Dream-like mode of narration and articulation of images: hyperconectivity of the langue of religion

Modo onírico de narração e de articulação de imagens: hiperconectividade das linguagens da religião

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Abstract

This article deals with complex religious texts, which not only differentiate themselves from everyday language, but also challenges academic interpretative models. They are myth-like forms, related also to displace forms of the myth. In order to discuss such kind of expression we have adopted a working definition, which allows us to handle with visual forms as well as oneiric mode of narration and articulation of images. To address this kind of text we have adopted two sets of theoretic approaches. The first one is the dream theory of Ernest Hartmann, that takes into account the dream, above all the REM-dream, as a kind of consciousness (within the broad spectrum of consciousness) with intense neuronal activity, articulated by means of images and guided by emotions. In other words, it is in dreams that imagistic and narrative context are given to the subject's emotions. Because in REM-dream thought is lateral and hyper connective, there is more space for textual creation. According to Hartmann, that is the kind of consciousness that predominates in mystics and poets. The second concept we use for understanding the dense religious expressions is the grotesque. It is a kind of text and image that articulates disparate, contradictory and even excluding elements in a whole. The grotesque not only deals with contradiction; it does pursue it. It not only articulates contradiction but leaves it unresolved. The kind of expression of the oneiric mode of narration and articulation of images is potentially appropriate for rendering realities of suffering, alienation and violence. Maybe that is reason why popular religiosities tend to express themselves by means of it. Finally, the article also points to the limits of the representational systems of the culture.

Keywords: myth, grotesque, dream, the complexity of religious language, narrative, image.

Resumo

Este artigo discute textos religiosos complexos que não apenas se distanciam das formas de expressão quotidianas, como também desafiam as abordagens interpretativas acadêmicas. Trata-se de formas ligadas ao mito e às suas formas deslocadas. Para aborda-las adotamos uma expressão de trabalho que permite analisar também expressões visuais: modo onírico de narração e de articulação de imagens. Para analisar esse tipo de texto nos utilizamos de dois conjuntos teóricos. O primeiro é a teoria de sonho de Ernest Hartmann, que considera que o sonho, em especial o sonho-REM, é um tipo de consciência (considerando-se o espectro amplo de consciência) com intensa atividade neuronal, articulado por meio de imagens e guiado por emoções. Ou seja, no sonho são dados contextos imagéticos e narrativos às emoções predominantes dos sujeitos. Como no sonho REM o pensamento é "lateral", ou seja, hiperconectivo, há maior possibilidade de criação textual. Esse é o tipo de consciência que predomina em místicos e artistas, de acordo com Hartmann. O segundo conceito que utilizamos para entender os textos religiosos densos é o grotesco. O grotesco é um tipo de expressão textual e imagética que articula num todo elementos díspares, contraditórios e excludentes. O grotesco não somente lida com a contradição, como a busca; ele a articula a contradição, mas nunca a resolve. O tipo de expressão de mundo encontrada no modo onírico de narração e articulação de imagens é potencialmente apropriado para a expressão de realidades de sofrimento e alienação. Talvez por isso as religiosidades populares tenham preferência por esse modo de expressão. Ele também aponta para os limites dos sistemas de representação de mundo da cultura.

Palavras-chave: mito; grotesco; sonho; complexidade da linguagem religiosa; narrativa; imagem.

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Introduction

Chapter 9 of the Apocalypse of Saint John narrates the angel sounding the "fifth trumpet". It describes one of the strangest scenes of a book that is already known for its unusual narratives and images. John saw a star that had fallen from heaven on the earth. This star, which seems to assume the role of an angel, receives the key from the pit of the abyss. When the star opened the well, "a smoke, like the smoke of a great furnace", came up, making the sun and air dark. Out of the smoke came locusts with the power to damage like scorpions. The text, however, is exhaustive: grasshoppers are prevented from damaging vegetation (what is expected of a grasshopper) and can only harm humans (what is expected of a scorpion). The story is capricious. Grasshoppers can only cause pain in humans, without ever killing them. They are powerful instruments of torture. The text says that men (probably women included), because of the pain, will seek death, but will not find it. This strange text, difficult to interpret, gives the reader a curious note. It was also difficult to comprehend and visualize. The Apocalypse actually refers to "seeing" and "imagining" than understanding to the visionary John. Let us pay attention to the curious way the prophet describes such locusts with the power to cause pain as a scorpion:

> 7 The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads, they wore something *like* crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. 8 Their hair was *like* women's hair, and their teeth were *like* lions' teeth. 9 They had breastplates *like* breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was *like* the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. 10 They had tails with stingers, *like* scorpions, and in their tails, they had power to torment people for five months. 11 They had a king over them, the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer). (Apo 9.7-11).

What kind of animals did John happened to see and described like locusts that hurt like scorpions? The locusts had the appearance (*homoíôma*) of other animals. That is to say, they were all but grasshoppers. The locusts were also scorpions and other kind of animals. In general we can say that they were horses prepared for battle. They were also humanoid and sexually ambiguous: they had crowns on their heads, the faces of men with women's hair. Like soldiers, they wore

iron breastplates. Their ferocity was well characterized: They had lion's teeth; their tails were like stings of scorpions, with the power to cause pain. They also had very noisy wings. What kind of animal did the visionary describe, or rather, what animal might look like it? It would have characteristics of fierce animals (lions), swift (horses) and venomous (scorpions). Within the humanoid characteristics, they are more diffuse: they evoked war (they wear harnesses); they were sensual (feminine hair). John is leading us into the universe of monstrous, hybrid beings. They express terror and chaotic disorder because they are made up of parts of different beings, incompatible with each other, and do not respect the order of creation and the classifications of culture. These are beings of confusion and apocalyptic horror, like the monsters (the famous beasts) of chapter 13. If, however, we read the text more closely, we shall see that it is still more uncomfortable than we have already recognized. Monsters are strange, frightening, disturbing beings in our classification systems. How to deal with a being that has dandelions, scorpion venom, and (sensual?) hair of women? We are definitely faced with gaps in emotional and cognitive responses. The monsters tell us about the margins of cultural systems, de-structuring our center (COHEN, 1996). However, the text reproduced above makes us retreat from any attempt at literal visualization, which in theory would be a solution. A bizarre monster, let's say it is! But that's not what the text is talking about. It is densely constituted, instituting a semantic crisis by proposing a game of broken image, radically hybrid, which sends an image to another image, an indefinite image, just suggested. Composing hybrid beings is a daring, uncomfortable game when it is not intended for entertainment, as is the case with apocalypses. However, proposing a broken image that is not exactly an image, which prevents the composition of the monstrous, is to raise the games of interpretation to extreme limits. The account says that John sees things with the appearance of others, but it prevents him from identifying them, of reaching the final composition. The play of producing meaning through images which are not exactly the proposals, preventing us from identifying and composing the final picture, is an extreme exercise in suspending the references of the language.

Let us return to the translation of the text presented above to observe the italicized expressions that highlight the emphasis of the games of interpretation proposed in the vision. We note that the comparison particle "like" (*hôs*) appears six times, alternating with *hómoios,* which is used twice, in addition to the noun "appearance" (*homoíôma*).[1] In other words, despite all the harshness and concreteness of the apocalyptic language, in this view John describes things that cannot be equated to a simple sum of the total of the images, even if it bears nonsense. The result is an accumulation of interpretive possibilities, of imagery associations, which need to be compared with other things in their parts and also in the whole. Here we have the monster potentiated, because it is a monster whispered, but never seen. In the only part of the description of the vision, which is not loaded with comparisons, where the reader waits for references, we have the names of the being that reigned over the locusts: a name in Hebrew and another in Greek: the being of the world of the abyss, *Abaddon*, and the destroying demon, *Apollyon*. These are two identifications difficult to harmonize. Their sum shall be something like the destroyer of the realm of the dead, or something so terrible. The text strictly refuses to offer references, even within the framework of the monstrous and mythical identifications. In such a vision we enter the universe of extreme borders: an angel descends from heaven, release from the abyss hybrid beast-like demonic creatures that only resemble the animals they evoke, with inverted functions, with bilingual names. The demonic is presented in one of its fundamental characteristics: it is a fundamental dimension of life, but we cannot orient ourselves from it.

When referring to the fifth trumpet of the book of Apocalypse, we do not intend to get into its insoluble mazes, but rather to raise, via an example, a fundamental problem, which has not been thoroughly discussed: the fact that religious traditions recurrently express themselves through narratives and images that radically challenge all the referential and communicational potential of

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[1] Comparative and even metaphorical expressions use the "like" particle; pointing to the fact that one thing must be understood in terms of others. In this case, however, with the overuse of the comparative particle "like", one points to an opaque image, thus losing the comparative function.

language. Religious expressions organize themselves in dynamic systems of information and communication. Religions deal, virtually, with everything, from everyday subjects to major cosmic issues. They provide the scripts for day-to-day behavior, instructions for worldly life, also articulating what we imagine in the world beyond. They narrate the past (primordial time) and the future (eschatological time), without leaving aside historical time and the temporality of biographies and subjectivities. Virtually everything can be expressed in the languages of religions, in constantly circulating textualities. The power of language articulation of religions is so intense that, in religious texts, different traditions, even among incompatible ones, can be brought into dialogue in a new text, in syncretic processes of bricolage, allowing that religious subjects understand them as integral, even unique. Faced with this power of expressiveness and articulation of the languages of religion, we ask ourselves for those texts and images that seem to mislead the readers. Our perspective on religion in modernity, assuming that religion is possible in modernity and beyond, is that it communicates to emancipate, to create fairer relations, to allow a holistic view of the world, to adjust our feelings and emotions. Within this purpose, the forms of communication of religions need some sort of referentiality, a minimum of shared objectivity in the community. Why, then, do religious communities, faced with oppression and scarce resources, spend time and energy in the elaboration, transmission and interpretation of dense and purposely enigmatic texts?

Such a dynamic of the informational and communicative articulations of religions goes therefore beyond the scope of communication and diffusion of ideas and religious representations for immediate consumption by their groups. More than diffusion of ideas and creation of texts in the most diverse discursive genres, the religions have *sets of texts of high informative density*. These texts are presented here in two basic formats: a) in the complexity of narrative and semantic aspects, when, for example, a religious narrative rebels against any kind of narrative linearity, or the images and metaphors of a text (oral or written) subvert the expected forms of imagery association; b) in the hybridity of genres and textual hierarchies, as when we find in an altar entities of hierarchies and distinct origins,

of contradictory but articulated functions. We propose that the phenomenon of production of dense texts of complex articulation, besides recurrent, originates in the psyche through dreams and trance states, but also in society, in certain types of mythical texts or in reports related to the myth.

Throughout this article we propose to dedicate ourselves to that type of dense, complex language, which seems broken when compared to the everyday forms of expression. This type of language we are referring to here is often overlooked in the sciences of religion which are generally more concerned with the referential aspects of language, with its status as the organizer of the real and the social. In order not to confine ourselves to the classical definition of myth and mythic language, such as an account of origin or articulation of the social group, and to perceive alternative roles of this type of expression in the languages of religions, we will be using an *instrumental concept of myth*, which will be named *dreamlike mode of narration and imaging articulation*. With this concept, we intend to expand the scope of the discussion to peripheral forms of the myth and its displaced forms found in artistic and religious expressions of different genres. The dream mode preserves wild and deep strata of religious expressions, which point to the limits and gaps of the forms of world representation and the social ordering of language. Our concept starts from an analogy between the psychic processes of the individual and the social languages. In the presentation of our scientific references we hope to justify the use of this analogy. For now it is worth remembering that we are not referring here only to the classical expressions of the mythology of religions or to their theological symbols and scriptures. We are especially interested in the marginal but recurrent religious expressions that confront everyday knowledge and systems of common representations of language. We think of texts in which *many factual* elements are articulated in a single text. In other words: the objects of our discussion concern texts that articulate (articulate, do not harmonize!) contradictory, excluding elements with complex semiotic structures that integrate subtexts of different hierarchies into a single text. These texts are especially endowed with informational potential.

To develop our argument two theories will be discussed: the dream theory of Ernest Hartmann and the theory of the grotesque. In the first one, we seek to relate the dense forms of expression of the languages of religion with psychic and neurological processes constituting human cognition. In the second, we seek to relate this type of religious text with forms of expression which has been articulated in the origin of culture, but which are intensely cultivated in the arts. With dialogue with dream theory and grotesque theory, we intend to open space for a better appreciation of the dreamlike way of narration and articulation of images, highlighting their role in culture. We hope to point to promising perspectives for the study of the organization of complex, dense and highly imagistic texts in the languages of religions. In this sense, this article should be understood as an outline.[2]

1 Dream and imagery connectivity

In order to look for alternatives to understand the languages of religions and their peculiar ways of representing the world, I came upon a fascinating book by Lewis-Williams: *The Mind in the Cave*, which raises questions about the origin of culture, language and human imagination in prehistory. He argues that a possible key to understanding the awakening of this "human spark" in the Upper Paleolithic is that humans would certainly have frequented and painted caves for the practice of religious rites in altered states of consciousness. It could, however, be argued that these experiences between the aesthetic and the religious would be marginal for the development of human cognition in relation to other cognitive processes aimed at practical and instrumental activities, etc. Lewis-Williams, however, understand that art made in caves, in trance rituals, is fundamental to the interpretation of the cognitive advances of Homo sapiens in that period. He proposes that in order to evaluate these processes, we need to adopt what he calls the "broad concept of consciousness", which includes not only awake conscious states, for practical activities (such as making weapons, hunting, cooking,

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[2] This article intends to answer the question of the potential that the religious expression has to subvert the conventions of language, as I stated in my article: Nogueira (2016).

socializing, etc.), but also consider the other side of the spectrum, namely the REM (*Rapid Eye Movement*) dream and its analogous state, the religious trance. In this way, we would have an "intensified spectrum of human consciousness". According to the author, there is a serious flaw in the western conception of consciousness in considering that "... there is an 'ordinary consciousness', considered genuine and good, and then perverted or 'altered' forms." He states: "all parts of the spectrum are equally genuine" (LEWIS-WILLIAMS, 2004, p. 125).

Lewis-Williams's provocations led me to search for approaches that took into account the broad spectrum of consciousness, which made me find the work of the psychologist, exponent of the contemporary dream theory, Ernest Hartmann (dead in 2013). He presents these ideas in his work *The Nature and Functions of Dreaming* (2011), in which he demonstrates that consciousness has a broad spectrum ranging from focused awakened thinking (*focused-waking-thought*) to encompass the REM dream. We must note, however, that the REM dream is the end of a *continuum*, of other modes of thought related to the dream. Between the awakened attention to task execution and the REM dream there are states more or less focused or rambling. Hartmann's dream theory follows a trend in dream studies, called new dream studies, which, as for example J. Allan Hobson, distances critically from Freudian dream theory, with his understanding of the dream as the product of the unconscious, based on dynamics of repression. This conception does not focus on repressed latent content, but rather studies the relations of the dream to the brain and to the ways in which consciousness operates. One of the aspects emphasized by Hartmann is the high connective power of the dream and the fact that he exercises it in an extremely broad way. According to him:

> Clearly the dream creates connections with newly tried material (daily waste) and old memories; dreaming often brings together different people, two different places, two different periods of our lives by means of a mechanism that Freud calls condensation. (HARTMANN, 1996, p. 1).

In this way, while we are dreaming, we have access to more possibilities, more information than when we are awake. Dreams are hyperconnecting and there are no limits on them. Whereas awakened thinking is directed toward the execution

of tasks; he can only access things related to them; similar mechanism does not happen with the dreams, that being less focused and specific, can be directed laterally, that is, they can make more connections. We should however, make one important observation: the neuronal activation in the REM dream is so intense when in the awake state geared toward task execution. The intense activation of the neurons in it occurs differently within the broad spectrum of consciousness. In the intermediate fields, between little focused attention or daydreaming, the activation is less. In the extremes, in the execution of tasks and in the REM dream (and in altered states of consciousness, as in the religious trance) activation is very intense, albeit with distinct modes of functioning. On the side of the awakened consciousness focused on tasks we focus on the use of signs, numbers, the center in the "I" and more precise delimitation of the aspects of reality. In the REM dream or altered states of consciousness we have pure image, fluid boundaries and hyper connectivity (HARTMANN, 2011, p. 43-47).

In REM dreams the connective processes are determined by two processes that are of major relevance to the discussion we propose in this article. Dreams are guided by dominant emotions and these emotions are contextualized by means of images (HARTMANN, 2011, p. 23ss). The images work in this field in a way very similar to the function of metaphors, according to the conceptual metaphor theory (LAKOFF & JOHNSON, 1980; DANESI, 2004), designing conceptual fields. These conceptual fields organize experience. For example, when we compare LOVE RELATIONSHIP with CAR TRIP we find ourselves in a relationship that "accelerates", "slows down", "reaches a dead end", etc. We experience the love relationship as a journey. It is in this sense that Hartmann understands that the images of the dream give context to the emotions that guide the dream. From the proposal of Hartmann, and also according to the proposal of Patricia Kilroe (2000), we can say that dreams are narratives, just as metaphors indicate stories. It is in these stories, in the narrative frameworks suggested by metaphors, that emotions are contextualized. Let's look at a case where images organize emotions.

Hartmann reports in his research that among the dreams he studied one of the most recurring is the giant wave (*tidal wave dream*). A person lies on the beach and is surprised by a giant wave that pulls him into the sea and the person drowns. This standard image, as well as many others, serves as a context and provides a metaphorical basis for the processing of emotions originating from traumas. Of all the dreams, Hartmann understands that the most important and productive is precisely the nightmare, since it is in it that the emotional connections of the dreamer become evident (HARTMANN, s/d.). His uncomfortable and frightening images give him the appropriate emotional context. These dreams are very useful to dreamers as they relate the trauma to a wider chain of events in their lives (cognitive function). Thus the trauma, inserted in larger contexts, could be worked (adaptive function).

In short, from the above perspective we can understand the REM dream as a model for a kind of thinking that differs from that of the awakened mind for problem solving, but which is equally complex, connective, and promoted through intense neural activity. In dreams, we find ourselves connected to our emotions, many of which have a traumatic origin. These emotions are organized through images, which in turn can be selected and connected without the constraints of everyday life, logic and rationality. This connectivity, however, is a way of giving images and plots to the emotions.

Perhaps a fundamental misconception of the academic studies of religion originated in modernity, such as the demitizing approaches, lies in the fact that they take religious (especially mythical) language into account as imperfect, childish speech, incapable of dealing with reality and with their problems. The ideal of religious language in these studies would be more focused on the thought directed to the execution of tasks. The dense forms of the languages of religion, however, seem to be more geared to a type of thought-like activity that resembles that of the dream: hyperconecting, lateral, condenser of memories of different types and periods, imagedly organized, based on emotional states. Ernest Hartmann himself perceived the relation between dream-thought and the

hyperconductive forms of art and religion, suggesting that mystics and poets activate this form of thought.

2 The grotesque as articulation of unlikely images

The second theoretical approach to be presented here, in the effort to articulate a theoretical field for the study of the complex (and difficult to define) images of the languages of religion, comes from the concept of the grotesque, which is metaphorical par excellence, and as elusive as the things that it seeks to interpret. In the fifteenth century, an alleged cave was accidentally discovered in Rome with decorative images of hybrid beings painted on the walls. It was found out later that the place they thought was a cave actually was the *Domus Aurea* cupola of Emperor Nero. Art critics have called the style of those images of grotesque, that is to say, that come from the cave (*grotto* in Italian). The concept was appropriated by the history of art and quickly transcended the description of the style with which the palace of Nero was decorated, to characterize bewildering, daring, hybrid paintings in the plastic arts in general. Then the concept was also appropriated by the literary theory that used it to refer to the literature of disconcerting and monstrous beings, etc. Of a misconception, after all the palace was not a cave, it goes to various applications, both in the plastic arts and in literary theory. The grotesque today is an important concept of cultural studies, which aggregates other analogous concepts, such as hybrid, carnivalization, abject and monstrous[3]. It is an aesthetic and metaphorical concept par excellence, in accordance with the elusive characteristics of the works that it intends to analyze.

When we refer to the grotesque in the history of art and literature, in particular, we think of images with the power to express ambiguous elements. The grotesque has a predilection for images of the body and the female body in particular. The cave is an allusion to the earth, the belly, the mouth, place of both birth and death (HARPHAM, 2006, p. 85). Grotesque images are characterized by being disconcerting and difficult to classify. They are configured in a hybrid way,

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[3] For an overview of the concept of grotesque and related concepts, see: Edwards; Graulund (2013).

therefore, with disparate, inconsistent and incoherent elements. Take, for example, the famous old hags (medieval witches). It is a broken, inconsistent image: old women begetting life. However, they are witches, bearers of hidden, creative and magical knowledge. Likewise, monstrous beings of various cultures, such as Leviathan and Behemoth, despite their bestiality, are characters of creation myths. In the same way, we can recognize the ambiguous character of the dragon of Revelation 12, as the protagonist of an account of creation, described as the birth of a child generated by the astral mother. The dragon here is chaos, a fundamental element of creation myths. It is not without reason that the visionary John tries to eliminate this ambiguity by identifying the dragon with Satan and the devil in verse 9, since he wants to turn him into an eschatological opponent. This identification, however, does not correspond with the ambiguity of the mythical character of the dragon. Despite the symbolic and mythical potential of the Apocalypse, it also tends to historicize.

The grotesque offers, in an image, the fusion of irreconcilable images (CONNELLY, 2012, p. 2). This has implications for the understanding of its function in language. One of the possibilities is to give up a definition of the grotesque, understanding it as a game (CONNELLY, 2012, p. 2). In this way he can only be apprehended by what he does, not by what he is. That is, in the grotesque we find images in relation, in flux, combined. That is its game and in it several meanings are explored. Perhaps the play, the joke of the grotesque is to show us that the systems of representation upon which our world constructions rest are more than arbitrary: they are extremely fragile. And for many of our experiences in the world, referential language classification systems are not much help, so it is necessary to tap into the inconsistencies and incoherencies of the grotesque.

The grotesque, however, cannot be restricted only to a denial of our systems of representation. After all, the language of the dream and the unconscious, in the foundations of our psyche, make use of their sense sets and religions construct images of this kind in abundance. To understand the cognitive function of the

grotesque in the direction of the high imagistic connectivity of the dream, I propose an adaptation of John Ruskin's definition, as suggested by Connelly:

> A fine grotesque is the expression, in a moment, through a series of symbols gathered, by means of risky and fearless connections, truths that would have required a long time to have been expressed in any verbal form, and whose connection among it is left for the appreciator of the work to build it for himself. The gaps left or ignored by the imagination compete in the formation of the grotesque character. (CONNELLY, 2012, p. 151).

Ruskin's definition, and its resumption in Connelly, is turned to grotesque images in the field of fine arts. Our interest here is broader. We also want to analyze religious literary images. To do so, we need to replace the expression "expressed in any verbal form" with "discursively expressed", to leave open the possibility that metaphors and literary images have their grotesque character recognized. That is to say, the cognitive power of the grotesque image also manifests itself in the dreamlike mode of narration, in which contradictory, sometimes excluding aspects are placed in relation either in the image or in the plot.

While Connelly's work has focused on the grotesque in the plastic arts, Harpham's analysis explores its imagery in the sense we propose, as a literary grotesque image and metaphor, coming into action "when language categories are exhausted" (CONELLY, 2012, p. 3). In this way, the grotesque images in literature have the function of naming "non-things". This happens in the same way as in the dream the images go through a process of condensation, accumulating different, and sometimes contradictory levels of meaning. The grotesque image is dense. The process of densification of the grotesque occurs in two ways: the first is the concentration of narrative time in a single place, that is, a long process, such as youth, pregnancy and old age, is presented in a single place, as in the example we gave up of the pregnant old witch. The second form consists of the condensation of narrative into image, for example in the presentation of apocalyptic monsters. In a single monster, historical periods are compressed; just as in a single monster, many animals are contained. The oneiric narration mode manages to store

potential information in a few symbols and scenes. This density, however, is not at the service of saving time and resources; on the contrary, its plural, contradictory and ambiguous constitution configures the images that can express us in our humanity.

The density of the grotesque image offers natural difficulties to the reader; after all, he has to unfold the image, without, however, reducing its parts to isolated units. If you isolate them, the image is lost. Before him, the grotesque image opens gaps. The grotesque "plays language against itself by affirming both terms of a contradiction at the same time". In Harpham's words, "because [the grotesque] breaks the rules, paradox can penetrate into new and unexpected areas of experience, discovering relationships that the syntax generally makes obscure" (HARPHAM, 2006, p. 23). It is in these new potential spheres that the reader enters and plays with the grotesque.

The grotesque is a type of language originated and displaced from the world of myth, hence its deep relationships with the religious universe. Harpham insists on affirming the relation of the grotesque to magical thinking, in which everything is related to everything, in relations of deep interdependence. It is the "law of participation" (Levy-Brühl) transformed into a refusal to make something meaningless. In the grotesque it becomes the "law of infinite metaphor", according to which all things are in relation to each other, even when they are contrary to it. As in the dream world, contradiction is not only tolerated; it is, in fact, sought after. The myth and the grotesque perform their games of signification mediating the opposites. For our rational and pragmatic classification systems, however, it is a violation of conventional forms of representation.

Perhaps we should allow ourselves to play with the right metaphor, but mistakenly attributed to the grotesque. The art of the cave reminds us of the origin of this type of language, of magical rites, performed in altered states of consciousness (Lewis Willians) in caves, accompanied by practices of sacrifices, orgies and cannibalism, in search of affinities with the forces of nature, being

different from it. Through the dreamlike mode of narration, whether in the processes of individual dream or in grotesque religious and artistic expressions, we share this mythological consciousness. In a way, in our psyche and in certain types of religiosity, we still visit the cave. However, it would be misleading to think that the grotesque is a form of alternative and peculiar manifestation, aseptically separated from social and everyday life. It follows in the forms of popular culture and art, destabilizing social ordinations. In Third World societies, the dream-mode of narration is present beyond the individual psyche, through the religions of ecstasy, especially in popular culture.

3 The pragmatic way of narration and articulation of images

Faced with the laterness of religious thought, its hyperconnectivity, and its complexity, one might ask why do religions spend so much energy on difficult seemingly undeclared forms of communication, especially in resource-limited communities. In the case of popular culture, a privileged space for cultivating this kind of mythical and grotesque narrative and imagery, this question is obvious. Communities that fight against hunger, violence, and infant mortality, among so many pressing problems, strive to produce rituals, songs, prayers, and narratives of extreme complexity. Nor does it make sense to subvert the referential system of language and cognition with its power to organize the world and facilitate the social world of the human species. Language is fundamental, for example, for the conclusion of contracts at various levels in society. What is the reason for the production of texts that are difficult and insufficiently understood?

The answers to these questions require us to return to the broad-spectrum theme of consciousness proposed by Hartmann's theory that problem solving or focused task execution is only one of its extreme points. On the other side, there is a kind of lateral thinking, highly connectively and imaginary that dialogues with the universe of emotions. Emotions are psychic processes of the utmost importance, being dissociated only, arbitrarily, from the processes of textual production. One of the misconceptions of modernity and its plans to interpret phenomena and

religious texts was to imagine that practical reason would suffice, that the archaic and contradictory forms of the myth and its related forms could finally be discarded. In societies with extreme situations of suffering, misery and death - as is the case in the vast majority of societies all over the world, except for chain of misery and prosperity - with threats to psychic, biological and social life, religions articulate reality through their dense, imagery texts that seek contradictions. Only the type of language of the oneiric mode could articulate extremes such as desire and fear, life and death, in contexts of extreme misery and violence. Perhaps these contexts of suffering, and their lack of meaning, require of religion dense ways of expressing the world. Our conjecture is as follows: this is one of the reasons why popular religiosities often adopt the dreamlike way of narration and articulation of images. The texts of the oneiric forms are, therefore, far from being a luxury or decontextualized aesthetic practices. The opposite has proved true. The emergence of ultra-right conservative religious discourses, with impoverished speeches both imagistically and narratively, with their pretension of dogmatic exhaustion of the world, in total inability to deal with the complexity of reality and social life, in the production of empty symbols, alert us to risks of impoverishment of religious language.

The dense texts of religions also remind us of the reminiscences, the ancestral memories, of the origin of culture. They denounce a desire to overcome, at least negotiate, an unsurpassed split. By pointing to the outer limits of representational systems, they show that forms of language representation, even the most fundamental, are arbitrary. They also point to the fact that the foundations, upon which our social relations and our self-understanding are based on, are due to a great trauma. Such a trauma is expressed in the first bloodshed, in the killing of the animal brothers, in separating from nature, calling it nature, and not more of ourselves, of naming the world, of pointing and naming things, becoming beings of culture, of the second skin, living in what has been called the "second reality" (Ivan Bystrina). Insurmountable trauma, origin and driving force of culture and religion.

Conclusion

This article investigates theoretical possibilities to approach religious texts and images that have challenged and extrapolated the forms of expression and referentiality of everyday language. These are mythical texts, of mythical character, or those containing elements displaced from the myth. In order not to be restricted to the strict technical use of myth, such as creation accounts, and in order to broaden the discussion to aesthetic-religious forms of various periods, including contemporaneity, we suggest a concept of work: "dream-like mode" of narration and articulation of images. In this way, images can also be inserted in this discussion. To address these texts - and bearing in mind apocalyptic texts and visions as a model and example - we use two independent theoretical sets. The first one is dream theory, especially in the version proposed bythe second one is the aesthetic theory of the grotesque, both in the plastic arts and in literary criticism. From these approaches we seek to value texts that, at first glance, seem bizarre, disorganized, that seem to fail in the communicative and referential function of language. They seem to offer subjects and religious communities cognitive and emotional spaces for the articulation of aspects perceived as disparate, contradictory and ambiguous psychic existence and social life. Ernest Hartmann; Faced with death, suffering, meaninglessness, and contradictions and oppressions of the most diverse kinds, only a certain type of language, such as we explore in the dreamlike way of narration and articulation of images, can articulate, express and connect images and ambivalent and contradictory symbols. This is not the language present in sophisticated and intellectualized aesthetic exercises (only) but of fundamental forms of the languages of religions in shaping the world and inserting us into it; a world that from the beginning was perceived as a split, as a rupture.

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