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The Cybernetic Sublime Gentrification, Ecstasy, and the Celebration of Misunderstanding

Max Kaario[1]

Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between music, events, and transformative experiences in urban environments, arguing that certain musical and social settings facilitate individuation through aesthetic experiences that momentarily exit from normalized daily rhythms. Drawing on the anthropologists Michael Taussig, Ernesto de Martino and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, it examines how aberrant forms of collectivity, such as the trance-inducing tarantella, suspend the strictures of contemporary capitalist norms, allowing for the release of hidden, entropic information. The collectivity of music can become a catalyst for transcending the quotidian, an aesthetic experience that might be identified as the 'cybernetic sublime'.
The experimental music events the author has organized in the Northeast Paris over the past 12 years have been attempts to put these strategies into practice, aiming to foster a resistant atmosphere that disrupts conventional concert venue settings. Strategic disorientation, efforts to demonetize, and the celebration of misunderstanding are key to encouraging an anti-colonial form of the cybernetic sublime, a collective experience of uncertainty across social, spatio-temporal, and technological systems, offering a brief but intensely collective potential for individuation that resists the dominance of capitalist experience.

Keywords: cybernetic sublime, gentrification, misunderstanding, music events, anthropology

1. Introduction

Money driven music events are spectacular in a way that reflects Guy Debord's early warning about the rise of cybernetic society (Debord, 1967). Social and spatiotemporal control, risk assessment, and a homogeneous sum of expected outcomes. Money driven expectations frame an event with a limited means of verbal and gestural enunciation, bodies placed in endless lineups for entrance, toilets, drinks and exits. Stringent hierarchies for people performing, working, and forming an audience for spectacular music events ensure any outcome is known beforehand.

However, in many cities, other sorts of music events exist, often hidden within marginalized communities and eccentric milieus. These events undermine the spectacular by utilizing a realm of uncommodified aesthetics. Generating little money, they rely heavily on community volunteers and emphasize collective forms that are at times ecstatic, in a way not possible in an event setting strategizing a more commercialized outcome. Today, online forms of ecstasy are perhaps easier to identify than those which take place in public or private spaces among interacting bodies.[2] This essay focusses on collective situations

[1] Independent researcher, maxkaario@gmail.com, ORCID-ID: 0009-0003-4110-5650.
[2] A recent example which describes many online ecstatic forms is Susca (2024).

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that take place at music events in urban spaces like bars, squats, galleries, restaurants, small clubs, or épiceries. With alcohol sales often forming the money-making ends of a space's subsistence, the music event can minimize the importance of financial gain.[3]

One challenge of organizing music events in these urban contexts is understanding and attempting to reduce their participation in gentrification. My attempts to understand the aesthetic dimensions of gentrification have led me to identify a type of collective situation I have called the cybernetic sublime. By reducing the spectacular, money-driven expectations of the music events I organize in Paris, I have attempted to offer a place and time where the cybernetic sublime might emerge with a minimal gentrifying impact.[4]

What follows is a breakdown of some of the aesthetic and anthropological reflections that brought me first to identify the cybernetic sublime in its gentrifying impetus, and then to describe its antidotal form as a celebration of misunderstanding.

2. Longinus and the Early Modern Evolution of the Sublime

The sublime has been associated with ecstatic experience since the writings of Longinus in the first century AD:

> The Sublime leads the listeners not to persuasion, but to ecstasy: for what is wonderful always goes together with a sense of dismay, and prevails over what is only convincing or delightful, since persuasion, as a rule, is within everyone's grasp: whereas, the Sublime, giving to speech an invincible power and [an invincible] strength, rises above every listener. (Longinus, "On the Sublime")

For Longinus, the sublime is a literary affect that extends beyond persuasion into an ecstatic experience of being overwhelmed. In more contemporary terms, Longinus' sublime might be described as a leaving behind of everyday expectations, forcing the reader into the ecstatic. This "leaving behind" involves a risk-taking, an uncomfortable venture into the unknown. Drew Hemment's raises awareness of the risk taking aspect of ecstasy: "a turn to ekstasis is not intended to rescue our humanity - quite the reverse. For it is our humanity, and specifically the puritan self, that holds our desire in suspense, and which would be undone by a resurgence of ekstasis." (Hemment, 1997) The 'puritan self' belongs to the every-day: bourgeois desire, work, domestic responsibility. When this constrained self is left behind in ecstatic moments, a remapping takes place, a questioning of hierarchies, repositioning the underpinnings of social milieu.

In early modern Europe, when Longinus' Latin text was translated into modern European languages, new interpretations of the sublime emerged, notably in the writings of Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant. The intricacies of these 18th century renewals of the sublime are beyond the scope of the present essay, but their descriptions, which contain an Enlightenment ethic, admit the role of experience that extends beyond 'sense': "For what is sublime, in the proper meaning of the term, cannot be contained in any sensible form." (Kant, 1987)

Another aspect of the 18th-century sublime were the new enticements of leisure and particularly travel, especially among rich young European men. What was known as the Grand Tour, a coming-of-age ritual where young European men of a certain class traveled through Western Europe, became emblematic of a new sensibility, that included an experience of 'awe and terror' in front of natural wonders such as the Alps. An important

[3] Art galleries can be an exception to this point, as they often receive government and sometimes private funding. While galleries can be exciting places to play and put on music, their clinical, white cube aspect, can encourage sophisticated, or professionalized behavior.

[4] Whether or not these attempts have been successful or ineffectual is beyond my ability to measure.

example that influenced Kant's version of the sublime was Saussure's *Exploration of the Alps* (1796). The significance of this characteristic of the 18th century sublime might not be obvious at first glance. But the particular feeling of pleasurable awe that is the 18th century sublime was directed by a class apparatus that sought momentary exit, an ecstatic moment beyond the limitations of the aristocratic or bourgeois self.

As shall be seen, this 18th-century ecstatic, related to leisure, contemplation of 'wild' nature, a colonial spirit of cultural exploration, is reminiscent of the contemporary desires of artists and information workers.

3. The Technological Sublime

With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, the sublime changed its form, becoming technological. This is the thesis of *The Machine in the Garden,* a work of literary history and theory which analyzes the recurrent insertion of machines into garden or wilderness settings in 19th-century American literature, and the ecstatic collectivity that it sometimes instigated (Marx 1964). Perhaps the most evocative example is *Moby Dick*, where the crew of the Pequod, an industrial whaling ship, roam the seas in search of a white whale.

The whaling ship is a complex industrial machine, the seas are a garden/wilderness, and the white whale is a sheer representation of the unknowable. During moments when the crew is working together, for example squeezing whale sperm in a large vat, there is an experience of ecstatic togetherness that is at least partially provided by the experience of the collective use of machinery in a wilderness setting (Melville 1851). The technological sublime combines an idea of an opportune 'wild' setting intercepted and sometimes augmented by technological collectivity.

The cybernetic sublime, as I formulate it, took its initial impetus from *The Machine in the Garden*, translating the industrial setting into a contemporary post-cybernetic context. Society has undergone a cybernetic paradigm shift that has only expanded since 1948, the year the term cybernetic was formally coined by Norbert Wiener (1948). This paradigm shift includes the digital technology revolution, the dematerialization of money, labor and culture, and a profound general integration of cybernetic concepts and apparatuses.[5] This essay focusses on the cybernetic sublime as it is experienced in music events taking place in neighborhoods undergoing gentrification. Following the logic of *The Machine in the Garden*, the cybernetic sublime is the collective ecstatic experiences that can take place through the insertion of a sound system in particular urban spaces.

The representation of the technological sublime in *Moby Dick* contains another particularity, not mentioned in *The Machine in the Garden*, which is highly relevant to the present essay: at the helm of the Pequod, is Ahab, a maniacal captain who has abandoned the money-making ends of a standard whaling voyage in search of Moby Dick, the white whale. Arguably, the ecstatic collectivity of *Moby Dick* is heightened by this non-lucrative difference. Ahab as orchestrator of a collective ecstatic through his maniacal obsession of the white whale.

In a music event setting, with its cables, speakers, acoustic and electronic instruments, there is a similarity to *Moby Dick*'s complex technological assemblage. When the event takes on a nearly demonetized social apparatus, as on Captain Ahab's Pequod, from my experience, the potential for ecstatic collectivity is heightened. Simultaneously, because the event is

[5] A growing literature upholds the idea of a cybernetic paradigm shift. For an example, see Lafontaine (2014).

demonetized, as much as the context allows, there is potentially a lessened gentrifying impact.[6]

4. The Cybernetic Sublime and Gentrification

The sublime is a moment experienced outside the semiotic readability of every day, beyond the social or proportional confines those algorithms enforced by the rapid transformations of societies facing imminent ecological catastrophe. The cybernetic sublime is collective, experienced between bodies. As Vincenzo Susca (2024) has evocatively suggested, current dance crazes, which encompass both online and in person worlds, are a type of dance of death.[7] The gentrifier is a prime organizer and participator in this apocalyptic entrancement.

In the Parisian context, where I live and organize music events, who are the gentrifiers? As Anne Clerval shows in *Paris sans le peuple* (2013), in the early stages of gentrification in a Parisian neighborhood, the population of information workers increases.[8] Certainly information workers are looking for lower real estate prices. This is a primary reason they move to the neighborhoods they do. But given their cultural values, many of these people also seek out diversity, neighborhoods they do not know or understand, a way of life that implies difference from what they have already experienced. It is here we find a similarity with the older forms of the sublime: I argue that information workers experience a form of pleasure, sometimes reaching the summits of fearful awe and ecstasy, by frequenting, moving through, occupying, passing their leisure time within pre-gentrified neighborhoods. Eventually, as gentrification progresses, information workers financially invest in the neighborhoods by opening up businesses, galleries, associations and renting or buying property.

Perhaps even more pertinent to the current study, is the early role of gentrification among artists. Before the information workers arrive, artists and musicians form an early vanguard in un-gentrified neighborhoods (Ley, 2003). For example, in Paris and its near suburbs, the opening up of artist squats in ungentrified suburbs was a prominent feature of young artists' attempts to establish radical living situations, until recent anti-squat laws made it more difficult to open up unused architectural spaces for utopian purposes. In the contemporary Parisian region, the opening of galleries, art associative spaces, and studio collectives, are part of an influx of artists newly frequenting and inhabiting a given neighborhood. Eventually spaces of commerce are opened which directly refer to the values of the artists. At some point in this evolutive medley the arrival of information workers enters into the mix.

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[6] Monetization remains present in the events because performers rightly expect to be paid for their work. The complexity of gathering money at a music event that is at the same time trying to reduce the importance of money, is an unresolved challenge I continue to face in the events I organize.

[7] Susca (2024) presents social media trends, on the one hand, and all sorts of dance parties, concerts, festivals, house parties, new age practices, therapy, on the other.

[8] A rather vast subject, what I refer to as information workers is to be associated with post-Fordist, post-industrial, or cognitive labor. Key characteristics of this type of labor include precarity, dematerialization and 'always-on' working conditions. The information worker, bodily invested with these characteristics, asserts themselves in the yet to be gentrified neighborhoods they frequent and inhabit, thus enforcing gentrification in the public and commercial spaces that make up the quarter. Anne Clerval's description is best summed up in the following citation: "La présence des professions culturelles est donc notable dans les quartiers populaires dans lesquels la gentrification est la moins avancée, là ou les cadres sont les moins nombreux par rapport aux classes populaires. Ainsi, la part de ces professions parmi les cadres est la plus forte le long du front de gentrification. Cela confirme la place d'avant-garde des professions culturelles dans la gentrification à Paris." (Clerval, 2013, 174)

5. Neo-Colonialism, the Frontier Mentality, and the Semiotic Unreadability of Wilderness

The word gentrification was first put into use by the British sociologist Ruth Glass in 1964, as part of her description of the urban changes London was undergoing (Glass, 1964). This historical placement is synonymous with the insertion of cybernetics into the discourse of art, the social sciences, and philosophy (Geoghegan, 2011). An early commentator on the paradigm shifting importance of cybernetics was French philosopher Henri Lefebvre. Most well-known for his radical urban theory, Lefebvre also wrote book length essays on cybernetics. While his critique of cybernetics is less well-known than his work on urbanism, I believe they coincide, and thereby provide an impetus to understand the inner workings of both gentrification and the cybernetic sublime.

The constraining force of cybernetics, according to Lefebvre, prevents renewal, imposing a homogeneous, mimetic repetition of habits, gestures and verbal forms of expression. This is largely due to the technical application of information theory in new media such as television, computers and the culture industry. According to Lefebvre (1973), the renewal of language and gesture is being disrupted by the appearance of cybernetics in the media landscape. The result is a standardization of social relations, in which the conditions necessary for the renewal of social forms are eliminated. This is where we might understand why, at the end of the 1960s, with the publication of *Le Droit à la ville*, cities and, later, urban spaces, take on paramount importance for Lefebvre. They are practical sites for the renewal of gestures, offering them a critical space to be invented and reinvented in 'moments', a means that escapes the algorithmic framing of cybernetic technologies.

Lefebvre's 'moments' offer the possibility of disrupting the expected algorithms of an increasingly stratified everyday life. Described in this way, 'moments' help us to understand the cybernetic sublime as the experience of vital forms of communication that renew gestures and verbal language through the practice of urban spaces. The vitality of communication that occurs in non-gentrified urban spaces is a central element of the 'new orality', and extends beyond the domesticated signs of pre-established behavioral codes.

In the second installation of *La Droit a la ville*, Lefebvre describes an internal neo-colonialism that establishes itself in the aftermath of the loss of multiple French colonies in the 1950s and 1960s. This internal neo-colonialism, Lefebvre associates with "overdevoloped, overindustrialized, overurbanised zones" within French cities (Lefebvre, 1973).[9] Lefebvre shows that in the post-colonial situation of the 1960s, there was a form of 'internal neo-colonialism' being installed in French cities. Gentrification is synonymous with this neo-colonialist drive, functioning with a frontier mentality where artists form an early thrust, moving into neighborhoods, opening spaces formerly occupied by industry and working class communities.

Describing the consumerist frenzy of the frontier myth embodied by artists and information workers, unknowingly inherited from the past of European colonialism, Neil Smith (1996, 12) writes:

> As new frontier, the gentrifying city since the 1980 has been oozing with optimism. Hostile landscapes are regenerated, cleansed, reinfused with middle-class sensibility; real estate values soar; yuppies consume; elite gentility is democratized in mass produced styles of distinction.

Writing in 1996, Smith suggests the frontier myth is present in much of the rhetoric surrounding the gentrification of contemporary cities, and that this pioneering vision of a

[9] "La France impérialiste a perdu ses colonies, mais un néocolonialisme interne s'est installé. La France actuelle comprend des zones surdéveloppées, sur-industrialisées, sur-urbanisées." (Lefebvre, 1973, 143).

'wilderness', while evidently racist, unashamedly establishes a direct correlation between the 'Wild West', the contemporary city, and its 'urban jungle', renewing a European myth charged with a form of discrimination that romantically attributes wild primitiveness to people living in these neighborhoods. This mythological frontier mentality is driven by a search for wild nature, and just as the introduction of the railroad into the American landscape created an ecstatic form of the technological sublime, the frontier mentality of gentrification takes the ecstatic form of the cybernetic sublime.

The cybernetic sublime is driven by the desiring machines of a frontier mentality that seeks to experience the ecstatic shock of alterity. Among the historical characters entailed in the search for alterity, the anthropologist is a key figure. Born during the late period of European colonialism, the anthropologist has very often participated in the justification for imperialism (Viveiros De Castro, 2009). However, since the mid 20th century numerous anthropologists have attempted to address the complicity their discipline has had in colonial processes.

This paper finishes with three examples from anthropology that provide insight into how the gentrifying mentality present in music events might be upturned, reduced, or slowed down, for example through demonetization. Michael Taussig, Ernesto de Martino and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro offer radical methodological and conceptual tools to disrupt the colonialist mentality of music event situations, pointing towards an ecstatic that is in ecological tune with the neighborhood in question.

6. Seeking the Unreadable: Wildness, Uncertainty, and the Gentrifier

Like the technological sublime, the cybernetic variant must be understood as implicated in colonialist forms of violence, discrimination and domestication. A seeking out of wildness, a periphery of everyday readability, is part of the artist's pioneering mentality. In the artist's search to deterritorialize space, there is a desire to unearth alterity. What better place for an artist to experience alterity than in an un-gentrified neighborhood, where ways of living are often 'other' to them, a place where the subaltern continues to speak. The alterity an artist can embody encourages an edgy sheen, an otherness to people living and working in more domesticated circumstances. The artist is supposed to be a miner of unreadability, a semiotic pioneer that refuses a fully domesticated life. Through the desire bound seeking out of undomesticated experience, the artist can be made to believe their presence in an un-gentrified neighborhood is justified. The justifications of the colonizer are key to understanding any colonial process (Said, 1978).

The artist's contemporary interest in experiencing alterity is analogous with a predominant European colonial narrative that identifies wilderness with any context that is not easily readable, reaches beyond a domesticated threshold of certainty, and perhaps most significantly, any misunderstanding that might occur in a newly experienced territory. The concept of wilderness participates in a long-held, fallacious lens that invents and maintains stereotypes that vary in degree of being maliciously or soothingly discriminatory of the peoples already occupying a given territory.

This is true of both historical and contemporary forms of colonialism, among which gentrification is to be included. The mythological rhetoric applied to the inhabitants of yet to be gentrified urban neighborhoods, to which colonizing artists are drawn, appeals to a stereotypical vision of the "magical" wild man, as described by Michael Taussig in his analysis of the idea of wildness as seen through the lens of the European pioneer:

> [Savagery] is incessantly recruited by the needs of order (and indeed, this is one of anthropology's most enduring tasks and contributions to social order). But the fact remains

> that in trying to tame wildness this way, so that it can serve order as a counterimage, wildness must perforce retain its difference. If wildness per se is not credited with its own force, reality, and autonomy, then it cannot function as a handmaiden to order. The full implications of this paradox are submerged in a violent act of domestication. (Taussig, 1987, 220)

Today the concept of wilderness is a 'handmaiden' of an order that depends on the preservation of everyday capitalist rhythms. In the urban areas of neo-liberalized nation-states, artists and information workers have been trying for decades to access the cybernetic sublime by attending punk shows, raves, dance parties, and concerts – cultural forms taking place in urban areas not yet engulfed by the most radically homogenized forms of capitalism. These events unwittingly reinforce the process of gentrification, while at the same time asserting a 'wildness' that enables a sensorial de-territorialization which participates in the artist's quest to upturn and renew meaning.

The careerist aspect of the majority of information workers and artists today leads them to experiment with 'cleansed' spaces of consumption, fitted for their branded attachments to design: concept stores, minimalist cafés, vintage boutiques, or organic food shops are a short list of examples.

The idea of wilderness provoked by the colonial imperatives is complicit with the artist's aim to renew sense. In other words, art is regenerated in its constant search to invent the new through a belief that the accessing of the 'wildman' – in Taussig's terms – can provide an ecstatic relinquishing of the domesticated and an entrance into a 'death space' for the readable.[10]

7. Aberrant Temporality, Social Lacuna and the Crisis of Presence

By identifying the complicity between art's search for unreadability and gentrification, a region of tacit desire begins to be made explicit. The cybernetic sublime is a meeting point between art, aesthetics and gentrification. This raises a question related to the search for a form of the cybernetic sublime that subverts rather than produces gentrification in a music event setting. One response is to further describe the Lefebvrian notion of the need for 'moments' that extend beyond the capitalist squeeze on everyday temporality. A correlate temporal concept, which turns the aesthetic of 'moments' on its head, can be found in the work of Italian anthropologist Ernesto De Martino. One of his most powerful ideas is the acceptance of a need for allowing a space for social lacuna in collective situations. How he arrived at this conclusion requires some unpacking.

In his first book, *Il mondo magico* ("The Magic World", 1971), De Martino produced an ethnographic compilation, bringing together examples of field situations in which European anthropologists witnessed phenomena that cannot be explained by modern scientific epistemology. Examples such as fire-walking and telepathy are described using historical ethnographic studies carried out by anthropologists in different parts of the world. Above and beyond any assertions about the veracity of these paranormal phenomena, what must be retained from De Martino's ethnographic examples is that the

[10] "Wildness also raises the specter of the death of the symbolic function itself. It is the spirit of the unknown and the disorderly, loose in the forest encircling the city and the sown land, disrupting the conventions upon which meaning and the shaping function of images rest. Wildness challenges the unity of the symbol, the transcendent totalization binding the image to that which it represents. Wildness pries open this unity and its place creates slippage and a grinding articulation between signifier and signified. Wildness makes of these connections spaces of darkness and light in which objects stare out in their mottled nakedness while signifiers float by. Wildness is the death space of signification." (Taussig, 1987, 220).

rituals in question are not to be understood from the scientifically biased perspectives of the European anthropologists:

> The paradox of culturally conditioned nature is now before us in all its scandalous force. But at the same time the 'new way' opens up for us: the culturally conditioned nature leads us back to the cultural situation from which it springs, to the historical world of magic. Whether, and to what extent, the magical powers are real is a question that cannot be decided independently of the sense of reality that serves here as a predicate for judgment. (De Martino, 1971, 61)

The literate European intellectual perception of magical rites practiced by non-Western cultures is falsified by the very logic on which its perceptions are based; as De Martino writes, one cannot decide what is actually happening in a magical rite, without including the culturally specific 'sense of reality' applied in the actual rites. Hence, this happening in the context of a music event during which social, spatiotemporal and technical organizational strategies are demonetized, could differentiate it from a standardized sense of capitalist reality, even if only momentarily, establishing a spatiotemporality that cannot be rationalized beyond the enunciative particularities of the collective milieu itself.

This helps account for the challenge of documenting music events, for which the actual aesthetic affects are somatic and collective, far from being limited to photographs, videos or sound recordings, which often only serve as a type of promotion for the artists. For De Martino, the bodies of the collective become the central source of mediation: the body as media, the body as memory, the body as documentation – a moment beyond easy readability.

Rituals which dissolve the standardized course of everyday life are often a response to an anthropological need De Martino later called "the crisis of presence". He saw rituals presenting entropic or 'aberrant' enunciation, such as the Tarantella trance in Southern Italy, as a collective admission of the existence of a social need; a lacuna that must be filled by a ritualized setting, offering a particular spatio-temporal 'moment' for enunciative aberration (De Martino, 1961). In David Gutherz's analysis, this need for "aberrant moments" must be collectively accepted and endorsed:

> Through the history of magic, de Martino sought access to societies that didn't push this "drama of presence" out of the public sphere, but rather treated it as a problem that concerned the whole community. Fascism, he suggested, was able to undermine liberal institutions by offering collective solutions to the pain that "humanists" blinded by individualism couldn't even see. To counter this pseudoregression, socialist humanists would have to find a more compelling response to "primitive" fears. And to do this, de Martino insisted, they would have to work through the history that ethnology erased. (Gutherz, 2017, 58)

Behavioral aberrations remain possible within moments when social lacuna are collectively encouraged to emerge. "The crisis of presence" is tacitly or explicitly present in every social situation, no matter how rational, puritan, professional or clinical. If a music event is monetized, in a stadium, large concert hall, commercial gallery or museum, for example, the crisis is made to be invisible, but remains present as tacit violence that stultifies the aesthetic potential. On the other hand, a music event that strategically accepts the important presence of the crisis of presence, may engage with a leave-taking of quotidian stringencies, while also celebrating social phenomena that are difficult to understand, exactly because they contain an aberrance that is necessary for radical diversity.

There is an equivocal difference between the perceptions of one person to the next. Learning to perceive misunderstanding as inevitable is a way of celebrating the complexity of radical difference in an urban neighborhood. In other words, the celebration of misunderstanding experienced at demonetized music events represents a means to reinvent from a "bottomless" source in the Deleuzian sense: reorienting movements,

behaviors and enunciations towards a reterritorialization that is immune to gentrifying desires:

> These movements are the expression, the visible form of this 'bottomlessness' that has replaced the foundation. For what interests Deleuze is not exploring the depths, but establishing new 'lands', new surfaces, that respond to a new logic of the irrational. (*Le Monde*, 2014)

Establishing new 'territories' of desire requires a dismantling of rational expectations, an admission of the limits of understanding, or in other words, to use Ernesto De Martino's expression, an admission of a crisis between subjective bodies that must not be homogenized by state-approved tactics of 'communication'. The demonetized music event is a locus where such re-territorialization might occur. However before newly individuated surfaces can emerge, misunderstanding must be accepted as an inevitability.

8. The Celebration of Misunderstanding

Misunderstanding is at the heart of the search for irrational territories. As Taussig articulates, wildness is a semiotic unreadability, a terrifying yet enthralling encounter with the seemingly unknowable. A desire to domesticate wildness swipes away the potential for a celebration of misunderstanding as a viable model for communication in a situation of urban diversity. A celebration of misunderstanding accepts the inevitable unreadability of some situations that present themselves in urban contexts where there are communities with which a newcomer to a neighborhood has had little contact.

A gentrifying desire would be to make a stereotyping defense that builds a justification for changing a neighborhood by installing new values which are economically reenforced as superior. At the opposite end of the spectrum, an acceptance of the inevitability of misunderstanding, creates an opportunity for individuation away from gentrifying thresholds of desire. A new desire for a harmonizing sustainability of radically different collective ecosystems might be territorialized: indeed, the co-existence of two radically different ecosystems is a natural phenomenon known as ecotone.

Misunderstanding thus provides both a perspective that might disrupt gentrification, while at the same time providing an ecstatic form of the cybernetic sublime that leaves behind the puritan or professionalized self.

At the heart of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's *Cannibal Metaphysics* is the acceptance of the inevitable misunderstanding experienced when people with different bodies meet. This framework for understanding encounter, reveals a challenge the music event organizer must face if they are to achieve a level of involvement that goes beyond mere professional expectation. Indeed, I would argue that it is a celebration of misunderstanding that is a means of overturning the insistent forces of gentrification, for it denies the homogenized vision of nature imposed by capitalism. To approach this level of involvement, event organizers must understand that

> [t]he crucial point here is not the empirical fact of misunderstandings, but the "transcendental fact" that they were not the same. The question, then, is not who is wrong, still less who is deceiving whom. Equivocation is not an error, a misunderstanding or a falsehood, but the very foundation of the relation that implies it, which is always a relation with exteriority. An error or misunderstanding can only be defined as such in a given "language game", whereas equivocation is what happens in the interval between different language games. Misunderstanding and error presuppose premises constituted in advance, and constituted as homogeneous, whereas equivocation not only 'presupposes' the heterogeneity of the premises

> in play - it posits them as heterogeneous, and it presupposes them as premises. (Viveiros De Castro, 2009, 58)[11]

The "equivocation" proposed by Viveiros De Castro is the recognition of insurmountable difference, of a heterogeneity of bodily perspectives on misunderstanding. The differences between the perspectives of people who attend a music event vary; there is no direct means of "communication". The method for dealing with the inevitable troubles caused by event organization allows translation and interpretation to take precedence over communication, rejecting the homogenizing directives of contemporary colonialism.

An aesthetic aim of the music events I organize is to confront information workers and artists with urban enunciations beyond what is acceptable in their normalized everyday lives. Confronting the digital worker with the equivocation always present but concealed by their prejudices. Consequently, this aim can be seen as a practice of strategically setting up situations in which participants are invited to reconsider their capacity to accept different levels of behavioral aberration and misunderstanding.

9. Conclusion: Ecstatic Experience and Literacy

Ecstatic experiences are difficult to articulate in written form. In many respects, they are not compatible with literacy, reading text being part of a state-led campaign to eradicate cultural manifestations that engage social phenomena capable of creating or allowing a gap between the multitude of different perspectives and natures making up a city or state. Each of our bodies contains multiple thresholds of resistance and capitulation to the homogenizing directives of overarching contemporary power systems. The aim of this essay has been to describe a particular form of ecstatic sublime that can occur in demonetized music events. Ecstatic experience is inscribed in the memory, in the body, in communities, between people. Attempting to describe ecstatic experience in an essay form remains a contradictory challenge.

The sublime is the acceptance and proliferation of an ontology that celebrates the unknown. Through radical collectivity there might be an entry into what is pejoratively known as wilderness, and more positively as the irrational, a loss of legible semiotic sense, a surpassing of homogenized experience as imposed by the nation-state, institutional education and the professional situations of contemporary workers. This intrusion into everyday life necessarily provokes some level of social friction or conflict, an urban confrontation with differences in values, moments of uncertainty and incomprehension.

The clinical professional life expected of the contemporary adult obligatorily foregoes the potential experience of rich heterogeneity through the enforced application of transparent communication systems, both at work and in what remains of private life. The cybernetic sublime, in this context, has to reach extensions of alterity hidden in everyday life, and among the technical assemblages available to the city-dweller, the sound system remains one of the most resistant, an apparatus of proto-subjective dimensions, integrating an

[11] "Le point crucial ici n'est pas le fait empirique des incompréhensions, mais le "fait transcendental" qu'elles n'étaient pas les mêmes. La question, donc, n'est pas celle de savoir qui a tort, et encore moins de savoir qui trompe qui. L'équivoque n'est pas une erreur, une méprise ou une fausseté, mais le fondement même de la relation qui l'implique, et qui est toujours une relationavec l'extériorité. Une erreur ou une méprise ne peuvent se définir comme telles que dans un "jeu de langage" donné, alors que l'équivoque est ce qui se passe dans l'intervalle entre différents jeux de langage. La méprise et l'erreur supposent des prémisses constituées d'avance, et constituées comme homogènes, alors que l'équivoque ne "suppose" pas seulement l'hétérogénéité des prémisses en jeu- elle les pose comme hétérogènes, et elle les présuppose comme des prémisses." (Viveiros De Castro, 2009, 58)

ecstatic proper to the incomprehensible and incoherent moments that we are sometimes given to experience.

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