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Give and Receive Silence*

DAR Y RECIBIR SILENCIOS

DAR E RECEBER SILÊNCIOS

Leonel Vásquez**
Traducido por Neva Ann Kenny***

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Abstract

This paper is the result of a reflection on the role of silence in the research that, as an artist, has led me to listening to rivers, oceans, and water bodies in sound territories of social-environmental conflict in Colombia. In this paper, silences appear as a political posture of listening that determines the relationships with the body and the landscape, as an anthropic expression of the crisis of water landscapes and, at the same time, as sensitive and resonant material in the creation of a project that finds, in silence, poetic ways of working in the construction of the memories of a dry river. To listen again to the water from the amplified powers of the sonorous, tactile, vibrating body is the possibility of cleaning from them the instrumental representations that reduce it to a matter-object; it is allowing the interpretation of their messages and the opportunity of rhyming in new times of water.

Keywords: Sound heritage; sound memory; sound body; bone hearing; natural and cultural water landscapes; water crisis.

Resumen

Este artículo surge como reflexión sobre el lugar que ocupan los silencios dentro de la investigación que como artista me ha llevado a la escucha de los ríos, los mares y los cuerpos de agua en territorios sonoros de conflicto socio ambiental en Colombia. En este los silencios aparecen como postura política de la escucha que determina las relaciones con el cuerpo y el paisaje, como expresión antrópica de la crisis de los paisajes del agua, y a la vez como material sensible y resonante en la creación de un proyecto que encuentra en la mudez, formas poéticas de trabajar en la construcción de las memorias de un río seco. Volver a escuchar las aguas desde las potencias ampliadas del cuerpo sonoro, táctil, vibrátil es la posibilidad de limpiarlas de las representaciones instrumentales que la reducen a una materia-objeto, es permitir la interpretación de sus mensajes y la oportunidad de ritmar en unos nuevos tiempos del agua.

Palabras clave: Patrimonio sonoro; memoria sonora; cuerpo sonoro; escucha ósea; paisajes naturales y culturales del agua; crisis del agua.

Resumo

Este artigo surge como uma reflexão sobre o lugar ocupado pelos silêncios dentro da pesquisa que, como artista, me levou a ouvir os rios, os mares e os corpos de água em territórios sólidos em conflito na Colômbia. Neste artigo, os silêncios aparecem como uma postura política de escuta que determina as relações com o corpo e a paisagem, como expressão antrópica da crise das paisagens aquáticas e, ao mesmo tempo, material sensível e ressonante na criação de um projeto que encontra, na mudez, formas poéticas de trabalhar na construção das memórias de um rio seco. Ouvir novamente as águas desde as potências amplificadas do corpo sonoro, tátil e vibrante é a possibilidade de limpá-las das representações instrumentais que as reduzem a uma matéria-objeto; é permitir a interpretação de suas mensagens e a oportunidade de ritmar em novos tempos da água.

Palavras-chave: Patrimônio sonoro; memória sonora; corpo sonoro; audição óssea; paisagens naturais e culturais da água; crise da água.

Not long ago I was in the Colombian coffee region coordinating a creative workshop with various artists, craftsmen, and cultural experts. With the premise that the coffee region is an important part of human heritage, the purpose of our workshop was to provoke artistic expressions that explored the challenge of safeguarding and preserving a dynamic landscape that is constantly evolving. Our natural laboratory prompted the following inquiries: "What part of this heritage is related to the soundscape?" and "What to do with the dilemma implied by 'conservation': to maintain and fossilize something alive?"

We decided to take these questions to Enfances, a children's foundation that encourages participation in cultural activities, including exhibitions and artistic events, where the children's artwork is exhibited in the town of Pereira, Colombia. The foundation presented me with a cane carved and whittled from a coffee branch as a symbol of their gratitude for the work I did in revealing the coffee territory's acoustic richness. The gift represents the symbolic power as a guardian instrument according to the beliefs of the Cauca Department and other indigenous traditions in Colombia. The cane was engraved with the words "the gift of silence." I understood that with this gift I had received a dual invitation, first, to serve as a custodian of the landscape through sound awareness and, second, to think of the gift as the giving and receiving of silence. These are ideals that have supported some of my creative-research projects, in which I have expressed a critical point of view. These projects were fueled by the crisis of several important water landscapes in Colombia.

SILENCE

To understand silence you have to experience it. To that end, I developed an exercise that comes very close to discovering the complexity of silence and a way of experiencing it, as illustrated in Figure 1.

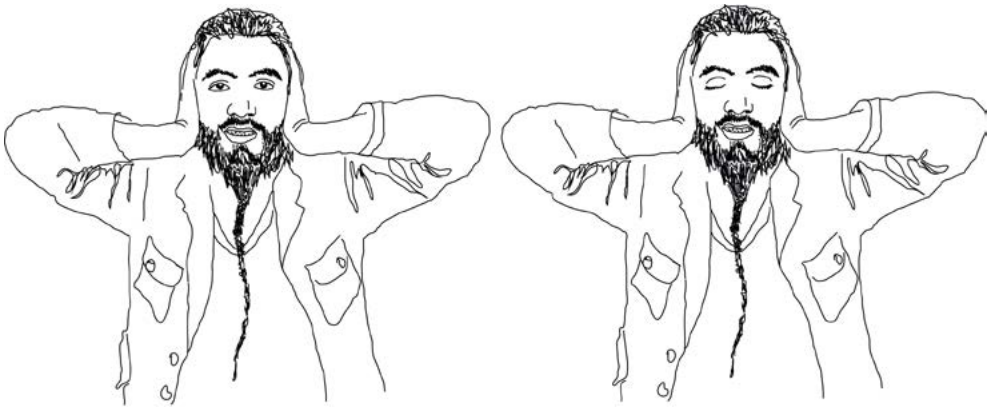

Figure 1. Internal listening exercise.
Source: Own source.

This gesture was made by my daughter, Eloisa, when she was two years old, as she did not want to listen to the noise the blender was making. I also use it myself and tell my students and friends to try it from time to time as an exercise in healthy conscious listening. I extend the same invitation to you. Plug your ears tightly and listen to silence for a minute. It's hard to find, right?

What we can infer from this experience is that this form of silence, the elimination of sound by blocking out external sounds, is impossible. The physiological perspective tells us that we are tied to a body that is alive, life being synonymous to the vibration of matter. On the other hand, there is something very interesting and undeniable about this exercise: the possibility of inner listening. We begin to interpret that, indeed, our body is part of a chain of discharges, activities and actions, through organic matter, that make up an internal sound landscape—one we rarely notice. It seems that we do not need a stethoscope or any sophisticated mechanism to listen inwardly. Who better than ourselves to perceive the murmurs, whistles, snores, clicks, crackles, wheezes, and rales that we emit, as well as their corresponding signals? We can penetrate the sound of the inner body, thanks to the ear being attached the body. I think that, due to its complexity and our own comfort, we leave this responsibility up to the doctors, the mystics, and the rest of the auscultation experts, and leave them to activate the sound imagination inside our bodies, as we cannot be bothered. Through this experience, an incomprehensible situation appears. We are immersed in a world that expresses itself through sounds and that can hardly be silenced; yet, at the same time, we move through this world without listening to it, deaf to its auditory structure.

SOUND FROM INSIDE AND OUT

In his later years, Beethoven lost his hearing and with it, the connection between the external and internal sound world. He was always eager to find ways to stay connected and began experimenting with a number of prosthetic devices and basic technological mediations to try to drive the music that was projected from the piano into his head. He took advantage of the vibratory sound quality found propagating in solid mediums, such as wood and metal, conducting through the bony medium until reaching the inner ear (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Tubes and hearing aids
Source: BTHVN. Beethoven House Museum, Bonn, access 10 July 2018.

How does this work? We receive sound in two ways: through the air (acoustic) and through the ear canal, the eardrum, the ossicles, up to the cochlea, and through the bone (mechanical). The bone path transmits the sound directly through the jaw or the cranial bone, to the inner ear. This is where transductions of a chemical-electrical nature occur, which then become stimuli that advance through the nerve fibers to the brain, without use of the external ear and in part of the middle ear. This happens because the cochlea, which is the body's last door to the vibrating sound world, is embedded within the temporal bone of the skull. Bone is a solid material and as a means of transmitting sound, the vibrations move faster and lose less sound than through the air. The body structure is connected through this material (bone), and therefore any mechanical vibration that is projected to the skull will be advantageous in sound perception, an involuntary part of listening. These listening powers are so extraordinary that if someone lost their hearing due to middle ear damage, they could recover it via bone, by driving implants, or vibrational systems, embedded directly into the skull or teeth, which, like skinless bones, connect directly from the jaw to the cochlea by vibration remission through calcified materials.

Thus, the world of acoustic and mechanical disturbances remit and touch the body in various ways, both inside and out. In the act of listening, both forms are activated, only we are not aware of the bone perception because their presence is less noticeable, or perhaps the sounds that travel there don't say anything relevant to us. How do we put aside bone hearing when such a large percentage of the body is made of this material? What Beethoven did to overcome his hearing deficiency in his latter compositions was to feel the sound directly from the vibrating bones. The sounds from his imagination, configured into musical language, were then transmitted through his hands to the keyboard. From the keyboard, the sound was transmitted to the resonance box, which, in unison with the bones in his body, vibrated in a particular way, producing what is termed as "tactile listening."

I really like the phrase "sounding of the bones," which is not too different from "listening with the bones." Both are given in a "sound present" (Jean Luc 2007) via emission-hearing. This not only reveals one aspect of the physiology of sound perception, but also provides insight to the complexity of listening as an experience. It strongly connects the causal sources that produce sound, their acoustic presence, the space where they are projected and molded, the vibratory way it circulates and touches the body, and, finally, the perceptual image it creates. There is no possible separation. Sound is connected to the body—the body listens, the body is synesthetic, and the body is resonant.

Now, if we turn our ears outward, we also face the impossibility of silence, as we do not have eyelids to stop sound flow. Even in a state of sleep, rest, or an altered state of consciousness, the sound continuum persists. We are simply destined to listen. From before birth in the womb, we were listeners, and until the end of life we will continue to be so. Some doctors—including Sam Parnia, intensivist doctor and Director of Critical Care at the New York University School of Medicine—even talk about the possibility of listening hours after biological death is declared, due to the prolonged postmortem brain activity.

We consciously listen, inside and out; but we also produce sounds from inside and out. The sound body is bidirectional and bifunctional. Although, we do not recognize it or give importance to this phenomenon, we conceive the body in an instrumental way.

In short, the body cannot be silenced because it is alive and sound is the manifestation of life. The body produces sound and resonates inwardly and outwardly. Listening in synch and sensing with the ear through the bones, involves both the internal vibrational mechanics; while also feeling the acoustic vibrations of the outside world. The body is, by nature, sound and not something to be taken for granted.

IF THE ELIMINATION OF SOUND THROUGH THE VERY NATURE OF THE BODY IS IMPOSSIBLE, THEN HOW CAN ONE UNDERSTAND WHAT WE CALL SILENCE?

First of all, it must be said that listening implies directing ones attention towards a center, including that of silence. Focusing on a center is both the selection and ranking of sounds, considering those of greater value over others of less importance. Initially, prioritization arises from self-preservation, then removal through language-based reduction, sound memory among different parameters of reference and human necessity. Let us call this split "sound utilitarianism," or better, "sound anthropocentrism." Only under particular circumstances—for example, the song of a whale, a solar explosion or the stridulating of a cicada—will sounds occupy the center of our listening.

On the other hand, it is said that we pick certain sounds out of several simultaneous sounds—usually the strongest, clearest, and understandable ones. This perceptual process is called "psychoacoustic masking." The sounds of the outside world mask the sounds of the body itself, anchoring our attention away from the internal sound. The need for listening to the outside world and long distance listening, over the last century, has led man to create a large number of devices such as: the telegraph, the radio, transoceanic communication systems, sonar, hydrophone, acoustic radars, among many others (Figure 3).

Portable radars, listening battalions, and acoustic training are among the listening instruments and methods developed during World War I, which in particular, made use of hybrid technology: acoustic and organic. They functioned as a kind of giant membrane-mimic made up of acoustic mirrors projected through vibrating metal and tubular conduits. The vibrations coming from menacing objects at long distances, adapted at the end of this chain to a human organic interface, who lent their ears to interpreting the sound material received.

This battalion is submitted to listening because no part of the body can perceive distance or obscurity better than the ear. While observing the images and the position of the body in relation to the object, I cannot help but to think about the deconstruction of the functional purpose of the head, the ear, and the negligible body that supports it. The natural sound is denied, so that any internal sound, including mental sounds, such as those of the voice of thought, would interfere with the transparency and sound objectivity for which these bodies are trained. Any different sound would have to be masked—an additional way of sacrificing the body on the battlefield. In the use of these devices you see an inversion of values. We would logically think that the radar was created as a means or prosthesis, to overcome the deficiency of human listening. However, in this case, humans are the prosthesis for the radar. We have been mechanized to deny our own natural sound, silenced, so as to be able to listen as a military machine. These technologies represent an authentic, banal listening; in other words, listening without the body, in turn denaturalizing feeling and preventing deep reflection of the experience.

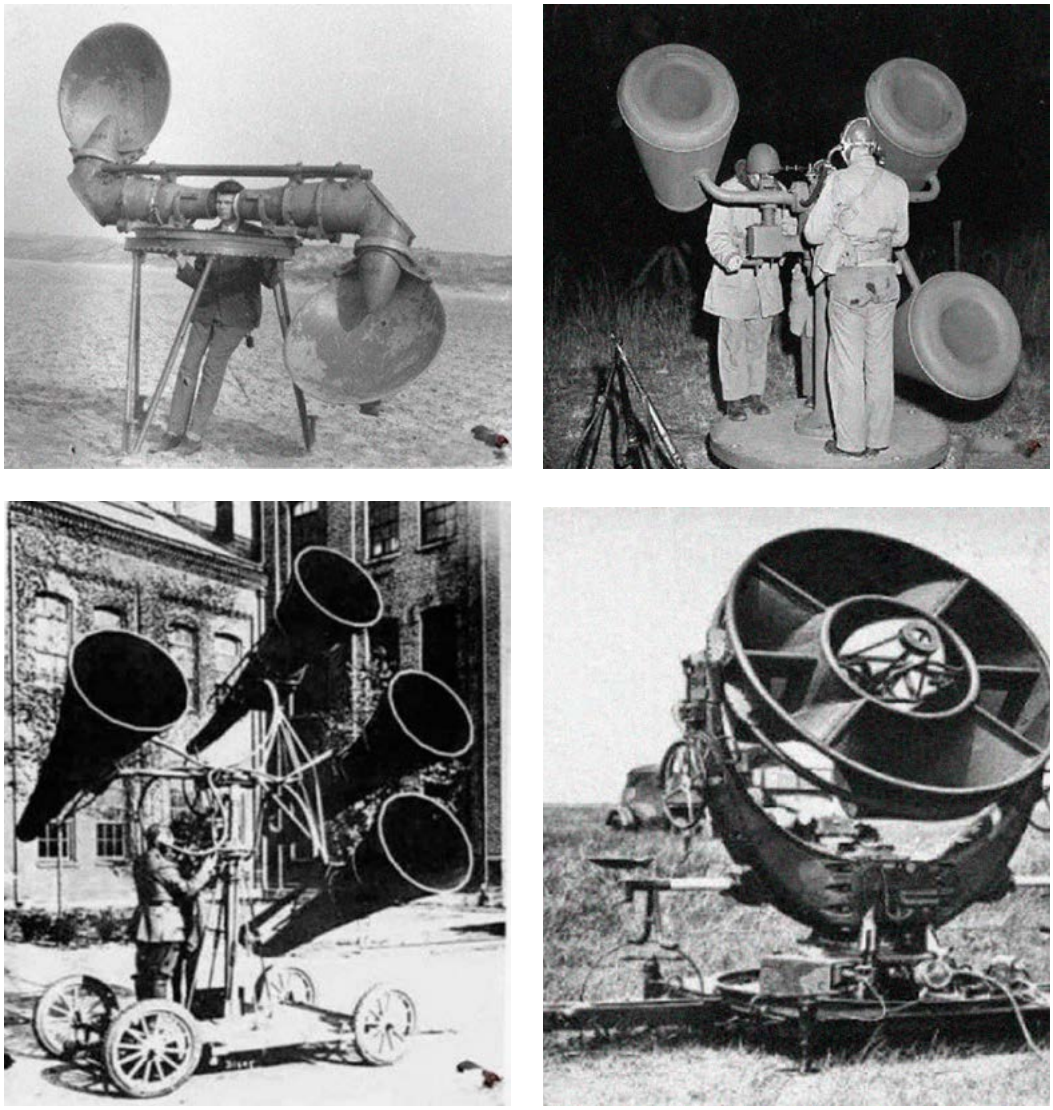

Figure 3. First acoustic radars for military use
Source: Collage made by the artist with images by Von Saldern, Münkel, and Schwarzkopf (2004).

Listening requires intent. Therefore, silence does not appear—it is activated. We silence what is not at the center of our interests. The dilemma of listening resides in the fact that we naturalize all sounds and turn them into "background" noise, thus reducing their importance until we are not aware of their presence. Everything is simplified so that its instrumentalization is more comfortable. The crisis of listening is also a cultural issue. For example, one does not want to be heard crying. The sound of the body is hidden because culture has taught us to silence it and to deafen its natural resonance. If that is our stance on apparently "essential" sounds, what is there to be expected from the rest of our culture?

In my experience as a listener, several of these silences resonate with me. Inquiring about the precariousness of the act of listening, in the silencing of the waters, and the potential to develop a sound body of aquatic origin[1]; I have found myself in situations that challenge me to rethink the relationships we establish between the listening body and that of water landscapes. Expressions that emerge from the voice of a dynamic world, in constant evolution, challenge and mobilize us.

Through my travels and research of listening to the rivers, seas, and bodies of water, I have encountered several conflicting soundscapes. The voices between humanity and nature are often in conflict, as revealed through the silencing of seas and the hush of rivers, as well as their different life forms. On the other hand, I have also discovered a contrasting and hopeful situation, where songs and sounds are a reflection of cultural expression and ancestral knowledge, seeking "the breeding and harvesting of water" to restore order.

UNDERWATER DEAFNESS IN THE COLOMBIAN CARIBBEAN

The first of the silences comes from the Caribbean coast, 100 kilometers off shore. In 2014, authorized by the National Hydrocarbons Agency (ANH), the offshore area was reopened for oil and gas exploration and production. The agency authorized Ecopetrol and other multinational oil companies to carry out a series of oceanographic explorations to identify well sites. An area composed of 33 blocks for exploration and exploitation in the Caribbean and 12 in the Pacific was constructed. Today, the oil well "ORCA 1" near Punta Gallina in La Guajira has tested positive at the depth of 4240 meters. The report says "a reserve of 264 million barrels" exists, as well as other findings in the Gulf of Urabá, which have triggered the oil rush in the Colombian seas (Belalcázar 2014). It is important to draw attention to the fact that these operations produce intense underwater noise pollution through seismic testing, pipe installation, platform construction and the constant drilling and removal of the land. While this occurs, and although allegedly there is no relationship, the artisanal fishing communities have complained about the scarcity of fish in the Caribbean Sea. What happened to the fish? Where are they? In Dibulla, the seismic activity of recent years is also unexplained to date.

The deep waters of the Colombian Seas are being acoustically polluted, and while we terrestrials do not have to listen to it, fish and other organisms do. Although there has been no extensive research, the scientific evidence currently available indicates that the energy generated by this type of technology for offshore exploration and exploitation, can negatively impact marine mammals, fish, and other forms of ocean life.

The animals are being exposed to a series of disturbances in the marine acoustic environment represented by frequencies, intensities, and unbearable exposure times. To better understand what this means, I will give you some comparative values between the sounds produced by the perforations and the sensitivity of the human ear. The threshold of hearing in frequencies for the average person is approximately 20-20,000 Hz, with a maximum intensity of 75 decibels (dB). From there on up, and in conjunction with long exposure to the same sound, one begins to experience discomfort. Above 130 dB, temporary acoustic pain and trauma occur. If it continues to increase for a prolonged period, it will produce permanent loss of hearing. Now, let's see the exposure to which we would be placed under in the waters near these offshore projects. According to Table 1, the so-called Air Gun Array, which is used for the seismic survey in the detection of oil and natural gas on the sea bed, fires shots of compressed air directed at the geological structures at approximately 10-second intervals and at 133 per km2. This generates incredibly strong sounds that would reach, in some models, up to 259 dB ref (1µPa @ 1m) and are projected omnidirectionally at long

distances, with little loss in acoustic strength, due to the properties of the water in sound conduction. Sounds of seismic prospecting, in addition to being powerful, are similar in frequency to the vocalization and the acoustic system developed by some animals, such as cetaceans (Tyack and Clark, 2000).

TABLE 1. NOISE PRODUCED BY SEISMIC GENERATORS

TYPE OF GENERATOR	DEPTH (m)	NOISE LEVEL dB ref 1 µPa @ 1 m
Air-Gun Array		
GSC 7900		259
ARCO 4000	10	255
GECO Array 3100	7,6	252
GSI Array Jonsson 200	6,1	249
SSL Array 1460	7,6	242
GECO 594 Subarray	8,2	235
Air-Gun Simple		
Pequeño	9,1	216
Mediano	9,1	225
Grande	9,1	232
Sleever Exploder		148 – 153 @ 8 km 115 – 117 @ 25 km
Gas-Gun		123 – 0,9 Km 117 – 14, 8 km

Source: Adapted from Rodrigo (2014).

In Bogota, if you ask the Ministry of Environment, you will find that one of the factors that generate most problems for citizens is "noise" (Ministerio de Ambiente 2018). If for humans, 90 to 120 dB of loud music, for long periods, results in fights with one's neighbor, imagine if that figure escalated to 259 decibels.

The well-being of the humpback whale and other cetaceans found in Colombian seas are at risk due to the intensities and frequencies that alter the acoustic quality in the water. This could have an impact on their health through reduction of sensitivity and temporary, or permanent, ear damage. On the other hand, alterations in habitats (Gedamke et al. 2016), is why it is not strange that humpback whales that arrive every year to the warm waters of the Pacific are beginning to show bleeding in gums and auricular zones, alterations in mating behavior, feeding, breeding and defense mechanisms, as has already been discovered in other places (Environmental Ministry for Sustainable Development 2017).

The inability to listen to sea beings and deep waters is precisely the reason we are oblivious to the effects of these types of interferences. The sound environment that inhabits the deep waters of the sea contrasts with the silent image that we project through our external perception. Just because we cannot perceive its sound, does not mean that it does not exist. On the contrary, it is through our negation of sound and listening that we can hear.

On the other hand, it is interesting that, despite this situation of the conscious silencing of the waters, the powers of the auditory perception surpass the use we have bestowed on it. In the evolutionary origin of species, there is a connection between cetaceans and humans. Both have the inner ear attached to the bone and listen through bone conduction via the vibration of the skull, particularly through the jaw (The PLOS ONE staff 2015). That is why, when we are in the water, our hearing capacity is not completely absent. Part of what our ears hear resembles what whales perceive. This is an ability that, even after centuries of human evolution, has not disappeared. Suppose our anatomy was designed differently, both in perception and listening; surely, our way of relating to ourselves, in and with water, including those who reside in the water, would be different.

THE SILENCE OF THE MUÑA WATERS

(((An underwater record plays. Imagine a crackling sound, low and deep, with crystalline accents, acoustically very pleasant.)))

My interest in the sound of the waters and rivers of Colombia has led me to explore them from the inside, through underwater recording systems, which enabled me to listen to their voice. The river that you just heard is very special. It is a river that has a large amount of lead, cadmium, and other metals, as well as detergents and countless chemical and organic substances. It has a dark and dense appearance, with a foul odor. I speak of the Bogotá River and the section that I constantly travel as a Sibateño (rural area outside Bogota). These waters are in the reservoir of Muña, only 10 minutes away from my house. This reservoir was built last century to dam the waters of the Bogota River, as part of the San Antonio del Tequendama hydroelectric project, which currently supplies 5% of the country's national energy grid.

I began to listen and register routes from the start of the river to the places where it flows, or where it is intervened and transformed, and I realized the distances are relatively short (Figure 4). If one reviews the distance between the Guacheneque paramo, where the Bogota River begins, to where the sewage of the tanneries, the municipal aqueducts, the factories and the waste of the greater Bogota are dumped, the distance is just a few kilometers. Something wonderful arises from experiencing these underwater recordings. The river upstream does not sound any different from the river downstream, where its waters meet the waste of this large city. While the hydrographic political order changes as it flows forward, it is impossible to decipher the difference in the river's sound between the upper and lower sections. In both cases it sounds alive and its vitality is demonstrated through numerous acoustic images, fluid and resonant spaces, accumulations of granular sound particles, polyrhythmic masses, and dynamic enveloping movements. The sounds are soothing and comfortable. The sound of the river is a vibrational unit, a manifestation of the rivers being. By removing the foul odors and images that represent the ugly state of the water, the river expresses hope for change. We observe this body of water that flows through the landscape without touching it and without feeling, only seeing the water as a dark and silent presence. We are not aware of the impact that our actions have made on her.

Figure 4. Collective tours of the Bogotá River in the vicinity of the Muña reservoir
Source: Author archives.

In 2016 we experienced one of the longest droughts in recent years. Some tributaries disappeared, wetlands dried up, winds produced forest fires, and even the hills in the city caught on fire. The rivers that flow from the Sumapaz paramo, provide water to Sibaté and fill the Muña reservoir dropped drastically in level, leaving the reservoir dry and barely enough for vital consumption. The Bogota River was at its lowest level. The reservoir did not have enough water to cover the demand. The intense and prolonged summer exacerbated the damages caused by the fire at the Guatapé hydroelectric plant in Antioquia. This prompted the president to declare a state of energy emergency in Colombia and to introduce immediate policies to overcome the crisis and avoid a national blackout.

In order to address the energy crisis the country was facing, the Hydrologic Committee, led by the Cundinamarca Autonomous Corporation (CAR) decided, between March 10 and July 30, 2016, to collect a total of 78 million cubic meters of portable water from the reservoirs in Tominé, Neusa, and Sisga. This water was transported through the Bogota River channel to the Muña reservoir in order to satisfy the energy demand. By the way, the water of these hydroelectric plants is referred to as "clean energy" but, in this case, it was definitely not. Drinking water was transferred and combined with sewage water, which magically filled the Muña Reservoir[2].

In addition, the CAR asked the Navy to support the militarization of the Bogota River to prevent thirsty "criminals" from stealing water. These people were peasant farmers and inhabitants of the surrounding rural savannah, north of the city, who suffered water shortages and were left them with no water for their crops and animals. I do not know how to interpret the silence of all those who witnessed this environmental "sacrifice." It was disgraceful, at least for me, who witnessed how in the midst of the frosty mornings and sunny days, the Muña was filled with waters that were born clean and then were contaminated. This happened openly, and nobody argued. There was only silence, another type of silence… indolent silence.

On March 25, 2016, after what happened in Muña, I traveled to La Guajira, where I found silence; the vestiges of the Aguas Blancas Stream (Figure 5). The stream was diverted by multinational El Cerrejón to support the expansion of coal mining. According to the local communities, they were deceived with the promise that it was going to be a responsible project, with engineering standards so as to not adversely affect the environment ("The Bruno Stream deviation […]"). It was appalling to observe the effects on the surrounding area. Walking along the dry riverbed, a group of locals from the community appeared, leaders and ancestral authorities, who loudly demanded and asked for justice. The silence of the river was converted into a forceful protest, a chorus of murmurs and song to the water.

Figure 5. Aguas Blancas Stream, Guajira, Colombia (March 31, 2016)
Source: Author archives.

With the environmental impact of mega-mining and long periods of drought, communities in La Guajira have forced themselves to build more jagüeyes. The *jagüeyes* are rainwater reservoirs that the Wayúu indigenous people use to capture, store and distribute water, for use by humans and animals. At the same time, they have had to intensify their songs (*jayechis*) dedicated to the call of water. The songs constitute ancestral ritual forms of water nurturing. Singing is a means to describe the interaction and connection humans have with water. Additionally, the songs demonstrate sensitivity for water, as a living being, as a person, with feelings and emotions, capable of reproducing itself. Water breeds the life of humans and, at the same time, is raised by humans. There is a lullaby for when a child is prey to chaos, a song that soothes and calms. Also, in these difficult times of drought, there is a song for Juya[3] . They sing to the water to express feelings of deep respect and admiration. The body of the voice is also a body of water and singing is an act that engages them with the real world. The interaction with the force of nature, from a supernatural perspective, connects the communities with the landscape.

The silence of the Aguas Blancas stream was not unfamiliar to me. I had recently returned from a lagoon that I occasionally visit in the Sumapaz paramo in Sibaté; but the stream that fed it, as well as the bodies of water that I mentioned earlier, were gone. I remembered the sounds recorded in my previous visits and I was surprised by how quickly the sounds have become memory. I thought about how important it is to have that abundant archive of sound material associated with the events of the water, because in these new environmental and political times, it will be the only thing we have left. The sound, as an expression of a vital event, disappears as soon as the action ends. In this case, it disappears as well as its cause; i.e. the water itself is gone. It really has filled me with melancholy to hear these sounds again. Now I feel like Niper, the flagship dog of the company RCA Victor, who is in the company logo listening to a gramophone. The gramophone is playing the voice of his deceased master. In my listening, the deceased master is the dry landscape. The recorded sound is all that I have left. In my creative work, through research on mechanical and bone sound conduction systems, I have tried to listen to the water through the bones of the body, joining the external and internal waters.

From this research came the sound installation, Aguas Blancas (Figure 6). It was built from the video material of the dry stream and the recorded sounds of the stream before its disappearance. It consists of a two-channel system of analog-mechanical amplification, projected and acoustically enhanced by metal cones that collect the vibrations of the audio transmitted directly in containers with water. While in front, an image is projected presenting the events over time in a landscape with a river without water.

Figure 6. Sonora installation White waters in the framework of the exhibition "The end of the Human Exception" held at the Gilberto Álzate Avendaño Foundation (2016).
Source: Author archives.

I think it is necessary to reflect on deafness (silence), the inability to hear the water. It is a call to synchronize the rhythm of humans to water and not vice versa. In my project, I have dedicated myself to increasing human awareness of these silent sounds.

In the installation it is not possible to understand what the sound does unless you are there, inside the work. When inside the installation, the sound envelopes and wraps the participant physically and in a powerful way. This prompts the participant to be open to tactile listening of the silent voices of the river and to recreate the sounds. The sound resonates simultaneously both with and within the person. Resonating implies not only the physiological perception but also a deployment, a becoming.

What I am looking for is not to recreate the sound of the river, but to work from its silence, its voids and extinguished voices. The river is full of subtle forms and traces that it has left in all that we are; in the voices that activate in the present time of the river and that call to "remember," because a river without memory is a river of nobody, and it is treated that way. We have already seen it according to the etymology; e.g., *re-sound* means to bring back, and *cordis* means heart… "Bring back the heart." The installation, "Remember the Auguas Blancas Stream," searches for unique ways to make the sound travel through the ears of the spectators again.

NOTES

1. Reflection extracted from the Postcard Sound Project carried out by the author and titled "Listen to Water Times, 2017", images and sounds, products of recordings and interactions in distinct places throughout Colombia, providing evidence of the natural and cultural water crisis.
2. CAR (Corporación autónoma regional de Cundinamarca). REUNIÓN DE CONSEJO DIRECTIVO SESIÓN ORDINARIA DEL 15 DE MARZO DE 2016. https://goo.gl/xkUCQf
3. According to traditions and customs, Juya is the Master of the Waters of Heaven, symbolizing rebirth, fertility.

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