

Abstract

Bossius, T: Med framtiden i backspegeln. Black metal- och transkulturen. Ungdomar, musik och religion i en senmodern värld. (The Future in the Rear-View Mirror. Black Metal and Trance Culture. Youth, Music and Religion in a Late Modern World.) Doctoral dissertation at the Department of Musicology and Film Studies, University of Göteborg, Sweden 2003. In Swedish with a summary in English.

During the twentieth century, society and our ways of thinking and living, went through big changes. Due to the processes of modernisation and secularisation a lot of the values, norms, and ways of looking at life, which earlier to a great extent were shared and taken for granted, quickly lost much of their credibility and authority. Among all the authorities affected by the changes, religion may be the one that has been affected the most. In Sweden, this development has entailed that Protestant Christianity, being almost alone on the throne of faith for several hundred years, has been forced to compete with a number of movements, religions, and ideologies. More and more individuals have questioned, lost faith in, and turned their backs on the Christian churches. What to a large degree used to be common ground, turned into something that the individual had to find out for her- or himself.

The main purpose of this study is to make a contribution to the understanding of the function of music on the area of religion and philosophies of life. It focuses on how young people consciously and by themselves combine religious conceptions and symbols with their music and lifestyle.

As case studies I have chosen two relatively new youth based cultures: black metal culture, and the psychedelic trance culture. Both these cultures are characterized by conscious and very obvious ways of using different kinds of religion. Black metal is part of the heavy metal culture and mainly uses different forms of satanism and paganism, and trance culture is part of the rave or techno culture and mainly uses New Age, paganism and shamanism. By choosing these two distinct and easily separable objects of study, my aim is to say something not only about them, but also about young people's relationship to music and religion in a wider perspective. My study is centred on the ways in which music and the discourse surrounding it is presented and talked about in the official mass reproduced medias of the two cultures.

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