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CATASTROPHE in English Pop Culture: A Cognitive-Semiotic Perspective

Abstract

The paper addresses verbal means that represent the notion of catastrophe / disaster in present-day English rock lyrics. The article employs an interdisciplinary approach that treats categorisation patterns and respective semiotic phenomena as irrational rationalisation and myth-oriented semiosis. The concept of CATASTROPHE embodies human experience of systems' rapid transformations that cause their structural and functional breakdown or annihilation. The paper discusses the reconstructed irrational "nano-myth" behind the semantics of CATASTROPHE's designations and suggests a formal logical model of a catastrophic event. The article highlights the cognitive premises of language units verbalizing the said concept in rock lyrics. Respective frame-type cognitive structures are arranged within the framework of a universal model of an open system.

Keywords: system; catastrophe; disaster; designation; cognition; myth

1 Introduction

In the first quarter of the 21st century, a profusion of crises regularly unfold on various planes of existence. Systemic interactions and fluid transitions fitting the categorical dichotomy ORDER vs. CHAOS involve energy-matter exchange, restructuring and deconstruction. These transitions, when addressed from the human vantage point (Bartlett, 2019), acquire the quality of "catastrophic events" (CE). The nature of CEs is primarily identified as natural (a super volcanic eruption, a tsunami) and human-triggered, i.e. environmental (deforestation), social (terrorism-related, military), or technological (industrial, cybersecurity-related) etc.

While the planet's global ecosystem transcends towards the "the sixth extinction" (Kolbert, 2015) there is sufficient evidence to the fact that the anthrop factor is largely responsible for the world's abnormal entropy that accelerates the decline of life (Cowie et al., 2022) and civilisation altogether.

The present-day civilisation's model is primarily marked by consumerist mentality, digitalisation (near-dehumanisation), "dopamine-seeking" culture (Lembke, 2023), and the English-ridden globalised "semiosphere". Despite recognizing the gravity of the critical transitions' consequences and generating a profusion of "ecological discourse", the human race has essentially stayed on the suicidal track in terms of resource consumption, energy production, manufacturing, military and communicative activities. The latter often employ empirically non-verifiable data (pertaining to both traditional myths and derivative secondary myths and simulacra). While myth is recognised as the source of "ontological significance, truth and psychic reality" (Mills, 2020), language means used in discursive interactions provide access to an infinite number of alternative realities which correlate to, mirror or remodel states of affairs and transitions in the arguably primary reality (Kolesnyk, 2021). The designators of an alternative world's basic concepts and transitional states create inchoative matrices (secondary mythic structures) which suggest trajectories of rational-irrational categorisation which fuels quantum-like transformations of the said world's contours and semantic space.

Verbal representations of the CATASTROPHE concept found in diverse types of discourse function as **qualifying identifiers** of menacing states of affairs that require altering or are registered as irrevocable. They also become a part of manipulative discursive activities (Shurma, 2020) that we consider a means of hybrid warfare. Apart from occurring in professional, political and media discourse, CATASTROPHE's verbalizers appear to be focal in present-day pop culture (Bampatzimopoulos & Mademli, 2022; Best, 2018; Wildgen, 2015) creating a certain conceptual axis for flux subcultural world-views. Modern English rock lyrics, in particular, contain designators of CATASTROPHE thus providing a specific subcultural variant of the respective universal systemic phenomenon.

Our previous analysis of two corpora (English Web 2021 (enTenTen21) corpus of English web discourse suggested by Sketch Engine and the customer corpus of English rock lyrics) provided a comparison of the structure and content of the semantic field CATASTROPHE within two alternative worlds. We registered certain asymmetry of the field's structure, differences in its zones' content and general semantic features' distribution that testifies to differences between two respective alternative worlds. The web-based world-view is off-centred and "euphemistic" as its nuclear segment is dominated by the designations of "[absence of] health" (level 1) and "war" (level 5) as CEs. The alternative world that faces CATASTROPHE in English rock lyrics is rather "straightforward", lacks euphemistic associations and focuses on "war", "violence", "death" and "fear". (Kolesnyk, 2024). The following analysis focuses on the linguo-cognitive premises of the DISASTER and CATASTROPHE concepts' direct verbalisers found in the custom-built corpus of English rock lyrics.

2 Short Notes on Methodology

The interdisciplinary methodology that employs broad inter-systemic analogies (Capra, 1996; Von Bertalanffy, 1968) was addressed in detail in Kolesnyk (2020) and labeled "M-logic". It provides universal-oriented systemic interpretations largely congruent with CATASTROPHE's understanding in synergetics (Thom, 1972/1975). We assume that language signs (essentially, textual and discourse constructs) are capable of modelling states of affairs different from those of the "primal reality". Such modelling is based on the algorithms of irrationally grounded cognition ("irrational rationalisation"). The latter unfolds as the use of empirically unconfirmed yet axiomatic (thus, "mythic") knowledge structures that determine the choice, composition, (re-)arrangement, profiling, modification, distribution and discursive functioning of language signs. The irrational (mythic) structures refer to once primary "default settings" of the world's configuration and function as both interpretational / categorisational filters and inchoative building blocks for alternative realities. The mechanisms and logic of irrationally driven semantic transformations (basic "evolution" / "involution phases", stages of "shape-moulding", "interaction", "management" and "synthesis" as well as 12 functional steps-interfunctions that outline the process of noemo-genesis) are discussed in detail in Kolesnyk (2021, pp. 11–17). Each verbal construal corresponds to an alternative state of affairs (alternative world). Semantics and cognitive premises of the world's basic components' verbal representations reflect the results of the universal process that we identify as myth-oriented semiosis (Kolesnyk, 2019).

Semantic peculiarities of the CATASTROPHE / DISASTER concept's verbalizers, retrieved from the custom corpus of rock lyrics (texts dating to 1975–2023 available at darklyrics.com, total of 1,627,422 words processed with Ant.Conc 3.5.8 tools), were ascertained via the procedures of corpus analysis and semantic analysis. The inchoative "nano-myth" (dominant and irradiating semantic feature) within the semantics of the concept's name was reconstructed through etymological analysis complemented by interdisciplinary speculations. The said "nano-myth" is considered a prism for further interpretations of the analysed units' semantics. Conceptual analysis and frame modelling were employed to tackle the cognitive premises of the said language units.

The results were interpreted synthetically in the framework of "M-logic" via broad systemic analogies. The synthesis presupposed an eco-centric rather than anthropocentric focus, non-linear (metaphorically, "hyper-type") causative logic, and analogue application of universal principles of open systems' development (Kolesnyk, 2020). The model of an open system's hierarchical architecture (Figure 1) which we

introduced and discussed in Kolesnyk (2019) is employed as the basis for formalizing a synthetic “neo-anthropocentric” interpretation of the language data.

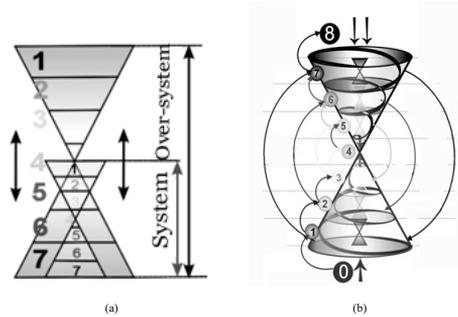


Figure 1. (a) Open system’s hierarchy and fractal isomorphism; (b) Logic of the system’s hierarchical plane’s organization.

As Figure 1a suggests, the universal “subsystem – system – over-system” correlation reflects the open system’s components’ coherence and fractal isomorphism. A system (as seen in the aspect of embodied cognition) manifests its components’ features at physical (1), psycho-emotional (2), mental / rational (3), social-adaptive (4), inter-group dynamic (5), axiological (6) and energy-informational (7) levels. Respectively, a system’s components allocated at different structural levels are involved in interactions defined by the following types of causation (Figure 1b). Direct causative–determinative relations are described as the impact that a program (a sense, a dominant semantic feature etc.) allocated at each hierarchically higher level has upon the content of a lower level (7→6→5→4→3→2→1). The content of lower levels providing an “objective” or “attributive” basis for the immediately higher level is regarded as complementary relations (1→2→3→4→5→6→7). The content of an upper plane’s level governing that of its symmetric correlate from the lower one is identified as symmetric–determinative relations (7→1→6→2→5→3→4). The focus in the “assembly point” at level 4 results in the emergence of a contextual semantic construal reflecting current states of affairs in an alternative reality, relevant for a social group as the carrier of “collective mind” and respective world-view. Reconstructed semantic and conceptual features of CATASTROPHE’s designations were mapped against this model.

3 Discussion

3.1 The “Nano-Myth” of Catastrophe

Apart from the basic features of CATASTROPHE as “sudden change” and “a system’s controlling parameters crossing the critical value” (OED, n.d.), we reconstruct “nano-myths” (irrational axiomatic features) in the concept’s name’s semantics.

For instance, E. *catastrophe* “reversal of what is expected”, “sudden disaster” (OED, n.d.) < Lat. *catastrophe* < Gr. *καταστροφή* “a turn-over; a sudden end” < *καταστρέφω* (*katastréphō* “a turn-over; a sudden end”) < *καταστρέφω* (*katastréphō* “I overturn”) < *κατά* (*katá* “down, against” “I overturn” < *κατά* (*katá* “down, against”) + *στρέφω* (*stréphō* “I turn”), where *στρέφω* < PIE **streb(h)-* “to wind, turn” (Pokorny, 1959, p. 1025). As PIE **streb(h)-* is considered an extension of PIE (s)*ter-* / (s)*terā-* “hard, rigid” (Pokorny, 1959, p. 1022), we suggest the semantic development of [turning] > [excessive movement] > [drop of energy] > [immobility] / [loss of integrity] (= μ01). This development reflects a system’s excessive dynamics which results in a critical level of its entropy that leads to the system’s loss of resources for functionality and possible disintegration (i.e. “death”, as the metathesis within the **streb(h)-* / **sterb(h)-* stem suggests, cf. G. *sterben*, O. E. *steorfan* “to die”, E. *starve*, O. H. G. *sterban*, Dut. *sterven*, O. N. *starf* “work,

strain” related to O. N. *stjarfi* “tetanus” < Germ. *sterb-* / *starb-* < PIE **streb(h)-* / **sterb(h)-* < (*s*) *ter(p-)* “grow stiff” (de Vries, 1962, pp. 542, 549; Kroonen, 2013, p. 474; Levyts’kyi, 2010, pp. 512–513).

Respectively, E. *disaster* “event of ruinous or distressing nature” / “unfortunate event” < Fr. *désastre* < It. *disastro* “ill-starred” < *dis-* of negative-pejorative meaning, “ill” + *astro* “star, planet” < Lat. *astrum* < *ἀστρον* (*Astron*) “star” < PIE **ster-* (2) “star”. The traditional “astrological” interpretation referring disaster to bad luck, fortune or fate may be revisited in the abstract systemic sense, cf.: E. *star*, O. E. *steorra*, G. *Stern*, O. H. G. *sterno*, *sterro*, Dut. *ster*, O. Sax. *sterro*, Sw. *stjärna*, O.N. *stjarna*, Goth. *stairno* < Germ. *sternon* / *sterran-* // Gr. *ἀστέρ*, Lat. *stella* (< **ster-la* / **stel-na*) < IE. (*ə*)*s-ter* (?) where the IE. origin is either explained as related to **as-* “burn, shine” (Levyts’kyi, 2010, p. 513) or as a borrowing from the Semitic **cattar-* “star goddess, Venus”, cf. Akk. *ištar*, Hebr. *‘aštoret*, Arab. *‘ttr* (Kroonen, 2013, p. 478).

The first version relates PIE **as-* (**azg(h)-*, **asd-*) “to burn” to the “element of FIRE” that in mythopoetic interpretation stands for an energy-informational impact or a “development program” imposed upon a system by an over-system (sacral sphere). In this case *disaster* as a “**malfunctioned program**” (= $\mu 02$) causes a system’s crash. In a slightly different interpretation that focuses on the FIRES’s effect of destroying / evaporating matter, a “dried up” system appears to lack the energy of WATER i.e. it is **deprived of resources** (= $\mu 03$) necessary for functioning. Hence a certain proximity to the above-mentioned version of the etymology of *catastrophe*. If the “borrowing version” should be entertained, *ištar* may be considered a fractal representation of the sacral sphere thus basically complying with the “malfunctioned program” version.

In the context of most prominent mythic traditions which define categorisation and alternative realities’ modelling, the following correlations are registered.

E. *apocalypse* < Lat. *apocalypsis* “revelation” < Gr. *ἀποκαλύπτω* “uncover, disclose, reveal” < *ἀπο* “off, away from” (< PIE **apo-* “off, away” (Pokorny, 1959, p. 53) + *καλύπτω* “to cover, conceal” (< PIE root **kel-* “to cover, conceal, save” (Pokorny, 1959, p. 553). If “revelation” is interpreted as “highlighting / profiling a set of navigational markers for a new development program”, the governed system arguably undergoes “rebooting”, restructuring or “deleting”.

Considering the generalised semantics of the related language units like Sanskr. *apa* “away from”, Avest. *apa* “away from”, Lat. *ab* “away from, from”, Goth. *af*, O.E. *of* “away from” (< PIE **apo-*) as well as Sanskr. *cala* “hut, house, hall”, Gr. *kalia* “hut, nest”, *kalyptein* “to cover”, *koleon*, *koleos* “sheath”, *kelyphos* “shell, husk”, Lat. *cella* “small room, store room, hut”, *celare* “to hide, conceal”, *clam* “secret”, *clepere* “to steal, listen secretly to”, O. Ir. *cuile* “cellar”, *celim* “hide”, M. Ir. *cul* “defence, shelter”, Goth. *hulistr* “covering”, O. E. *heolstor* “lurking-hole, cave, covering”, Goth. *Huljan* “to cover over”, *hulundi* “hole”, *hilms* “helmet”, *halja* “hell”, O. E. *hol* “cave”, *holu* “husk, pod”, O. Prus. *au-klipts* “hidden” (< PIE **kel-*) (OED, n.d.), the traditional etymology of *apocalypse* as “revelation, unveiling a secret” may also be hypothetically rendered as “**loss of defence**” < “**loss of cover**” (= μ^*) that makes a system utterly vulnerable to any impact. The “loss of cover” complies with any of the suggested versions: an unsustainable system falls to “excessive dynamics”, “loss of resources”, or “malfunctioned program”.

O. N. *Ragnarøkkr* < *ragna* (Gen. of *regin* “gods” + *rök* “fate” or *rökkr* “downfall, twilight” (OED, n.d.) is a direct typological parallel to the “malfunctioned program” version, as the GODS represent the governing over-system that provides an erroneous algorithm for systems and subsystems.

The reconstructed semantic features comprise the conceptualised experience ($X00 = \Sigma (\mu 01, \mu 02, \mu 03)$, the “nano-myths” in a cluster) of potentially destructive transformations within a system (*SYS*) triggered by variably intensive energy-informational impact (ΔE). The cluster of reconstructed semantic features ($X00$, embedded in the model as $|X00|$ as a “constant value”) of a CE constitutes the “**propositional quantor**”. As an interpretational prism it focuses otherwise flux quanta of experience thus defining the vector of human categorisation and determining the connotations of “pattern” / “algorithm” within the semantics of CATASTROPHE’s verbalizers (turning them into near legi-signa).

As CEs encompass rather stereotypical mechanisms of a system’s transformation we regard them as scenarios. The logical structure of a CE as a scenario is as follows:

- (1) in WV (M/R)
- (2) $SYS |a^n, b^n, c^n, d^n|$

- (3) if $SYS |a^n, b^n, c^n, d^n| / \Delta\varepsilon$
- (4) $trans(|X00|) SYS |a^{\Delta n}, b^{\Delta n}, c^{\Delta n}, d^{\Delta n}|$
- (5) if $a^{\Delta n} = 0$ then
- (6) $SYS_{lim \rightarrow 0}$
- (7) if $b^{\Delta n} = 0$ then (6)
- (8) if $c^{\Delta n} \rightarrow c^{n-1}$ then
- (9) $SYS \rightarrow SYS^{-Cn} / -SYS^{Cn}$ or (6)
- (10) if $d^{\Delta n} \rightarrow d^{n-1}$ or $d^{\Delta n} = 0$ then
- (11) $SYS \rightarrow SYS^{-Dn} / -SYS^{Dn}$ or (6)
- (12) $WV (M/R) \rightarrow WV (M/R) |trans (X00) SYS |a^{\Delta n}, b^{\Delta n}, c^{\Delta n}, d^{\Delta n}||$

This notation reads as follows: (1) in a real (*R*) or mythic (*M*) world or a world-view (*WV*); (2) there exists a system (*SYS*) that possesses (a) ontological, (b) functional, (c) axiological, and (d) temporal–locative features manifested to a degree (*n*) in diverse contexts; (3) in case of an energy–informational impact ($\Delta\varepsilon$) upon the system ($SYS |a^n, b^n, c^n, d^n|$); (4) the system undergoes transformations (*trans*) involving (*X00*) that result in the variable (Δn) qualitative and quantitative manifestation of its basic features; (5) if a fundamental ontological feature defining the essence of the system is erased; (6) the system ceases to exist; (7) if a fundamental functional feature necessary for the system’s sustainability is erased the system ceases to exist (6); (8) if an ascribed axiological quality transforms along the negative vector i.e. loses its value (c^{n-1}); (9) the system may acquire a strong negative marking (SYS^{-Cn}) or undergo a fundamental negative inversion into ($-SYS^{Cn}$) thus eventually losing its functionality or ceasing to exist as in (6); (10) if a structural element of the system degrades (d^{n-1}) or disappears ($d^{\Delta n} = 0$); (11) the system may acquire a strong negative marking (SYS^{-Dn}) i.e. “damaged”, undergo a fundamental negative inversion into ($-SYS^{Dn}$) i.e. become “decomposed” or cease to exist as in (6); (12) the general configuration of the world / world-view becomes altered, provided that the transformation of the said system is complete. This notation was introduced and discussed in Kolesnyk (2024, p. 99).

(1) CE caused by an ontological parameter’s degradation. In “*You’ll fire your musket but I’ll run you through*” (Iron Maiden, 1983b, Tr): the sin-signum with promissive / menacing semantics “*I’ll run you through*” denotes the ontological feature “loss of bodily integrity” being as the result of damage to the system delivered at physical level 1. The damage is potentially critical ($a^{-1} \rightarrow -a^n \rightarrow 0$) and results in the system’s physical demise ($SYS_{lim \rightarrow 0}$) at level 1 (death).

(2) CE caused by a functional parameter’s degradation. In “*Now I can’t think, think why I should even try*” (Metallica, 1984, FB) the $d^{\Delta n} \rightarrow d^{n-1}$ functional feature “inability to perform a mental operation” (dysfunction at mental level 3) prevents the system from mobilizing its resources and results in the typical scenario ($SYS_{lim \rightarrow 0}$) at level 1 (death).

(3) CE caused by a locative parameter’s degradation. In “*I’m goin’ off the rails on a crazy train*” (Ozzy Osbourne, 1980a, CT) the “object’s displacement” (d^{n-1}) is a generalised metaphoric designator of a system’s breakdown at several levels of organisation: mental level 3 (“*Mental wounds not healing*”), large-group interaction level 5 (“*Millions of people living as foes ...Heirs of a cold war*”), axiological level 6 (“*Who and what’s to blame*”), social-adaptive level 4 (“*I know that things are going wrong for me*”) etc.

(4) CE caused by an axiological parameter’s degradation. In “*Now you live inside a bottle // The Reaper’s travelling at full throttle*” (Ozzy Osbourne, 1980b, SS) the metaphoric assertive sin-signum “*live inside a bottle*” refers to a flawed conceptual cluster: a damaged axiological incentive (c^{-n}) allocated at level 6 of the system’s structure causes an emotional overload at level 2 (symmetric level 6 – level 2 causation) that negates the system’s defensive-adaptive capabilities and aggravates the flaw at level 6 (c^{-1}) (drinking as a remedy). As this vicious circle progresses ($-c^{n+\dots} \rightarrow 0$), the “alcoholic navigational marker” becomes ineffective and the person commits suicide (“*But you lie there and moan // Where to hide, Suicide is the only way out*”, an auto-termination ($SYS_{lim \rightarrow 0}$) at level 1 (Ozzy Osbourne, 1980b, SS).

The next stage of analysis addresses the cognitive premises of the direct designations of the CATASTROPHE and DISASTER concepts in English rock lyrics.

3.2 Cognitive Peculiarities of the Verbalised Catastrophe / Disaster in Pop Culture

A pop-cultural alternative world (in this case, the one based on the English lyrics of rock performers) demonstrates certain variations in categorizing CATASTROPHE / DISASTER.

The nucleus of the pop-cultural semantic space CATASTROPHE / DISASTER contains the tokens “death”, “war”, “violence”, “fear”. The space is asymmetric: “disaster” and “catastrophe” are located in its medial zone together with “Apocalypse”. The top token of the peripheral segment is “Ragnarok”. While verbalizers of CEs in rock lyrics are condensed around a limited number of related core concepts, the content of its periphery and “halo” containing loose associative designations is rather dissipated (Kolesnyk, 2024, pp. 114–115). In our interpretations CATASTROPHE and DISASTER constitute “target domains”.

While some of the identified conceptual patterns demonstrate the structure of traditional conceptual metaphors (Kövecses & Radden, 1998) or metonymies (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003), others appear to be hybrid models of a more complex nature. For instance, the “**social order – disaster**” model seems to contain a paradox: as “order” is seemingly opposite to “chaos / disorder” (resulting from a CE), their identification turns the model into a certain “conceptual oxymoron” and demonstrates the idea of society as “unstable, entropic and therefore dangerous and harmful”. The “**future – catastrophe**” model often involves concepts of the mystic, religious or sacral sphere thus becoming a metaphoric-allusive hybrid. This model may expand, e.g. as its variant involves a mythic creature personifying “prophecy” (cf. *Caught from some unhappy master, An unmerciful disaster* (Grave Digger, 2001, Raven), an inter-text borrowed from E.A. Poe’s poem) and incorporates a subordinate metaphoric construal “**Disaster – determiner (governing system)**” or “**Disaster – agent**”: *Predicting war, predicting life, predicting when disaster strikes* (Testament, 2008, DoF). Although the current research does not focus on the “internal semantic mechanics” of these models, it is essential to highlight that they employ irrationally driven mapping and function as secondary myths which set up the dynamics of an alternative world-view. At this stage of analysis CATASTROPHE and DISASTER are treated as “source domains” as we ascertain which phenomena are categorised as CEs and allocate them within the hierarchical model of an open system.

Verbalizers of CATASTROPHE (22 in the customer corpus) and DISASTER (91 in the customer corpus) ride the following conceptual models (CM_n) that are respectively allocated at various levels of systemic organisation:

Over dynamic state of affairs is disaster (CM1 of levels 7, 5): *Disaster is constant, No shade from the sun* (Death Angel, 2008, WWC), *Born to prevent wars, it froze in the face of disaster* (Megadeth, 2007, UA), *Going in disaster, For the mankind is in fight* (Accept, 1979, FMN) is the most generalised model of reiterating conflicting systemic interactions that exceed the normal range of entropy and cause the loss of systems’ sustainability, integrity and functionality.

The results of imbalanced systems’ interactions are categorised as **outcome / consequence is disaster** (CM2): *This planet’s become one big spinning disaster* (Megadeth, 2016, PAW), *Misery, disaster, catastrophe // Exactly how you knew the end would be* (Exodus, 1990, ODD) *Now that they see the disaster is done // Now they put all the blame unto me* (Iron Maiden, 1988, The Prophecy). Such “result” may refer to a large-scale event (level 7) as the examples above suggest or to a specific (level 1) occurrence: *A black hulk against the night’s darkness // Disaster along starboard side* (Metal Church, 1989, RIP).

Large-scale natural event is disaster (CM3 of level 7): *Natural disaster, volcanoes erupt Innocent convicted, justice is corrupt* (Anvil, 2002, DAM), *When the winds of disaster blow, When Earth becomes a wasteland like Mars* (Anvil, 2000, BOF), *A flood disaster in India, An earthquake in Los Angeles, A world disaster in full progress, Rainforests burning – it’s all screwed up* (Axxis, 1993, BWLD). This level 7 model is a subordinate specifying “attributive complement” to CM2.

Large scale unnatural event is disaster (CM4 of level 7): *Sickening disaster of epidemic proportions, devouring us* (Cannibal Corpse, 1990, UWF) is allusively connected to the **Person is disaster** (CM18 of levels 1, 4) pattern as it is human activity that violates the laws of nature. This model is extended by a number of subordinate objective complements:

a) **Technological breakdown is disaster** (CM5 of levels 7, 1): *Nuclear disaster, forget about the war // A touch of switch no man will exist no more* (Exciter, 1984, WF);

b) **Destruction [WAR] is disaster** (CM6 of levels 7, 5): *Tragic. World of magic. Master. War disaster* (Dark Moor, 2013, LIN), *Exterminating faster, devastating plaster, Fabulous disaster ... When the bomb Comes falling* (Exodus, 1989b, FD), *The architect of war is here, Disaster rule the night* (Mystic Prophecy, 2016, FTB).

This model is further extended via an objective-partitive complementary structure (c) **Battle is disaster** (CM7 of levels 5, 4, 1): *Faster, faster, killing faster, Persian soldier – blood disaster* (Mystic Prophecy, 2013, 300 In Blood).

Systems' predictive auto-diagnostics results in experience encoded as **destination is catastrophe / disaster** (CM8 of all levels): *And I know we're going, So far away from this wretched life we lead, With open arms meet catastrophe* (Metal Church, 2006b, WCP), *I'm trying just to find my way home, Everything coming up catastrophe* (Overkill, 2007, CGYG) where a targeted irrevocable transitional, most likely destructive, scenario unfolds along a predicted trajectory towards the system's breakdown (war, murder, suicide, any large-scale CE) or a change in the state of affairs that makes the system's further functioning impossible.

The **destination – disaster** model is identified as a certain universal as it refers to virtually all levels of a bio-vital system's functioning: *Heading straight for disaster, But I don't care, I'm pushin' it faster* (Exciter, 1986, LFDY), *Burning up the road, Headed for disaster* (Anthrax, 1983, MTM) ("physical" level 1); *Every hour on the hour, Your heart is beating faster, Headin' for disaster* (Pretty Maids, 1995, AJ) ("psycho-emotional" level 2); *They say I'm crazy and I'm headed for disaster* (Annihilator, 1994, Speed) ("mental" level 3); *You're marching into disaster, Can't you hear my nasty laughter* (Destruction, 2005, KM) ("social-adaptive level 4"); *Master; master; royal buster, chaos king and trouble queen... Faster; faster into disaster* (Freedom Call, 2005, KQ) that occurs after stereotype scenarios are followed blindly ("inter-group interactions" of systems' level 5); *Head for disaster, I've done before, Go back to my master, I just cannot ignore* (Rage, 2016, DSA) ("axiological" level 6); *Faster – this world is heading straight into a big disaster, Tell me, when will it reach its end?* (Rage, 1992, EIE), *As time runs faster, moves towards disaster, The ferryman will wait for you, my dear* (Blind Guardian, 2002, ATTWS) ("informational" level 7 where disaster refers to a global cataclysm or a fall of civilisation).

The association of disaster and movement determines the model **container is catastrophe** (CM9 of level 7, level 1): *And I thought of good Old Blue, And he pulled me from that catastrophe* (Alice Cooper, 1982, IA), i.e. a frame-like state of affairs presupposes a chance of "entering" or "escaping" the hostile enclosed space.

The spatial categorisation of CEs is complemented by the temporal one, hence the model **future is catastrophe / disaster** (CM10 of levels 7, 5): *As the clock is ticking faster, Mayhem and disaster, And chaos ever after* (Pretty Maids, 2010, Pandemonium), *There will be a catastrophe, the like we've never seen* (Iron Maiden, 2010, WWWB), *Not even the strong will survive, Great catastrophe told by the prophets and wise* (Kreator, 2005, DRA) i.e. a future state of affairs is seen as a reinterpreted biblical secondary myth. The model may be reversed (here and in suchlike instances the model is indexed as "inv"), where **disaster** appears as **determiner**, associated with the **sacral sphere** (CM10_{inv01} of level 7): *Ask what fate waits in the stars? Disaster governs, your house is in mars.* (Cloven Hoof, 1989, MOF). As a phenomenon involving large entropic energy, it becomes **an enforcer of a future state of affairs** (CM10_{inv02} of levels 7, 5): *If disaster strikes then they'll be hiding* (Exodus, 1989a, Corruption) or a **sign of a future state of affairs** (CM10_{inv03} of levels 7, 3): *The impending disaster it looms, And the whole of the village is doomed ... Suffering and pain impending disaster* (Iron Maiden, 1988, The Prophecy), *Disaster looms, Choose not to see it* (Death Angel, 2016, CFA).

The models involving the target domains of "destination" and "future" appear co-referential, the latter bearing the implication of "prophecy" that rides on re-interpreted secondary mythic concepts. Both are related to a subordinate model, **Imposed [by an agent] future is disaster** (CM11 of levels 7, 6, 5, 1): *just step into my world, I guarantee you'll never be the same... they call me the pastor of disaster* (Annihilator, 1996, POD), *And there's always a messiah preaching mass disaster* (Alice Cooper, 2017, DF), *Another prophet of disaster who says the ship is lost* (Iron Maiden, 1983a, DWYBO), *In this chapel I am*

the pastor, A fucking guarantee of your impending disaster (Slayer, 2015a, AV), *Coming straight from hell, The bringer of disaster, The one who tolls the bell* (Saxon, 1983, MT) where the predicted CE is the result of misinformation or manipulation carried out by a hostile entity.

A solely anthropocentric focus of categorisation and the sense of the transition's finality determine the model **death is catastrophe / disaster** (CM12 of levels 7, 1): *Blood does leak distorted beauty, Catastrophe steaming slop, Splattered all over me* (Cannibal Corpse, 1992, HSF), *Slipping away, just a heartbeat from disaster* (Black Sabbath, 1981, SL), *Darkness and light Naked disaster* (Overkill, 2012, SY), *Voices of disaster, rain that never ends, Now and forever in passionate flames* (Grave Digger, 2012, DAGD), *The day of disaster struck, The murders did begin* (Accept, 2017, Koolaid). If the model should be reconsidered in a "metaphonymic" sense (Goossens, 2003), it applies to a strictly physiological aspect of death as a result of disease: *Infernal disaster, revulsion, Dormant bodies bursting* (Cannibal Corpse, 2002, DBB).

The same focus determines the identification of various transformations of a person as CEs. For instance, **Personal (interpersonal) crisis is catastrophe** (CM13 of levels 7, 5, 1): *life's catastrophe, my glass empty* (Overkill, 1989, BOT), *You're your own worst enemy, You're a walking catastrophe* (Alice Cooper, 2005, YOWE) implying either an extreme deviation from routine life scenarios or destructive shifts in a personality's structure caused by entropic overloading. A crisis-like occurrence is categorised as **negative experience is disaster** (CM14 of levels 7, 5, 1): *I ask myself could it be a disaster and when, It's maybe threatening to happen again* (Iron Maiden, 1998, LST).

An imbalanced personality assesses the state of affairs from a shifted vantage point and voluntarily engages in potentially dangerous scenarios. Hence the model **game is disaster** (CM15 of levels 3, 2, 1): *Flirting with disaster ain't a funny game, Bad energy kills* (Destruction, 2011, DOR), *They're on your trail, They know you'll fail, You're flirting with disaster* (Judas Priest, 2014, Creatures). In a more general sense, individually (level 1) or group-oriented (level 5) dangerous scenarios are categorised as [**Auto-**] **destructive practice – disaster** (CM16 of level 5, level 1): *We're sowing disaster, the mess is complete* (Helloween, 2010, IMCT), *You know we've always been our own walking disaster* (Metal Church, 2006a, MTYM), *Faster, much faster, what a human speed disaster* (Helloween, 1996, ST), *My speed becomes relentless ... Prompting death and disaster* (Megadeth, 2011a, FL), and **failed / faulty search is catastrophe [> secret]** (CM17 of levels 3, 1): *I know you'll never tell another soul, Is it a catastrophe* (Motorhead, 2015, The Devil), where a voluntary interaction with a dangerous over-system (the Devil) causes destructive consequences and axiological discrepancy with the system's current "field of reference" (hence the "secret" extension).

The model **Person is disaster** (CM18 of levels 4, 1): *One man disaster, One man death row, The punisher rising, Declaring a war* (Exciter, 2008, The Punisher), *His wicked Highness born from disaster, To dominate and to kill* (Megadeth, 2011b, SD) directly identifies a human being as a cause and an instrument of a CE.

Considering the social nature of potentially destructive / auto-destructive anthropic systems, their clusters share the susceptibility to entering CEs. Thus, we speak of models such as "[**social**] **institution is catastrophe**" (CM19 of level 4): *Ambassadors from countries enjoy a catastrophe, enjoy Diplomatic immunity living in Manhattan* (Megadeth, 2007, UA) referring to an inchoative error, a fundamental flaw that prevents a system from functioning properly; *Horror for tyranny, Human catastrophe, Satan is real* (Kreator, 2017, SIR) where SOCIAL and SACRAL conceptual domains' components merge, thus implying the sense "society is ungodly" or in a more general sense "social system is an erroneous projection of an over-system" / "social system is a projection of an erroneous over-system". Ultimately, a certain paradox is reflected in the model **social order is disaster** (CM20 of levels 4 5, 6): *We will take control, Of this disaster called society* (Slayer, 2015b, TC), *When coming is the disaster, the Emperor master* (Dark Moor, 2007, Emperor).

Religion is catastrophe (CM21 of levels 4, 6): *A composition of atrocity, The Story of Christianity, A fairy tale of tyranny, Recipe for catastrophe* (Exodus, 2007, AE) complements the previous model as a secondary myth (the premise of an institution) which provides a system with false "navigational coordinates" and leads it toward a CE. Eventually, flawed social hierarchy becomes a projection of **higher power is disaster** (CM22 of levels 7, 6) model: *Praise be the fallen lord of Chaos, disaster* (Cloven Hoof, 1984, CH) that also refers to a variant of a secondary myth.

In regard to these reconstructed CMs, the generalised pattern of a CE unfolding in the “rock-focused” alternative reality may be seen as a frame-like cluster (Fig. 2). It demonstrates the **dynamics** of the above-mentioned linear logical representation of a CE in a cultural / subcultural context.

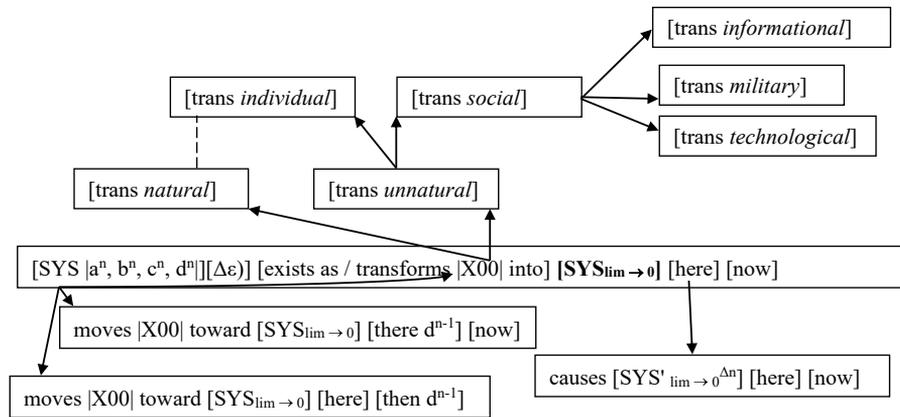


Figure 2. Frame representation of a CE verbalised in English rock lyrics.

The slot $[SYS|a^n, b^n, c^n, d^n]$ represents a target system; $[SYS_{lim \rightarrow 0}]$ stands for the system that has undergone a destructive transformation; $\Delta\epsilon$ denotes a stimulus triggering a CE; $|X00|$ indicates the inchoative irrational “mythic” background of transformation. Sub-frame extensions specify either the content of the slots (a system on the verge of a CE and a system that has transformed catastrophically) or the “*trans*” operator. Overall, the pop-cultural verbal representations of CATASTROPHE / DISASTER refer to the target concepts of DEATH, FUTURE, DESTINATION and SELF-DESTRUCTION allusively connected to the damaged or immanently flawed content of the SACRAL SPHERE.

The content of this secondary myth fits into the hierarchical plane of the universal model of an open system thus reflecting its “static” architecture (Fig. 3).

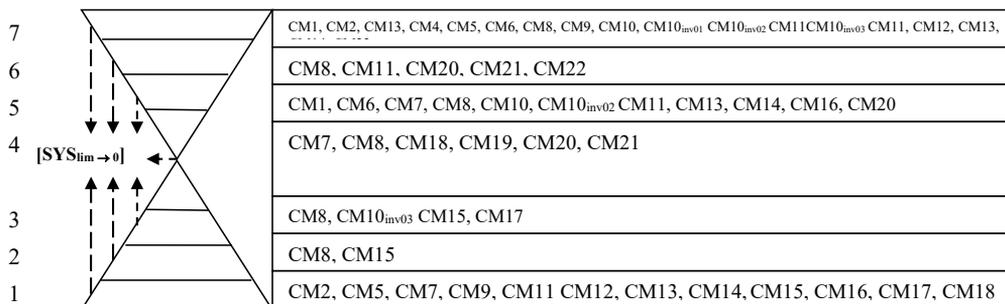


Figure 3. Distribution of CEs’ cognitive models within the hierarchical dimension of an open system.

The indicated cognitive models are allocated at the primary systemic level at which a CE occurs. Any of the cluster’s slots may contextually become a profiled focal point of categorisation, the rest providing an associative field of complementary informational quanta. The slot $[SYS_{lim \rightarrow 0}]$ of the cluster then becomes a “hyper-link” between the models (information quanta) within the semantic and respective conceptual spaces of an alternative world. CEs categorised within the conceptual framework of the pop-cultural

alternative world tend to adhere to the global informational / civilisational plane, the plane of inter-group relations and the personal plane.

4 Conclusion

The semantics of modern English representations of CATASTROPHE / DISASTER reflects human experience of systems' entropic transitions. Systems' rapid collapsing which results in annihilation rather than natural "reformatting" are regarded as "catastrophic events". A universal algorithm of a verbally represented CE involves negative inversions or degradation of a system's basic ontological, functional, axiological and locative characteristics. The inchoative "nano-myths" behind the semantics of language signs verbalizing CEs as systemic transformations are "excessive dynamics" ($\mu01$), "erroneous development program" ($\mu02$) and "the loss of resources" ($\mu03$). These irrational informational structures ($X00 = \Sigma (\mu01, \mu02, \mu03)$) are projected onto the modeled states of affairs in a pop-cultural alternative world.

CEs verbalised in rock lyrics by direct designations of DISASTER and CATASTROPHE are connected with "death", "war", "future", "destination". These assertive "legi-signa" refer to a number of typical scenarios unfolding as CEs at various levels of systems' organisation. The model *destination is disaster* may be considered a universal (or at least a generalizing schema) as it is present at all levels of an open system involved in a CE. The conceptualised feature of "self-destruction" marks entropic developments at all levels and is manifested explicitly at levels 1, 5 and 7. Cognitive models employing "catastrophe" and mostly "disaster" as source domains shape a complementary frame cluster that outlines the trajectory of an alternative world's demise, i.e. the "fate" of the arguably primary reality, thus creating a new prophetic secondary myth.

Further research may address the interdisciplinary interpretation of secondary myths and verbal manipulations unfolding in political and media discourse related to CATASTROPHE / DISASTER.

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