

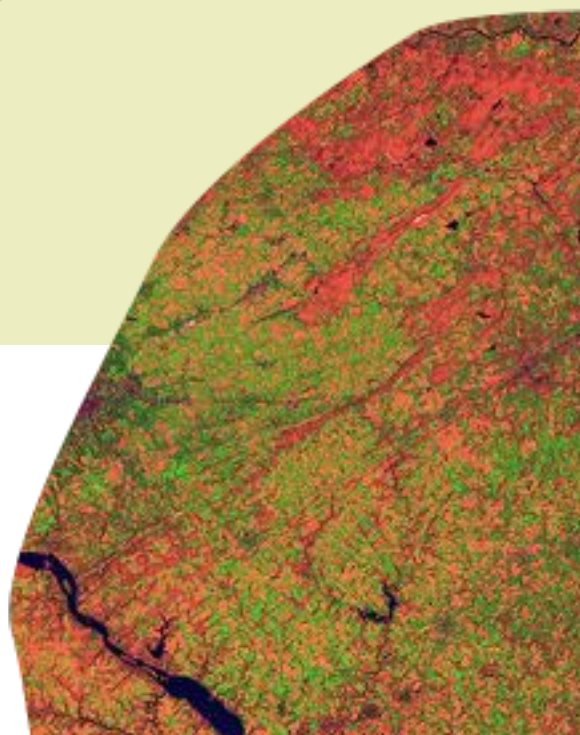
**Title:**

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**Occupy Climate  
Change (OCC!)**  
*Grassroots initiatives  
entry*



FORMAS



# Nature Roars: All You Have to do is Listen

By Stefanie Naoun

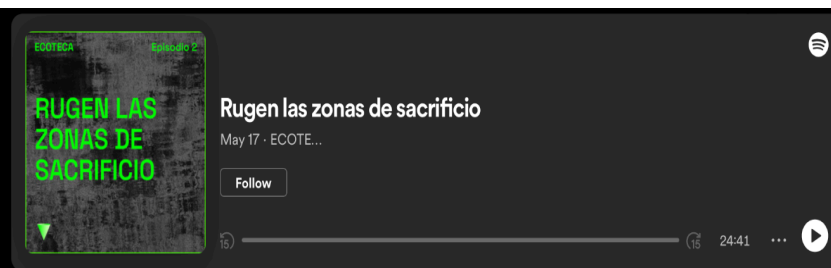
RUGE EL BOSQUE

ENG

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**Ecoteca** es el podcast de Ruge el Bosque. Grabado en un contexto de degradación irreversible de la naturaleza, este bosque acústico preserva un momento de los ecosistemas lingüísticos, climáticos y políticos de Abya Yala/Afro-/Latinoamérica a partir de sus reverberaciones sónicas. Cada capítulo hace eco de un problema medioambiental específico desde los biomas poéticos y los paisajes musicales de Ruge el Bosque, invitándonos a la escucha atenta de futuros posibles.



Las zonas de sacrificio son regiones geográficas en las que se habilitó la instalación de industrias extractivas que tienen impactos corrosivos permanentes. Una de las más grandes está en Quintero y Puchuncaví, Chile, donde el funcionamiento de varias plantas termoeléctricas ponen en riesgo la vida completa del ecosistema.

En este episodio, **Carlos Soto Román**, **Victoria Cocco** y **Ana Gayoso**, tres poetas de Ruge el bosque, encuentran la grieta poética de estos espacios en conflicto. El percusionista y campanero **Federico Orío** los acompaña con un paisaje sonoro.

Voz: Valeria Meiller | Música original: Federico Durand | Investigación y guión: Javiera Pérez Salerno, Valeria Meiller y Whitney DeVos | Asistente de investigación: Stefanie Naoun | Producción sonora: Celeste Prezioso | Producción general: Ruge el bosque.

Screenshots taken from Ruge el bosque's [website](#). The artwork was designed by Clarisa Chervin, with permission to use the images by Dr. Valeria Meiller

[Ecoteca](#) is an experimental podcast recorded in Spanish available in Spotify. It seeks to preserve landscapes from the Southern Cone. The name derives from the words eco and thèque. It is an

archive of environmental degradation stories fighting to preserve the climatic, linguistic, and political ecosystems of Abya Yala/Afro/Latin America; all terms alluding to the same ground. Abya Yala refers to the New World in the indigenous language of Guna. These guided listening sessions are accompanied by sonic reverberations, ecopoetry, and city movements. The [second episode](#) focuses strictly on sacrifice zones in the locality of Quintero and Puchuncaví, Chile. The National Institutes of Health defines these sites as “hot spots of chemical pollution where residents live immediately adjacent to heavily polluted industries”. In other words, places where the community’s wellbeing is unjustly sacrificed purely for economic growth approved by the government in a disproportionate manner. These locals are frequently people of color and belong to lower socioeconomic statuses; demonstrating that capitalism’s inequalities affect racialized and marginalized communities. In 2018, a state of sanitary emergency was declared in Quintero and Puchuncaví due to the formation of a toxic yellow cloud arising from the industrial park. It contained substances such as methyl chloroform, toluene, and nitrobenzene, leaving more than a thousand inhabitants affected (Peña, 2019). Ecoteca’s episode braids together a script that delves into the manifold problems raised in the sacrificial zones of the Southern Cone by interlacing political ecologies with the work of three poets, Carlos Soto Román, Victoria Cocco, and Ana Gayoso with the percussionist Federico Orio, specifically commissioned for the episode. Ecoteca recognizes that environmental degradation is irreversible. However, it spreads awareness about climate change while visualizing cruel capitalist practices. Episode two lasts nearly 25 minutes; it is concise and persuasive.



*Photograph taken by Anita Peña Saavedra (2019)*

The image above shows the CODELCO (Corporación Nacional del Cobre de Chile) Ventana complex in Quintero-Puchuncaví, which is currently the largest power plant in Chile. It is a coal-fired electrical generating station that has erased nature's color in the area and painted it literally and metaphorically gray. CODELCO focuses on copper mining while its Ventana complex ventures into thermoelectric power generation. The Quintero-Puchuncaví area has been the subject of environmental concerns due to these activities, leading to air pollution and contamination. However, this is not the only industrial facility threatening the bay. There are oil refineries, chemical plants, and ports. Its designation as a sacrifice zone reflects that the interest of economic development has taken precedence over the wellbeing of living and nonliving entities.

**Where is this grassroots initiative implemented? Who are the promoters? Who are the beneficiaries?**

Ecoteca is a subdivision of [\*Ruge el bosque\*](#), an anthology series combining literature and ecology. The poems shared in the second episode belong to volume 1. The initiative's main promoters are the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) and the University of Texas in San Antonio (UTSA). *Ruge el bosque* received the 2022 Ford-LASA Special Projects grant and UTSA's INTRA 2023 research grant. The project director is Valeria Meiller, who is additionally

part of the editing team. Whitney DeVos and Javiera Pérez Salerno are co-editors. However, the project has more collaborators such as graphic designer Clarisa Chervin and Celeste Precioso who is in charge of sound design. Frederico Durand is the podcast's musician and creates minimalistic melodies. Analía Iglesias has created collages and Sofia Stel is the website's proofreader. All individuals involved have written an ecobiography that can be found on the website explaining their proximity to nature and interests regarding environmental humanities. The podcast initiates dialogues among activist groups, artists, and institutions while acting as a grassroots scheme to avoid the erasure of biomes. Its founders believe climatic urgency requires a combination of strategies: ethos, pathos, and logos. The crisis requires the unity and action of all global citizens, in whichever manifestation possible, including the artistic field. Ecoteca is a subsection of *Ruge el bosque* seeking to initiate transnational and intercultural conversations about the role of Latin American literature in the context of the current climate crisis.

**How does this initiative engage with climate? Does it tackle mitigation, adaptation, both or other dimensions of climate change?**

Ecoteca engages with climate by opposing the destruction of habitats and linguistic extinction. It strives for the harmonious kinship between humans, animals, territories, and nonliving entities. This project aspires to reach diverse audiences; to call attention to the intersectional issues of the current ecological crisis from the power of poetry. It tackles both, the mitigation and adaptation dimensions of climate change from an indirect stance. It criticizes anthropocentric practices. In particular, extractive industries such as thermoelectric plants causing permanent and corrosive impacts on landscape, putting everything and everyone at risk. Ecoteca understands that these industries will not cease to exist. However, it desires the implementation of controlled practices; the problem is not necessarily the Anthropocene, and rather Moore's idea of the Capitalocene. As for the mitigation part, by critiquing thermoelectric plants in the previously mentioned sacrificial zone, it promotes the transition to renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, hydro, and geothermal power; hopefully reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Ecoteca's implicit and explicit outcomes also include sustainable land use. In line with the adaptation element, the podcast (not limited to second episode) hopes for water management strategies, agricultural adaptation, and mainly, ecosystem conservation and restoration. This second episode explains how sacrifice

zones disrupt communities, lead to environmental injustice, addresses its health impacts, talks about the economic dependence on polluting industries, and offers a voice for the residents of Quintero-Puchuncaví and the environment.

### **What are the main objectives? What are the main values?**

Its main objectives are to promote respect for the environment and lend it a voice for causes and communities that go unheard. Its central values are:

1. Resilience: Authors, musicians, professors, graphic designers, and researchers united with the sole purpose of spreading awareness in a creative manner. Mixing auditory and visual senses to strengthen message reception.
2. Advocacy: Every person involved in the project advocates for minority groups and their stolen territory.
3. Awareness: Ecoteca makes visible environmental threats and demands action.
4. Justice: The project wishes to aid in societal and infrastructural reconstruction. To witness regions not suffering from the disproportionate effects of climate change. Ecoteca fights for the wellness of marginalized groups.
5. Coexistence: Living and nonliving entities from Abya Yala in peace. A relationship displaying values from commensalism or Jason W. Moore's idea of ending cheap nature. Humans should stop appropriating nature's gifts, reminding us that the problem is not the Anthropocene and rather the 'Capitalocene'.
6. Hopeful future: Aspiring to live in a society that takes accountability regarding the climate crisis and fights injustices. Ecoteca promotes imaginative exercises as well.

### **What is the timeline? Are there already visible effects?**

There will be a total of eight episodes. Ecoteca's first episode aired on April 13, 2023 while the second one came out on May 17. The release date for other episodes is still unknown. However, they will follow a similar pattern to the previous two. It can be speculated that a different episode will be released every month. Among its visible effects are reaching multiple Latin American individuals and spreading awareness about sacrifice zones in the bay of Quintero and Puchuncaví, Chile. The podcast is advertised on *Ruge el bosque*'s social media platforms

([Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)) and it is available on Spotify. Every time an episode comes out, the link is shared on social media along with a post.

### **Which limits and shortcomings does it encounter?**

Ecoteca and *Ruge el bosque* have limited funding and depend on their director to constantly apply for grants. Being realistic, they are not guaranteed to receive support. However, regardless of this shortcoming, the team is still willing to allocate time for researching more financial opportunities. Another limitation is that it is currently only available in Spanish. Although Spanish is among the world's top five languages in terms of number of speakers and geographic extension, the lingua franca is still English. If this project could be translated, the audience reached would be much broader. However, the main shortcoming is that translating poetry turns into a difficult task. Rhymes, if any, tend to be lost along with puns or clever literary devices. The podcast should be kept as faithful as the original as possible.

### **How would it be potentially replicable in other settings?**

This podcast can easily be replicated in other regions. A climate issue in a city must be identified. In the case of Ecoteca, it follows the following structure:

- Episode one - destruction of wetlands.
- Episode two - sacrifice zones.
- Episode three - contaminated water.
- Episode four – the extinction of indigenous languages and its interrelation to habitat loss.
- Episode five – endangered species.
- Episode six – forests.
- Episode seven – grasslands.
- Episode eight – the city with an emphasis on e-waste.

Each episode targets a different city from the Southern Cone; a geographical subregion of South America typically covering Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay. In Spotify, there is a distinct graphic piece per episode, along with a description of the content, poets' names, and a brief acknowledgements section. The podcast scripts must consist of an introduction, at least 3 poems relating to the issue, the author's implications to the climate crisis, background music, and



credits. Interviewing citizens living in the affected area and including their statements can also be beneficial. There is plenty of artistic freedom when it comes to a project like this. What is most important is devoting plenty of time to contact potential participants, selecting the appropriate content, researching, and setting the agenda. There are many tasks involved when it comes to creating a podcast. The team must be communicative, respectful, responsive, and most importantly, passionate about the crisis. Each poet is asked to read their selected materials and it can be recorded asynchronously. I invite all Spanish speakers to visit the website and listen to it. The creation of a similar podcast must require a pre-production phase, episode preparation, recording, editing and postproduction, revision, and promotion. Applying to grants, fellowships, and securing partnerships are important steps in the replication of the project.

### **Is this initiative conducive to broader changes?**

This podcast initiative can be conducive to broader changes in multiple ways. First, it can raise awareness by educating listeners about environmental threats while presenting well-researched and compelling information such as deforestation, habitat loss, extinction, and so on in specific areas of the Southern Cone. Secondly, the podcast can inspire listeners to take individual or collective actions. By showcasing these heartbreaking stories, environmental conservation, sustainability, and positive change can emerge as a result. Listeners can be motivated to adopt environmentally friendly practices, spread information, and support relevant organizations. Podcasts can play an influential role when it comes to policy advocacy. Perhaps, it can contribute to public discourse with audiences eager to propose new ideas and debate existing policies to prioritize environmental protection, sustainability, and improve quality of life. Policy makers could even listen to the podcast. Overall, it can be concluded that Ecoteca can reach wide audiences, raise awareness, educate, inspire action, facilitate dialogue, and mobilize individuals. Ecoteca seeks to underscore how the region's poetic production shapes emerging politics, demonstrating that poetry can work as a way of preserving endangered ecosystems and even languages. Nature is constantly speaking; it is simply that we fail to hear it. That is why the podcast acts as a mediator or dare I say, interpreter. It is impossible to avoid anthropocentric discourse. However, the podcast would like to imagine that if nature could talk, it would



verbalize its state and needs, even though it already does through climate change. Nature is the voice of the Earth and is hurting because its ecosystems are being disrupted.

## **References**

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