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Matti Sarmela

Postlocal culture. An inevitable future?

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Phenomenons of the future

When a tank wagon loaded with a dangerous liquid burst into flames in the railway yard of a little Finnish town on the 28th of August 1989, the inhabitants of nearby areas were evacuated. A father snatched his family's video and portable TV-set and threw them into the boot of their car; his daughter saved the dog. Later the man commented ironically: "Something had to be kept as a memory, if the whole area were burned down".

When the Karelians were evacuated from the Karelian Isthmus during the second world war, these self sufficient peasant families took along seed, cattle and the photographs of the family. Today the first thing evacuated in the ecocatastrophe is a Japanese portable TV and videoplayer.

Ordinary man is living in a media-saturated environment, in a growing stream of nonlocal aural, visual and written communication; in the forest of international symbols. It is his real environment in the anthropological meaning.

At present Finns devote an average of 5-6 hours a day to the mass media. It is possible to watch 10-15 TV-channels in Finland, including all international satellite and cable programmes, sky and superchannels. There are four national channels: two "factual" programmes, one commercial, and one sending mainly foreign movies and serials or entertainment. Without counting the international sky-channels, approximately 80% of the national TV-programmes are foreign, chiefly Anglo-American. Most of the Finnish programmes are "structurally" overnational.

In Finland, the consumption of foreign media culture has increased dramatically in the past decade. There are so-called "local" radio stations in almost every town, however they broadcast mainly international pop, rock and heavy music; disk jockeys of some metropolitan radios are even English-speaking foreigners. The marketing of the world cultural industry: art, music, literature, fashion and so on has been increasing and will little by little replace domestic. More and more, Finnish intelligentsia are becoming imitators of Anglo-American art and science.

In the process of building a modern country, international standards of living and the demands of industrial development have destroyed almost all distinctively ethnic characteristics in Finland. The Finnish man, his fashion, habitus, world view does not differ from Euro-American people; Finnish city centers, supermarkets and apartments correspond to the same expectations as in any Western country. The tools of culture are already similar throughout the developed world. There are Euro-structures which will penetrate the Finnish national culture during the upcoming years, when the country will be integrated into the EEC. The status and power of the new elite depends on international development. Euro-leaders have already developed "Eureka", a new language of manipulation. Finnish culture will have to reach the Euro-level in every field of life. Finland is beginning to build Euro-development, Euro-centers, Euro-services. Finnish industry is beginning to produce Euro-goods, Euro-fashion, Euro-quality; Finland is training Euro-engineers, Euro-doctors, Euro-athletes; creating Euro-literature and Euro-entertainment. New words of the developing mythology are: supertechnology, universal level, international infinity and the unity of mankind. Finland is adapting to a new environment; a structural change is again under way. The new elite groups give explanations for the right future and new culture.

Discourse on constitutive ideas

The following Table 1 shows constructive structures of the cultural ecosystems in Finland from the past to the future. The cultural ecosystem is a totality, and also contains distinctive ideological structure, ethos or everyday religion.

The religious structures of arctic fishing-hunting-gathering ecosystems have been rites of reconstituting: returning of nature, reincarnation of human beings and ecologically significant animals. The key structure is the soul, an immortal (incarnateable) element of umwelt. The shaman was a religious expert who could manipulate the soul; the basic theme of myths and narrations was the trip of the endlessly changeable soul in the realm of visions, on the cover of heaven or in the subterranean world of the deceased.

A core institution has been the bear cult also among the Finns and the arctic Finno-Ugrian hunters, as among many other circumpolar peoples. The bear was ritually killed in its winter den. After the bear feast, where its meat was publicly shared, the soul of the bear was returned to its astral home as a first-born in the nature renewed. In its death and resurrection, the incarnation of all animals of prey slain by humans was realized. In addition, by ritualization of the bear killing, the anarchy of hunting was prohibited during the ecologically critical winter time.

The ecological security of hunters and gatherers was dependent on the constancy of umwelt and the returning of nature, as spring follows winter in the perpetual cycles. The less a man changed his natural umwelt, the more secure was his life. Thus the constructive structures of religions, even structures of narration maintained the ecological order of the hunting and gathering culture.

The basic religious structures of the swidden culture (extensive cultivation) were the cult of ancestors and sorcerism. As an economic system, swidden cultivation was based on the diversified use of the surrounding natural environment. The swidden farmers cultivated forest clearings and kept cattle, practised intensive fishing, hunting and gathering. The cattle were pastured in the clearings that had been left for new forest growth; the winter fodder for cattle was collected from forests and meadows; fishing saunas were built on the shores of lakes. The swidden farmer was already bound to his local geographical environment, other than hunters, but his economic resources were scattered over wide wild areas.

Sorcerism (witchcraft) was a tool to keep the scattered resources in hand, to control umwelt of swidden farmers. The sorcerer was the ritual expert, who knew the right (magical) techniques and the right words - the incantation. While the shaman manipulated souls, the sorcerer controlled the supranatural forces. The sorcerer guarded resources, protected

Table 1.

Constructive structures of cultural ecosystems in Finland

Fishing and hunting culture ca 7000 B.C. -

- fishing & hunting bands, winter and summer villages
- rites of reconstituting (ritual return of the catch, offerings to guardian spirits)
- bear cult
- shamanism
- totemism (e.g. bear and elk people)
- nature/astral myths (trip of the soul)

Swidden culture ca 1000 B.C.-

- swidden cultivation, animal husbandry, seasonal fishing & hunting
- kinship villages, kinship networks
- kinship institutions, (extended families, kinship weddings & funerals)
- cult of the deceased (groves & trees of ancestors, village cemeteries)
- sorcerism (magical rites & incantation poems)
- cultivation rites, calendar rites, animal sacrifice
- epic and lyric poetry of Kalevala metre
- tales relating to natural spirits and the dead

Peasant culture ca 1100 A.D.-

- permanent field cultivation, animal husbandry
- village communities, neighbour relations, holding-centredness
- village administration, village co-operation
- Christian church, peasant Christianity
- community culture (village weddings & funerals, common bees & handiwork parties)
- local feasts (parish holidays, Confirmation Sundays)
- songs in new metre, dances and fiddler (instrumental) music
- youth culture (village dances, village swings, night courting, village fights)
- community centered, moralistic narration

Period of local industry ca 1870-

- local machine technology & energy (water power)
- agrarian & industrial communities
- peasants, workers, educated elite
- local & provincial organizations & institutions
- cult of (local) development
- local activities, social events of local associations
- village & parish centered form of living: village schools, shops, libraries & sporting places
- myths of national unity & heroes

Overlocal (delocal) culture 1950-

- mass production, technology of the conveyer belt, delocal industrial resources (oil, fossil energy)
- metropolitan structures, international standards
- professional differentiation, meritocracy
- delocalized organizations & centralized institutions
- cult of (national) development
- professional cultural industry & international mass communication & entertainment (TV, hifi, video, computer)
- official culture services, cultural centres, supermarkets, international festivals
- myths of scientific-technological development & international heroes

Postlocal culture ca 2000-

- automatic mass production, process (robot) technology
- overnational, universal structures
- global technosystems (technopowers), global mechanism to control biosphere
- global data networks, files & programs
- cult of consciousness
- universal industry of mind design, audio-visual world culture, culture of excitement & intoxication
- scientific-technological machinery of possession
- myths of universality, delimitation of global man

clearings and cattle herding, prevented bears from eating crops in remote fields or from killing cows in the forest pasture. The sorcerer was able to divert outsiders from the fishing tackles and hunting traps, to send back the threatening powers, e.g. a ritually raised bear or projectiles of disease. He was the builder of the magical iron fence around the niche of the swidden cultivator. The cult of the deceased was probably the main religion of the Bronze and Iron Ages in the early swidden communities. The dead were buried close to clearings in groves or in stony outcroppings in the middle of the fields. The cult places gave to the kinships the right to cultivate. The cultivated land belonged to the ancestors, and they were entitled to the first share of all of the produce of field and cattle, even the first share of the catch of fish.

The peasant was the first man who was totally dependent on his local environment and its resources. The ecological security of an agriculturalist was based on the changing of the environment, on clearing and cultivation of permanent fields, on hard work and saving. The peasant began to construct the future and organize the social order of the local community. Christianity, Islam, Buddhism were the religions of the intensive agrarian cultures. Since then, man has had to live in communities, where he had fellowmen and neighbours and where he needed the Ten Commandments, the ethics to live together and norms to occupy the cultivated land.

The culture of organizing things has its roots in the peasant societies. There began the triumph of organization culture, which culminated in the states, where the Führer and the Party got the right to organize everything in the national Umwelt. The religion of the delocalizing ecosystem is the cult of development with its myths and rites. At present, the cult of development determines the reality of most cultures, and gives final, self-evident answers to the relationship between man and nature, or between man and Umwelt. It justifies technosystems to develop culture, to exploit nature with maximum efficiency, to breed animals and plants for increased productivity, to control the organic and inorganic world, univsum.

The cult of development sustains the structures of the overlocal ecosystem, sanctifies the heroes of innovation and pronounces new miracles of development. As a religion, it has its own priesthood, strivers and missionaries. There is constant chanting the liturgy of development in the centralized organizations. Development consecrates the power of ecological winners. The structures of development and antidevelopment, sacred and damned, human and inhuman exist also in the text of development religion. The local past, the time before the revolution are representatives of antidevelopment; paganism in the mythology of development. When the scientific-technological development once will invent the

inexhaustible source of energy, an AIDS-vaccine, an all-producing bio-creature... then the New Atlantis will rise up and the final eschatology of the new religion will be realized.

Ideologies maintain the culture of ecological winners and support the ecological pyramid. The symbolic system is an explanation of the ecological order, for the hierarchy of culture. Religious experts are needed to legitimize the occupation of Canaan, to give rights to use its resources and to determine the ecological competitors. The culture of ecological winners is always based on interpretation of a human god.

The law of delocalization

There are only three periods in my cultural history: local, overlocal and postlocal (Tables 2 and 3). The cultural ecological system is an answer to the demands of the umwelt at a given time, and there have been some characteristics of the structural changes from a local to a nonlocal era:

1. Delocalization: The local systems have adapted to their own geographical environment and have been mainly dependent on the resources of the surrounding natural umwelt. The period of the local systems continued in some form until the second world war in Finland and is still continuing in the so-called developing countries. The direction of adaptation has totally reversed in the delocalizing ecosystem. The umwelt is outside locality: national or international markets, demands of mass consumption or scientific-technological development. The essence of the postlocal umwelt will be a continental unity or an united world: "common markets", "Eurocommunity", "Oceanian imperium".

Delocalization reaches to every detail of the cultural system, also to man himself. All structures of the overlocal ecosystem are delocalized; modes of production, consumer goods, religions, ideologies, communication, folklore, music, language and ways of thinking have structurally changed from local to delocal.

The local dimension will be totally lacking in the postlocal ecosystem. The structures are unlocal, e.g. international, continental, worldwide, universal or global. The culture is mixed with the heritage of all nations and cannot be categorized in

any local (ethnic, national) terms. Locality or regionality will mean structurally different subjects than in the history of mankind up to our times.

2. Centralization: The delocalized cultural ecosystem has been able to function by centralizing its operations. The overlocal organizations and institutions have been national, e.g. national economy, national income, national health, or centre-oriented, like cultural centres, commercial centres, industrial centres, school centres, sport centres. The basic structures are central organizations, unions, metropolitan-satellite relations.

The largest centralized systems have been or are the national socialistic (nazi) or communistic countries, where the cult of development has been a national religion. Growing meritocracy, international trusts and monopolistic technosystems are corresponding phenomena in the capitalistic world. As centralizing systems, both capitalism and socialism are only two sides of the same coin. Like delocalization, centralization also concerns all structures of the cultural ecosystems, whole production of culture. The institutions of education, art, religion, political activity are more and more centralized, and will become monopolized by the global technosystems in the postlocal world.

3. Organizational conformity: Delocalization has meant the organizing of culture. In the delocal system, the basic social structure is no longer the local society, but the centralized organization, technosystem. The culture has been organized, civilized. The ecosystem cannot function on the basis of kinship or village ties. The organization culture by nature subordinates the individual to the common goal. The ideal of the Western organization is the army, which can completely recruit, subordinate, and conform its members. The military is the most effective, organizationally and technically highest achievement of Western civilization, its real cultural model.

Like puritanism in the agrarian ecosystem, the cult of development is the built-in structure in the delocal ecosystem because of the demand of organizational effectivity. western culture must develop and produce newer and newer techniques, styles, modes and fashions, new theories, ideas, therapies, and ways of consuming.

4. Discontinuity of the structures: The cultural ecosystem is an integrated entity, and its constructive structures function only in the particular umwelt. There are no functional traditions, rather each structural change cuts off the continuity of culture.

Postlocal ecosystem

From a philosophical point of view, the rationality of culture is determined by the *umwelt* and if we can predict what the *umwelt* will be like, we can also predict the structures of the coming cultural ecosystem. It seems that the dominant *umwelt* will be control: the scientific-technical control of the environment and the safety control of world-wide technosystems. There will be more and more factors which force taking the whole *umwelt* into control: the pollution of the biosphere, the demand to continually increase productivity, the necessity to protect international banking, trade and communication networks, new AIDS-like diseases, alienation of the masses, terrorism, world-wide mafia, drug problems and so on. There will not be any other *umwelt* possible but control.

Local man arranged his environment by words, names. The meritocrate control the things with numbers, statistics. The future ecological winner will take the *umwelt* into his possession by means of global codes, programmes. The completed scientific-technological development means the perfect control of man and nature by space technologies, biotechnics, computer technology. The science of control is becoming the most important science in the western world, the ultimate goal of the civilization. As Yoneji Masuda has stated, it is possible to integrate technosystems without any limits by means of computer technology. So, the world culture can be a reality, the culture is always as large as its control technology.

The main function of the local culture was to maintain locality. Mutual aid, common festivities, village weddings and funerals, shared dialect and a system of local symbols belonged to the ethnic cultures and distinguished them from neighbouring areas. The centralized national cultures are striving towards organizational growth and nonlocal, universal solutions; the utopia is international scientific-technological and commercial development. The postlocal culture will go in the direction of the delocal ecosystem, but its dominant function is the supervision of global, increasingly sophisticated technosystems and controlling the international masses.

The structures of the future will have to adapt to the *umwelt* of control and possession. The basic social structure will be the global autonomous technosystem, which has occupied a field of the culture and dominates the knowledge, technology and future of its sphere. Only "continental" technosystems can produce new superculture: world-brain computers, space stations or other technical innovations, world-sight TV-series and rock-videos. Every significant product of a global cultural industry will need an investment of milliards of Euro-dollars.

Table 2

Macrostructures of cultural ecosystems

	Local (ethnic)	Delocal (national)	Postlocal (global)
<i>Umwelt</i>	nature	development	control
<i>Essence</i>	community	organization	technosystem
<i>Technic</i>	handiwork	human mass	automatic process
<i>Information</i>	speech folklore name	writing book number	data database code
<i>Language</i>	ethnic dialect	national professional	global program
<i>Human ecotype</i>	village-man, native	organization-man consumer	system-man, exciter
<i>Function of culture</i>	maintenance of locality	manipulating development	controlling umwelt (masses)

The culture of national states will disappear as the "tribal" cultures did during the process of change from local to delocal ecosystems. Today the state has become a barrier to free economic development, and chains postmodern man like the villages oppressed the heroes of the fatherland. The delocalized systems of communist states have fallen into a catastrophe, but after all the capitalistic world is still integrating into expanding alliances, to the Euro-culture or the Pan-american supersystem.

Autonomous technosystems will replace ethnic and national cultures in the postlocal era and create its own "business culture". The system will begin to take care of its members' lives and people will identify with their own technosystem as they did earlier with the local community. Postlocal man will speak the language of his own worldwide technosystem. The umwelt of every man will divide into two parts: his own technosystem and the other technosystems. The technosystem will shape its member's personality, resolve his ethical problems and give him the ultimate meaning of human existence.

Culture of ecological winners

The polarity of umwelt, like the hierarchy of culture, will also reach the global level. Mankind is perhaps dividing into two classes: performers and receivers. The performer is the actor, who is able to keep the overnational technosystems operating. The social duties of the receivers, need-men, are to maintain technosystems by consuming culture and by receiving services.

The ecological winner of postlocal culture will be the performer. These supermen will be scientific-technologically perfect human beings, who have been sifted, cloned and adapted by the completely developed technosystems. They will produce the culture: science, arts and entertainment on a global level. They will win in the olympic games and computer matches. They will take responsibility for world trade and control of global resources; they will plan a complete umwelt, a perfect human life, perfect creatures and plants, an entire techno-environment of universality. The performers will produce and act the lives of receivers.

The production of world-level performers needs all kinds of scientific-technological tools: biotechnics, mind design, chemical and spiritual expedients. In the systems of compulsory development, man and his cows, horses and dogs are in the same position. The culture does not adapt to the Umwelt, but the environment – man and nature – has to adapt to the technosystems.

In accordance with the cultural system, the anthropological winners also produce postlocal interpretations of human consciousness, create theoretical rock-videos in their own field of the global illusion industry.

Extreme meaning of culture

Man has to concentrate on himself, on his own narcissistic experiences. Receivers, ordinary people are needed as consumers of this social and cultural industry, as onlookers of international rites and as audiences of global socio-dramas. The need-man - exciter - receives his experiences from his media of cognition. Since his childhood, the postlocal man has lived in the reality of the illusion industry, with TV-heroes and rock-shamans, in actions of world leaders. He lacks his own social career, he lives through the passages of performers, goes through the sexual life of world masters, celebrates the weddings of supercouples, mourns over the death of a human god. Man lives a strange life in the postlocal media culture.

Technosystems create the culture of receivers. The culture is the fundamental means of power. When the independent local cultures have disappeared, mankind will have been subordinated to the world megastructures. The global media culture is necessary to quiet the masses, it has the same function as drugs: forgetting, destruction of reality.

The nonlocal masses will be fed with increasing amounts of therapy, self-care and self-cognitions. Cultural security services produce continually up-dated self-construction programmes, male and female interpretations and explanations of individual existence: myths of individualism in the universe. The scientific-technological wordsystems will take over all of mankind's problems and build the omnipotent machinery for reconstituting development.

Table 3
List of structures

I. LOCAL CULTURE

I. Ecological independence

local environment
local form of production

local (natural) resources
local energy

local technology
local knowledge

total mode of production
totality of work, skill

distribution within local community
community exchange

local control of umwelt
local spheres, niches

local adaptation
local choices

2. Local institutions

structures within community
local field of activity

local participation
local cooperation

local hierarchy
personal relations

community solidarity
community integration

traditional goals
local ("ethnic") standards

local forms of action
local rites & ceremonies

3. Local man

local, ethnic identity
community consciousness

local idols
local illusions

spontaneous experiences
local reality

traditional order of living
local definitions, truths

local concepts, cognitions
local language

local (religious) values
self sufficiency ideology

II. OVERLOCAL CULTURE

I. Ecological dependence

national environment, umwelt
national economy

delocal resources
delocalized energy

supranational technology
international knowledge

industrial production
serial or phase work, skill

overlocal, national distribution of
production
national, international exchange

overlocal (national) control of
umwelt
organizational spheres, niches

educational adaptation within
technosystems
overlocal models, choices

2. Centralized organizations

centralized, specialized
technosystems
organization centered activity

professional statuses, roles
organizational cooperation

centralized, national hierarchy
formal subordination

professional, ideological motivation
egocentric integration, solidarity

organization centered goals
international standards

organizational forms of activity
power and hierarchy rites

3. Delocal man

organizational identity
"individual" (self-centered)
consciousness

delocal, national idols
developmental illusions

experiences guided from outside
instrumental reality

organizational order of living
institutional truths, ethic

meritocratic concepts of thinking
national, professional, class
language

values directed from outside
mass ideologies

III. POSTLOCAL CULTURE

I. Ecological integration

global environment, umwelt
world economy

global resources
global energy

universal technology
universal professional knowledge

unmanned mode of production
automatic technoprocesses

distribution inter technosystems
global exchange

supranational control
technological spheres, niches

technical adaptation
universal choices

2. Global technosystems

international, autonomous
structures
system centered activity

performing positions
intersystem cooperation

informational, overnational hierarchy
internal, inmost control

technosystem solidarity
narcissistic integration

technosystem centered goals
universal standards

system centered activity
global hierarchy, media rites

3. Postlocal man

technosystem identity
egocentric consciousness

supranational idols
universal illusions

experiences produced globally
mental (virtual) reality

egocentric order of living
innersystem explanations of life

worldsystem concepts
technosystem language

values produced by technosystems
global ideologies

For people lost in their own local culture, there will be rock centers and drug stations, cultural establishments, where the technosystems eliminate the human sewage. Bigger and bigger machinery will adapt the masses to the global cultural system. The cult of consciousness and the cognition industry will change the reality of man into postlocal techno-experiences, artificial auditions and visions. The engineering of minds is limitless. Reality will be programmed into global data bases, mankind will at last have achieved unity with one religion, one personality and a final concept of himself as a superior being.

Control can not be left unfinished

The global technosystems promise to remove the wars between nationalities, exploit global resources impartially, delay the explosion of world population and the pollution of the biosphere. The systems are multiplying and dominating the entire global ecosystem. Maybe the time will come when the postlocal system won't need ordinary men, neither as consumers nor as soldiers.

New ideologies of human rescue are emerging. Ecofascism, genetic salvation of mankind, an emergency movement for ecological winners... Are these the ideologies of 2000's? The culture of technosystems is only for genetically perfect individuals, who can manage themselves in the scientific-technologically complete Umwelt. There are some basic questions without answers: Is locality a hereditary character of mankind? Can imperfect men - a new proletariat - carry on the green revolution in the perfect world of the future?

Background

The paper is based on books and writings of the author published mainly in the Finnish language.

Matti Sarmela

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