

ESSAY 35 – ART REVIEW

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Heads or Tails: 75th Anniversary of Cultural Pathology, Art Rock-Style

- A Music Review of Kate Bush, 'Heads We're Dancing'

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One late morning, on some ordinary week day in the fall of 2018, an Archaeo-Futurism moment occurred in the great hall of Rotterdam Central Station - it came and went in an instant, barely noticed by anybody at all in the great mad crowd of that multicultural vortex. Frantic commuters, newly-arrived tourists, relocating asylum-seekers and prowling pickpockets have other things to do than to study the shifting advertisement screens high above. But no meditative 'freezing at the epicentre' of that great maelstrom was necessary for a significant Archaeo-Futurist moment to imprint itself on the mind. There, across one of the great advertisement screens the mind-boggling ten-second message came: Adolf Hitler has reached second place in the best-selling book listing of one of the nation's prime print vendors. Commercial interests have finally overridden the nation's two generation book banning - *Mein Kampf*, obviously critically annotated in perfect 'polcor' jargon, is now available in mass print for those parts of public still able to read and still willing to pay for paper. Obviously, the real Archaeo-Futurist counter-epiphany is this: that Hitler's long-feared message is now no longer deemed dangerous. In other words: in the estimate of the rulers, the ruled are now deemed to have been 'dumbed down' to such degree, that no word and no message can now ever penetrate their 'idiocratic' preconditioning. In a word: Hitler has become *safe*.

In Cultural-Nihilist public discourse the 'Hitler phenomenon' has now taken on a mythical life of its own, totally separated from its original cultural-historical context: a caricature mythology has now 'fixed' and 'framed' it at an ontologically indisputable level. Within this frame, any attempt at reaching something approaching 'scientific objectivity', as defined by the now utterly anachronistic 20th Century Western academic discipline of History, is doomed to fail immediately and abysmally. The last such attempt, limited to the technical reconstruction of Hitler's function as a warlord, was made by British historian David Irving in 1977: the cacophonous controversy that followed it effectively cost the writer his professional career and his personal reputation. Irving's work is now relegated to that sphere of inquiry and debate that can perhaps best be described as the contemporary equivalent of medieval 'demonology' - the sphere to which the 'Hitler phenomenon' has been definitively relegated since the passing of its last living witnesses. Since then, political vigilance and book bannings regarding the 'Hitler phenomenon' have basically become redundant - as proven by the 'Rotterdam Central Station moment'. Depending on one's point of view, the contemporary 'reading public' may be said to have either *risen above* or *fallen below* the 'cognitive vulnerability point' that was guarded by censorship for two generations. Thus, the 75th birthday of Hitler's death, on 30 April 2020, passed without any *historical* reassessment: what is the subject of demonology cannot be the subject of history - and vice versa. Thus, the most that Archaeo-Futurism can now achieve is to give a *mythological* reassessment of the 'Hitler phenomenon'. Even from this angle, however, the cultural access points necessary for such a reassessment are few and far between.

The last *straight* reference made to Hitler's mythical status by a European artist of stature dates to 7 May 1945 - one week after Hitler's death and one day before Germany's unconditional surrender at the end of the Second World War in Europe. The short obituary written by Norwegian Nobel Prize writer Knut Hamsun - who had actually disastrously 'fallen out' with Hitler after his confrontational meeting with him 1943 - earned him (among other statements) a treason trial and public disgrace. This is the English translation of the obituary he wrote for *Aftenposten*:

Adolf Hitler - I am not worthy to speak up for Adolf Hitler, and to any sentimental rousing his life and deeds do not invite. Hitler was a warrior, a warrior for humankind and a preacher of the gospel of justice for all nations. He was a reforming character of the highest order, and his historical fate was that he functioned in a time of unequalled brutality, which in the end felled him. Thus may the ordinary Western European look at Adolf Hitler. And we, his close followers, bow our heads at his death. - Knut Hamsun

Since then, only a few *crooked* references have been made to Hitler's mythical status by European artists of stature. Perhaps the most significant of these can be dated to 16 October 1989, a little over three weeks before the Fall of the Berlin Wall, when 'Faerie Queene' Kate Bush (cf. Solère, 'Kate Bush') released a studio album that included a strange Hitler-referencing song: 'Heads We're Dancing'. Obviously, the rarified atmosphere that 'latter-day witch' Kate Bush conjures up in her artistic concoctions defies any definitive classification - as befitting any creation of feminine genius. Thus, 'Heads We're Dancing' can only be analytically dissected at the 'flat level' of simple dramatic structure. This is the song text as she included it in her album 'The Sensual World':

Timeline:	Lyrics: BINARIES	Dramatic Arc: BINARIES
1919	Diktat - PLUS	Character:
1933	<i>You talked me into the game of chance</i> ACTION	(1) Protasis <i>plot line</i>
1939	<i>It was thirty-nine before the music started</i> <i>When you walked up to me and you said</i> <i>Hey, heads we dance</i> <i>Well I didn't know who you were</i>	(2) Epistasis <i>trial</i> <i>seduction</i> ♀ PASSIVE
	<i>Until I saw the morning paper</i> <i>There was a picture of you</i> <i>A picture of you 'cross the front page</i> <i>It looked just like you, just like you in every way</i>	(3) Catastasis <i>climax</i> PUBLIC (IMAGE)
	<i>But it couldn't be true</i> <i>It couldn't be true</i> <i>You stepped out of a stranger</i>	(4) Catastrophe <i>unravelling</i> <i>disavowal</i>
1945	Stunde Null - ZERO	Chorus:
	<i>They say that the Devil is a charming man</i> RE-ACTION	(1) Protasis <i>plot line</i>
	<i>And just like you I bet he can dance</i> <i>And he is coming up behind in his long</i> <i>Tailed black coat dance</i> <i>All tails in the air</i>	(2) Epistasis <i>trial</i> <i>seduction</i> ♂ ACTIVE
	<i>But the penny landed with its head dancing</i> <i>A picture of you, a picture of you in uniform</i> <i>Standing with your head held high</i> <i>Hot down to the floor</i>	(3) Catastasis <i>climax</i> PRIVATE (FEELING)
	<i>But it couldn't be you</i> <i>It couldn't be you</i> <i>It's a picture of Hitler</i>	(4) Catastrophe <i>unravelling</i> <i>disavowal</i>
1990	Tag der deutschen Einheit - MINUS	Exeunt