

Nostradamus, Freud, and Apocalypse: Political Psychology of a Qualm

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Introduction

As said by Freud, an important mental need in some neurotic patients is the need for uncertainty in their life, or for doubt, which may prepare the background for drawing the patient away from reality, isolate him from the world, organize the person's perspective for magical fantasizing, and turn their thoughts to those subjects upon which all mankind is uncertain, like life and its continual after death (1). In this regard, 'Animism' (magical thinking) may be considered a system of thought that allows us to grasp the whole universe as a single unity from a single point of view, and myths, as well, are based on animistic premises, which are not devoid of an essential need for controlling humans' surroundings. So, hand in hand with the animistic scheme, there came a body of guidelines for how to achieve mastery over men, monsters, animals, and things—or rather, over their spirits. These formulations may be named 'sorcery' and 'magic', as the 'strategy of animism' (2). Accordingly, since magic should protect the person from his foes and threats, it must give him the power to hurt his nemeses, and it must subject natural phenomena to the will of man, while the element of distance was ignored and telepathy was taken for granted. Therefore, it is easy to comprehend the drives that lead men to practice magic: they are human wishes, like children, that, in the beginning, satisfy their aspirations in a hallucinatory manner by generating a satisfying status quo (kids' play). As a result, as stated by Schopenhauer, the problem of death stands at the outset of every philosophy (3, 4). On the other hand, eschatology refers to expectations of the end of the present age, human history, or the world itself. While the 'End-Time', 'End of the World', or 'Judgement Day' is foreseen by several religious convictions (like Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism) or Armageddon sects, the belief that the end of the world is forthcoming is known as 'Apocalypticism'. Then again, while signs of environmental hazards like wars, conflicts, and increasing levels of crimes and wickedness in the world, which have not been rare during different epochs, may signal that the 'End-Time' is near, the term usually refers, allegorically and transcendently, to the end of ordinary reality, reunion with the divine, transformation, and redemption. The Oxford English Dictionary defines eschatology as "the part of theology concerned with death, judgment, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind." On the other hand, people are drawn to the idea of an

apocalypse for a variety of reasons. For example, while some may find the concept of a dramatic world-changing event to be electrifying or exhilarating, others may feel that an apocalypse would provide a sense of purpose or meaning in a world that can sometimes feel messy or worthless (5, 6). On the other hand, 'End of Life' may be accounted for, matter-of-factly, as a natural distress, which may encompass every Tom, Dick, and Harry in the world over, and, also, may occur personally or collectively, naturally or oddly, timely or untimely, and fairly or unfairly, depending on the subject's demographic physiognomies, attitude, mentality, understanding, dogma, wishes, and surroundings. Therefore, it may not be formulated homogeneously or systematically, though it may be classified metaphorically. Ontogenetically, 'End of Life' for every individual may be determined as his or her last moments of life, just before death. Phylogenetically, 'End-Time' of every colony, group, or nation may symbolize the demise of their last survivals. Accordingly, while 'End of Life' is, factually, a repeatable and acceptable expiration of a human being due to imaginable maladies, catastrophes, or tragedies, universal 'End of Life' may have supernatural, spiritualistic, or, possibly, political implications. Currently, in many folklores, global 'End-Time', has been designated as an aftermath of war between superpowers, which may happen due to hegemonic rivalries or retaliations (7). On the other hand, while from usual spiritualistic outlooks, 'End of Life' may be the commencement of a resurrection and new beginning, from some radical outlooks, it may be analyzed as a gizmo for new schema, sovereignty, or setting because, politically, 'End-Time' may not simply mean 'End of Life' of creatures, and it may allude to 'End of Life' of nemeses, too. For example, while some scholars in the last decades believed that the end of collectivism could be acknowledged, symbolically, as the 'End of History' and substantiation of 'Liberal Democracy' (8–10), the subsequent conflicts or mishaps showed that neither history may be ended philosophically nor democracy may be implemented painlessly or correctly. Similarly, neither globalization, which has been labeled, correctly or incorrectly, as 'democratic imperialism' by leftists, nor neoliberalism, which has promoted fiscal complications, oligarchy, or monopoly in some realms, was efficacious with respect to their pledged purposes and fortunes. On the other hand, in an epoch when everything

should be analyzed, first politically and then socially, fiscally, or philosophically, the doctrine of 'End of Life', too, may not be considered only transcendently, especially when it is being discussed too widely. Anyhow, while Freud formulated telepathy as a longitudinal and unconscious passage towards innate unconscious drives (11), it is not impossible for politics to misuse, consciously and methodically, insensible or topsy-turvy foretelling. In this regard, the prediction of Armageddon and related circumstances has, at all times and in all places, its explicit patrons. So, while, for example, vague and antique predictions of Nostradamus, as a real or fictional foreteller (12), who belonged to a few centuries ago (a process that is not essentially, logically, and scientifically approvable) are being promoted and publicized, time after time and massively, they may have some real implications or intentions, which should be analyzed politically, not transcendently. Similarly, more meticulous and truthful foresees may have more chance to involve a political memo instead of a mere prophecy. Though sociological, political, or financial analysis, which is usually based on real proofs and statistics, may predict to some degree present or future deviances on related grounds, the gap between associated facts and predictions is usually tighter and more rational than awkward and boundless breaks in magical forewarnings. On the other hand, while unworldly prophecies are usually around revitalization and celestial judgment, recompense, or sentence, politically indorsed or devised forewarnings are commonly about worldly matters. Similarly, some sociopolitical theories, like 'Class Struggle', 'Historical Materialism', 'Materialism Dialectic', etc., may be regarded as hypothetical formulations, not unbreakable prophecies, because, while they may or may not be true, their application on behalf of revolutionary modifications is not conceivable without the materialization of a series of parameters (13). So, they may not be accounted for as automatic deterministic forecasts and may be regarded more as conditional, conceivable restructurings. But why do deep states' doctrinaires or proposers resort to concrete or contrived forecasts? Because they, as elites and realist organizers, may prefer to prepare the mindset of their people, who do not have analogous mentalities, for upcoming unexpected schemas that are not habitually favorable. Therefore, they generate psychological links between present, but intolerant, people and bygone, ambiguous, and mystical figures who may have whispered some lyrics or decrees to transmit a series of desired repercussions for present or upcoming plans. Anyway, control of public minds and desensitization of people's emotions, which was, at all times and in all places, a never-ending wish of different ruling classes, may have eventually found beneficial tools in mystical, paranormal, or abstruse phenomena because, when masses are bewildered, the systems may become immunized against genuine estimates and scrupulous critiques, at least provisionally (14, 15). Moreover, such psychological maneuvers may prevent possible embracement or failure in unpredicted happenings and may increase their ability to manage circumstances through unhurried decoration of settings, though they do that disguisedly, clandestinely, and prematurely, in spite of plausible domino effects. Likewise, such an intention may become more effective when there are shared elements between the covert objectives of decision-makers and the overt wishes of the masses. On the other hand, they may persuade, concurrently, other people, even their adversaries, to move unconsciously towards the said objectives, though in a different way, based on the aforementioned conjoint clues—a process that is similar to the defense mechanism of projective identification in borderline personality structure. Therefore, mysticism, forecasting, and traditional beliefs may construct, bit by bit, a milieu that may not be generable explicitly and effortlessly by mass media, reasoning, or yearnings. Though, ethically, misuse of cultural or holy beliefs on behalf of political purposes is not acceptable,

Machiavellianism may theoretically enable it, at least for politically aware tacticians (16). Anyhow, while the intention of the present paper is neither denial of hilarious, supportive, or methodical predictions nor devaluation of spirituality in the psychological life of human beings, it signifies the analysis of every plausible phenomenon that may captivate unaware people who don't like to become fooled, bamboozled, or exploited, though the infiniteness of mysticism seems to be so prevailing that almost not a soul may disregard fully its mesmerism, joy, or vigor. On the other hand, while many people, especially pacifists, may believe that it is unlikely that any person plans, politically and calculatedly, for Armageddon, isolation of affect, egocentrism, bizarreness, or superego lacuna in every planner with obsessive-compulsive, narcissistic, schizotypal, or antisocial personality trait or disorder, respectively, or even conditional inescapability, may eventually prepare some mindsets for such merciless resolutions. Unfortunately, the constant supremacy of rationality over irrationality is not continually guaranteed.

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