The evolution of marginalized voices in Canadian Audio Media

Principal Investigator: Stacey (Anastasia) Copeland **Faculty Supervisor:** Dr. Milena Droumeva
Department: School of Communication

Funding source: Joseph Bombardier Doctoral Fellowship (SSHRC - CGSD)

2. Summary of Proposed Research

Media representation plays a crucial role in how we communicate and understand human experience (Barnhurst, 2007; Gross, 2001). Today, as ‘diversity’ becomes an increasingly valued part of Canada’s culture industries (Fleras, 2011; Mannani & Thompson, 2012; Shade, 2014), online searches for lesbian and queer podcasts return a rich listing of shows from across Europe and the Americas. But how did we arrive at this particular moment? And what makes a radio show or podcast ‘queer’ anyway? My doctoral work focuses on the role of audio media phenomenon – radio shows and podcasts – in the creation of sonic space and sonic subjectivity for queer women and lesbians. My research draws on literature from queer theory and feminist media studies to theorize the term ‘queer’ as both an identity marker for sexuality and gender, aka ‘queer as being’, as well as ‘queer as method’ for queering the ways in which engagement with and disruption of normative structures of cultural production take place (Doan, 2013; Muñoz, 2009). Through this doctoral research, I aim to trace queer subjective experiences through past and present radio shows and podcasts produced for and produced by queer women to study the ways in which these shows ‘queer’ the media soundscape at large.

Early queer radio shows such as Vancouver Co-Op Radio’s *The Lesbian Show* (1979-2000’s) and CKUT Montreal’s *Dykes on Mykes* (1984-2000’s) offer a glimpse into a lesbian feminist past in which ‘visibility’ - or in this case ‘audibility’ - was key to establishing political rights and social education around women’s sexuality (Gill 2007; Marinucci, 2010; Millward, 2015). At the same time, listening to *The Lesbian Show* is not so different from listening to a modern talk based queer podcast. What *has* changed, however, is the ability to reach a broader (often transnational) online community and in turn create space for more voices and sonic representations across sexuality, race, ability and gender (Fox, 2008; Berry, 2016; Siebler, 2016; Tan, 2016).

Research Questions: What might a study of identity politics and cultural construction of audio media across multi-generations of queer radio makers reveal about the history and future of queer representation and gender politics in Canadian media? To study these shifts in distribution, communication and construction of queer radio soundscapes, semi-structured interviews, archival research, discourse analysis and documentary creation will be applied to interrogate: 1) How gender and sexuality are communicated through audio media as queer phenomenon. 2) How shifts in distribution between radio and online podcasting affect the representation of marginalized voices and queer identities in media. 3) How media makers perceive their show as an extension or representation of their own identity construction.

Research methods: Three methods will be used in my proposed phenomenological research design: semi-structured interviews, listening-centred critical media analysis, and audio documentary creation. The BC Gay and Lesbian Archives radio collection and the Archive of Lesbian Oral Testimony (ALOT) collection

of tapes from Co-Op Radio's *The Lesbian Show* along with the ArQuives (formerly CLGA) collection on Vancouver's *Coming Out Show* and Montreal's *Dykes on Mykes* create the introductory archival corpus for this study. From these archival materials, names of show contributors are pulled for potential interview participants and episodes are marked for secondary analysis based on what episodes, experiences and events are brought forward during the interviews. Interviews are divided into two stages with each individual or small group interview lasting approx. 60 minutes. The first stage of interviews will be conducted with these early radio makers through a criterion sampling method. The responses given during these interviews will then be used to target contemporary queer podcast creators with connection to one of these early shows for a second stage of interviews. Criterion and chain sampling techniques (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 159) will be used to identify the network connection cases that meet the criterion of being part of a queer audio media phenomenon with links to the foundational shows in Canada to further explore participants experiences and the two shows influences across generations of media makers. An interview protocol instrument is included in this ethic application and will be utilized for all semi-structured interviews.

The second method is listening-centred critical media analysis. In advance of interviews I will listen to selections of each show and collect audio clips to be played for the interviewees as part of the interview process. A secondary analysis and listening of additional episodes of the radio shows and podcasts made by these participants will be analyzed dependent on what episodes or events are discussed and shared by participants during the interviews.

The third method to be used in this phenomenological research design is audio documentary creation. The intention of creative documentary production as method is to have a reflexive document of the process of uncovering these lesbian and queer women's audio media histories and connections. The documentary will also become an affective audio media archive in itself of my own experience of listening to lesbian and queer feminist voices as a queer lesbian radio producer myself, including reflections and findings along the way. The audio documentary will be made for a public audience and is a separate final project from the dissertation itself but the process of documenting my own experience on tape throughout the research stage works as a reflexive feminist method that also opens my research findings after the dissertation to a wider audience beyond the university.

Data analysis plan: All interview data will be analyzed in NVIVO (computer assisted analysis software) to code for themes and analyze findings. Radio show and podcast episodes will be analyzed through listening and all notes will be stored in NVIVO for analysis in relationship to interview data findings.

3. Prospective participant information

The prospective participants for this research study are adult queer women radio makers and podcasters able to give consent to participate. Specifically, audio media creators with connection to one of the foundational Canadian lesbian radio shows *The Lesbian Show* and *Dykes on Mykes*. The aim is to conduct a first round of semi-structured interviews - ideally 5-10 interviews - with founding and long-standing members of *The Lesbian Show* and *Dykes on Mykes*. A second round of interviews – ideally 5-10 - will then be conducted with contemporary queer radio show and podcast creators with connection to these two foundational shows based on my findings from the first round of interviews. Based on early research, shows with potential participants include *The Heart* from the sound art collective *Mermaid Palace*, and *The Queer Public Podcast* from a former CKUT radio producer. Each participant will be required to dedicate an hour of their time for participation as well as being available for continued contact for ongoing consent as outlined.

4. Recruitment methods

For recruitment I will share my first call for participants to Canadian lesbian and queer groups and organizations on Facebook and Twitter which provide social space and community for wide demographics of LGBTQ+ women from Vancouver, Montreal and North American more broadly. I also plan to email my

call for participants to Co-Op radio, CKUT, ALOT (Archive of Oral Testimony) and the ArQuives (Formerly the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives) to request their help in circulating my first call for participants who were involved with *The Lesbian Show* and *Dykes on Mykes*. My second call for participants will be targeted. I will personally email the recruitment call to radio shows, podcasts and individuals connected to these two foundational shows based on the findings and conversations that emerge during my first stage of interviews. No monetary incentives will be included.

5. Obtaining Consent/Assent

Once participants have made contact and an interview has been scheduled, the written consent form (see template attached) will be sent via email to participants for review. Consent forms will be filled out by the participants and returned to the researcher before the interview is commenced. The consent form will be reviewed at the beginning of the interview and additional verbal consent will be given by participant on audio recording before the commencement of the interview to provide ongoing dialogue on consent. As the researcher and the interviewer, I will give adequate time to participants to read, discuss, ask questions and understand the form. I will include in my interview protocol the opportunity for interviewees to ask me any questions about the research and process.

Voluntary Nature of Participation: To ensure participants are aware of their right to withdraw voluntarily from participation, and parts of participation, I will describe the voluntary nature of their participation in the recruitment messages sent out to potential interview subjects. I will also make sure to include a written description of the voluntary nature of participation in the consent forms to be signed by all interview subjects, including the right to skip a question. During the interviews, if at anytime the subject vocalizes that they would like specific content removed or not used within the research or documentary, that content will be deleted from the recording immediately. Participants will have the opportunity to review their interview transcript and the audio documentary before they are archived or released. If subjects withdraw after or during the timeline outlined in the consent form, I will delete their data, make record of participant withdrawal and remove their data from my research. Consent will be discussed and acknowledged at all times during the interview process and participants can choose to be excluded from the audio documentary and use an alias for publication of any findings from their interview material in the research and documentary.

6. Potential Benefits

Potential benefits from the research to participants are as follows but not limited to: Acknowledgement of their contribution to the research. Exploration and documentation of their experiences to aid in greater conversation around representation and presentation of lesbian and queer women in audio media. Becoming part of a larger oral history of queer and feminist voices in media production through audio documentary, publications, and the availability of interview materials for future researchers and community.

7. Risks: Minimal Risk

There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. Participation is completely voluntary. Because the subjects may discuss personal experiences or emotions related to their work and identity, they may experience emotional response, a loss of privacy or upon reflection feel embarrassed about what they have shared. The risk of psychological or social risks will be minimized by allowing the subject to only speak to the extent they feel most comfortable and with ongoing consent. Refusal to participate or withdraw/dropout after agreeing to participate will not have an adverse effect or consequences on the participants or their employment. If a participant were to withdraw from the study, their data will be destroyed.

Ethical concerns: The study involves no foreseeable risks and participants will be informed that if they would like additional information or wish to withdraw at any point they are free to do so. If participants

wish to obtain the results of the study they will be encouraged to contact the principal investigator, Stacey Copeland.

8. Risks to researchers

Risk to researcher is minimal given the minimal risk involved in the nature of the study as noted above. Interviews will primarily be conducted via skype or by phone, limiting physical contact and travel. If interviews are conducted in person, the location and time of the interview within Canada will be communicated to my supervisor in advance and up-to-date guidelines on public contact for research (e.g. covid-19 social distancing measures) will be adhered for safety of participants and researcher. Only the remote practices will proceed until the restrictions on in- person research are lifted.

9. Participant confidentiality measures

I will strive to ensure confidentiality for participants during the study. Only the primary researcher involved in the study will have access to the audio recordings of interviews, and they will be used for transcription purposes and audio documentary production only. With permission from study participants and upon acceptance of my dissertation to the SFU Library, all interview transcripts and audio recordings will then be made available through a digital archive such as SFU AtoM and/or the ALOT collection at SFU for future researchers.

Interviews will be conducted in private as well as quiet locations as the quality of the audio recordings is paramount to this research. Interviews will be primarily conducted remotely. If interview must be conducted in person, interviews will be conducted in a bookable private meeting space on SFU campus or at the participants home or place of work to provide aural and visual privacy and under up-to-date social contact guidelines for research (e.g. covid-19 distancing measures) in the location and timeframe of the interview. Only the remote practices will proceed until the restrictions on in-person research are lifted. If interview is conducted remotely, participants and the research will be asked to join the skype or phone interview from a secure and private location to ensure confidentiality of information discussed. Telephone, virtual-conferencing and email are not a secure means of communication; therefore, full confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. We anticipate interviews will primarily be conducted individually though small group interviews will be offered at the request of participants on a case by case basis. We encourage participants not to discuss the content of the interview to people outside of the interview; however, we can't control what participants do with the information discussed. This will be communicated in the consent form.

Written and ongoing consent will be acquired from participants in relation to confidentiality of any and all identifying information and data. As audio documentary creation is included in this research as a practiced based method, the voices of participants could be considered identifying information, along with the experiences they choose to discuss. This identifiable information is essential to the research, but consent will be discussed on an ongoing basis throughout the pre, post and interview process and an option to have their voices altered will be given.

10. Data stewardship plan + FutureUse of data

Storage of Research Data: All data will be kept for 5 years in a locked safe in the researcher's office. Digitized materials and digital data will be kept on a secure external password-protected hard drive in a locked safe in the researcher's office.

Future use of data: With permission from study participants and upon acceptance of my dissertation to the SFU Library, all finalized interview transcripts and interview audio recordings will then be made available through SFU AtoM and/or the ALOT collection at SFU for future researchers indefinitely.

11. Dissemination of results

I expect to use the results of this study for the purposes of publication and academic presentations, including a completed PhD dissertation in the SFU library and the future creation of an audio documentary. The audio documentary will be made available publicly through a to-be-determined broadcast platform such as but not limited to the CBC Doc Project or the Scope at Ryerson CJRU1280AM in a linear radio and/or on-demand digital format.

12. References

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Appendix C.

Participant Consent Form



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Ethics Application Number: 2019s0493

INFORMED CONSENT BY PARTICIPANTS IN A RESEARCH STUDY

“The Lesbian Show: The evolution of marginalized voices in Canadian Audio Media”

Principal Researcher: Stacey Copeland, PhD Candidate | School of Communication | email:|

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Milena Droumeva | School of Communication | email:

Funding body: This study is sponsored by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)

Duration of Study: June 2020 – April 2022

We are doing this study to learn more about how audio media (radio and podcasting) is used to communicate lesbian and queer women’s experiences across different platforms and contexts. Specifically, we’re asking: What might a study of LGBTQ+ women’s experiences in the production of audio media across generations of radio makers reveal about the history and future of queer representation and gender politics in Canadian media?

Research Procedures

We invite you to participate in an interview with researcher Stacey Copeland as part of their Doctoral research in the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University, Canada. The participants for this study are lesbian and/or queer women identified persons who have produced or are currently producing a lesbian or queer radio show or podcast, *or* audio media that includes lesbian or queer feminist content. Interviews are conducted in two stages. The first stage is restricted to past members of Vancouver Co-Op Radio’s “The Lesbian Show and CKUT’s “Dykes on Mykes”. The second stage of interviews is restricted to current or recent (in the last 5 years) members of contemporary podcasts and radio shows. Interviews will be audio taped, and later transcribed by the researchers.

Yes, I want to take part. By agreeing to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

- Sign this consent form and return it to the principal researcher before the interview.
- Participate in a 60-minute interview about your experience in producing queer audio media. This interview will take place in person, via internet teleconferencing (video or audio, eg. skype) or by phone. This interview will be audio recorded only. Only the remote practices will proceed until the restrictions on in-person research are lifted.
- Approve or decline the use of your interview materials in an audio documentary to be produced by the primary researcher as part of the research process. A draft version will be sent to participants for approval/edit notes.
- Approve or decline archival of your interview recording and transcription at Simon Fraser University for future community and research use with permission from the principal investigator.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, you may still choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences to the education, employment or other services to which you are entitled or are presently receiving. If you withdraw we will destroy your data and remove your participation from the study.

Potential Risks: There are no foreseeable risks to you in participating in this study. Still, some questions may evoke an emotional or uncomfortable response. Ongoing consent is important. If you ever feel uncomfortable and would like to cancel or conclude the interview or wish to have interview material in part or in full removed from the study, please communicate this to your interviewee and your data will promptly be destroyed. We anticipate interviews will primarily be conducted individually though small group interviews can be offered at the request of participants on a case by case basis. We encourage participants not to discuss the content of the interview to people outside of the interview; however, we can't control what participants do with the information discussed.

Benefits: Potential benefits from the research to participants are as follows but not limited to: Aiding in greater conversation around representation and production of lesbian and queer culture/identity in audio media. Becoming part of a larger oral history of queer and feminist voices in media production through audio documentary, publications, and the availability of interview materials for future researchers and community.

Confidentiality and Data Storage: We strive to ensure confidentiality for participants during the study. Only the principal researcher involved in the study will have access to the audio recordings of interviews, and they will be used for research purposes such as transcription purposes and audio documentary production only. All data will be kept for 5 years in a locked safe in the researcher's office. Please note telephone, virtual-conferencing and email are not a secure means of communication; therefore, full confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Digitized materials and digital data will be kept on a secure external password-protected hard drive in a locked safe in the researcher's

office. Only information collected with written and ongoing consent will be disclosed within the research.

Participants can choose to be excluded from the audio documentary and use an alias for publication. Use of an alias cannot guarantee full anonymity given the identifiable nature of voice recordings and information that may be disclosed during the interview. Only limited confidentiality can be offered for those being interviewed in small groups. We encourage participants not to discuss the content of the interview to people outside of the interview; however, we can't control what participants do with the information discussed. Please note that posting to comments sections on social media or other forums about this study may identify you as a participant. We therefore suggest that if this study was made available to you via a social media site or other online forums, you refrain from posting comments to protect your anonymity.

Future use of Participant Data: With permission from study participants upon study completion, all interview transcripts and audio recordings will then be made available through a digital archive such as SFU AtoM and/or the ALOT collection at SFU for future researchers. Participants have the right to review audio recordings and interview transcripts. Participants hold the right to edit or retract a statement or response given upon review of the audio recording or transcript. To review audio recordings or transcripts, please contact Stacey Copeland to arrange an appointment for review. The documentary cut will be sent to participants for review before public release.

Dissemination of Results: The results of this study will be used for the purposes of publication and academic presentations, including a PhD dissertation through SFU Library and the creation of an audio documentary. The audio documentary will be made available publicly through a to-be-determined broadcast platform in a linear radio and/or on-demand digital format. If you wish to obtain study results please contact the principal investigator, Stacey Copeland or faculty supervisor, Dr. Milena Droumeva.

Ethical concerns and complaints:

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Toward, Director, Office of Research Ethics.

Contact for information about the study:

Stacey Copeland, PhD Candidate | School of Communication | Simon Fraser University
Email:

Confirmation of Agreement

(YES / NO) I agree to have my interview audio clips used for the creation of an audio documentary as outlined in this consent form.

(YES / NO) I agree to have my full name and identifiers used in publication.
If NO, please include a preferred alias for your data.

Preferred alias: _____

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative impact on your relationship with the researcher, fellow participants and professional affiliations.

- Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.
- Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.
- You do not waive any of your legal rights by participating in this study.

_____ Participant Signature

_____ Print Name of Participant

_____ Email or phone (for study follow-up)

_____ Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

Appendix D.

Semi-Structured Interview Instrument

The Lesbian Show: The evolution of marginalized voices in Canadian Audio Media Semi-Structured Interview Outline (Stage I and Stage II interviews)

Primary Researcher: Stacey Copeland

Opening Script: *Introduce myself as a researcher and as a queer feminist audio producer.*

'Today I will be asking you a series of questions about your experience in producing queer/lesbian media. This interview is part of a study of what LGBTQ+ (past or present) women's experiences in the production of audio media across generations of radio makers can reveal about the history and future of queer representation and gender politics in Canadian media. If you have any questions or concerns during the interview, please do not hesitate to bring them to my attention.'

1. You have read through and signed the consent form to participate in this interview. Do I have your permission to record our interview today for use as specified in said form?
2. Please state your name, pronouns, and give a brief description of who you are.
3. Which queer radio shows or podcasts are/were you involved with?
4. During what timeframe are/were you involved?
5. What roles do/did you take on as part of that show?
6. How many other people are/were involved at this time?
7. How did you decide to take part *or* How did you get involved in the show?
8. In your own words how would you describe the show? (format, genre, tone, audience etc.)
9. What is the focus or mandate of the show?
10. Take me back to __insert date__, why do you think the show got started at this time?
11. Thinking back, what are some of your favorite episodes or segments? Why?

I'd like to listen to a clip from the show with you. [play pre-chosen audio clip 5-10 min. from show they were involved in.]

12. How does listening to this clip make you feel?
13. Listening back, do you feel this show was an extension of your identity at the time?
14. Does it evoke any particular memories or experiences?
15. What was it like to hear these voices of queer or lesbian women during the time this episode was aired?
16. What is it like to listen to these voices and their stories now?
17. Why audio (radio or podcasting) instead of say TV, film, blogging or an alternate media form?

18. How did you go about making choices of what topics to cover? Eg. Where choices of topics to cover based on the lived experiences of show members?
19. How did you go about making choices of what content to air? (music, interviews, sketches, etc.)
20. What other media (other radio shows, art, tv) was influencing you at the time?
21. Were there any barriers involved in making the show as you envisioned it? (eg. technology, regulations, time commitments, space, politics).
22. What makes a radio show or podcast “queer” or “lesbian to you?”
23. How would you define lesbian feminist OR queer media?
24. How do you think queer feminist representation has changed since you first started the show?
25. Do you think of yourself or this show as part of a particular generation of political activism? (eg. queer/feminist/other?)

FOR STAGE II ONLY Q27-32. If Stage I skip to Q33: I’d like to listen to a clip from a past show with you. [play pre-chosen audio clip 5-10 min. from foundational lesbian radio show their show has identified to be connected to.]

26. How does listening to this clip make you feel?
27. Had you listened to or heard of this show before?
28. Does it evoke any particular memories or experiences for you?
29. What is it like to hear the voices of queer/lesbian women on the radio from the time this episode was aired?
30. What is it like to listen to these voices and stories in relation to your own show? Do you hear any connections?
31. What sounds different to you? Particularly thinking about the production choices.
32. Listening back to this show, and thinking about media today, how do you think queer feminist media has changed?
33. Are there any contemporary radio shows or podcasts that remind you of the work you are/were doing with this show?
34. Are any of the folks involved with the show working on other queer or feminist audio media productions right now or for the near future?
35. Today radio shows and podcasts can be on air one day and gone the next, why do you think your show lasted as long as it did or why do you think the show has continued on for so long?
36. If no longer involved in the show now or at the end, why did you end up leaving?
37. If the show ended, why do you think the show ended?
38. Did you have any additional thoughts or comments you would like to add?
39. If there anyone else that you think I should interview would you pass along my name and contact information?

Closing: That concludes the interview. Do you have any concerns about answers given that you would like me to exclude from my results? Do you have any questions for me? Feel free to reach out at any point to review your interview transcript and I will be in touch as the project moves forward to discuss transcript review, the documentary process and when results will be published.

Appendix E.

Call for Participant Instruments

Call Instrument #1 – Call for Participants Instrument for Stage 1 Interviews: The Lesbian Show and Dykes on Mykes. Script for posting to Social Media, eg. Facebook (text), Instagram (image), Twitter (text + image).

[SFU logo and SSHRC logo here]

Calling all Lesbian and Queer Radiomakers Past and Present!

- Were you ever involved in Vancouver Co-op Radio’s “The Lesbian Show”?
- What about CKUT Montreal’s “Dykes on Mykes”?

You are invited to participate in a study about how audio media (radio and podcasting) is used to communicate lesbian and queer women’s experiences across different platforms and contexts. In this call for interviews we’re particularly interested in folks who were involved in one or both of these lesbian focused community radio shows from the 1980’s to 2000’s.

Participation involves a 60 minute interview about your experience in producing queer/lesbian audio media. This audio recorded interview will take place via remote video or audio service, eg. zoom or skype or by phone or in person. Participation is voluntary.

For more information please contact Stacey Copeland by email

This research is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Please note that posting to comments sections on social media or other forums about this study may identify you as a participant. We therefore suggest that if this study was made available to you via a social media site or other online forums, you refrain from posting comments to protect your anonymity.

** Please feel free to share this post widely! **

Call Instrument #2 – Call for Participants Instrument for Stage 2 Interviews: Email Script for Current or recent (in the last 5 years) members of contemporary podcasts and radio shows connected to the two historical shows (The Lesbian Show and Dykes on Mykes).

Hello _____

My name is Stacey Copeland and I am a PhD researcher at Simon Fraser University in the School of Communication. I am contacting you to see if you would be interested in participating in a research study I’m conducting on queer radio and podcasting.

We are doing this study to learn more about how audio media (radio and podcasting) is used to communicate lesbian and queer women's experiences across different platforms and contexts. In this call for participants we are particularly interested in current or recent (in the last 5 years) members of contemporary podcasts and radio shows who we have identified as having connection to Vancouver Co-Op Radio's "The Lesbian Show and CKUT Montreal's "Dykes on Mykes" on some way, shape or form. For example: through a past show member, the community radio station, or an affiliated individual or organization.

Your participation is completely voluntary and will include a 60 minute interview by video chat, phone or in person. You have the option of participating in an audio documentary as part of this research. Interviews will be audio taped only.

This research is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. If you are interested in more information about the study or would like to participate, please reply to this email.

See consent form attached with further details on participation.