

## *Technoshamanism, Transversal Shamanism, Dirty or Noisy*

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Many people have an idea as to what “technoshamanism” means. These ideas are generic and point towards something between science and religion, or between technology and ecstasy. I prefer to present it as a subject which is under construction - a challenge we are all currently facing, and to which we need to find solutions in the times of the anthropocene.

To think of technoshamanism it is essential to understand its association with garbage, with filth, with excess, with overabundance. “Dirty” shamanism thus surfaces as a complex concept which at first might seem offensive to those who think of shamanism as something sacred. I will, however, now make an effort to change that idea.

In his book *Metafísicas Canibais*, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro talks about the relation between prophecy and horizontal shamanism, and similarly between priesthood and vertical shamanism. He attempts to create an approximation between Amerindian shamanism and Judeo-Christian religion. Horizontal shamanism (prophecy) is roughly defined as a state of presence in and belonging to Nature and the mystery behind things. It happened before the arrival of the colonist, when Indians and (obviously) their shamans would have a balanced relationship with knowledge, which would be promoted and expressed at the same time, intuitively and openly, without restraint and without promoting the powers that be. This is what happened with the prophets who guided the people through their conversations with gods and angels - through intuition and clairvoyance. Transversal shamanism began with the arrival of the white man who reconfigured the paje's power, introduced the idea of a personal identity, built a hierarchy between subjects and imposed their imperial and monotheist concepts on the indigenous beliefs. Human beings were placed vertically above all other things and thus created a place for vigilance, for a law to govern knowledge and morality. This is exactly how it is with priesthood, which in the Judeo-Christian religions precisely had the role of controlling the people, the laws and the religious hierarchy.

According to this reasoning, transversal shamanism is a mixture of all this; a mixture of prophecy and priesthood, of shamanism and priesthood, of polytheism and Catholic liturgy, of humanizing policies with the power of herbs and rituals, of polytheism and the ten commandments, of the Holy Fathers and the African cults, of all those beliefs which are half one and half the other. The Amerindian shamanhood was penetrated by all these ideas and created a state of syncretism where ancestral beliefs blend with theological categories.

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All these things then blended with the white people's own transversal and syncretistic ways of life - the heathen festivals, orgies, drunkenness, assassinations, firearms, city-building, garbage-production; with the diseases, the misery, the betrayals of Empire, the devastation of the Earth, the irresponsible abuse of the environment - the concept of the Earth as a repository of resources for the unrestricted use of mankind.

This whirlpool of mixed information is noiseocracy. Dirty shamanism could mean the capacity to produce ecstasy and trans-communication within this universe of noises where everything is perceived to sound, where everything vibrates and emits sounds, where everything converges and diverges for moments at a time, and where this enables listening rather than deafness. The experience of radical noiseocracy is an important state in technoshamanism.

## TECHNOSHAMANISM

Estamira, the heroine of Marcos Prados' eponymous film, is a good example of technoshamanism. She is the pajé of garbage, the schizophrenic prophetess of refuse. She is a woman who represents the state of putrefaction, the explosions of gas, who literally cohabitates with the "leftovers" of mankind. It is from civilization's garbage dump that this "dirty shaman" speaks to us of other times and their accomplishments. She hallucinates about garbage. What method could be more effective if you want to know about a planet's population? Her shamanism is more than transversal, it is motivated by the power of excess, by the misplaced, by the leftovers. I will not deny that she did recycle things, but it is all the filth that turned her into something special, a specialist on the spectrum of exclusion. If she had not been surrounded by all that garbage, she probably would never have gone so far with the schizophrenic connections that she produced. She became a historic figure in the hands of the director Marcos Prado, whose deep insight emphasized the connection between Estamira and all the world's refuse. She talks about the smell of the garbage, of its internal implosions, of its constant transformation, of the satellites connected to the antennas erected in the landfill by arrogant authorities; she speaks about control and about the illusions which

create control. Although at some point in the documentary the director creates a link between her prophecies and her mental illness, which seemed to be caused by a trauma and thus presents us with a psychoanalytic explanation of her mental problems, there are readings of the film which ignore these attempts. In Estamira's case, what cannot be denied is her fluent relationship with the Earth's garbage.

This is equivalent to saying that technoshamanism, apart from arising directly from a transversal shamanism, is also dirty and noiseocratic. It belongs in the garbage dump, is unclean. A significant part of what technoshamanism affirms originates in the leftovers of scientific thinking, from precarious laboratories, uncertain knowledge, hacking, electronic garbage, workarounds; originates from the recycling of materials, from the duplication of already thoroughly tested scientific results. To this we may add particular questions from social movements related to feminism, to the movements of or for queers, blacks, free software, the landless, indigenous people, river communities, homeless people and the unemployed among countless others who also perceive through their own noises, their own dissidence, their own garbage.

To all this I want to add the exploration of the relationship between the body and technology, interspecies communication with material objects, elements and plants, as well as interception of electromagnetic waves from the most remote spaces, from the north and the south poles, from the buildings destroyed by war, from those that survived, who tell passive stories that can be recorded by DIY instruments. Not to mention the issues of the environment, space, extraterrestrial space, space culture, fiction, our relationship with the cosmos, astronomy and astrology using mechatronic devices and signage.

## WHAT I WANT TO SAY WITH ALL OF THIS, IS:

- 1) Technoshamanism originates in a waste bin of excess, leftovers, remains, noises, discontinuous processes, from transversalised and syncretist shamanisms, from the incorporation of ideas, cultures, from social and cultural cannibalism, from workarounds, overlapping political ideologies, from electronic mining.

Overwhelming Imagination:  
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2) Technoshamanism recycles materials and subjectivities; it recycles environments, reconnects human beings with the Earth as well as the universe; it is a reconnection (a “religare”) without any representation or univocality, a kind of perceptual opening, an expansion of our attention, an opening towards the full spectrum of phenomena which surrounds us, towards mystery; it is a lesson in humility regarding the existence of things.

3) Technoshamanism is dirty because its origin is in humankind’s material and subjective garbage dumps. This does not mean, however, that one should underestimate the power of shamanism. On the contrary, it means that we attribute powers to the garbage beyond those of industrial recycling which organizes, separates, withholds and exploits the garbage collector. But technoshamanism attributes powers to garbage precisely because it is from this confluence of misery that we are able to perceive which kind of species we are, and from that specific condition we can begin to extend some fields of convergence in order to transform ourselves into something more interesting.

For the full text: [http://www.modspil.dk/docs/technoshamanism\\_fabi\\_borges.pdf](http://www.modspil.dk/docs/technoshamanism_fabi_borges.pdf)

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