



Violence and Resistance, Art and Politics in Colombia

Edited by

Stephen Zepke · Nicolás Alvarado Castillo

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Bestial Sound: Affect, Metaphor and Posthuman Memory in Clemencia Echeverri's *Sacrificio*

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To enter the audiovisual body of *Sacrificio* (2013) is to enter an assemblage of sensations from which it is impossible to escape, a body that touches your body with the absorbing presence of a vibration that will inhabit it forever. The video installation by Clemencia Echeverri is, first and foremost, a resonance box whose bestial sound installs a deafening, dislocating roar in the flesh, its powerful cacophony striking a shuddering chord in every fiber. In the flesh of my body, when I saw the installation for the first time—or rather, when I *listened* to it, because here sound is the entrance, an access without return—in a small room of a house in Medellín, as part of the Salón Nacional de Artistas de Colombia in 2013. Indeed, my body has continued to vibrate *in a low frequency* from a place that I cannot name, cannot hear, cannot locate with certainty. A place that

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lies between my cellular membranes, both here and beyond the synapses between my neurons, in the memory that my skin keeps that is neither matter nor thought, and is both at once. But also in the flesh of the letters and the folds of this writing, its agitated mute scribbblings on the page are also inhabited by these virtual bodies that are no longer mine, bodies through which *Sacrificio's* vibrational wave continues to propagate with its ominous impropriety. This is no metaphor, or, if it is one, it is a metaphor that does not and cannot escape from the materiality of the terms that it puts in relation, of the material, sensible relationship between the bodies it *brings together*. This essay explores the aesthetic and mnemonic repercussions of this impossibility.¹

In *Sacrificio*, everything emerges from and returns to sound, although this return is not a return, but rather the expansion of a wave whose vibratory field gives no respite. It is difficult to describe the sensations this wave produces when one enters the installation, and this is perhaps the whole point. The dense darkness of its interior—no walls for eyes that can only see their own blindness—produces an anticipatory vertigo, an almost harmless anxiety corresponding to a loss of power over the visible and, with it, over the body and the bodies that inhabit this *unseen* space. In this somber silence vision gives way to sensation, exposed to each other in their mutual helplessness bodies become aware of the *other* senses, which maximize their perceptive power, no longer as supplements to vision, but as bearers of sensitive images *that are not seen*: the squeak of the floor, the breeze in the corners, the murmur of the city outside, the beating of the heart, perhaps the breathing of others. Indeed, the ear is always open, always *already exposed* to vibrations that escape its thresholds by excess or by defect, and the intensity of this openness signals the relative vulnerability allowing the work to literally *enter us*, invade us, before its sonorous interpellation takes us in.

Suddenly this interpellation takes place and takes over: the sound of *a crescendo* of dry blows, repeated tirelessly, the roar of its brutal echo that stuns without permission and without mercy.² Like pain or pleasure, this sonorous roar produces a sensible image of something whose dangerous imminence resists any attempt to codify it as a stable, consoling sign filled with a decipherable meaning. The power of this excess *gives no space* for elaboration; it invades everything with the violence of its vibration. It subjects us to an almost impossible experience that, just like an unfolding echo that overflows itself. The body touches the limit where its flesh vibrates both *in and beyond* any specific sensation, in and beyond what words, any

word, can contain. This intimacy between the excess of sonic interpellation and the production of sensible experiences that emerge at the limits of the body, and in the body as limit, is a consistent feature of Echeverri's recent work, both in technical and thematic terms.³ In her video installations, sound is a disorienting force whose immersive effect is almost absolute. Indeed, in this vibrating atmosphere the body—the materiality of the flesh, but also of emotion and thought, all in one, in its plural unity—is almost put outside, beyond itself.

Sacrificio is, perhaps, the furthest extension of the perceptual violence that this immersive effect produces in the spectator. As Echeverri says in an interview with Giraldo, 'it is an enveloping work of six synchronized projections where sound dominates. [...] This sound has a larger scale and is placed above the story and the spectator' (200). Immersed in the waves of its rhythms, enveloped by contingency, mutability and the unintelligible substratum of noise, the body traversed by resonance discovers and loses itself in the irresolvable frictions between its various and inexhaustible dimensions. Sound dis-orders, to say the least, the correspondence between sensible, mental, and emotional states. Sound *exceeds* any ordering of the experience produced in the body of an exposed subject, a subject put out-of-itself by the intensities anchored in its own material. This subject's will to name, contain and control its states and sensations is suspended by the invasion of its own improper vibrations. If, as Echeverri suggests, 'exploring the acoustic perspective establishes a relationship between what is on the outside and what resonates within' (Giraldo, 2017, 201), the angular effect of this resonance destabilizes the topology of an autonomous subjectivity opposed to the objectivity of a world which its *nomos* feels, organizes and controls *as subjective experience*. Neither active nor passive, neither interior nor external, neither sovereign nor victim of itself—or of another—the subject of *Sacrificio* is a *passible* subject, a subject feeling itself as it suffers the frictions of its irreducible plurality of sensitive states, a subject-without-subject who experiences the interruption of all subjective experience.

This interruption, and the destabilization of subjective topology it introduces, demands a relationship with the materiality of *Sacrificio*'s sonorous body that does not neutralize its vibratory *interpellation* or, if you will, does not *respond* to it by silencing the tremor of its call. Nothing else is at stake here but this experience of the passibility of subjectivity *as an exposed body*, and even as a body that resists being reduced to this exposure. The work thus exposes the body in a way that demands a different

relation to the materiality of sensations, one that goes beyond abstraction, a relation that attends to the potency of their singular and contingent intensity. The axis of this new disordered and disordering relation is imposed, in fact, by the auditory medium in which *Sacrificio* primarily unfolds, one that sets forth a new way of feeling as *a new way of listening*. How to listen to this sonorous hecatomb in six simultaneous channels, if it is impossible to trace in it, in its own untimely resonance, a phenomenal *cause* that can give rise to an explanatory narrative?

As will become clear, in its mismatch with the images on the screens this sound cannot be reduced to the sound *of something*. The expansion of its almost tautological materiality ('almost' because a return of 'the same', of *a* material vibration, is also uncertain) overflows, as Steve Goodman says, 'the linguistic imperialism that subordinates the sonic to semiotic registers [...] forcing sonic media to merely communicate meaning, losing sight of the more fundamental expressions of their material potential as vibrational surfaces' (71). Attending to the fundamental expressions of *Sacrificio's* roar, listening to the power of its vibrating surfaces (and aren't this page and your skin already examples of these?) implies an understanding or, better said, a feeling, *a sense of its materiality as means and end*, overflowing the logic of causes and ends that frames signification and the language of the *subject*. Listening to a feeling *qua* sensible vibration rather than as signified meaning is close to what Chion calls *reduced listening*, where, in his words, 'the emotional, physical, and aesthetic value of a sound is linked not only to the causal explanation we attribute to it but also to its own qualities of timbre and texture, to its own personal vibration' (51). This personal vibration is not, however, subjective, instead it vibrates in and as the singularity of the body in which it emerges and becomes sensible. As a result, to feel the materiality of sound in *Sacrificio* is to feel the materiality of the body, or better, the resonant bodies in which the work's vibrations are embodied, both inside and beyond the room. There is no pure, disembodied sound, the uncontainable modulation of its power establishes a rapport between the materialities of the passible bodies it inhabits, whose collective trembling thus reveal and inscribe them in what Goodman calls an *ontology of vibratory force*.⁴ To enter *Sacrificio* is to enter this ontological realm, which is the only one there is. The perceptual violence of its bestial sound entails, before anything else, that the embodied consciousness—which, paradoxically, is the very suspension of all consciousness, of all experience—that *we are and will continue to be* is part of its sonorous vibration. This interrupted

consciousness *is its reduced listening*. How can we speak of it? How can we give an account of this tremor that expands in the body of the work, in our body *in it*, our body which is then no longer properly ‘ours’?

* * *

The body’s passibility, the paradoxical a-subjective experience that this vibratory ontology presupposes, is the passibility the sonorous avalanche of *Sacrificio* exposes us to. This is not a metaphorical operation. The experience of the exhibition and its bewildering sound *is not like* that of a subject exposed to the limits of its presumed autonomy. Rather, they *are one and the same* within the vibrating topology of the video installation, where subject and object, their contacts and frictions, tremble in the propagation of the wave, in the amplitude and frequency of its echo. In its resonant spatiality there are no fixed positions or stable borders, nothing can be pointed out with absolute certainty, there is no inside and no outside because ‘this structure of the echo partially blurs the sound source, making it unintelligible, and producing a spatial polyphony and proposing open spaces’ (Echeverri quoted in Giraldo, 201). Vibration and the body, as two instances of *the same vibrating body* filling the room, cannot be reduced to an explanatory *cause* that neutralizes their constitutive polyphony and spacing. The space of *Sacrificio* is thus open, a constant and unrestricted *opening*, in which the body is inscribed: the body of every spectator feels both a part of it and outside of it (‘it’ being both the space and the subject in their mutual imbrication and distance).

If ‘affects are no longer feelings or affections, they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, 164), then the trembling of the vibrant body in *Sacrificio* reclaims the language of affect, because paying attention to the *affective* materiality of the work is necessary to verbalize the kind of *reduced listening* it installs and demands. Indeed, to perceive in a *reduced* way the vibrating materiality of the work, not only the vibrations of the sound but also those of the visual image, means experiencing its affective resistance to signification or, as I suggested earlier, its resistance to the demarcations of an explanatory narrative. This resistance is felt as an uncomfortable virtual space in which the asignifying intensity of sound waves amplifies the trembling of the spectators just as the electromagnetic waves of color do, their variable frequency accentuates the contrasts of light and shadow, shaping and disfiguring the



Fig. 1 *Sacrificio* (detail). Video installation with six simultaneous channels. Image courtesy of the artist

silhouettes of the cattle (see Fig. 1) and the unstable contours of the bodies in the room.

There is no way to order these stimuli and their effects in a narrative sequence that exhausts and neutralizes the intensity of their piercing simultaneity. There is no way, in other words, to make the vibration and the sensible states it detonates correspond *completely* with the structure of signifying emotions. Although some of the stimuli may be encoded (the stamping of a hoof, the crackling of a fire; the back of a cow, the gleam of its ears or eyes; the feeling of something like anguish, fear, helplessness), their simultaneous crossings intensify their vibratory power, to the point that the density of what we perceive and feel, its resistance to language and subjective appropriation, orients us toward the vertiginous interval of its asignifying substratum.

This vibratory power gravitates toward what Brian Massumi calls *affective intensity*. Neither subsequent content nor foreseeable effect, ‘the primacy of the affective is marked by a gap between content and effect, [...] between the form of content—signification as a conventional system of

distinctive difference—and intensity’ (85). Affect is both the *medium* and the sustained *passage* of forces that are incarnated in the ‘autonomic’ reactions of the body’s surface (Massumi, 1995, 85). Neither form nor content, neither signifier nor signified, its logic is that of materialization or, better, the embodiment of these forces that break the logic of signification. In this sense, the empty space inhabited by *Sacrificio* is a hyperbolic materialization of the perceptual and cognitive *gap* that affect installs. Its irreducible and uncontrollable autonomy, the sense of its intensity, imposes itself on the *nomos* of language and a subject that can no longer find consolation in the supposedly constitutive correspondence between sign and world. This imposition is especially manifest in affect’s resistance to being equated with a particular emotion. As Vermeulen points out, emotion is a subjective content, while ‘affect is an impersonal dynamic principle that cuts across personal feelings and experience’ (122). Just like the material excess of affect resists the logic of the intelligibility of language and *its* subject, *Sacrificio*’s audiovisual body resists the operation of signification because *there is no outside* to its resonant materiality in which the apparently stable and sovereign immateriality of *logos* can be performed. The materiality of affective vibration as embodied sensation is the supplement of nothing other than itself, whose interiority it already and always—literally, materially—*makes tremble*. *Sacrificio*’s affective materiality cannot be reduced to the materiality of the signifier (the foundation of ‘linguistic imperialism’), there is neither cause nor end to the vertiginous sensation being *without sense/only sense*.

Since, by its very definition, affect exceeds and misaligns the opposition between the sensible and the intelligible, this interval between content and effect is as material as it is virtual or, to be precise, is inscribed in the *continuum* between the materiality and virtuality of its vibratory ontology. Affective vibration comprises both the reaction of the skin and the state of commotion that is embodied in it and that, precisely because of its asignifying intensity, is neither prior nor alien to its concrete ‘texture’. As a result, the affective interval in which the vibratory interpellation of *Sacrificio* announces, installs and expands itself, *is* the material interval, spatialized and spatializing, *between* the humans and non-humans in the room, the bodies that vibrate within it. In other words, affect is the mobile interstice in which the plural vibration *that is the work* propagates. The plural bodies that participate in it thus form a collective *skin* by which its autonomy-without-a-subject is literally sensed. As Moraña points out, ‘affection emerges as an interstitial manifestation [...]. Affectivity marks

the relationship between subjects as much as the passage of forces or intensities that are transmitted from body to body (human or non-human)' (318). To enter the assemblage of intensities that are transmitted in the *medial* materiality of this video installation is, significantly, to enter into an interstice, an *in-between* between the hidden walls of the room, between the facing screens, between the sound waves coming from different channels, between the bodies of the cattle that surround us on the screens, between all the other bodies present in the gallery. Here, everything is *in the midst* of each other, because the affective intensity of this interstitial exposure forces us to feel a vibration that is as much our own as foreign to ourselves. 'At once intimate and impersonal', Moraña adds, 'affection (the capacity to affect and to be affected) marks the subject's belonging with respect to the world of encounters and misunderstandings that we inhabit and that in turn inhabits us' (318). This mutual belonging of the *in-between*, this inhabiting and being inhabited by an interstitial and dynamic force, makes *Sacrificio* a sort of material/virtual surface that extends from the black leather of the cows to the synthetic fibers of the screens, to the transparent nature of the air, to the membrane of every cell and, in always unpredictable and retroactive circuits, to the skin of an intensity that escapes language. The intensity, the force of *what can only be*, the intensity of what is felt in a flesh that goes beyond itself, that is, in a body that exceeds itself in its vibration, a body traversed by impersonal forces, a body that feels itself in the interstice through which it escapes from itself.⁵

In effect, 'more than particular cattle, what unfolds here is a moving collective body, frightened, running, disoriented' (Giraldo, 2017, 144), a body of affected and affecting bodies vibrating in the interstice of its inescapably shared passibility. Their affection is neither an external phenomenon nor a subjective state, but rather the vibration in which both *participate* ontologically, the echo that connects them. This entanglement between the intensity of affect and its propagating vibratory interval implies a reconfiguration that dislocates and overflows the opposition between an active human subject and a passive non-human object. The circulation of affect sets in motion a material imbrication where the contact between the body that feels and the body that is sensed resist all forms of subjective appropriation. This sensation renders sensible the participation of human subjectivity in the becoming of the world's non-human matter (Vermeulen, 2014, 122). Without belonging to the body that perceives it, nor to the one that produces it, affective sensation *is the relation* that exceeds them both in its material and immanent spacing. Hence, as Deleuze and Guattari

say, ‘the being of the sensation [...] will appear as the unity or reversibility of feeling and felt, their intimate intermingling’ (178), and it will emerge in a future that is not consummated or hypostasized in a *final* instance (a signified, an emotion, a subjective state, an end...) exterior or transcendent to the circulation of sensation itself. This material, affective *continuum* between human and non-human bodies as passible and asignifying bodies forces us to consider our place in the work—that is, our being immersed in the material vibration that we share with the cattle, with everything that lies *in the middle*—from a paradigm differing from that of representation as signification. If affect ‘proposes a liberation of the representational instance [...] as a deterritorialized, fluctuating and impersonal form of circulating energy’ (Moraña, 2012, 323), how can we conceptualize the experience of *Sacrificio*’s audiovisual images without reterritorializing, fixing or personalizing their affective energy?

* * *

If we take the title of the work as an interpretive cue, our first temptation is to reduce the power of *Sacrificio*’s vibrating body to the regime of representation by means of an extended metaphor. Giraldo’s suggestive and lucid work on Echeverri’s ‘political bestiaris’ is framed by this hermeneutical operation, one that tends to remain unquestioned as a paradigm. Her analysis stems from the metaphorical identification (this *is* that) of figurative elements, particularly animal bodies, and contextual elements related to the Colombian armed conflict. In the case of *Sacrificio*, Giraldo writes, ‘a sacrifice of cattle, a hecatomb, is proposed as a plastic image for the Colombian conflict, where people, rather than being killed, have been ritually sacrificed’ (137). Here, *being the plastic image for something* neutralizes the force of the sensations that, as we have seen, install the affective milieu *that Sacrificio is* qua asignifying vibration. If ‘every sensation is a question, even if the only answer is silence’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, 196), shouldn’t we abstain from metaphorical identification if we want to listen to *Sacrificio*’s affective interpellation, that is, to its material vibrations rather than to their ‘signifying’ materiality? How can we engage with the intensity with which the work envelops us without re-inscribing its over-imposed images within the logic of semiotic mediation, thus making them a representation *of something else*?

In the case of allegorical interpretations of artistic images which, like those of *Sacrificio*, indirectly allude to certain socio-historical elements,

metaphor is a montage producing a relationship of identity while simultaneously *accenting* the term's difference. A metaphor's figurative sense can *only be expressed* through the taut overlaying of the terms, one subordinated to the other to the extent that some of its characteristics are transferred to it. For example, when Giraldo proposes that the slaughter of cattle is an image of the ritual sacrifice of bodies in the Colombian conflict, the passivity, vulnerability, anguish and fear of the animal bodies are transferred to human bodies that we do not see but are, thanks to this metaphorical operation, rhetorically identified with them. The condition of possibility of this subordination is the mutual implication between, on one hand, the production of an explanatory narrative that seeks to saturate the semantic abyss between the terms and, on the other, the violence implied by the fact that the singularity of one (the subordinate) functions as a mirror in which the other (the subordinating) expands *its* meaning. Although their mediation is always opaque, because montage can only take place by virtue of the difference between terms that are never *the same*, metaphor only achieves its consoling rhetorical effect insofar as it is semantically violent. It is the violence of the specular return between the terms that guarantees the production of metaphorical meaning as a totality that pretends to resolve—both to differentiate and to conceal—the tense and hierarchical interval between them in the name of the narrative that metaphor itself sets in motion as its frame of intelligibility.

To renounce the mediation of metaphor is to renounce the possibility of establishing a meaningful connection, however opaque or indirect, between an image (whether visual, sonorous or verbal) and a state of things in the world. The production of an explanatory narrative, even one that claims to account for its own suspension or interruption, cannot escape the violence of this mediation. As Derrida warns, 'even if I were to decide to speak no longer metaphorically about metaphor, I would not succeed; it would continue to get along without me in order to make me speak [...]. Every statement concerning anything that happens, including metaphor, will have been produced *not without metaphor*' (2007, 50). There is no way of evading the temporal interval between the state of affairs referred to and the image that the metaphorical mediation at once conceals and points out. To suspend or interrupt the violence of metaphor, that which inscribes the materiality of the image in its narrative-representational logic, is only possible, then, *from within metaphor itself*, that is, by making evident the interval between the terms that the violence intends to suture and saturate in order to establish its ordering *logos*. In

other words, to make this interval evident in the metaphor itself consists of making it an *ironic metaphor* for its own constitutive semantic violence, the violence of its operation in general and, with it, that of the specific explanatory narrative that obliterates this violence by the deployment of its explanatory, consoling power.

The dynamics of the audiovisual montage of *Sacrificio* can be read as producing an implosion of metaphor that affectively makes sensible the violence inherent to its framework of intelligibility, the framework that Echeverri's metaphor ironically pretends to install. In this montage all sensations coincide in the *interval of their mutual mismatch*. The overwhelming density of sounds mocks any attempt to listen to their cause and, therefore, to associate them synchronically with the movements of the cattle. For their part, the images of this animal, collective body are always fragmentary, making the space of the yards only virtually *unifiable*. The shots are taken from different distances and locations, from the level of a head or the legs, to a near-panoramic shot of the backs of the cattle from above (see Fig. 2); they appear on the screens simultaneously, and sometimes repeatedly, preventing the imposition of any narrative *continuum* between them. Additionally, the cattle move in various directions, increasing the sensation of disorientation, confinement and instability.

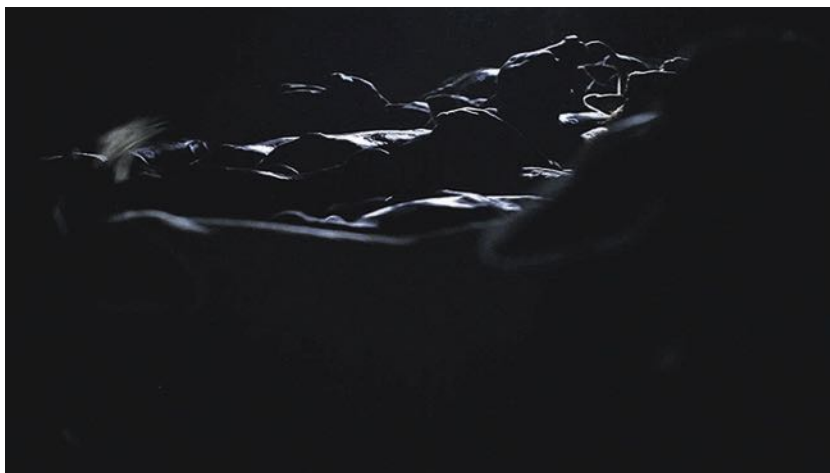


Fig. 2 *Sacrificio* (detail). Video installation with six simultaneous channels. Image courtesy of the artist



Fig. 3 *Sacrificio* (detail). Video installation with six simultaneous channels. Image courtesy of the artist

Finally, the progressive superimpositions of images of flames, smoke and ashes that finally consumes the work, stages a *literal* visual montage (see Fig. 3) of the cattle and the fire that invites us to connect the superimposed elements metaphorically, but never confirms such connection. We never see the carcasses of the cattle burning, their sacrifice only taking place on *the plane of metaphorical suggestion*. As a whole, *Sacrificio* is a montage of sensations that cross each other in the affective interval of their simultaneous, although never synchronous perception, which suspends the possibility of saturating its meaning with narrative. The interaction between its images and its different registers of meaning both provokes and exceeds the desire to synthesize them in a metaphorical sense that can give way to cognitive consolation. In *Sacrificio*, perception and cognition tend to be suspended *in and as the duration* of the experience of the work, whose aesthetic apparatus produces a need for synthesis that its own architecture ironizes, making it *possible as impossible*.

This prolongation of perception through the suspension of the metaphorical synthesis intensifies the perceptual and cognitive interval in which the intensity of affect emerges and circulates. Thus, this interval's a-signifying resistance materializes and embodies the impossibility of metaphorical identification, the metaphorical synthesis is suspended when the meaning of the images we perceive implodes, both in the irreducible gap

between sensations, and in the one between the images' materiality and their alleged allegorical reference. This *affective* suspension of the multiple metaphorical associations and narratives that the video installation simultaneously invokes and revokes, makes *Sacrificio*, as Shklovski would say, an aesthetic apparatus of *de-automatization*. Indeed, the montage *that the work is* does not give rise to a narrative that neutralizes the unfamiliarity of what we experience with a consoling sense, one that can return us to the familiar, naturalized and *automated* elaborations of perception that reduce the affective strata of the images to the stability of subjective emotions or assignable meanings. On the contrary, the question *Sacrificio* interpellates us with is how 'to remove the automatism of perception, [...] so that its perception is impeded and the greatest possible effect is produced', to the point where what we see, hear and feel 'is perceived not in its extension in space, but, so to speak, in its continuity' *with ourselves* (Shklovski, 1988, 27). The *affective* continuity, we could say, of an impersonal body's vibratory force, whose sensations invade us as much as we participate in them. What automatic perceptions are de-automatized in *Sacrificio*, that is, in the interval of affect and as the interval of metaphor (and vice versa)?

The title of the work might help us to answer this question if we understand it as an ironic metaphor, one that signals and at the same time suspends the rationality of its instrumentalizing violence. What is a sacrifice? What is the function of the violence exerted on the sacrificed body? According to Nancy, sacrifice is the fantasy of transgressing an impassable frontier. Sacrifice is thus framed by fantasy, the fantasy of violently appropriating this frontier in the attempt to reveal a certain *continuity* with *what lies beyond* it. 'This drift toward or through sacrifice is always connected', Nancy tells us, 'to the fascination with an ecstasy that moves toward an absolute Other or toward an absolute Outside' (75), that is, toward that which resists appropriation. The sacrificed body is the operator of this impossible interiorization: its materiality is violated and *erased* to make of it an instrument that would confirm, through *incarnation*, the desire for this narcissistic continuity with otherness. Sacrificial economy erases and thus transfers the singularity of the sacrificed body to the sacrificial subject. Its violence reveals and relays the 'truth' of the absolute identity of the second *in exchange for* the concrete materiality of the first, whose instrumentalization allows for the fantasy of this specular return. A fantasy, in effect, because the sacrificial body is and always remains non-appropriable, its flesh and blood *are only flesh and blood*. They thus embody the violent erasure of an otherness *that cannot be erased* since 'sacrifice silently falls

headlong into an antithesis that is also its culmination: a revelation of horror with no accompanying means of appropriation' (Nancy, 2002, 69).

Sacrificio's aesthetic apparatus signals this impossible erasure by installing the logic of metaphor in and through the affective interval in which its constitutive sacrificial violence becomes evident. In formal terms, the gap between the different aspects and registers of its audiovisual montage points out that the body of the work is not unitary, passive or available for sacrificial instrumentalization. Quite the contrary, although it invites us to elaborate explanatory narratives based on a desire for metaphors, its perceptual ubiquity, so to say, totally resists any blurring of the vibratory body of the work in the name of a signified—a truth, Nancy would say—that can order and so neutralize the affective power of its materiality. This resistance, which is that of affect and its always improper vibration, forces us into an overwhelming, durable perception of the work *before or outside* of any attempt to erase, and thus reappropriate, the impropriety of its materiality as a metaphor of something else. Thus, *Sacrificio* affectively deautomatizes the economy of sacrifice that subordinates the materiality of the figured term to a signifier of the 'truth' of the figuring term, an economy that structures the violent 'this *is* that' of metaphor. What would this truth be in *Sacrificio*? What effect would this suspension have on the subject who, following Nancy, would see in the work, in the erasure of its indelible materiality, the revelation and the relay of his 'continuity with himself'? Who would be the 'self' of this specular, sacrificial return, which *Sacrificio*'s ironic metaphor at once installs and interrupts?

As Giraldo rightly points out, *Sacrificio* alludes to the burning of livestock that the guerrillas and the paramilitaries in Colombia's armed conflict have used since the mid-twentieth century to intimidate peasants and farm owners who refused to pay extortion payments (Giraldo, 2017, 137). But how the allusion to this violent practice occurs *in the work* is not evident, given its resistance to the production of a metaphorical narrative that can saturate the inexhaustible sense of its affective-metaphorical interval. Like most critics of the video installation, Giraldo's interpretation obliterates this resistance explicitly or implicitly by making the metaphorical sacrifice that the work itself suspends, it sacrifices the materiality of non-human bodies—the bodies of the cattle—to build a narrative that reveals and relieves the 'truth' of the pain of human bodies. According to Giraldo, *Sacrificio* stages the metaphorical role that animals have played in the armed conflict (137) by showing how the logic of violence starts with the animalization of its human victims. Under this logic, 'the animal is man's alter ego and his

sacrifice is man's own sacrifice' (Giraldo, 2017, 140), insofar as his more-than-human body is the body of 'the beast', the brute and disposable body of the *non-human other* in which the human Subject finds its dialectical reflection. The body, in other words, that is thus its own inverted metaphor. Hence, the violence against human bodies that such interpretations denounce reproduces the distribution of 'humanity' that sustains it, which reduces more-than-human bodies to dehumanized 'non-human' bodies that can be instrumentalized as metaphors or carriers of human truths, such as the condemnable meaning of violent retaliation or the more honorable meaning of the victims' pain. In both cases, there is a metaphorical identification between the vulnerability of more-than-human bodies and that of human subjects—the targets of retaliation, the victims of the conflict—that can only take place if the violence of a consoling and self-legitimized distribution between 'human' and 'non-human' bodies remains unquestioned.

Indeed, the operation of signification can only take place if the autonomy of the subject of identification, its capacity for naming and self-signification, is reaffirmed through the (re)production of more-than-human bodies as material signifiers that sacrificially incarnate its ordering *logos*, that is, signifiers that (re)produce the subject's violent fantasy of its embodiment in the world. Thus, it is thanks to the same anthropocentric matrix allowing them to signify *through* the 'non-human', through bodies that *do not count as human*, that 'human' meanings can be incarnated as the fantastical, but no less violent, access to the truth of the human Subject. In the case of *Sacrificio*, this implicit intertwining of the production of consoling narratives and the violence of anthropocentrism *in the conflict and its critique*, is evident in the fact that the bodies of the cattle are *automatically* interpreted as metaphors in which the *logos* of humanist discourse is (re)produced. One of the distinctive procedures of such sacrificial anthropocentric narratives is the deployment of a trope in which the relations of human societies 'get played out and negotiated through the symbolic currency of animality' (Wolfe, 2009, 567). At the base of this instrumentalization of bodies other than human is a sacrificial logic of identification that neutralizes their affective powers by subjecting them to anthropocentrism's linguistic imperialism. Is it not this logocentric, anthropocentric neutralization that *Sacrificio's* aesthetic apparatus de-automatizes, paradoxically, as its ironic metaphor?

To vibrate with other bodies—the cattle, the burning earth, the illuminated screens, the bodies of other spectators, our own body as other—to *feel with* their always singular affects, entails that these bodies can *feel* and that this possibility can be shared. This question, as Derrida notes in his reflections on the suffering of animals, ‘manifests already, as question, the response that testifies to a sufferance, a passion [...]. Being able to suffer is no longer a power; it is a possibility without power, a possibility of the impossible, [...] the possibility of sharing the possibility of this non-power’ (2008, 28). What is shared between bodies that approach each other in the *with* of this non-power is not affect as a cognitive or emotional content, that is, a meaning embodied in the *passivity* of a sacrificial body. What is shared here is the singular exposure of each body to other bodies, the possibility that opens up the impossible possibility of sharing the non-transferable experience of its embodiment. The interval (the in-between) that exposes the body to the force of sound in the work opens the way to an (im)possible intimacy interrupting the sacrificial logic of anthropocentrism. The interval in which, therefore, the reflexive structure of the autonomous human Subject is called into question, in the words of Wolfe, ‘by riveting our attention to the embodied finitude that we share with nonhuman bodies, a finitude that has been the business of humanism largely to disavow’ (570).

Any consideration of the relationship between memory and the aesthetic experience in *Sacrificio* must start by engaging with the im-potence of this passibility, and the non-sacrificial proximity between the bodies announced in it. If, as Vermeulen argues, ‘posthumanism can be understood as an affective scenario in which the suspension of the procedures and pieties of humanism takes place’ (123), then *Sacrificio* dwells, with us, in the space of this posthuman suspension, it dwells in the multiple interval—sonic, affective, metaphorical—from which it resists any attempt to reterritorialize its material and affective vibration in a specular correlate that would incarnate the anthropocentric *logos*. This resistance exhorts us to think of a form of memory that exceeds, dislocates and thus questions the anthropocentric matrix that sustains it in narratives about the past, which, from the human present, offer only humanist consolation. Either through its positive totalization as the narrative and meaningful experience of the Subject of history, or through its negative totalization as the melancholic experience of its unforgettable loss, these narratives re-inscribe the intensities of time within the anthropocentric paradigm of subjectivity.⁶ In *Sacrificio*, however, there is no possible consolation. The vibration of its sonorous, affective and plural body—the vibration that spreads in the

room and beyond it, in the passible body of my words—turns us, then, to the unstable and uncomfortable horizon of a *posthuman memory*.

To account for the subtle dynamics and modes of presentation of posthuman memory is difficult. To do so, as Echeverri's video installation forces us to, we must give an account of affective states that destabilize the anthropocentric foundations of our analytical categories and, in a broader sense, dislocate and disrupt their *subjective* conception of knowledge, time and experience. It is not simply a call to remember the histories of non-human bodies, to expand anthropocentric narratives of memory in a consoling 'inclusion' that redeems their constitutive exclusion. Posthumanism calls for a paradigm shift not only at the level of the object of knowledge but, as Wolfe warns, in the type of theoretical and methodological approach to its constitution as an object, which challenges the human subject as the subject of knowledge (568). This challenging shift beats in the plural body of *Sacrificio* and its vibratory ontology, in the way it exhorts us to sense how our passible flesh—its intensities, affections, embodied memories—can only be *ours* within that interval, that in-betweenness, in which it ceases to belong to a subject. If 'affects are precisely these non-human becomings of man' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, 169), then *Sacrificio* is an affective machine whose asignifying sensations install in us a posthuman proximity to the world as a material web of bodies-without-subjects, always singular and always plural, a web of metonymically entangled bodies that is ours only in its radical impropriety.

To take the potency of these posthuman becomings seriously, to take up their challenge in theoretical and methodological terms, implies putting our bodies and words in a position of cognitive and aesthetic discomfort, exposing them to the immanence of affect that our discourse *should not and cannot neutralize*. This position opens our critical gaze onto the past—onto the ways in which time materializes, *becomes bodies*, before or outside of the anthropocentric narratives of history—to the resonances of *other* heterogeneous times pulsating in the vibrant, passible materiality of an ever im-proper present. Indeed, the vibratory rhythms of affect and its modes of inscription set an experience of time in motion that does not comply to the structure of the subjective event—a *cut* that is infinitely lost or infinitely accumulated in the Subject's *past*—as the unit of history, or as the privileged sign of its consoling narration. Understood as the materialization of singular and plural experiences of time affectively inscribed in bodies, posthuman memory, as well as the spaced and vibrant time of its

inscription, resists, dislocates and exceeds any attempt to unify its intensities as significant events.

Thanks to its temporal ubiquity and its latency, one that deterritorializes *every present, every body and every subject*, posthuman memory is the horizon in which affective experiences of time and history could begin to unfold (the conditional is fundamental: there's no certainty, no consoling return). The multiple forms of violence such experiences make sensible are not significant in the eyes of the Subject of human history, but they are nevertheless the condition of possibility of its gaze and of the specular narrative it performs. These are the human *and* ecological forms of violence *Sacrificio* forces us to feel *with* the body of the earth, with the cattle and with all the other human *and* more-than-human bodies metonymically vibrating with/in its ever-expanding echo. Their intensity vibrates in the telluric, affective and invisible temporality of a memory that turns to what Rob Nixon (2013) calls *slow violence*: 'a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all' (2). Nevertheless, and as the darkness of the vibrant space from which the bodies in *Sacrificio* emerge and in which they finally dissolve suggests, perhaps the challenge of posthuman memory is not to make visible what is kept unseen, but to feel its vibratory resistance to the anthropocentric regime of visibility.

Broadening the deaf gaze of anthropocentrism will not open ways for us to critically, radically engage with the echoes, the intensities and the silences of this mnemonic vibration, of its bestial sound, in the incommensurable density of the present. Our task is rather learning to sense, *to listen* in and from the passible flesh of our bodies to the always present proximity of its resonance *here and now*. Our task is listening to the sound of the beasts whose impropriety, our impropriety, has always inhabited our bodies and our time in *low frequency*. Our infinite task is, then, learning how to embody the destabilizing vibrations of its posthuman frequency today—how to responsibly respond to its call in us, among us, without becoming mute.

Translated by Stephen Zepke.

NOTES

1. I thank María del Rosario Acosta, Ángela Duarte, Liliana Galindo and Jannia Gómez for their generous suggestions in the process of writing this text.

2. Giraldo accurately describes this soundscape, but her reading subordinates the materiality of sound by making it a supplement of the visual register:

We see a herd of cattle trapped in a corral, we hear their erratic march. We witness their unsuccessful attempts to escape, the friction of their bodies, suffocated in this space that compresses and expels them. We listen to their bellowing and the ominous rumor of fire that, in crescendo, like the sound of hooves and the mooing of animals, takes over the image until everything is caught: the cattle, the walls and the space.' (137)

In this piece, sound imposes itself *before, during and after* the images of cows, and these will never coincide due to the time lag of the montage. This suggests the necessity of paying attention, as I attempt to do here, to sonic materiality beyond 'causal listening,' which subordinates the sound phenomenon to its locatable source (Chion, 2012, 48). The interruption of the visual metaphor that *imagines the sound* by muting its materiality is the rupture that, as we shall see, exposes us to the affective dimension of the work.

3. I am thinking of the prevalence of sound in Echeverri's video installations after *Treno* (2007). From the enveloping swell of the river and the human cries in this work, passing through the superimposed and choppy confessions of *Versión libre* (2009), to the accumulation of footsteps in *Supervivencias* (2013) and the infrasound of the bats in *Nóctulo* (2015), sound produces an immersive effect. The density of *Sacrificio's* sound texture, its perceptual intensity and its affective imprint, is also evident in Echeverri's recent video installations such as *Sin cielo* (2017), about exploitative mining in the town of Marmato, and *Duelos* (2019), about the mass graves of La Escombrera in Medellín, projects in which the turn toward a posthuman memory that I begin to trace here expands from the exploration of the effects of the Colombian armed conflict to the materiality of more-than-human bodies.
4. This ontology is defined by the virtuality of the material vibration, whose movement through the bodies of the world, and the oscillating relation between them, overflows any attempt to reappropriate or fix the tremor of what happens *between* them in an autonomous substance or essence. In Goodman's words (2012):

What is prioritized here is the in-between of oscillation, the vibration of vibration, the virtuality of the tremble. Vibrations always exceed the actual entities that emit them. Vibrating entities are always entities out of phase with themselves. A vibratory nexus exceeds and precedes the distinction between subject and object, constituting a mesh of relation in which discreet entities apprehend each other's vibration. (71)

5. It could be said that affect is a violent force insofar as it shakes the sovereignty of the self over the body (and, undoubtedly, there is something non-consensual in the intensity of *Sacrificio's* immersive experience). However, to understand the affective intensity as violent would be to inscribe it within the logic of anthropocentrism. It would be, in other words, to protect subjectivity and to condemn all forms of sense (semantic, emotional or affective) that call into question its structure and rationality, implicitly validating violence against non-human bodies. It is precisely this movement that automates and invisibilizes the violence against non-human bodies that I wish to bring to light here.
6. This is not to say these narratives are dispensable or that they have no social function. Only insofar as they reproduce the subject of liberal humanism can they function as instances for the strategic denunciation of violence and the claim for rights and material restitution for 'human subjects' within a given historical narrative. That said, reducing the work of memory to its anthropocentric frames obliterates the latency of the affective experience of the *othered* non-human bodies who do not conform to, and in fact interrupt, the structures of language and of the subjectivity that are performed in it.

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CONTENTS

The Gualí Series	xxxiii
Rosario Lopez	
Part I Social Engagement	1
The Project of Engaged Science and the Appearance of the ‘People’ in Colombia	3
Mónica Zuleta P.	
In-Situ Aesthetics as Local Politics: Gilbert Simondon and the 21N Protest Movement	21
Ana Isabel Durán-Vélez	
Part II Memory and Sensation	39
The Resistance of the Unarchivable: From Myth to History in José Alejandro Restrepo’s <i>Musa Paradisiaca</i>	41
María del Rosario Acosta López	
The Emancipated Bodies of Nicolás Rincón-Gille: Dissenting Memories, amidst Devastations	61
Laura Quintana	

Bestial Sound: Affect, Metaphor and Posthuman Memory in Clemencia Echeverri's <i>Sacrificio</i>	79
Juan Diego Pérez Moreno	
Part III The Anthropological Turn	101
Inverted Worlds: The Cannibal Aesthetics of the Pictographs at Cerro Azul	103
Stephen Zepke	
The Violence over Memory: Archeology, Heritage, and Indigenous Histories in Colombia	123
Cristóbal Gnecco	
The River Spirit and the River Citizen: Epistemic Forms of Violence and the Languages of Transformative Critique	139
Carlos A. Manrique	
Part IV Transgression	161
Beyond Transgression: Representations of Violence and Politics in <i>La técnica del hombre blanco</i>	163
Nicolás Alvarado Castillo	
Antagonisms and the Fascinating Adversary: Nicolás Gómez Dávila's Early Readings of Nietzsche, Marx, and Sade	185
Juan Fernando Mejía Mosquera	
Part V Feminism	203
Supine and Naked America	205
Ana María Lozano Rocha	

Stories of Local Music: Women, Invisibilization and Resistance in Colombia	229
Sandra Natalia Sánchez Ramírez, Jorge Francisco Maldonado Serrano, and Alicia Natali Chamorro Muñoz	
The Gestural Dimension of Artistic Practice: Performance, Politics and Responsibility in Zoitsa Noriega's Installation-Performance <i>Daphne</i>	249
Gustavo Gómez Pérez	
Index	267