

Border Music: Global displacement and the possibilities of sound.

Introduction

I want to explore the possibilities of music coming from an indigenous/immigrant perspective and those who arrived in Europe as a result of violence and global displacement, re-thinking sounds from the borders and not from a specific epistemological and geographical territory. I also would like to challenge the hegemony of the written word and Eurocentric musical connotation as the continuous invisibilization of oral tradition and exterior ways of creating music without separating body from mind, in the development of (other) cognitive processes and creative interventions.

From an indigenous perspective it is difficult to talk about music as a uni-versal language when the hegemonic Eurocentric paradigms created during the last 500 years assume a universalistic, neutral and objective point of view (Grosfoguel 2005, 2006b) that invisibilises and subjugates other cosmologies under a 'colonial difference' where the idea of *race* was created to classify the population and define a global division of labour. On the other hand, the 'coloniality of power' acts as the mechanism that (re)produces this same colonial difference (Mignolo 2003, Quijano 2000) maintaining, perpetuating, and re-articulating the idea of 'race' as an epistemic category that controls knowledge and subject formation. Coloniality of knowledge not only classifies populations as properly 'human' and 'non-human' via race as the primary modern arbiter of human differentiation in an hierarchical scale of value (e.g white, Indian, black etc.), but also regulates the modes of knowledge production of the groups that it racializes. Music, either as human or and non-human expression, is not immune to these social phenomena.

Being subjected to global displacement immures the contemporary migrant to an array of possibilities and exclusions within popular music, the Western academy, and everyday music circles depending on the negotiations between those who embody a different sound and musical constitution and those within the cognitive limits of the western canon of thought as a bridge for dialogue, creativity and hybridity. For instance, the Eurocentric practice of deforming external tunings and synchronizations of various indigenous sounds such as Ecuadorian and Colombian Marimba (Ana Maria Ochoa Gautier, 2012) or the M'bira in South-central Africa, serves to re-establish European modes of composition. The benefits of the idea of 'border music' that I am forwarding include the creation and combination of sounds usually excluded by the mainstream industry, such as urban noises, animals, natural and inanimate materials, and the harmonious cadence of indigenous languages among other sources.

With regards to balance between the clash of different rhythms within a modern/colonial matrix of power (Santiago Castro-Gómez 2005), rap music could be a good example of a 'new sound' when used from a decolonial perspective. The traffic of information created as a result of globalization, digital and technological platforms have been adopted by exterior voices as an extension of oral traditions and autonomous sounds, as in the case of some South-American Aymara, Mapuche and Quechua indigenous rappers who mix their own cosmological art of storytelling and traditional instruments with the electronic sounds offered by the methods of production germane to rap music. Due to the violence and genocide implicit in coloniality, as the hidden face of Modernity (Enrique Dussel 1996), and the global displacement of bodies from peripheral to central territories within a modern world system (Immanuel Wallerstein 1974), that mixture of sounds arrives in the Western Metropole as a new language that challenges the political persuasions inscribed in the Eurocentric discourse of the academic and musical landscape. The imaginary of the mega-cities always tries to encapsulate oral tradition and body-musical languages inside the written European connotation/scores and methods of composition without realizing that some indigenous expressions transcend the written paper as 'evolution' of music in a 'civilized' theoretical imposition; in other words, the written connotation/score (though important in the western imaginary) could be an incomplete representation of the indigenous musical event where 'music' functions as a complex expression of feelings, resistance and survival. In other cases the immigrant codes of sounds could represent a secret or have sacred meanings so the encounter with new territory implies the search for balance and equilibrium since the reception of those elements might not be important to those

who only seek to appropriate them as means of expression which they themselves might utilize for commercial purposes. Subsuming the immigrant sounds indicates the existence of 'World music' where before there was an indigenous or black music (Baraka, 1963), taking into account that 'World' could mean the pervasive and dominant approach that subalternized 'other' rhythms under the rubric of modernity/coloniality and its ambiguous attempts to create a 'multicultural' society by the use of 'diversity' discourses within musicians' relations.

In terms of performance, representation, spectacle and show, it is important to note the asymmetrical relations between those who came from slavery (blacks/'non-humans') and genocide (Indians/'savages') vis-à-vis the 'settler' (white/human) in a racial matrix of power (Wilderson, 2010). The immigrant musicians do not escape from the violence implicit in slavery and genocide and its ontological repercussions, foundational to the existence of (white) humanity in the current world system. Black music for instance, is rooted in the violent requirement of slaves to sing and dance for the owner's pleasure as well as to demonstrate their submission, obsequiousness, and obedience (Hartman, 1997). If looked at as a contemporary instantiation of coloniality's terrain of coercion, the musical environment of the big metropolitan cities can exert a similar violence, creating boundaries and obstacles to limit the immigrant's sound to the perpetuation of Western discourses, silencing their own voices, and erasing their complex relation to instruments and corporeal musical languages. So it becomes difficult to imagine the possibility of confronting social death by negating the white catalogue of sounds, performances, and expressions within the context of performative impositions and surreptitious threats in a violent relation of power. Some venues and musical circuits only open their spaces under invisible and regulatory norms of racial discourses which hide the repressive problematic and limitations of will, voluntarism and corporeal improvisation of music codes, re-articulating the constitution of the immigrant musician as a subject embedded in violent enactments of power. In other words, the free manifestation of creativity embodied by racialized populations gets interrupted when the very constitution of the subject subversively redeploys an identity determined by violent domination, dishonour and natal alienation (Hartman, 1997).

During the process of global displacement, the encounter between the postcolonial immigrant and the metropolitan landscape could signify the extinction of that mixture of sounds and creativity, in other cases the complete co-option and appropriation of such expressions as already occurred to Blues, Jazz, Hip-Hop and currently with indigenous instruments from Africa and the Americas. Negating the production of border knowledge and the (im)possibility of agency from its actors. It is important to situate performance within the context of border music practices and consider the possibilities of practice and music expression in relation to specific forms of domination, subjection and exploitation, since other cosmologies do not separate the body from the mind during the process of creation, assuming new concepts of discipline as a positive value of communication and not necessarily from a punitive disciplinary system (Foucault, 1975). As a result of the global diaspora, the old paradigms of cultural analysis need to be reconsidered and music studies (as ethnomusicology) have not been extraneous to such changes, recognizing the condition of the ethnomusicologist as someone who analyses musical expressions from a particular point of view in relation to gender, historical moment, ethnic status, class position, race, etc. The refusal of ethnomusicology as a 'neutral' and 'objective' science opens the opportunity to explore the immigrant sound from a healthier and horizontal position, increasing the vocabulary of music from a pluri-versal perspective by challenging the conventional limits impregnated in traditional musicology and its received methods of investigation. This is not an inconsiderable challenge when thinking on the role of music in social relations, the production of knowledge inside and outside the academy, the maintenance/survival/innovation of music instruments through the global movement of bodies, and the constant exchange of information as a result of the present digital/technological revolution. All this could be considered an ethic of liberation manifested in the investigation and development of music disciplines, re-evaluating the way in which we conceived different music cosmologies and their pedagogical use in academic programmes or urban musical landscapes.

In conclusion, the analysis of local sounds from a border thinking position goes beyond the superficial prejudices that constructed the disciplines of music investigation, hence the importance of creating new methods to approach the (non)logic of other music traditions and the new manifestation of sounds as a result of the global-molecular dialogue between different voices. Playing music from the borders is an invitation to improvise from our own intermediary position between Eurocentric academism and traditional/indigenous sounds in a constant search for positive values, contributing to other music disciplines from an experience of resistance and survivability. It is also crucial to build (or destroy) new

bridges of communication between dominant and objectified subjects in order to let the vitality of rhythm within those who are socially dead explode, creating the possibility of a big bang of sounds that articulates a new soundtrack for a different world.

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