

Hard Rock and Hallelujah to apocalypitics?

Apocalypitics is of current interest again. It is most interesting to consider the new use of these old religious texts in our own world. Some time ago, the feelings of some Muslims were discharged in a ferocious fight against the Danish cartoons. LORDI's *Hard Rock Hallelujah* conquered the whole Europe, but then the flames only blazed on stage. **Erwing Goffman** claimed in his books *The Portrayation of the self in everyday life* (1959) and *Frame Analyse* (1986) that we portray ourselves to the world even in our everyday lives. Even our social world is theatre. A human being is always on stage as a target of other people's perceptions. The area behind the stage (*backstage*) thus comes into being when we portray ourselves to the world controlling at the same time the impressions we make. The flames blazing on stage are like the stage props in a theatre, but are the petrol bombs thrown by angry people also theatre?

Apocalyptic language expresses religious fights. What does the recycled use of this fantasy world tell us about our own time? Submerging oneself in an apocalyptic world surprisingly often expresses collective moral panic or even a psychopathological problem of the people in question.

The apocalyptic world of rock n' roll can also be real business and some conventional people's temporary "hobby". **Arto Noro** has used this expression when describing the new post-traditional communality as a "hobby", in which a discussion is socialising rather than a conscientious state of mind (A Noro, *Civic Society, modernisation and becoming individual*. Tiede & edistys 4/1989). The colourful symbols and the dispositions of the conversations of an apocalyptic hobby may be found e.g. in the Jewish and Christian apocalyptic tradition, but in a new community they will nonetheless be dealt with as aids in the post-traditional socialising. Rock does not say hallelujah to the absolute comprehensive apocalyptic experience, but to a new kind of exciting socialising.

After the apocalyptic expressions at the theatre people return to their homes in order to make preparations for the following day's work, or continue celebrating by drinking beer or taking some other drugs, letting it all hang out until they pass out dreading the hangover they'll have in the morning. Investigation of the endogenic reasons of these visions has revealed that drugs can even be an explanation for the apocalyptic wave. The new apocalypitics has nonetheless become entertainment more than anything else, while it traditionally used to express moral panic, collective paranoia, or even hallucinations of the people concerned.

The world where the monsters were born

Douglas Collins has contemplated people's dissatisfaction with the prevailing ideals and establishments. He has approached the experience of dissatisfaction by studying the views of psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, who defended his doctoral thesis on schizophrenia. *L'Amour intellectuel de Dieu: Lacan's Spinozism and Religious Revival in Recent French Thought* (Anthropoetics 2004) is a detailed description of how the atmosphere in France turned in the 1990's towards regression, transcendence and a new kind of spirituality. Being effective at work and at home was not enough to this generation any more. The hereafter and forgetting one's own duties became important in a new way.

It has been doubted that dissatisfaction also brings about basic frustration in the whole system and causes people to drop out of the system. The postmodern attitude that despises possession has been called neo-cynicism. **Peter Sloterdijk** wrote at the beginning of the 1980's in his book *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft* (1983) that the cynicism now being born is an enlightened, wrong kind of

awareness. "It is a modernised, unhappy awareness. - - Enlightenment has taken this awareness towards vanity. - - This awareness is not any more touched by criticism of ideologies".

In this kind of world even extreme religious expressions have been seen both among Muslims and Christians. The world is made understandable with the help of fundamentalism. **Manuel Castells** wrote about the birth mechanism of fundamentalism in 1997 in his book *The Information Age*. The second part of the book, *The Power of Identity*, deals with global and local tension. The distress caused by that contradiction has become too overwhelming for some people. You have to build your identity by simplifying the world e.g. by means of religious and political fundamentalism.

So this is the world we live in, where monster rock touches us and gives us a "hobby" that brings excitement into our lives, gratuitous feeling of embarrassment. A mental, comprehensive initiation into apocalypitics would nonetheless be a serious threat for both the society and the individual himself.

Collective or pathological?

In sociology there is an established practice to investigate people's tendency to project their fears on scapegoats and to classify the world in a paranoid manner when in moral panics. **Johan Bäckman** has dealt with paranoid classification characteristic of Finns in his new thesis *The Eastern Mafia. Threat picture politics, criminal phenomena, and cultural meanings* (Police Polytechnic investigations 25/2006). According to Bäckman the political paranoia should be conceptually distinguished from the pathological paranoia. He says that collective paranoia can be strong political instruments that can gain ground in a culture. Apocalypitics, which expresses itself as political-religious, collective paranoia is co-ordinate with Castells' description of the rise of fundamentalism. As such apocalypitics is also a rhetorical tool of power which can be used for leading and controlling crowds of people. When I say rhetoric I do not mean such falseness that people often think about when talking about sophistic speech. It refers to the culture of talking in the world where language remarkably structures our vision and where our vision is created by its classifications.

The passionate reaction of the Islam fundamentalist groups against the Danish cartoons would suit the category of collective, political paranoia. The apocalyptic-paranoid world of Hard Rock can, of course, meet the description of collective paranoia in some subcultures and cliques, if the people themselves have projected their own fears on the apocalyptic pictures they have found in music. This will nonetheless "only" remain as an open tool, if there is no psycho-pathological diagnosing reason for these people's apocalyptic enthusiasm. Apocalypitics can also remain as a "hobby", if no commitment is required and outsiders are not converted but apocalypitics simply offers a therapeutic place or stage that is almost identical with its classical ideals for people to express their anger and frustration. Everybody does not even need this kind of therapeutic hobby, but they express their anger, frustration, and joy in some other way.

Jean Laplanche and **J-B. Pontalis** defined the psychotic language expressed in art as a universal phenomenon, which has sometimes been regarded as divine, diabolic, witchcraft or freedom from social restraints, in 1983 in their book *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*. The psychotic features evident in art "express an illumination coming from the most primitive level". In this sense the excited artist himself is not even paranoid in the worst sense of the word, but expresses primitive illumination in his inspiration. There would be something basically apocalyptic in every human being, if they agreed or were able to sense their own primitive feelings. Artists express basically human primitive feelings and win the Eurovision Song Contest. A religious prophet expresses his primitive fears and establishes a sect around himself, in which the members get a fractional touch of

their own hidden primitiveness, even if they are not rationally/analytically able to structure these feelings as a part of the outside world.

If individuals or groups (artists or fans) consecrate their clothing, external presence and, in a word, their whole life to the apocalypitics of rock, the suspicions of the pathological nature of the phenomenon may nonetheless strengthen over time as well. Professor **Veikko Tähkä** reminded us in his *Studia Generalia* lecture on 11th October 2000 at the University of Helsinki that values and religious concepts should not, after all, be distinguished from other human experiences. **Matti Hyrck**, on his behalf, lectured to the social workers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church at a conference on 3rd October 2001 in Tampere saying that "everybody's own mental state determines how they experience God. In their relation to God, human beings use their own mental apparatus." The language of religion - as well as that of art - also tells everyone what its user's mental apparatus is like.

As a pathological phenomenon, consecrating to apocalypitics verges on paranoid schizophrenia, which is the most common type of schizophrenic disorder in the diagnostic system (**DSM**) of the American Psychiatric Association. It usually interlocks with a difficult problem involving human relationships, delusive beliefs and paracusia, before the actual illness is diagnosed. The characteristics of schizophrenia also include denial as a defence mechanism and projection. This defensive characteristic may lead to delusions and for instance hallucinations that are seen as apocalyptic pictures. All paranoid schizophrenics are by no means kept in hospitals, but people with schizophrenia have been found to be active in political groups and religious organisations, even to work in courtrooms.

Daniel Paul Schreber, who was born in 1848, wrote his autobiography and memoir *Denkwürdigkeiten einer Nervenkranken*, which has often been used as an example of psychotic-paranoid experiencing. After Daniel lost the elections his life began to fall apart. He started having hallucinations as well. In the end he spent a long time in a psychiatric hospital. After getting well Schreber was nominated judge. In 1893 he even proceeded to the Supreme Court of Germany. In his new post Schreber suffered from sleeplessness. He even tried to commit suicide. The problem was not the stress caused by his job but the perfectionist demands portrayed to him by "God". In November 1893 the judge found his way to the psychiatric clinic in Leipzig. The treatment there lasted several years. That's when he wrote the above-mentioned memoir, too. Schreber used religious terminology in his writings. He was consecrated to the meditation of death in his apocalyptic world. One of his neologisms was "soul murder". Many researchers have dealt with Schreber's religious terminology in a praiseworthy way, **Ralph M Kaufman** (*Religious delusions in schizophrenia. International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 20/1939), **William Neiderland** (*The Schreber Case*, 1984) and **Roland Boer** (*Non-Sense: total Recall, Paul and the Possibility of Psychosis*, 2002) may be mentioned.



Schreber's universe became apocalyptic. God had called Schreber to this big task: to return the state of bliss to the world which had lost it. The pathologicalness of apocalypitics is expressed characteristically in the delusions of the big task that a person who has experienced psychosis requires other people to submit to. The judge had paracusia and mystic visions. He socialised with God and the devil. **Sigmund Freud** supposed in 1911 in his writing *Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)* that the judge had pushed his love away from other people and projected his own inner catastrophe outward and thus become convinced that a universal doomsday was about to arrive soon.

The French **Jacques Lacan** published in 1932 his thesis which dealt with psychosis, *De la psychose paranoïaque dans ses rapports avec la personnalité*. Later on Lacan developed into a leading figure when psychoanalysts returned to Freud. Lacan also investigated Schreber's case. According to Lacan's perceptions, the instinct to death is the actual key to understanding the structure of Id, Ego and Superego (J Lacan, *Écrits* 1966: 44–45). **Juhani Lindell** wrote aptly in 2001 in his article *Reportrayoidun division: Lacan as an instinct theoretician* that "the instinct to death is an ontological afterworld concept". Ordinarily put, it should be pathologically consistent that skulls are displayed with a flourish when depicting the apocalyptic end! "The instinct of death is a mask of the symbolic order", claimed Lacan himself (*The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book 2. The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954-55: 326*).

In a psychotic experience, speech and the whole system of living have, as a result of exclusion, become imaginary and the instinct of death is superimposed outward like a mask. A psychotic person is embarrassed about their self and the other person. The use of religious terminology characteristic of psychosis is metaphorical. If the language used by a priest or a religious sect is unclear, it is best to first question the priest's or sect's mental health rather than one's own unlearnedness. I have even seen evidence of such apocalyptic religiousness that a doctor would have been needed as the leader's and members' counsellor rather than a priest and new Spirit. How do Hard Rock Hallelujah and the apocalyptic props differ from psychotic paranoia? The post-traditional apocalypitics performed in theatres and pubs is a welcome recent use of the old apocalypitics expressing collective paranoia or psychopathology!

Propheticalness, business and hobby

The word business is often understood in a negative way, as a synonym of "false". I use the word business meaning goal-oriented activity, if no characteristics of collective or pathological paranoia are associated with the activity. I regard business and earning money by means of apocalyptic theatre as a positive phenomenon. The doers themselves are culturally efficient and serving their purpose. No doubt rationality relates to paranoia in its own exceptional way. The difference between collective and pathological paranoia is that a prime minister who likes rock n' roll is pursuing a postmodern "hobby" rather than being a prisoner of collective paranoia or his own psychopathology, even if he hears apocalyptic words while pursuing his hobby. Apocalyptic theatre is a prudent field of business (some are better at it, some worse). It uses the information on marketing communications and competition strategy in order to assure the rationality of commercialism, but it lacks the absoluteness of collective paranoia, in which there might be readiness for trying to reach even martyrdom.

The pathology of the prophets and other writers of the Old Testament will also remain based on mere guesswork. The apocalyptic images found in the texts were a prophetic reproach aimed at influencing opinion against injustice and oppression in the society. Associating these texts with the post-traditional apocalyptic theatre is nonetheless not justified, as the writers of the Holy Texts (even

if they did not know at the time that they were writing holy texts) portrayed the rest of the society with a total demand for improvement. In the world of the New Testament, apocalypitics may well be an expression of psychopathology or stress brought about in warlike circumstances.

I met one of the members of LORDI a couple of weeks before their wonderful triumph. The band was just getting ready to leave for Athens. The First of May had started badly and the band's bus was now outside the Malmi Hospital. None of the patients and visitors knew that these people were the future national heroes of our country. The musicians were not wearing masks. I talked to the drummer. He wanted to convince me that they were not satanists, even though I did not even ask him whether they were satanists or not. This former colleague of mine said that he was sorry that a Finnish clergyman had expressed a derogatory opinion about the band. Once we spent a week together on a small island looking after 15-year-old youngsters. I found this musician a pleasant person and felt that there was no reason to be afraid of his many tattoos and piercings. Nonetheless, the Holy Communion was not distributed by him to the youngsters, as he might have attracted condemnation in some sensitive, elderly people. I certainly was not the one to set these restrictions. The musician told me that the problem of rock music had for long been lack of tension. Monster rock is now going to restore that tension.

LORDI is not hallelujah to the apocalyptic way of life and mentality, but to the prophetic excitement in our postmodern world. It is a suitable hobby for leading politicians as well, as long as they remember to return to their responsible posts and work efficiently.

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