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## **SOUNDS OF THE BAGUAZO: LISTENING TO EXTRACTIVISM IN AN INTERCULTURAL RADIO PROGRAM FROM THE PERUVIAN AMAZON**

**Abstract:** This article examines a fictional radio program from the Peruvian Amazon as a response to extractivism in the region. *Etsa Nantu: Pasión en la Amazonía* (2012) resulted from a six-month collaboration among Peruvians deeply concerned with how the media had portrayed Indigenous opposition to extractivism after the 2009 Baguazo, a violent struggle between the Peruvian national police (PNP) and protestors in the area surrounding Bagua, Peru. Not only does the radio drama serve as a medium for Awajún and Wampís participants to imagine alternative outcomes for such encounters, but it also dramatizes critical interculturality—placing Indigenous worldviews on equal ground with western ones—to prevent further conflicts. I argue that because radio constitutes an aural format, different audiences’ listening practices will diversely mediate the hearing of these messages. In exploring listening as a challenge for allowing marginalized voices to speak to broad publics through the radio, the analysis also highlights sounds of the Baguazo in *Etsa Nantu* that non-Amazonian listeners might not hear. I propose auditory attention to such sounds, even when listeners cannot fully understand them, as a way to practice the interculturality proposed by the program.

**Keywords:** radio, interculturality, Indigenous media, extractivism, Baguazo, Amazon

Should sixteen million Peruvians renounce the natural resources of three quarters of their territory so that sixty or eighty thousand Indigenous Amazonians can peacefully carry on shooting each other with bows and arrows, shrinking heads and worshipping the boa constrictor?<sup>1</sup> –Mario Vargas Llosa (2008), *The Storyteller*

Who is going to be able to hear everything, all at once, and believe it?  
–César Calvo (1981), *The Three Halves of Ino Moxo: Teachings of the Wizard of the Upper Amazon*

At the climax of *Etsa Nantu: pasión en la Amazonía* (2012), a twenty-four-episode *radionovela* produced in Bagua, Peru, the percussion of machine guns and helicopter blades, the airy whoosh of arrows, and cries of pain convey a violent struggle between Indigenous defenders of land refusing to submit to the illegal expropriation of their lands and the national police (PNP) acting on behalf of the state. The scene is an unmistakable reference to the 2009 Baguazo, an armed conflict that erupted between Indigenous protestors—primarily Awajún and Wampís—and the PNP following months of civil disobedience in opposition to oil extractivism in the

Bagua region.<sup>2</sup> Unlike the Baguazo, which resulted in deaths, injuries, a disappearance, and escalated tensions played out in the Peruvian media, the conflict in *Etsa Nantu* resolves when the police learn of the false premises of their own intervention and an Awajún leader asks her people to trust in them to carry out justice for those involved in the scandal.<sup>3</sup> This more hopeful version of the Baguazo resulted from six months of intensive collaboration among Limeño audio-visual professionals, a Peruvian anthropologist, Awajún and Wampís nurses trained in intercultural medicine, Indigenous elders, and mestizo Bagua residents, all of whom were committed to crafting positive representations of Indigenous protestors, in contrast to their portrayal in mainstream media, while also considering solutions for future struggles. Production included translating the original radionovela into Awajún and broadcasting both because the production team prioritized reaching Awajún and Wampís listeners,<sup>4</sup> and because they hoped the program would eventually have national and international audiences, as it does now indirectly in the form of streaming audio on the web.<sup>5</sup>

*Etsa Nantu* is not unique in its effort to offer a version of the events that led to the Baguazo from a perspective challenging the racist logic of extractive capitalism. Scholars (Espinosa de Rivero 2009; Manacés Valverde and Gómez Calleja 2013; Larsen 2019) have criticized the state's dismissive characterization of protestors as 'perros del hortelano' (the gardener's dogs), a moralizing 'neoliberal slogan' (Larsen 2019) sourced from a Spanish parable to construct a straw man argument about Indigenous people and environmentalists as 'dogs who do not eat from the garden of natural resources and do not let others eat from it either' (Zanelli Barreto 2009). A special commission comprised of Indigenous, state, and local government representatives produced the comprehensive report, *La verdad de Bagua* (2013), recovering marginalized perspectives surrounding the events. The award-winning documentary *When Two*

*Worlds Collide* (2016) combines television news footage, recordings of meetings and protests, and interviews with former government figures and protestors to highlight the Indigenous concerns that led to the massacre. With similar aims, testimony from an Awajún protestor in *La otra cara del Baguazo* (Royo-Villanova y Payá's 2017) frames both protestors and police demonized in the media as victims of an irresponsible state government led by then president Alán García Pérez. The 2009 low-budget comedy film, *El perro del hortelano*, resulted from a diverse collaboration like *Etsa Nantu*, and similarly used fiction to convey a sense of the conflict between Indigenous Amazonians and commercial interests (Beaulieu 2013, 155). Though the film references a struggle involving Indigenous people in Manu National Park, Texas-based Hunt Oil, and Repsol Peru, the Baguazo happened only weeks after the filming was completed, and stills from the massacre overlain by text at the end of the film directly relate Bagua to Manu. What distinguishes *Etsa Nantu* from these projects is its audio format, which allows for a more democratic dissemination to audiences both throughout the Amazon—where literacy rates are low and where in many places radio is the only information and communication technology (ICT)—and outside of the region where listeners might hear Indigenous voices for the first time.

The following discussion of *Etsa Nantu* as an aural response to the Baguazo proceeds in two parts. First, I examine how the narrative disrupts the *perro del hortelano* rhetoric by crafting a bold intercultural solution to conflicts between defenders of the forest and the state. Then, speculating how Amazonian and non-Amazonian listeners might hear and interact with the program differently, I highlight the implications of different ways of hearing for listeners' interpretations of the novela's intercultural message. Focusing on *Etsa Nantu*'s soundscape, I amplify sounds that might be ignored or misheard by listeners in other parts of Peru and beyond and argue that active listening can enable non-Amazonian listeners to encounter the

epistemological and ontological voids in their understanding of Amazonia, allowing them to approach dialogue with Indigenous activists from a position of acknowledged ignorance. By considering how narrative and sound work together to tell a story about the victims of extractivism, the radionovela reveals soundscapes as culturally and politically significant realms of expression, imagination, and activism.

### **Critical Interculturality between the Gardener's Dog and the Gardens of Etsa Nantu**

Critical interculturality refers to a decolonial process enacted and theorized from subalternised perspectives, primarily Indigenous and Afro-descendant ones, which—rather than incorporating marginalised groups into hegemonic structures as in multiculturalism—seeks to subvert colonialist systems by exposing their construction of differential hierarchies (Ramos Pacho and Rappaport 2005; Tubino 2005; Walsh 2010; Cárdenas, Pesantes, and Rodríguez 2017; A. C. García 2019). In Latin America, the discourse and practice of critical interculturality emerged out of political advocacy for intercultural bilingual education programs, promoted by Indigenous peoples, NGOs, and states in the 1980s to address the academic needs of speakers of Indigenous languages (Walsh 2010, 79). In the twenty-first century, states and cultural institutions alike have co-opted interculturality's critical potential, using the word indiscriminately as a synonym for multiculturalism to justify the commodification of Indigenous cultures (Tubino 2005, Schiwy 2005, Walsh 2010). Nonetheless, in many Indigenous communities, and in Amazonia in particular, interculturality continues to operate as part of a radical political project to elevate the status of the knowledge of colonised and racialised groups.

*Etsa Nantu* places cultural traditions hierarchised by the logic of development and modernisation on equal ground with that logic, thus dramatizing a model for critical

interculturality in the Peruvian Amazon. The plot follows the Ikam ('forest' in Awajún) family, leaders of the fictional community of Etsa Nantu, as they mobilize their people in a fight to defend their territory from illegal usurpation. The story begins when Roberto Wisum Hintash, an Awajún doctor from another community, who has been studying on the coast, arrives to Etsa Nantu to carry out his Servicio Rural y Urbano Marginal de Salud (SERUM), a year of medical service to the Peruvian state. Against the backdrop of outside parties taking interest in the community's lands, Roberto's presence incites a conflict between Indigenous plant-based medicine and western manufactured biomedicine, which touches on cultural theories of illness, Indigenous fears of western medicine, and scientific arrogance in the face of other forms of empirical medical knowledge. On a vaccination campaign in a nearby community, Roberto learns that community members have seen armed people at night 'stealing biodiversity' from community gardens (Chapter 10). Though Roberto does not initially understand what this information has to do with him, a woman insists that if he came to help, he needs to find out what is happening. For her, the health of the community is intimately bound to the care of its biodiversity, and thus, the community doctor is called into the struggle for territorial defence.

At first, Roberto's positionality prevents him from intervening effectively. He symbolizes what the characters refer to as 'science' whereas Yunuik Ikam, daughter of the community Apu, represents 'traditional medicine.'<sup>6</sup> Over the course of twenty-four fifteen-minute episodes, the two fall in love and become leaders of the community in different capacities. An Awajún community member colluding with the Iquitos businessman responsible for orchestrating the illegal sale of Etsa Nantu poisons Yunuik's father to remove him during a critical council meeting, but when the poisoning unintentionally kills him, Yunuik is called to assume the position of Apu. Roberto understands his active role in the defence of Etsa Nantu after

communicating with his ancestors through the entheogenic plant Toé. As the conflict around the false titling of community lands unfolds, the PNP move into the community and the Baguazo-like struggle takes place. Amidst the fight to save Etsa Nantu, Roberto must accept plants as teachers integral to community health, and Yunuik must learn to trust in state institutions. One of the final scenes portrays them working together—Yunuik with medicinal plants, Roberto with anaesthesia—to treat Yunuik's brother wounded in the armed conflict. The overarching message revolves around recognizing the imperfections of different systems—western and Amazonian—and allowing them to work together to complement one another and thereby compensate for the shortcomings of each.

Medicine plays a central role in this story about contemporary Indigenous Amazonian struggles because the majority of the Awajún and Wampís participants in the radionovela project were completing training in intercultural nursing in Bagua. The Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest (AIDSESEP) initiated the Proyecto de Formación de Enfermeros Técnicos en Salud Intercultural Amazónica (PFETSIA) in 2005 to address public health issues in Amazonian communities without weakening Indigenous medicinal practices. The AIDSESEP program involves studying with both books and Indigenous elders to establish western and Indigenous medicine as equally valid empirical practices. Cárdenas et al. (2017, 153) have argued that the AIDSESEP program engages a critical interculturality because it does not attempt to 'incorporate Indigenous knowledge into a dominant cultural matrix but rather to construct a political, epistemic, and philosophical proposal different from the hegemony, from the Indigenous perspective.' Part of this process involves contending with internalized cultural biases about the inferiority of Indigenous medicine. Many nursing students, similar to Roberto, come to the program thinking that western medicine is superior, and therefore, the program also serves a

decolonizing function that strengthens the nurses' Indigenous identities (Cárdenas et al. 2017, 163). The nurses that worked to create *Etsa Nantu* were the first Awajún and Wampís graduating class from the program, and the positive valorisation of Indigenous identity in *Etsa Nantu* is no doubt shaped by the experiences of the PFETSIA nurses who were trained to put a philosophy of critical interculturality into practice. As a result, throughout the story, Indigenous characters are obliged to live between (-inter) cultures without allowing one to dominate the other, and this project aimed first toward decolonizing Indigenous communities from within.

In the wake of the 2009 massacre, the interculturality proposed by *Etsa Nantu* also presented a desperately needed, if not idealistic alternative to conflict resolution between defenders of Amazonia as a polysemic more-than-human assemblage and those who seek to separate and exploit it as natural resources. Marisol de la Cadena (2015, n. pag.) has theorized the Baguazo as an example of the anthropo-not-seen, 'a war waged against world-making practices that ignore the separation of entities into nature and culture—and the resistance to that war.' The confrontation came at the end of negotiations leading up to a free trade agreement between Peru and the United States that went into effect in February 2009. Former president Alán García issued a series of legislative orders that facilitated corporate extraction of Amazonian resources, allotting 72% of the Peruvian Amazon to multinational hydrocarbon concessions during his term. The administration's complete disregard for Indigenous concerns during negotiations violated international law requiring consultation with Indigenous peoples prior to implementing 'legislative or administrative measures which may affect them directly' (ILO convention 169). In response, leaders from the Peruvian Amazon's two major Indigenous rights organisations—AIDSEP and the Confederation of Amazonian Nationalities of Peru (CONAP)—mobilized Indigenous communities.<sup>7</sup> A unified front of 1350 Awajún, Wampís, and



Achuar communities, supported by some local farmers, organized acts of civil disobedience to halt ongoing development projects by blockading strategic locations throughout the Bagua region. From April to June the blockades persisted until the government definitively refused to consider Indigenous demands to repeal the ecologically harmful new laws. On June 5, the PNP, heavily armed with ‘war material’ (García 2019, 29) and already stationed throughout the protest areas, intervened and violent struggles transpired at three sites including the town of Bagua.<sup>8</sup> Stefano Varese’s (2012, 159) glossing of the events as ‘accumulation by plunder’ underscores the extent to which the state failed to engage with Indigenous Amazonians in the days and months leading up to the irruption of these tensions.

For Alán García, the Indigenous protestors in defiance of economic development via extractivism were enemies of the state; from the perspective of a neoliberal cosmivision that divides the world into human subjects and nonhuman objects that serve them, the destruction of Indigenous worlds promised by García’s economic plans was ‘unseen’ (de la Cadena). In the years leading up to the free trade agreement, García consistently dismissed the concerns of Amazonia’s Indigenous peoples while characterizing them as second-class citizens. He spoke on national television and published a series of op-eds between 2007 and 2008 in the conservative national newspaper *El Comercio*, appealing to the *perro del hortelano* discourse to conceptualize Indigenous protestors as irrationally conceived barriers to capital flow.<sup>9</sup> Numerous Peruvian Internet trolls shared García’s opinions (Espinosa de Rivero 2009, 138). According to their racist logic, Indigenous Amazonians had no right to their lands, were not using them, had no knowledge of how to do so, and were animals senselessly keeping ‘real’ Peruvians from resources that were rightly theirs. García’s insistence on the need to ‘get rid of the gardener’s dog’ (2007) constituted an open invitation to the PNP to clear the gardens of Indigenous bodies

in order to make way for corporations. On the day of the Baguazo, in a gesture eerily similar to the racism of Vargas Llosa's autobiographical character toward Amazonian Peruvians in the epigraph to this article, García stated on national television that 400,000 'natives' cannot tell twenty-eight million Peruvians what to do (quoted in Brandenburg and Orzel 2016). In the aftermath of the events, he equated Indigenous protestors to Shining Path insurgents, and the Peruvian Minister of the Interior called them 'savages,' demanding their conviction (quoted in Brandenburg and Orzel 2016). The dehumanization of Amazonian peoples has a long history in Peru, dating back to the Incan empire, so these public and unapologetic expression of racism by Peruvian leaders played into long-held cultural prejudices, making it nearly impossible for Indigenous activists to tell their side of the story, much less be heard as equals.

*Etsa Nantu* strategically intervenes in this geopolitical landscape on less divisive ground by making the oil commodity entirely absent from the story. Instead, a drama about the lived experiences of navigating what the characters call 'tradition' and 'modernity' revolves around the plant life of the community's medicinal gardens (huertos); given the political context, gardens serve as powerful sites to elaborate the cultural and political needs for biodiversity beyond the *perro del hortelano* discourse. The nocturnal theft of plant specimens from the gardens obliquely alludes to a 1995 dispute between Monsanto and the Aguaruna Huambisa (other names for Awajún and Wampís) Council (CAH) over unauthorized bioprospecting on community lands, which further removes the conflict from the events preceding the Baguazo.<sup>10</sup> The small-scale robberies relate to the plot to orchestrate the illegal sale of titled community lands, presumably for large-scale extractivism, and the insinuated pharmaceutical aims of the illegal activity underscore how the commodification of 'nature' so often capitalizes on the knowledge of the people living in what Macarena Gómez Barris (2017) has called 'extractive zones' while

simultaneously displacing them from the places with which they developed that knowledge. By focusing on plant life and avoiding any direct references to the Baguazo, the novela evokes instead the root of the conflict; the *huertos* recall the *perro del hortelano* discourse that presumes to understand Indigenous relationships to Amazonia without attempting to dialogue with Indigenous people.

Through the representation of a community connected to its gardens, *Etsa Nantu* emphasizes Awajún and Wampís integration with the forest as *ikam*, a relational concept in which human supremacy does not exist—on the contrary, humans live with non-human entities in reciprocal social relationships, which guard against the unrestrained capitalization of the forest as consumer goods.<sup>11</sup> The names of the two main Indigenous communities in the program reference oral traditions about sustainable hunting (Etsa) and farming practices (Nugkui).<sup>12</sup> The Awajún spiritual connection to gardening surfaces in the depiction of cultivated plants and humans living together in mutually beneficial relationships characterized by respect and care.<sup>13</sup> The farming and sale of *piripiris*, a type of reed plant, heals the physical and psychological wounds of abandoned and abused women and brings income to the community. A mother fraught over her children's participation in the armed conflict waters cacao fields with her tears while smoke from Amazonian tobacco, *mapacho*, protects her from bullets. Mosses and mushrooms act as first aid in the absence of medical facilities. Masato, a fermented yuca beverage, mediates peace-making conversations. Herbal *huais* tea unites fathers and sons in an advising ceremony, even when they live far from each other, and the Toé plant reveals the spirit of ancestors (*Ajútap*) for guidance. As part of *ikam*, these plants are important actors in the drama, entities who, as in other Indigenous Amazonian cosmovisions, once had a human form and maintain some human qualities. By resemanticizing the gardens insinuated in García's neoliberal criticism of

Amazonian activists, the supposedly premodern extremist ‘dogs’ letting riches in the rough go to waste become contemporary cultivators of plant life with valuable knowledge about their social and healing functions and reasonable expectations for their economic commodification.

Roberto at first represents the internalization of a form of the *perro del hortelano* discourse that misunderstands Indigenous relationships with the forest. As Yunuik tells him: ‘Studying away from home shouldn’t have made you lose respect for your roots but rather should have made you humble and made you learn’ (Chapter 6). Through Roberto’s relationship with Yunuik, cultivator of medicinal plants, he recovers prior knowledge overwritten by his medical training. When he visits the community’s gardens and observes women cultivating plants, he begins to remember his mother’s use of plants from his childhood. He then learns to value Yunuik’s plant knowledge, eventually accepting science as a complement and not a substitute for plant medicine. As he says to her in awe, ‘You have found a path to modernity without turning your back on your roots’ (Chapter 11). With faith in plants restored, as the armed battle for the defence of Etsa Nantu begins, Roberto calmly goes into the forest to drink *Toé*, a decision which builds the dramatic tension at a climactic moment. The vision he achieves ultimately allows him to save the community from displacement: he sees his Indigeneity as a river formed by two currents, an intercultural communicator. He then finds evidence of the illegal sale and relays it to Indigenous and state authorities, putting an end to the armed struggle already underway and resolving the conflict peacefully. The radio program wants listeners to consider the need for such intercultural perspectives to prevent bloodshed.

Media resources function as vehicles for the dissemination of the information that ends the community’s struggle. Clemencia Rodríguez (2011, 2) has discussed how rural Colombians use media in the face of violence as mechanisms of survival to ‘overcome feelings of collective

terror,’ and ‘discuss responses to the crisis and make collective decisions’; *Etsa Nantu* depicts a similar potential of radio communications. First, a radio call brings people across the Amazon together to fight for Etsa Nantu. In Bagua, Roberto communicates evidence of forged land titling quickly to the site of conflict using radio channels and telecommunication. Journalists capture the events as they transpire and document the peaceful resolution nationwide. When the PNP receives news of the false premises of their intervention, they immediately cease fire and instead become agents of justice. By implication, the police had acted against the community because they were misinformed. In this radically revised ending to the Baguazo conflict, the same institutions that constructed the community of Etsa Nantu as an impediment to ‘progress’—the notary where the documents were falsified, the press that documented Indigenous protests as savagery, and the police that tried to evacuate them by any means necessary—become institutions of support when the local fight against extractivist forces recognizes national authorities without relinquishing Indigenous perspectives. This narrative emphasizes interculturality as an Indigenous obligation to hold on to traditional cultural practices while also mastering the global languages of private property, environmentalism, and conservationism in order to translate their concerns through official channels of communication. In other words, looking at the plot alone, the burden of intercultural dialogue seems to fall on Indigenous actors.

Unlike some of the predominant ecological discourse coming especially from North America, which romanticizes ‘the ecological Indian’ (Krech 1999) living in harmony with ‘nature,’ and in contrast to the developmentalist discourse that demonizes Indigenous peoples, *Etsa Nantu* resists the idealization of either side of the conflict. Indigenous protection of natural resources does not stand in contradiction to the desire to market them for sale, and no clear dividing line separates groups of people into good guys and bad guys. Certainly, the businessman

who orchestrates the sale personifies extractivism with his objectification of plants as commodities and the people who cultivate them as disposable waste, but there are also police ready to intervene to stop him. Indigenous people fight righteously to defend their community and ways of life, but one community member is willing to poison his leader and sell the community for personal gain. Another Indigenous supporter of Etsa Nantu escalates violence in an effort to create martyrs for political causes. Through this complex cast of characters, the program aims its critique of the Baguazo, and by extension other multilateral extractivist conflicts, both externally at abuses of institutionalized power and internally at Indigenous actors who fail to resist hegemonic forms of political struggle. After the violence subsides, Yunuik urges community members to recognize their intercultural positionality as an ongoing process: ‘We live between tradition and modernity, between economic poverty and the richness of resources. We want progress but we don’t want to change. It’s hard. We are always going to have to be making decisions’ (Chapter 24). To make good decisions, Yunuik appeals to the fallibility of both sides of the conflict: ‘the justice system fails sometimes, but ours is not better. There isn’t a perfect system!’ (Chapter 24). In the lived reality of the Awajún characters, both systems must work together for the betterment of the community.

In a story in which people become gravely ill and injured, intercultural medical practice is a matter of vital survival, and likewise, the ability to operate across two systems of knowledge without valuing one more than another becomes an issue of cultural survival, both in terms of individual identity and political sovereignty. This responsibility is pointed inward at the community that must straddle two systems of knowledge and indicates an ‘asymmetrical ignorance’ (Restrepo and Escobar 2005, 115) on the part of the Peruvian state. Aware of this asymmetry, Yunuik anticipates future challenges and calls her people, but also indirectly, other

Amazonian listeners to action, evoking the intersectionality of their identities: ‘We are one! We are Amazonian! We are Peruvian! We are Etsa Nantu!’ (Chapter 24). Appealing to the diverse and sometimes contradictory perspectives that each of these identities entails, *Etsa Nantu* directs Amazonian listeners to strengthen their connections to plants in order to assure the social integration of the community, its economic prosperity, and also its security. In the meantime, community members must familiarize themselves with media, the law, and environmental discourse to make themselves understood by those beyond their communities. In this sense, radio becomes an integral component of political participation: *Etsa Nantu* entertains with a dramatic love story amidst recognizable political turmoil, and it also imagines a shared practice for preserving a vegetal Amazonia whose care provides economic wellbeing, an Amazonia created collaboratively with Indigenous actors and plants and respected and guarded by the state.

### ***Etsa Nantu* in the Amazonian Mediascape**

Worldwide, radio constitutes one of the most widespread and accessible ICTs, and radio technology is particularly important throughout Amazonia. The Department of Amazonas, where Bagua is located, is home to many Awajún and Wampís communities and compares in size to the state of California, covered 75% by tropical forest. According to a 2012 report (Suárez 2012), approximately 400,000 people live in Amazonas, most in rural districts away from cities, the largest of which is Bagua Grande with a population of approximately 50,000. In 2012, fifty-eight percent of homes in Amazonas did not have access to electricity, and 78% of the population lived in poverty. As a result, the affordable battery-operated radio serves as the primary ICT for connecting communities in the region, as it does throughout Amazonia. Many riverine communities receive national and sometimes international commercial programming as well as

community radio programming. Non-profit community radio stations, responsible for the initial broadcast of *Etsa Nantu*, play a particularly crucial role in the communication of local news by connecting people along the rivers where other means of communication—mail, telephone, in-person—may be absent, extremely difficult, or impractically time consuming.<sup>14</sup> Community radio, then, dominates the Amazonian mediascape as a means of sharing and receiving information and entertainment.<sup>15</sup>

Community radios responsible for the initial broadcasts of *Etsa Nantu* have reported that some of the most frequent calls requesting retransmission of the program came from Indigenous people in jail awaiting trial for their involvement in the Baguazo ('ETSA NANTU 6 de 7,' 2012). Examination of *Etsa Nantu* as Indigenous programming in this context builds on a body of scholarship (Cárcamo-Huechante 2010; 2013, 2017; Martín 2018; Oyarce Cruz 2013; Oyarce-Cruz, Medina Paredes, and Maier 2019) that has established the critical social function of radio in Indigenous communities in other parts of Latin America. Luis Cárcamo-Huechante (in Cárcamo-Huechante and Legnani 2010, 45) has argued that Mapuche radio programming in Argentina and Chile uniquely allows Mapuche people to build 'their own acoustic and sonorous space as minority subjects amid the hegemonic noise of mainstream media.' For the Cárcamo-Huechante, Indigenous uses of radio in urban settings allow dispersed people to create a sense of community, memory, and identity. Juan Martín Ramos (2018) and Jacqueline Oyarce Cruz (2013) have examined similar uses of radio programming in rural contexts focusing on Aymara radio in the Bolivian and Peruvian altiplano, respectively. In each of these cases, radio serves a representational function for voices and languages marginalized from mainstream media and, often historically disconnected from other forms of mass media. Though *Etsa Nantu* is not an example of Indigenous radio programming created autonomously as in these studies, like these



examples of Indigenous radio, it highlights contemporary political struggles from Indigenous perspectives, strengthens cultural memory, and promotes Indigenous identity in a setting where the Baguazo was still fresh.

Freya Schiwy (2009, 18) argues that Indigenous media often evolves from collaborations, as *Etsa Nantu* did. Even though the idea for an Indigenous radio response to the Baguazo was originally the idea of Limeño producer Matías Vega Norell, who admits that he had never been to the region and knew nothing about it when he applied for a grant from the Netherlands' Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development, its collaborative production model meant that the content of *Etsa Nantu* was predominantly the design of Awajún and Wampís people. Vega Norell formed a production team with anthropologist Willy Guevara; Alexander Muñoz, filmmaker and member of the Taller Ambulante de Formación Audiovisual (TAFA) collective that workshopped storytelling, acting, script writing, recording, sound mixing, and editing with participants; and communications student Carlos Rodríguez Daza. Together, they founded the NGO Proyecto Radionovela to receive the Prince Claus Funds. The collaborative work in Bagua facilitated by those funds, and to a lesser extent by contributions from the Peruvian Ministry of Health, Fundación Wiese, UNICEP, AIDSESEP, the Organización Regional de los Pueblos Indígenas de la Amazonía Norte del Perú (ORPIAN), and other sponsors, provided Indigenous Amazonians with an opportunity to create a story showcasing Indigenous knowledge for Indigenous listeners.

Because the nurses who participated in *Etsa Nantu* have returned to their communities throughout the Department of Amazonas, and are therefore, difficult to reach, I have relied on the accounts of Vega Norell and Muñoz to describe the making of the program.<sup>16</sup> In the early stages of the project from May to August 2011, Vega Norell, accompanied by anthropologist Willy Guevara, travelled to a number of Awajún and Wampís communities to get to know the area, its

people, and their concerns and to present rough ideas for the radionovela at general assemblies. Guevara conducted 100 surveys to document the topics that people most wanted represented in the program. Many of these figure prominently in the final product: traditional teachings, just leaders, a female leader, characters that challenge stereotypes, the role of Toé in the resolution of development problems, domestic violence, health problems and beliefs about *brujería*, the titling of lands, recovery of traditional medicine, a balanced view of Indigenous communities highlighting the good and the bad.<sup>17</sup> Though Vega Norell originally envisioned working in an Indigenous forest community in the Bagua region, the city of Bagua was eventually chosen for logistical reasons: easy access to electricity and sound equipment. In primarily mestizo Bagua, Guevara and Vega Norell visited local institutions to try to find Indigenous participants interested in working on the project, eventually learning about the intercultural nursing program and finding interest among the students. Free advertised evening workshops (to accommodate daytime nursing classes) recruited others, too, and capacitated people in the skills necessary to carry out the project.

The foundation of this process involved research in Awajún and Wampís oral tradition through the study and discussion of ethnographies and teachings from guest community elders. In total, more than 84 people from 41 communities provided input and support, and finally, twenty-four paid interns—including the nurses—worked as actors, sound technicians, and marketing specialists to record the novela. Before the initial broadcast, Vega Norell and Muñoz played the final product for community elders for their approval—apparently, they enthusiastically endorsed it with only minor complaints, for example, that when people arrive to communities, chickens greet them, not dogs as in the scenes of *Etsa Nantu*. The multiphase process of Indigenous consultation and participation allowed for the creation of a cultural

product authorized as Indigenous by creators and community elders, despite such traces of cultural heterogeneity.

The production team planned to promote the program as a catalyst for dialogue by allowing time for active interpretation of the episodes. The first episode premiered live in Bagua's main square on January 30, 2012, followed by an open forum with some of the actors. During the initial broadcast, a new episode played Monday through Thursday with Fridays reserved for on-air conversations with specialists who responded to listeners live and via mailed-in comments. Each week focused on a different theme: fiction and reality, health and vaccination, solutions to poverty, brujería and health, women in Indigenous societies, and democracy in the aftermath of violence. No study has measured the impact of the program, and further complicating reception studies, there are now pirated versions as well as international broadcasts facilitated by the Latin American Association of Radio Education (ALER) and the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC); the production team estimates that approximately 500,000 people have heard the novela in the Amazonian region, with no data for other broadcast areas. Anecdotal reports of listener impact from radio stations, as well as continued rebroadcasts and binge broadcasts convey continued interest, and since 2015, several schools throughout the Peruvian Amazon have adopted *Etsa Nantu* as educational material (Rodríguez Daza 2018, 117).

Beyond the initial broadcasts, the community broadcasting networks that transmitted the episodes spanned a transnational geography where the effects of extractivism are of prime concern. The Pan-Amazonian Social Forum (FOSPA), a transnational social justice network that opposes the 'colonial-extractivist model' (n.d.) and advocates for a 'Pan-Amazonian region governed by its peoples,' has urged Amazonian radio stations to transmit the program in order to

‘generate dialogue’ about ‘territories in emergency’ (2016). Tom McEnaney (2017, 11) has argued that in radio history transnational space preceded national space, and in the networks of media activism associations AMARC and ALER,<sup>18</sup> transnational space predominates as broadcasts function across a geography of values-based community radio networks advocating for social change through communication (Diasio 2010; Hopke 2015). The mediascape mapped by such transnational networks unites a geopolitical landscape governed by the international law of prior consultation with Indigenous communities and often characterized by violations of those laws. Furthermore, community non-profit transmitters operate on a small scale to deliver content by and for a particular community, and ‘mediations’ (Martín-Barbero 1987), or negotiations of meaning and recognition by consumers of media products, are both explicit and planned for. Participatory content—‘talk shows, round-table discussions, reading listener letters or texts on the air, and broadcasts from public locations’ (Myers 2011, 7)—characterises the community radio model. Therefore, even in the absence of the structured dialogue of the initial broadcast, *Etsa Nantu* circulated in extractive world regions as an entertaining call to action.

Outside this community mediascape, the production team has described the program as ‘the first bilingual intercultural radiopelícula,’<sup>19</sup> but the concept of interculturality referenced diverges from the meaning developed out of the intercultural medical training. Rodríguez Daza (2018,99) writes that one of the aims of the project was to generate ‘reflections on our identity as an intercultural country,’ thus deploying a concept of ‘functional interculturality’ (Tubino 2005), a superficial concept of multiculturalism ultimately in service to the neoliberal state. In a public presentation at the Universidad de Lima, Vega Norell described a ‘relational’ (Walsh 2010) interculturality, using the word ‘mixture’ several times to reference the ‘interculturality of the country’ reflected in the process of different people working together: Limeños, Awajún and

Wampís, and mestizos from Bagua ('ETSA NANTU 7 de 7,' 2012). By contrast, Muñoz, in the same presentation, recalled having his position of authority on questions of citizenship and national belonging challenged by the Indigenous makers, suggesting an approximation to critical interculturality as different forms of knowledge coming together in non-hierarchical relationships. In the absence of such experiences, interculturality sounds suspiciously like multiculturalism, heterogeneity, or transculturation, all of which entail the incorporation of marginalized cultures into a dominant one. This interpretation of interculturality points to the difficulty of allowing *Etsa Nantu* to promote the kind of critical interculturality practiced by the Awajún and Wampís nurses outside of Amazonian contexts. Though within the Amazonian mediascape, conversations about Indigenous concepts of interculturality are made possible through a participatory model that places different systems of knowledge in dialogue, the final section of this paper makes clear that in order for non-Amazonian listeners to hear the intercultural message as part of their responsibility, too, they must listen very carefully.

### **Hearing out of Context**

Muñoz and Vega Norell have insisted that *Etsa Nantu* was conceived of as a communication tool to facilitate listening across cultural divides in the Peruvian political landscape. As Vega summarizes, 'The message of *Etsa Nantu*, if we have to reduce it to one, is let's listen to each other' ('ETSA NANTU 6 de 7,' 2012). For this reason, the creators of the program have hoped for a nation-wide broadcast to spark a national conversation about the costs of extractivism and cosmopolitical approaches to economic development. Although the entirety of the program is now available to stream on the web, listening beyond the Amazonian region has not taken the form of directed participative dialogue as it did in the community radio

broadcasts throughout the Amazonian region. With the exception of academic discussion of the project in Lima and attention to the novela in online Indigenous news outlets, *Etsa Nantu* has not acquired cultural currency in Peru. In the absence of an organized national broadcast to frame responses to the program, interpretations of *Etsa Nantu* are mediated by listening practices developed outside of Amazonian contexts that may present obstacles for hearing all that the novela communicates.

As has by now been thoroughly discussed, with the conquest and colonization of the Americas came the imposition of writing as the only consecrated form of archiving and the consequent marginalization of other ways of organizing and transmitting knowledge. A growing body of scholarship pioneered by Martin Lienhard (1991) and Ana María Ochoa Gautier (2014) has begun the work of revealing the ways that aural literacy has nonetheless accompanied alphabetic literacy in the constitution of Latin American modernity. As recovery projects, such research has approached listening practices of the past by finding their traces in the textual archive, and what they have highlighted is that throughout history, diverse people living in the region now known as Latin America have heard the same voices, animals, and ambient sound differently. Indeed, what might be background noise to one listener is crucial information to another. Because radio is necessarily an oral/aural mass media format, following Schiwy (2008), it allows for a scholarly consideration of diverse listening practices in the present from outside of the colonially-charged written tradition. *Etsa Nantu*, as a unique radio program developed and implemented with the participation of people from a variety of cultural backgrounds, provides a particularly rich context for analysing the implications of listening beyond the framework of what Lienhard (1991, 20) has referred to as the ‘kidnapping’ of a marginalized orality by privileged writers.

The scope of this study does not allow for a rigorous investigation of all of the listening practices at play in contemporary Peru; rather, I would like to suggest that the existence of different ways of hearing and discerning sound necessarily affects the potential of *Etsa Nantu* to serve as a communication tool. Cárcamo-Huechante (2013, 61) has argued that Indigenous radio can elevate marginalized languages and voices that are nearly inaudible in mainstream media. However, in the case of *Etsa Nantu*, the democratizing potential of the program must first overcome the discriminatory listening habits of people beyond Amazonia. If those who most need to listen are intellectuals and politicians who accept the diagnosis of the ‘perro del hortelano syndrome,’ they are listeners for whom the heavily inflected Spanish of the Indigenous actors of *Etsa Nantu*—that is, how they speak—will likely sound uneducated, un-Peruvian, and, following Ochoa Gautier, perhaps even unhuman, potentially invalidating any meaning to be gained from the content—that is, what they are saying. If listening requires ‘intentional hearing’ (Carter 2004, 44), the presence of historically marginalized voices in the program might inhibit some Peruvians culturally conditioned to discriminate against certain dialectical inflections from listening. Even if they choose to hear the program from start to finish, they might mishear in a way that maintains colonial hierarchies.<sup>20</sup>

*Etsa Nantu* anticipates such challenges to listening out of context by drawing attention to the problem overtly. In episode 10, a community member named Basilio guides Roberto through the forest to the community’s gardens. On their way, Basilio quizzes Roberto about the bird vocalizations in the forest. As the leaves rustle under their feet, a call echoes through the forest. At first Roberto misidentifies a ‘paucar’ (yellow-rumped cacique or *Cacicus cela*) as a toucan, much to Basilio’s amusement. A moment later, a soft birdsong plays and Roberto exclaims with excitement that he has heard a tsuam (little tinamou or *Crypturellus soui*). Basilio laughs and

tells him that he is again wrong, but Roberto grabs Basilio by the shoulders, bringing his body to stillness and insists, ‘Be quiet. Listen.’ As they wait still in the forest, the bird calls out again softly, and Basilio has to admit that Roberto was correct: ‘The Indian in you is coming out’ (‘Te está saliendo el indio’), he says to Roberto.

The scene symbolizes Roberto’s re-attunement to the forest after years of living on the coast. Steven Feld (1996, 98) has perceptively argued that ways of hearing emerge in conjunction with people’s connections to place, and especially in tropical forest settings, acoustic sensations are integral to constructing a sense of place because in the forest ‘people hear much that they do not see.’ For Roberto, being able to hear and identify a bird deep in the forest beyond the scope of his vision requires a transduction of sound waves into vibrations in the ear, an interiorization of the vibration along neural pathways to the brain, access to previous sound memories, and a vocalization of his interpretation: naming the bird. This embodied experience of the forest through the sense of hearing allows for his sense of belonging. Indeed, auditory learning and belonging are so intertwined in the scene that because Basilio considers Roberto an outsider, he assumes that he cannot hear properly, joking that he needs to clean out his ears. Living—or listening—on the coast appears to have blocked Roberto’s ears—dirtied them—to the Amazonian soundscape. Hearing properly requires a full surrender of the body to the forest, which is why Roberto immobilizes Basilio to make him listen. An ability to hear in-corporates Roberto into the jungle’s sensory landscape. Being ‘indio’ here is not an ethnic category—Roberto is always Awajún—but a way of listening through corporeal integration with the world via a knowledge of its sounds.

Perhaps the novela calls attention to the relationship between hearing and belonging because the production team encountered diverse listening practices in the making of the



program. Script notes underscore the limits of hearing across different place-based listening cultures in the context of crafting the scene. Where Basilio says ‘paucar,’ the script indicates ‘XXX’ as a placeholder, and ‘YYY’ marks the spot where Roberto identifies the tsuam. Vega Norell typed the script from workshop notes into one document, but as he did, he could not provide the local names for bird species, noting his lack of knowledge with blanks. The scene had to be improvised by the Amazonian actors. Non-Amazonian listeners will have great difficulty matching the call to the bird, for they do not have sufficient sensory experiences in Amazonian forests to identify the local bird names. Thus, they remain outside of this tender moment of comic relief between Roberto and Basilio, unable to make sense of the bird calls or even verify if the two friends are correct in their identifications. Roberto remembers how to listen and makes his way to the garden already integrated with the more-than-human forest community. Non-Amazonian listeners, though, are given the opportunity to listen but need more help in order to hear.

The scene functions as a signal for such listeners to pay attention to the sounds that they may have been relegating to the background. Bird vocalizations resound in every episode of *Etsa Nantu* as one of the most consistent noises that construct the sense of place in forest scenes, and not merely as a repetitive soundtrack. Unique combinations of birds develop the feel of key dramatic moments. There are calls associated with certain characters; for example, a harpy eagle (*Harpia harpyja*) sounds whenever Roberto and Yunuik are together. Ominous birds forewarn of unpleasant events to come as when a screech owl, listed in the sound notes by its local name ‘pumpuk,’ presages the death of the Apu. When community members discuss events unfolding in Etsa Nantu, the birds chatter along with them. They only disappear during the battle scene, when the fighting renders them inaudible. Crucially, the birds have the last word in the radionovela. In

the final scene, as Roberto flies away on a helicopter to take Yunuik's injured brother to the hospital in Bagua, the narration shifts to his perspective, but instead of hearing the cacophony of the chopper, we hear birds chirping under the forest canopy, even as the narrator describes Roberto's aerial view. A paraphrase from José María Arguedas—'We are a country and a mixture that has not yet finished defining itself'—closes the scene, but the birds chirp on past the quote and into the credits, as if to announce that they have been there all along, communicating their place in that mixture.<sup>21</sup>

Altogether, more than 100 bird vocalizations, if heard, create an auditory experience for non-Amazonian listeners akin to what Julio Ramos (2010, 50) has called an 'acoustic overload' ('sobrecarga acústica'). For Amazonian listeners, each of the carefully placed vocalizations indexes a specific meaning that enriches the plot. A now deceased Wampís radio personality named Rusvelt Hinojosa gathered and catalogued the calls and songs, documenting the bird names and their symbolic values according to Amazonian cosmovision. Awajún and Wampís participants then made suggestions for auditory cues, and during sound editing, which occurred after the interns had returned to their communities, Muñoz chose how to implement the suggestions referencing Hinojosa's catalogue. Muñoz admits that as an outsider, he did not understand the meanings of all the proposed selections, why certain birds were chosen, in what combination, and the impact they had on the storyline. The concert of birds announcing impending danger, intrigue, love, and heartache were simply not intended for listeners like him. Instead, the persistent presence of inaccessible meaning in the form of bird vocalizations invites non-Amazonian listeners to feel overwhelmed by what they cannot see, hear, or know.

Listening for the limits of one's ability to interpret meaning adds another critical dimension to the political project of intercultural dialogue proposed by *Etsa Nantu*. Doris

Sommer (1991, 36) has discussed the silences in Nobel Peace Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú's now famous testimonio as more "literary" than "real," by which she means that Menchú's obtrusive refusals to disclose Indigenous knowledge function as reminders to western readers that knowledge exists beyond the limits of their epistemologies.<sup>22</sup> Menchú defends them, according to Sommer (1991, 36), 'from any illusion of complete or stable knowledge, and therefore from the desire to replace one apparently limited speaker for another totalizing one.' *Etsa Nantu* can similarly remind non-Amazonian listeners of what they cannot know, not by hiding information in this case, but rather by revealing it. Now the episodes are available on the web and Vega Norell and Muñoz have plans to make an adaptation for Netflix. With *Etsa Nantu* available out of its original Amazonian context, it can prompt non-Amazonian listeners to notice sounds that flaunt knowledge that those listeners cannot access.

Those sounds record the presence of entities outside of the immediate human drama—including numerous forest noises and effects that have not been discussed here—which are nevertheless pulled into the human struggle. In each episode, birds—both threatened by current trends in deforestation and central to reversing their effects (Bregman et al. 2019)—function as an archive of voices as well as human relationships to those voices that are in danger of extinction. According to Awajún witness I. Tukúp (in Royo-Villanova y Payá 2017, 140) communication between birds and humans was integral to Indigenous participation in the Baguazo. He describes a buzzard who, the day before the Baguazo erupted, came down from the sky to provide information about the police location and the actions that the protestors needed to take. I. Tukúp explained, 'Any of you [non-Indigenous readers] would have been astonished to see that a buzzard spoke to them, or you wouldn't have understood it. For us, it's natural. It's the way it is.' Non-Amazonian listeners of *Etsa Nantu* have access to markers for such cross-species

communication at the same time that their meanings remain inscrutable. Just as we non-Amazonian listeners cannot easily identify the birds, we cannot know why they matter. We have to trust that they do just as we have to trust that what Roberto calls a tsuam is in fact a tsuam. If the perro del hortelano discourse has tried to separate Indigenous Amazonians from the huertos that they protect, the bird vocalizations, along with the plants of the larger Amazonian garden, allow forest protection to emerge as a more-than-human concern in which humans and non-humans participate. In a global context in which Amazonian biodiversity is continuously submitted to instrumentalization via commodification, the gardens of *Etsa Nantu* make noises that break down the dichotomy of humans separate from their environments. Rather, an interconnected assemblage becomes irreducible to individual sounds or entities, unable to be divided out and commodified, and in need of protection nonetheless.

Non-Amazonian listeners could easily tune out much of *Etsa Nantu* and hear only the dialogue and narration, discerning the plot of actions that led to something very much like the Baguazo. If this kind of listening overcomes dialectical biases, the program offers insight into Awajún and Wampís representations of Indigenous relationships with the jungle, contesting the characterization of Indigenous people as perros del hortelano, and offering cultural perspective on fights against extractivism. However, the narrative of *Etsa Nantu* separated from its rich soundscape implies that the labour of critical interculturality falls only on Indigenous people who must straddle two worlds and find ways to communicate across the rift between them. If, by contrast, we non-Amazonian listeners experience *Etsa Nantu* aurally as I am proposing, as an affirmation of our ignorance when approaching topics of economic development related to forest ecologies, then critical interculturality requires recognizing and accepting the validity of knowledge that we do not possess. It requires the critical work of acknowledging that privileged

subjects will necessarily approach intercultural dialogue with subalternised subjects from a knowledge deficit. In the absence of knowledge, those of us who are asymmetrically ignorant must commit to listening actively and trusting in the ability of subalternised peoples to communicate meaning across irreducible cultural differences.

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<sup>1</sup> All translations are mine.

<sup>2</sup> Extractivism refers to economic development via high-intensity extraction of a large volume of natural resources destined mainly for export with little to no processing beforehand (Acosta 2011; Gudynas 2013). It involves social, economic, and ecological changes at sites of origin with implications for public health, local economies, and biodiversity. ‘Extractivist culture’ (Gudynas 2013, 7) ignores such costs—either because they are not immediately visible, difficult to trace, or ignored by confirmation bias—or considers them minor compared to expected return.

<sup>3</sup> Twenty-three police officers and ten civilian protestors died. One officer disappeared, and more than 200 people were injured, among them 172 Indigenous and mestizo protestors, fifty with bullet wounds, and thirty-three injured police (Manacés Valverde and Gómez Calleja 2013)

<sup>4</sup> Awajún and Wampís people speak Jivaroan languages with enough shared vocabulary to be mutually understandable. According to figures from 2007, more than 55,000 Awajún people live in the Peruvian departments of Loreto, San Martín, Amazonas, and Cajamarca, constituting the second most populous Indigenous group in the Peruvian Amazon after the Asháninka (Cornejo Chaparro 2015, 14).

Approximately 10,000 Wampís people live primarily in the Amazonas department near the Ecuadorian border and in north-western Loreto (Cornejo Chaparro 2015, 10).

<sup>5</sup> Episodes available at <https://tallerambulantetaf.wixsite.com/etsanantu>.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Apu’ is the name for non-hierarchical Awajún leaders who guide consensus-based communities (I. Tukúp quoted in Royo-Villanova y Payá 2017, 25)

<sup>7</sup> For Indigenous activists, the most egregious orders were D. Leg. N° 1064, ‘Legislative order approved by the legislating body for the use of agricultural lands’ (June 27, 2008) and the D. Leg. N° 1090,

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‘Legislative order approving the Forestry and Wildlife Act’ (June 27, 2008), which left Indigenous communities defenceless against corporate plans for resource extraction. D. Leg. N° 1090 was later determined unconstitutional; both orders were eventually repealed.

<sup>8</sup> Police weaponry included military-grade weapons with enough cartridges for 40,000 shots as well as rubber bullets and tear gas grenades (García 2019, 29).

<sup>9</sup> García’s op-eds were titled ‘Gardener’s Dog Syndrome’ (2007), ‘Recipe to Put an End to the Gardener’s Dog’ (2007), and ‘The Gardener’s Dog against the Poor’ (2008).

<sup>10</sup> On the bioprospecting case, which resulted in the first instance of an Indigenous group awarded a know-how license for traditional knowledge, see Greene (2004).

<sup>11</sup> Indigenous Amazonian cosmovision has inspired some of the most important works of the ontological turn in anthropology. See, for example, Latour (1993), Viveiros de Castro (1998), Descola (2013), and Kohn (2013).

<sup>12</sup> Etsa (sun) taught men to fish sustainably, and Nugkui (a kind of liana) taught women to cultivate plants sustainably. See Aurelio Chumap Lucía and Manuel García-Rendueles (1979).

<sup>13</sup> Michael Brown (1993, 97) states that Awajún people conceive of cultivated garden space as ‘a spiritually charged realm that poses dangers to the unwary and imprudent.’

<sup>14</sup> Radio Marañón broadcast in the Department of Amazonas as well as the cities of Jaén, Cajamarca, and surrounding areas; Radio Victoria in Chachapoyas; Radio Uctubamba in Bagua Grande; Radio Estelar and Radio Ld Stereo in Bagua Chica; and Radio Nieva in Nieva (Rodríguez Daza 2018, 13)

<sup>15</sup> Mediascapes, one of the dimensions of global cultural flow, refer to ‘the distribution of electronic capability to produce and disseminate information...and to the images of the world created by these media’ (Appadurai 1996, 35).

<sup>16</sup> I conducted two Skype interviews with Muñoz (August 23, 2017 and October 7, 2019). I interviewed Vega Norell in Lima on August 27, 2019. I thank them both for their time and support during various iterations of this project.

<sup>17</sup> See the appendix to Rodríguez Daza (2018).

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<sup>18</sup> Both networks emerged in the 70s and 80s to democratize the media sector worldwide during a time in Latin America when dictatorial military regimes controlled and censored the media.

<sup>19</sup> The creators chose the designation ‘radio movie,’ a movie ‘to watch with your ears’ according to the trailer, motivated by their desire to create a new cultural product, distanced from the radionovela. Though they drew on cinematic language and sound effects, the serial drama is immediately recognizable as part of the radionovela genre, as I refer to it throughout this essay.

<sup>20</sup> Here, I refer to mishearing by dominant groups as a form of colonialist silencing and not as Paul Carter (2004, 45) uses it to describe subaltern resistance to silencing.

<sup>21</sup> The original quotation is from *Nosotros los maestros* (Arguedas 1986, 78).

<sup>22</sup> My gratitude to Tamara Mitchell for the suggestion to dialogue with Sommer about the exposure of listeners’ potential epistemological blind spots in *Eisa Nantu*.

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