Dialogic Notes on the Origins of the Ambivalence of the Concept of Hell in Western Culture: The Sacred-Prosaic Simultaneity / *Notas dialógicas sobre as origens da ambivalência do conceito de inferno na cultura ocidental: a simultaneidade sagrado-prosaico*

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to identify the verbal-ideological conditions in which Judeo-Christin values in tension in the conceptualization of *hell* are installed as Western collective memory even out of the religious segment and, this way, frame a cosmovision. Theoretically, the discussion is preponderantly based on a dialogic reading (BMV Circle) of the Halbwachian notion of collective memory and on a socio-cognitivist approach to polysemy. Methodologically, apocrificity is used as a resource to trace de conceptual path constituting the semiosis of *hell* in dialog with canonical texts. The paper demonstrates that *hell,* by compressing the transit between cultures and by permeating Christian values in other fields of ideological creation, activates a moral-causal domain that, at the same time, defers to these values and denies their religious principles, making the sacred and sublime also prosaic. The sacred/prosaic ambivalence that occurs not alternatively, but simultaneously, as typical of the dialogic tension, frames a collective structure of memory.

KEYWORDS: Collective memory; Fields of culture; Christianity; Apocrificity; Semiosis

RESUMO

Neste artigo, o objetivo é identificar as condições verboideológicas pelas quais valores judaico-cristãos em tensão na conceituação de inferno *se instalam como memória coletiva ocidental mesmo fora do segmento religioso e, assim, emolduram uma cosmovisão. Teoricamente, a discussão se fundamenta preponderantemente numa leitura dialógica (Círculo BMV) da noção halbwachiana de memória coletiva e numa abordagem sociocognitivista de polissemia. Metodologicamente, vale-se da apocrificidade como recurso de levantamento de textos-fonte para rastreamento do percurso conceitual constitutivo da semiose de* inferno *em diálogo com textos canônicos. O artigo demonstra que* inferno*, ao comprimir o trânsito entre culturas e fazer permear valores cristãos em outros campos da criação ideológica, ativa um domínio moral-causal que, a um só tempo, faz deferência a esses valores e nega-lhes os princípios religiosos tornando o sagrado e sublime também prosaico. A ambivalência sagrado/prosaico que se dá não alternativamente, mas simultaneamente, como próprio da tensão dialógica, configura estrutura coletiva de memória.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Memória coletiva; Campos da cultura; Cristianismo; Apocrificidade; Semiose

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Introduction

> It all happened because Vitoria wouldn't take a minute to talk to the older boy. Nobody had ever mentioned Hell in his hearing before, and, surprised at old Miss Terta's language, he asked for an explanation. Vitoria, whose attention was on other matters, said vaguely that Hell was a very bad place, and when the boy asked her to describe it she merely shrugged her shoulders (...).[1]
>
> *Graciliano Ramos*

Originally published in 1938, the novel Baren Lives,[2] by Graciliano Ramos, is part of the canon of Brazilian literature. It portrays psychological, socioeconomic and environmental hardships, among many other relational nuances that constitute the harsh conditions of the Brazilian backlands. From this rich work, the epigraph of this paper highlights a tension between values of different sociocultural orders. There, the eldest's son conflict is revealed as he does not have the cultural repertoire to understand the figurativization through which his life condition is compared to *hell*. The categorization of the character's experience as hell conceptually coincides the religious field, especially Christian, and the political-economic field, including both the conditions for mobilizing resources to meet human needs, and interpersonal relations between social groups and between people and the surrounding arid environment. In the epigraph excerpt, the tension between religious and prosaic values stands as a monument of certain collective memory in the literary work and the multiple categories constituting the polysemy of hell are clues to the path of a vector of this memory.

Hell is not a good place. In colloquial language, sending anyone to hell is wishing for an unpleasant fate. In the religious field, hell becomes even more serious, as a destination of dissidents, misguided people or, not to escape the prototypical vocabulary, "sinners." In its origins, hell has the weight of a space belonging to the Christian sphere, competing with the heaven of the saints and the saved. However, over time, it became popular and, perhaps, was "softened" as an offensive expression in everyday life, even among people who do not believe in it or do not share the belief system that gave rise to this place of eternal punishment.

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[1] RAMOS, Graciliano. *Barren Lives*. Translated with an introduction by Ralph Edward Dimmick. Illustrated by Charles Umlauf. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999.
[2] For reference, see footnote 1.

In addition to its use in prosaic language, the theme of hell remains very present in the religious sphere, and a considerable part of the population, even if they do not understand themselves as belonging to the Christian religion, can imagine a description of Christian hell: a dark, foul-smelling place full of demons and monsters that eternally punish the souls of those doomed to suffering. In this paper, the conceptual path of *hell* is examined (i) presenting its origins as an absolutely profane space in which people are condemned to suffering of actions and values different from defended by a certain religious group and (ii) demonstrating how its conceptualization integrates the contemporary worldview in the West based on the semantic ambivalence emerging from polysemy. The aim is to identify the verbo-ideological conditions through which values in tension are installed as Western collective memory even outside the religious field.

1 Collective Memory in a Dialogic Key

Understanding the discussion about the semantic-axiological permeation in the West requires paying attention to the construction of cultural repertoires and their diffusion. These repertoires are distributed in societies through what Maurice Halbwachs (1992) calls the collective structure of memory. The mnemonic processes are traditionally identified as individual, subjective, to the point that Plato, in the dialogue Phaedrus, considers the advent of writing an externalization of thought that inhibits memory. However, the repertoires spread especially in the West from Judeo-Christian sources concern the sociocultural sharing of values, beliefs, and knowledge. Differing from the subjective phenomenon without rivaling it (Lewis Coser, 1992), memory is conceived in this discussion as a collective phenomenon of work not for preservation, but for reconstruction of the past based on the present (Halbwachs, 1992). Jean Duvignaud (1968) would say that memory understood this way undertakes a sociology of everyday life, of ordinary man in the fabric of his collective life and responds to man's concrete questions, and not to the abstract questions of philosophical speculation.

The collective structure of memory is here re-read through the dialogic lenses, which, in the words of Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson (1990),[3] are also concerned

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[3] MORSON, Gary Saul; EMERSON, Caryl. *Creation of Prosaics*. California: Stanford University Press, 1990.

with prosaics (Alexandre Dessingué, 2015). In a dialogic fashion, social dynamics emerge from verbo-ideological conditions at the same time as they define them. These conditions configure systems of thoughts, precepts, values, beliefs, artistic and intellectual creations, among others, that are fixed in cultural elements and organize worldviews Valentin N. Vološinov, 1983b).[4] This verbo-ideological universe is structure in semantic-axiological subsystems of symbolic creation named in different ways by the BMV Circle: fields of culture or of human activity (Mikhail Bakhtin, 1990;[5] 1986a),[6] fields of ideological creation (Vološinov, 2017)[7] and ideological environment (Pavel Medvedev, 1978).[8]
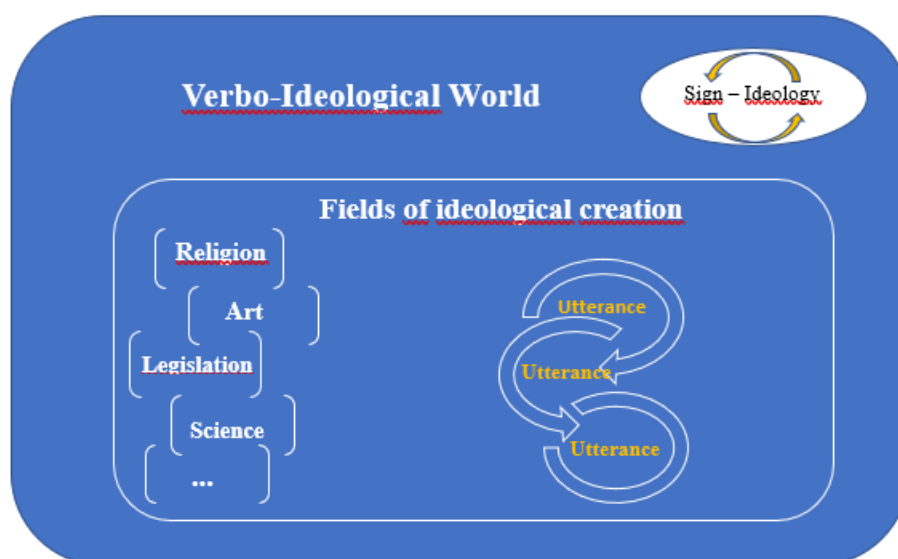

Figure 1 – Verbo-Ideological World. *Source*: The authors

[4] VOLOŠINOV, Valentin N. [BAKHTIN, M.M.] Literary Stylistics. 1. What is Language? (*In*:) *Bakhtin School Papers*. Edited by Ann Schukman. Russian Poetics in Translation. UK: Oxon Publishing Ltd, 1983b. pp. 83-113.

[5] BAKHTIN, Mikhail. Art and Answerability (1919). In: BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *Art and Answerability. Early Philosophical Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*. Translated by Vadim Liapunov (including material from the editors of the Russian edition, S. S. Averintserv and S. G. Bocharov). Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990. pp. 1-3.

[6] BAKHTIN, Mikhail. The Problem of Speech Genres. In: *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*. Translated by Vern W. McGee and Edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986a. pp. 60-102.

[7] VOLOŠINOV, Valentin. N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Trad. Ladislav Matejka and R. Titunik. Translator's Preface.Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973.

[8] BAKHTIN, Mikhail /MEDVEDEV, Pavel. N. The Elements of the Artistic Construction. In: *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*. A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics. Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978. pp. 129-141. [1928].

The codependency between ideology and semiotization founds and structures the verbo-ideological world (Medvedev, 1978;[9] Vološinov, 1973).[10] This means that the process of symbolization is not detached from the multivaluative cognitive collective arrangement that establishes ways of relating. The participation in this verbo-ideological dimension occurs through utterances. Because utterances are not produced in social void, but they always respond to prior utterances and provoke responses, human action is figurativized as an uninterrupted communicative chain (Bakhtin, 1986).[11]

In the present discussion, what is of interest is hell taken as a discursive object distributed in a communicative chain that passes through distant temporalities and spatialities and permeates different fields of ideological creation. Attention is specially driven to how the memory of hell, assumed as a discursive object (Amorim, 2009) in the religious field, more particularly in Christianity, is distributed through a collective structure to other fields of ideological creation. Part of the ongoing work of reconstructing the past is traced following the clues of linguistic symbolization.

The process of linguistic symbolization can be rhetorically described by the relationship between two counterparts: a conceptual one of socio-cognitive nature, and a discursive one of historical-social nature. Both emerge from concrete experience of members of a culture with the environment and with each other.

In dialogism, this experience is interpreted by the way in which the so-called Bakhtin-Medvedev-Vološinov Circle (BMV Circle) elaborates the historical-dialectical materialism. Medvedev (1978),[12] Bakhtin (1986;[13] 2016c; 2016d) and Vološinov (1973;[14] 1983a;[15] 1983b)[16] consider that language is concretely updated in utterances (Figure 1), which are permanently chained. Although the metaphor of the communicative chain is quite widespread, the historical functioning of social interaction is better represented by a tangle of links, and not by a linear sequence. In the tangle of historical-social relations, each utterance maintains a responsive relationship with others. This

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[9] For reference, see footnote 8.
[10] For reference, see footnote 7.
[11] For reference, see footnote 6.
[12] For reference, see footnote 8.
[13] For reference, see footnote 6.
[14] For reference, see footnote 7.
[15] VOLOŠINOV, Valentin.N. [BAKHTIN, Mikhail.M.] Discourse in Life and Discourse in Poetry. *In*: *Bakhtin School Papers*. Edited by Ann Schukman. Russian Poetics in Translation. UK: Oxon Publishing Ltd, 1983a. pp. 5-30.
[16] For reference, see footnote 4.

relationship is not formal, although it invariably presents shaped material clues; it is a verbo-ideological relationship or, in Bakhtin's terms (1984;[17] 2016b;[18] 1986),[19] dialogic. This means that this relationship emerges not from material or form, but from cultural entities capable of establishing it, whether through production or simply understanding (Bakhtin, 1986a).[20]

In this theoretical framework, the semantic dynamics that moves the communicative chain is a tripartite process of assimilation of values available in culture, material rework inherent to the production of any utterance, and axiological re-accentuation, since there is no way to integrate social relations with the absence of valuation (Bakhtin, 1986a;[21] Vološinov, 1973).[22] According to Maria Bondarenko (2008), in Vološinov (1973),[23] the process is synthesized in a particular understanding of semiosis, which occurs through the simultaneous reflection of what is socially available (assimilation) and detailed refraction of each utterance (rework and re-accentuation). Anyway, semantic dynamics occur through the simultaneity and varied distribution of these processes (Magalhães, 2022).

In Cognitive Linguistics, concrete experience is framed through the so-called realist experientialism (Rohrer, 2007). In this approach, human cognition in general and linguistic symbolization in particular unfold phylogenetically (Tomasello, 2007). The way of making sense of oneself, of the other and of the environment develops through and in culturalized relationships, which increase cognitive processes. From this point of view, verbal symbolization is categorization. In other words, meaning is categorizing, so that meaning and sense are always conceptualization and are never confused with empirical references.

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[17] BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. 8th printing. Translated by Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
[18] BAKHTIN, Mikhail. The Problem of the Text in Linguistics, Philology and the Human Sciences: An Experiment in Philosophical Analysis. In: *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*. Translated by Vern W. McGee and Edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986b. pp. 103-131.
[19] BAKHTIN, Mikhail. From Notes Made in 1970. In: *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*. Translated by Vern W. McGee and Edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986. pp. 132-158.
[20] For reference, see footnote 6.
[21] For reference, see footnote 6.
[22] For reference, see footnote 7.
[23] For reference, see footnote 7.

The categorization process is designed in a scalar way (Lakoff, 1987); based on prototypical conceptual references, which are central to the category, the other components are distributed radially on the periphery, according to the degree of conformation of the components in relation to the central characteristics (Rosch, 1978). Conceived this way, categories do not constitute closed sets, but open ones with fluid borders. For example, this is the way in which the fields of ideological creation are defined: not fixed, but fluid and without rigid borders (Figure 1). Fields function as superordinate categories that govern utterances. These are shaped in relation to the fields and are distributed based on central or peripheral and diffuse characteristics. In the case discussed in this paper, we see a concept founded on values specific to the religious field and which is being recategorized in the point of penetrating and spreading across other fields.

Regarding the conceptual path, it is identified a diachronic tendency that starts from more experiential and concrete categorizations and adds more abstract categorizations (Sweetser, 1990). That is when the figurativization processes come into play. These are not figures of speech, but cognitive processes of conceptual abstraction. This is the way metaphor and metonym, for example, are understood. Discussed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) and elaborated, among others, by Mike Borkent, Barbara Dancygier and Jennifer Hinnell (2013) and Barbara Dancygier and Eve Sweetser (2014), metaphor constitutes a cognitive process of conceptual association in which components of a source domain, which is in general more concrete, are projected into a target domain, which is figurative and more abstract. In the same way, metonym is processed through ways of symbolically associating elements by force of contact, limitation and dominance (Peirsman; Geeraerts, 2006); each of these components is subjected to scale by prototypicality. From this point of view, figurativization does not constitute a formal linguistic device, but a cognitive resource that demands the work of activating and articulating concepts and promotes polysemy (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 2007).

The approach of these theoretical frameworks makes it possible to treat the collective structure of memory as a symbolic apparatus for the generation and distribution of values that permanently constructs the past. This constant reconstruction occurs through the dynamics of categorizations challenged by dialogic relationships, always

marked by the tension between what is assimilated or reflected and what is reworked and re-accentuated or refracted. From this point of view, the conceptualization-valuation pairing makes up the collective structure of memory and is manifested by the simultaneity of symbolic differences.

The coexistence of differences is one of the dialogic conditions of language and, in this paper, it is treated in two ways. One of them has already been addressed: polysemy as socio-cognitive functioning. As a property of language production (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 2007), and not as an attribute of language form, polysemy generates clues to the values credited to each aggregated conceptualization. As it will be demonstrated in sections three and four of this paper, in each text, assumed as an utterance circumscribed in a communicative chain, there are conceptual contributions so that *hell* gradually brings together, through figurativization, other values. These values, although different, do not replace each other linearly or sequentially, but start to compose conceptual repertoire available for activation with each new utterance in the permanent reconstruction (and not preservation!) of the past. This activation, in turn, comes up against another way of dealing the coexistence of differences.

Evaluated by Irina Popova (2007) as a detailed philological work influenced by Franco-German intellectual production of the first decades of the 20th century, Bakhtin (1984b)[24] describes the construction of carnival language through the grotesque, and he understands the grotesque as the encounter between the eschatological (a category itself polysemic!) and the innovative (equally polysemic) values. This encounter, it is worth insisting, does not occur through replacement or through opposition, but through coexistence, hence the *ambivalence*: different values are valid. Revisiting these reflections with the contributions of Cognitive Linguistics, it can be stated that the same conditions of scalar and radial categorization apply to semantic ambivalence in the distribution of simultaneously activated values. It implies that the validity of differences does not mean balance between activated concepts, and semantic ambivalence is understood as a scalar correlation of meanings validated in culture (Magalhães, 2019).

In general terms, in this paper, we seek to demonstrate how the polysemic conceptual repertoire built from the concept of *hell* works as a vector of collective

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[24] BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by Helene Iswolsky. Bloominghton: Indiana University Press, 1984.

memory, breaking the fluid limits of the religious field and outlining a way of seeing the world. Next, the methodological decisions of the investigation are described.

2 Methodology

Tracking the polysemic dynamics of *hell* requires making decisions about which utterances to select in order to arrange in a communicative chain. In the Judeo-Christian field, the notion emerges in texts considered canonical and in texts considered apocryphal. As the issue raised in this paper does not face religious dogmatism, but the symbolic conditions of a prosaic worldview, aprocryficity is assumed as a criterion for surveying source texts. Pierluigi Piovanelli (2005) discusses the importance of paying attention beyond the first years of the Christian movement and, specially, to other sources resulting from this religious and cultural universe of the Roman Empire, and of trying to understand the historical-social processes that surround early Christianity. The assumption of extra-canonical sources to investigate the origins of this movement and historical period is what the author calls *apocryficity*. In this approach, canonical and apocryphal texts are assumed, at first place, as sources of Early Christianity.

If, on the one hand, there are few canonical sources, that is, sources listed in Christian Bible as official and sacred, to establish a common origin to Christian hell, on the other, from the so-called apocryphal literature numerous narratives emerge describing a place in which "sinners" are punished for the most various practices, such as disobedience to ecclesiastical authorities, sexual behavior considered non-standard by the doctrine of the church and murder. There are countless sources, such as excerpts from gospels and apocryphal apostolic acts and, mainly, apocryphal apocalypses. In the sense, it is possible to question how excluded and somewhat prohibited texts may have been responsible for the development of a concept that survived the centuries, persisting into contemporary times. For Piovanelli (2005), the non-dogmatic approach to canonical texts also favors the compilation of apocryphal texts, which expands the scope of investigation.

Thus, in addition to the mentions made in texts compiled as canonical in the Christian Bible, some other works, such as the Apocalypse of Peter, dating from approximately the second century; the Apocalypse of Paul, approximately, 5th century, and a set of texts that constitute a textual network with it, are considered the oldest sources

in which a detailed description of Christian hell appears. Martha Himmelfarb (1983) presents a list of 17 works she analyzed, some with more than one translation, with imprecise origins and dates. An analysis of the various themes and details that constitute each of these works is carried out by Carlos Eduardo de Araújo Mattos (2022). In this paper, it is important to highlight the fact that the origins of the theme of Christian hell go back to different circumstances and religious and textual traditions and form, within the scope of a popular perspective of religion, a formative network of values that goes beyond the dogmatic walls of the Chistian church, survives time, and permeates the collective structure of memory even in contemporary culture.

In this paper, apocryficity makes two contributions: (i) it enriches research and debate on the origins of Christianity going beyond the first two centuries of the Jesus-following movement by expanding the source texts (Koester, 1982);[25] (ii) it enables the construction and cutting of a communicative chain whose heterogeneity alters the semiosis of *hell* and the resulting values that integrate collective memory beyond the religious field.

Text	Classification in the religious field	Approximate dating
Jeremiah	Canonical prophecy	End of the 6th century BC
Nehemiah	Canonical chronicle	Mid-6th century BC
Joshua	Canonical chronicle	From the 7th to the 4th century BC
Psalms	Canonical poetry	2nd century BC
Mark	Canonical gospel	Between 66 e 70 AD
Matthew	Canonical gospel	80 AD
Luke	Canonical gospel	110 AD

Table 1 – Canonical texts with mentions to *hell*. *Source*: The authors

Text	Classification in the religious field	Approximate dating
Apocalypse of Peter	Christian Apocryphal Apocalyspe	Mid-2nd century AD
Acta of Thomas	The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles	Mid-2nd century AD
Acta Philipp	The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles	Mid-4th century AD
Apocalypse of Paul	Christian Apocryphal Apocalyspe	End of the 4th century AD
Apocalypse of Zephania	Jewish Apocalipse	5th century AD
Gospel of Nicomdemus	Apocryphal gospel	Mid-5th century AD

Table 2 – Texts selected by the apocryficity approach. *Source*: The authors

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[25] LIESTER, Helmut. *Introduction to the New Testament*. History and Literature of Early Christianity. Volume 2. New York-Berlin-Walter de Gruyter, 1982.

From these texts, excerpts in which the notion of *hell* is activated are selected for: (a) identification of the polysemic conceptual path, (b) description of the figurativization processes involved in the path, (c) comparison with texts from other fields of ideological creation.

3 Origins of Christian Hell: Semiosis and Conceptualization

Although hell is imagined as a religious space emerging from Christianity, curiously, there is a lack of biblical foundations – which, in Christianity, is the same as saying that there is a lack of documentary foundations – that explain its origins. In the New Testament there are few passages in which such a place of punishment is mentioned with precise descriptions and such passages have references external to the Chistian tradition. Considering the Jewish bases of Christianity, we start from citations to the Old Testament made in the New Testament to trace the concept of hell and the values that organize it.

Three important passages in the Synoptic Gospels helped shape the concept of hell. Mark 9.42-48 and Matthew 25.31-46 call Gehenna the place of punishment. It is a ravine outside the walls of Jerusalem, beyond the Gate (Jeremiah 19.2), called Ge-Hhinnom, the Valley of Hhinnom or the valley of the Son of Hhinnom (Nehemiah 11.30; Joshua 15.8).

I	And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which *is* by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee. (Jeremiah 19.2)
II	Zanoah, Adullam, and *in* their villages, at Lachish, and the fields thereof, at Azekah, and *in* the villages thereof. And they dwelt from Beersheba unto the valley of Hinnom. (Nehemiah 11.30)
III	And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the south side of the Jebusite; the same *is* Jerusalem: and the border went up to the top of the mountain that *lieth* before the valley of Hinnom westward, which *is* at the end of the valley of the giants northward. (Joshua 15.8)
IV	If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*. (Psalm 139.8)

Table 3 – Canonical references Old Testament. *Source*: The authors[26]

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[26] Quotes from the King James Version of the Chistian Bible.

I	And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (Mark 9. 43–48)
II	Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: (...)And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. (Matthew 25.41; 46)
III	And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. (Luke 16.22-23)

Table 4 – Canonical references New Testament. *Source*: The authors

The translators of the Hebrew Bible into the Greek Septuagint transliterated this name as Gehenna. Early Greek-speaking Christians used the Septuagint as their Bible and later as the Old Testament. Thus, they preserved and disseminated the term, and, apparently, the polysemy it indicts. For Jews contemporary to the production of the writings, it was not a reference to an imagined place; Gehenna referred to a concrete and well-known place.

In the center of the valley of Hinnom, there was a high place called Tropheth. According to the account in 2 Kings 16.3, King Ahaz fell under the influence of neighboring peoples to the point of following their religion and offering his son as a sacrifice to the god Molech in Ge-Hinnom. Apparently, King Ahaz was not alone in this practice. When King Josiah instituted the reforms that led the country back to the worship of the Lord, he desecrated the altar at Tropheth in Ge-Hinnom to prevent child sacrifices to Molech (2 Kings, 23.10). Always styled as a center for the occasional worship of a false god and possibly for child sacrifice, Ge-Hinnom was figuratively (metaphorically) and axiologically associated with burning, shame, and evil. Thus, in the context of the Old Testament writings, death and its religious and moral values referred to a relevant place for the collective memory of those who knew that the place was a space of death and abandonment, as the bodies of executed criminal were discarded there. Ranging from a place where innocents were sacrificed to a mass grave for executed criminals, the toponymic metonymy adds, by metaphor, the concept of a place of torment (Alan Bernstein, 1993).

In the gospel of Luke 16.19–31, although in Portuguese it is simply translated as "hell," in the original Greek, there is reference to the place of those who died far from God in the afterlife as Hades, the same place and Greek deity in the Hymn of Demeter. However, the suffering of the sinner described in the Gospel places this passage at the punitive extreme of classical Hades or Hebrew Sheol. The earliest written sources of Greek mythology do not deal directly with hell. However, they converge to illustrate, in different ways, the ideas of order, fertility and survival of the personality beyond death. Although in different ways, each of them refers to the origins, maintenance and arrangement of what the ancient Greeks considered their world order, including the underworld. And both the Greek Hades and the Jewish Sheol share with the Babylonian texts of the descent of Inanna and the descent of Ishtar a view of death as neutral, embracing all the dead in almost the same conditions, marked mainly by strict separation from the living (Bernstein, 1993). Paradigmatic Greek works such as The Odyssey, dated to the second half of the 8th century BC, Hesiod's Theogony (or Birth of the Gods), written between 700 and 665 BC, and the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, a myth recorded around 678 BC, portray the underground world allowing, in some way, access to how the Greeks imagined their relationships with their dead and in which world they believed their survival would occur (Mattos, 2022).

Sheol is understood in Judaism, according to Bernstein (1993), as the grave itself and as a place of forgetfulness and abandonment of life, where nothing more can be done. Psalm 139.8 inspires the belief in the presence of God as sovereign even in this place and, therefore, God, who is lord of Sheol, can send whoever He wants to this place (Table 3, quote IV). It is a place of shadows and oblivion, but it is not a place of punishment for any type of error (Bernstein,1993).

The passage in Mark was the first to identify the fire and worm of Isaiah 66.24 with Gehenna (Table 4, quote II). In this excerpt from the gospel, Gehenna can be understood as a concrete experiential reference to physical space, but, due to the dialogic relationship established with the text of Isaiah, there is a mark of rework and re-accentuation of value: the worm and fire of this place do not cease. This re-accentuation suggests the metaphorical conceptualization of Gehenna as a place of eternal suffering. There is a conceptual radicalization and a moral precept in Jesus' speech justifying this fate for the deviant. In Mark's usage, the torments of fire and worm must be sacred to the

Lord and never-ending. According to Bernstein (1993), this reference, apparently already figurative and with this continuative and peremptory aspect integrating the concept, appears to be the oldest in the New Testament to a hell.

When discussing this excerpt from Mark's gospel, Czachesz (2014) sees a deepening of what Himmelfarb (1983) attributed to the principle of retribution in the Hebrew Bible to think about the condemnations of hell. Understanding the punishments of those condemned to hell within the spectrum of Jewish apocalypticism, the author understood that, in Christian descriptions, as in the rabbis' texts, each sin would be paid for, punishing the part of the condemned person's body for which the sin was committed. Thus, some descriptions suggest that a man who stole something from his neighbor would be punished at his hands, for example. Istvan Czachesz (2014), however, understands this excerpt from Mark's gospel as a radicalization of the principle of retribution. For the author, Christian apocalypses describing hell go beyond this line of retribution, and the entire body can be thrown to hell because of just one eye (Mattos, 2017).

In a possible reference to the unquenchable fire of Isaiah 66.24, Matthew changes a little the context in which Mark referred to the fire and the worm. In Matthew, Jesus mentions the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the persecuted. Its qualities are the measures of righteousness, without which one will not be able to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. After these essential positive recommendations, Matthew's account shows Jesus turning to examples of bad actions that can bring punishment. More than that, it establishes a counterpoint, in which people who do evil against upright people will be condemned to eternal fire and worms that do not sleep.

In what is perhaps the most important canonical biblical passage for the semiosis of hell, Matthew relates Jesus' response on the Mount of Olives to the disciples' question about his return. Jesus precedes this account of His return with parables that explain the unexpectedness of the Second Coming. In the text, Jesus relates salvation to external manifestations, especially care for those in need, and perdition with the denial of this care. However, as Paulo Augusto de Souza Nogueira (2015) points out, the dimensions of this judgment are universal in nature: one group will be saved by its good actions, while another group will be condemned for not practicing them. In a similar way, the final separation occurs in the Revelation of John: the persecuted saints who did not bow to the beast will be rewarded, while the worshipers of the beast, the devil and his angels will be

thrown into the abyss and will suffer eternal punishment. It is worth noting that this abyss is presented not with the punitive details of Christian hell, but as the place where the final destruction of God's opponents will be carried out after the final judgment. Conceptually, it moves away from more concrete conceptual bases in favor of more abstract conceptualizations.

The evangelical narrative that presents, on the other hand, a character of individual condemnation after death can be found in Luke 16. In the parable of the rich man and the beggar Lazarus, it is possible to identify more clearly dialogic relationships between nascent Christianity and Greek culture. In the narrative, the beggar Lazarus, who in life had his wounds licked by dogs, is received after death in the bosom of Abraham, while a rich man who lived to feast, dressed luxuriously, will suffer torments in Hades (Table 4, quote III). In addition to what is evident in the text itself, such as the mention of the name of the Greek god of the underworld as a graphic location (Hades), there is also a debate regarding the possibility of communication between the worlds of the dead and the living. For the Greco-Roman world, this seems to be a topic of relative consensus, while the gospel establishes the limit of impossibility: Abraham tells the rich man that no one can pass from the side of the dead to the side of the living.

Another point in which the Lucan account differs from the vision of the underworld of the Greco-Roman universe regards survival itself in the space of the underworld. In Hades, from the Greek perspective, existence follows a line of continuity of posts and functions close to existence on earth; from the perspective inaugurated by Jesus, so to speak, a reversal is clear: the rich man who lived at banquets now suffers begging for a drop of water. In this re-accentuation of Christian tradition, Hades is metonymically conceptualized as a place of punishment after death. The articulation with discourses external to the field of Christianity in the figurativization of a key sign for Christian religious precepts is an important clue to the collective structure of memory. Even in a sacred text according to the dogmatic approach, the transit outside Christianity is mobilized to conceptualize hell, and this operates as a re-accentuation of a heterogeneous cultural repertoire through which the past is (re)constructed, and not preserved.

In his analysis of this excerpt from Luke's gospel, Rafael de Campos (2015) establishes a relationship between the account of Lazarus and the rich man and the work

of the cynical philosopher Luciano (2007), in his *Diálogo dos mortos* [Dialogue of the Dead], in which the character Menippus ironizes prominent figures in the history of Greece in their cadaverous states in the underworld. For Campos (2015), Luke's gospel inverts the logic of the underworld on purpose, to make fun of the understanding of the sociocultural environment in which Primitive Christianity is inserted.

Anyway, these references in the New Testament indicate a tradition that Early Christianity kept with great emphasis and importance over the centuries that followed. Some of them became the most influential descriptions of hell, generating reworks and re-accentuations through which dialogic relationships are established in many other works.

4 A Visit to the Hells of the Apocryphal Apocalypses of Peter and Paul

To minimally reference what is now being discussed, the Apocalypse of Peter (ApPt) is briefly mentioned, as it is one of the oldest works in which there is a detailed description of Christian hell. Also, the Apocalypse of Paul, considered by biblical research as one of the most influential works in which the description of hell is evidenced, is acknowledged.

4.1 The Apocalypse of Peter

According to Himmelfarb (1983), some quotations from Clement of Alexandria place the Apocalypse of Peter in the middle of the second century. Before the 1887 discovery of an 8th or 9th century Greek manuscript in a monk's cave at Akhmim in Upper Egypt, the ApPt was known only from allusions and mentions in canonical lists. In the first decade of the 20th century, a long Ethiopic version appeared in a collection of manuscripts. There is a discussion, initially supported by Montague Rhodes James and James Armitage Robinson (1892), that the Ethiopic version was closer to the original than the Greek version. The authors suggest that the Greek version of ApPt was adapted to serve as part of the Gospel of Peter, another text discovered in the same cave codex at Akhmim. They believe that the Ethiopian version was translated more directly

(Himmelfarb, 1983). Furthermore, only the Ethiopian version offers the text in full. Wilhem Schneemelcher (2003) argues that the Greek version is more fragmented.

Some texts by Church Fathers[27] mention the Apocalypse of Peter, and these mentions are important to highlight the role played by the work and, in some aspect, they strengthen the arguments for its ancient dating. To name some of the oldest works that mention the ApPt, we indicate: the Muratori fragment;[28] *Hypotoposes* and *Eclogae Propheticae*, two masterpieces by Clement of Alexandria dating around the year 200 AD; the *Catalogus Claromontanus*, an Eastern catalog of the Holy Scriptures from the 3rd century; *Ecclesiastical History*, by Eusebius, dating around 339 AD, who mentions the work together with *Shepherd of Hermas* (Bremmer; Czaschesz, 2003).

Briefly, the Apocalypse of Peter begins with a meeting between Jesus and his disciples, on the Mount of Olives, teaching and giving advice. To a certain extent, the text resembles similar ones in the canonical texts, such as Matthew 24, in which Jesus is in exactly the same situation. Just like the canonical, the disciples begin to ask the master about the end of time. The difference is spotted when Jesus opens his hand and, on the palm, he presents the fate of the dead in vision to the disciple Peter. He then shows Peter the image of what will be fulfilled on the last day: hell will open, and a widespread resurrection will occur. The earth will be consumed by fire and covered in darkness. Jesus will come on a cloud and eternal punishment will begin.

Then follows the description of the punishments: some sinners are hung by specific members of their bodies such as tongues, feet, among others. Other sinners are immersed in abysses and tortured by beasts. Some receive flames of fire. Peter is given a glimpse of the future of the saints who will witness the punishment of sinners and they are transported to Acherusia (a lake in Greek mythology connecting with the underworld), identified as the Elysian Fields. The final scene of the Apocalypse of Peter presents Jesus with his disciples on the holy mountain when they see him with Moses and Elijah. Here we have a version of the transfiguration narrated in the canonical gospels (Himmelfarb, 1983).

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[27] Leaders, bishops who succeeded the apostles and wrote the first commentaries on Christian writings, such as Clement, Ignatius, Augustine, Polycarp.

[28] The Muratori Fragment is a list of sacred writings, first published by Muratori in 1740, found by him in a 7th or 8th century manuscript in the Ambrosian Library in Milan, dated to the 3rd or 4th century.

It is worth quoting a small excerpt from the Apocalypse of Peter, mentioned by Schneemelcher (2003):

> 24. And there were also others there: women hanging by their hair over that boiling mire. This were they who had adorned themselves for adultery. But those (men) who had united with them for the adulterous defilment <were hanging> by their feet <and> had their heads in the mire, and with <Loud voice> cried out, 'We did not believe that we would come to this place.'
> 26. And near that place I saw another gorge in which the discharge and the excremento of the tortured ran down and became like a lake. And there sat women, and the discharge came up to their throats; and opposite them sat many children, who were born prematurely, weeping. And from them went forth rays of fire and smote the women on the eyes. And these were those who conceived children outside marriage and who procured abortions.
> 32. Other men and women who cast themselves down from a high slope came to the bottom and were driven by their torturers to go up the precipice and were then thrown down again, and had no rest from this torture. These were those who defiled their bodies, behaving like women. And the women with them, these were those who behaved with one another as men with a women. (pp. 629-631)

The fragment shows how the Apocalypse of Peter reiterates the metaphorization that integrates the moral-causal relationship into the conceptualization of hell. It is moral because it has Christian religious precepts that rule what is right and wrong as an axiological reference. It is causal, because the punitive effects after death maintain a certain contiguity with the acts carried out before death.

4.2 The Apocalypse of Paul

Regarding the origins of the Apocalypse of Paul, also known by the Latin name Visio Pauli, there are discussions and controversies that it is not necessary to deal with here. According to Theodore Silverstein and Anathony Hilhorst (1997), the text was originally written in Greek, in Egypt, and dated by Tischendorf to the end of the 4th century AD. However, it is worth recognizing that there are clues that the work was known by Christians in Egypt in the middle of the 3rd century, and it is also worth highlighting that external evidence locates what the author calls the "first edition," some older forms of the manuscripts, also around the 3rd century AD or even earlier. According to Silverstein and Hilhorst (1997), the contents of the text itself, which do not coincide

with the Christian life and language of that previous period, are external evidence. For example, the punishments that non-believers receive in places of torment are in accordance with basic principles of the new faith: denying the resurrection, the doctrine of the virginal conception and the doctrine of Christ as the Son of God. These are theological conceptions developed from a certain maturity of the Christian faith, so that an older theology would not address topics like these.

The Apocalypse of Paul can be summarized as the discovery of a revelation from an angel to a citizen of Tarsus, which presents Paul ascending to the third heaven, where he stands before the Throne of God. There the complaints of creation against the evils of men are taken. The testimony of angels describes these actions and the divine judgment on the righteous and the wicked. Then, there is a description of the moment when the souls of good people and bad people leave their body, at the time of death, and a description of Paradise. In the first part of the book, Paul is taken by an angel to the third heaven. From there, he sees the soul of a saint leaving the body and being taken to the presence of God, and then he sees the soul of a sinner leaving the body and being taken to the presence of God for a last opportunity to repent. As there is no repentance, it is taken into darkness. Paul is taken to the City of Christ, where he is introduced to Enoch, passes through prophets, and then taken to the Paradise, a place where those who were in need in the world but died faithful to God are received. After that, Paul is taken to see the hellish regions.

The apostle is taken by his guide angel to the place where the condemned suffer their punishment. Again, the sins punished are described as blasphemy against religious authorities, lack of mercy for orphans and widows, usury, and trust in wealth. Paul's Apocalypse highlights in particular sins relating to ecclesiastical authorities, such as non-compliance with religious obligations, breaking the fast, lack of attention to the proclamation of the Word of God and performance of sinful acts after participating in the Eucharist. To illustrate, some excerpts from a translation by Michele Evangelista (2011) are mentioned:

> And again I saw men and women with very black faces in a pit of fire, and I sighed and lamented and asked, 'Sir, who are these?' And he said to me, 'These are fornicators and adulterers who committed adultery, having wives of their own; likewise also the women committed

adultery, having husbands of their own; therefore they unceasingly suffer penalties.'

And I saw other men and women hanging by their eyebrows and their hair, and a fiery river drew them, and I said, 'Who are these, sir?' And he said to me, 'These are they who join themselves not to their own husbands and wives but to whores, and therefore they unceasingly pay the proper penalties.'

And I saw other men and women covered with dust, and their countenance was like blood, and they were in a pit of pitch and sulphur running in a fiery river, and I asked, 'Sir, who are these?' And he said to me, 'These are they who committed the iniquity of Sodom and Gomorrah, the male with the male,for which reason they unceasingly pay the penalties' (2011, p. 255). [29]

As can be seen from a brief comparison between the texts of the two Christian apocalypses, there are enormous similarities in motives, themes and interests that reinforce the stabilization of the moral-causal conceptualization of hell. These themes unfold over time in other Christian and apocryphal works, but, above all, in texts that do not necessarily have this Christian bias. One of the best-known examples is Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy.[30] According to Nogueira (2015), it is difficult to deny the thematic and formal relationship between the apocryphal and the literary work.

This classic of medieval literature goes beyond the boundaries of the religious field and constitutes an important vector of collective memory. The Divine Comedy is considered the supreme work of Dante Alighieri,[31] an Italian poet and politician who was born in Florence, Italy, in 1265, and died in Ravenna, in 1321. From 1307 until the end of his life, he dedicated himself to this work, in addition to others that he had previously written. Structurally, The Comedy is the account of Dante's journey to the three realms of the other world: Hell, Purgatory and Paradise. The journey is narrated in 100 cantos, the first being the introduction. Similar to early Christian works, Dante takes a guided journey into these spaces. To hell and purgatory, he is guided by the Latin poet Virgil and, to Paradise, by his wife Beatrice and Saint Bernard.

In the work, there are excerpts and scenarios from hell which are very similar to the hell described in Paul's Apocalypse, from the 5th century. Mattos (2017) and Henrique Mata de Vasconcelos (2022) discuss several excerpts in which this re-

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[29] ELLIOTT, J. Keith. *The Apocryphal New Testament*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005. pp. 635, 636.
[30] ALIGHIERI, Dante. *The Divine Comedy*. Translated by Robert Kirkpatrick. London: Penguin Classics, 2006.
[31] For reference, see footnote 30.

accentuation of *hell* can be spotted. According to Carmelo Distante (2014), the work is the memorial of a collective worldview in (trans)formation. The author states that Dante Alighieri[32] makes a synthesis of medieval thought and culture: a world in which the connection between classical culture and Christian culture is ongoing. The figurativization through which moral values are stabilized in the conceptualization of hell and the distancing from the experiential conceptualization are the key to semantic permeation through other fields of ideological creation.

5 Christian Hell "Conquers the World" and Goes beyond the Religious Field

In addition to many texts present in the analysis by Himmelfarb (1983) that go into the Middle Ages and that seek to identify with the oldest ones already mentioned Apocalypse of Peter and Apocalypse of Paul, other works emerged throughout the Middle Ages, in which it is possible to capture a paradigm shift in the presentation of the theme of hell. In texts that carry the heritage of early Christian apocrypha, hell is a place where "sinners" are sent to fulfill their eternal condemnation sentence through the most varied punishments.

Among the later medieval receptions of this theme, we find The Vision of Tundal (Zierer, 2015) and The Vision of Thurkill (Golin; Wotckoski, 2015). The vision of Tundal is an account produced in monastic circles by an Irish monk originally from Cashel and who was in Regensburg, in the south of present-day Germany. It is only known about this monk that his first name was Marcus and that he dedicated his work to the Abbess G. He wrote in Latin or Gaelic, in the 12th century. It had wide circulation in Europe. It deals with a sinner-knight called Tundal who, after an apparent death, is taken to Beyond the Grave by an angel. There he had the opportunity to discover paradisiacal and infernal spaces, with the aim of correcting his sins and evils (Zierer, 2015). The Vision of Thurkill is presented by its writer as a true fact that occurred on the night of October 27th, 1206. While taking care of the crops of the day, Thurkill is visited by Saint Julian, sent by Saint James, of whom he is devoted, to guide him on his journey to the Beyond World. In this vision, Thurkill is a simple and hospitable peasant and is called by Saint Julian to a special mission to go and see the Beyond World. His journey takes place when he falls asleep

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[32] For reference, see footnote 30.

and ends when he is woken up with water thrown on his face, and he wakes up from a long sleep (Golin; Wotckoski, 2015).

Zierer (2015) states that, in the Middle Ages, there was a great production of imaginary journeys; reports that explained the locations of Beyond the Tomb and which aimed to guarantee the conversion of the faithful. The author also points out that human beings see themselves as travelers in this visited world, so to speak, which would be a copy of the celestial world, the desired destination of travelers who had done good deeds. There was, according to her, a tendency, especially in works of art, to portray the human being as a pilgrim divided between two paths: one of salvation and the other of eternal damnation.

In the Middle Ages, hell as a theme and its figurative conceptualization went beyond the walls of churches and became part of culture in general, although, as part of the movement of the discursive communicative chain, reworking and re-accentuating the values of its religious origin. Many works describe hell in detail, if not with Christian motives, at least with elements through which strong dialogic relationships are established. If the experiential conceptualization already escapes the medieval reception of the concept, the figurative one, which consolidates moral values governing a causal contiguity between existence before and after death, is not restricted to the religious field. A collective structure of memory emerges from this permeation through other fields in which hell is ambivalently conceptualized, in the tension between sacred references and prosaic vulgarization.

Some examples of this expansion from church walls to other fields of culture are the paintings by Hieronymus Bosch, from the end of the 16th century, *Christ's descent into Hell*, which is currently part of the collection of the Metropolitan Museum in New York; *Crossing the River Styx* by Joachim Patinir, dated approximately between 1520 and 1524; *Last Judgment* by Giotto di Bondone from 1306 and *Last Judgment* by Hans Memling between 1467 and 1471. Among these, Hieronymous Bosch was one of the most influential painters in the 16th century to portray hell. Perhaps one of the most famous works by the Dutch artist is the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, in which the artist portrays the three dimensions of life: a paradisiacal image, a garden where humans are at the moment of creation and where Adam, Eve and God are portrayed; a second place, in the middle, where animals and humans are confused and mixed in eccentric pleasures and

vanities; and a last point of the painting, depicting hell, with references to torture, excrement and strange creatures. This hell will return as a theme, with other dimensions and motifs, in the work "Descent of Christ into Hell" by a follower and disciple of the artist. In this work, abysses, strange beings, beasts, animals mix with mouths, heads and other parts of bodies that make up a dark landscape, surrounded by smoke and fire. It is difficult to separate Bosch's school from religious themes, since, at that time, it was relatively difficult to separate anyone from religion. In fact, a large part of his works has religion and even biblical passages as themes. In any case, despite the lack of clear distinction between (Catholic Apostolic Roman) Church and the State, the appropriation in painting of the theme as it is elaborated in canonical and apocryphal religious writings in Early Christianity proves to be an important material rework to spread re-accentuations outside the religious field.

By migrating from the canon and apocrypha – texts of a religious nature, although not dogmatic – to literature and painting – cultural productions that meet the constraints of the field of art, even though there is room for hybridity –, the semiosis of hell is consolidated as a vector of collective memory. This is because the conceptualization begins to disseminate values that, when crossing the historical-social scope of Judaism and primitive Christianity and the field of religion, function as a vector of values and engender a worldview shared by varied social groups.

Conclusion

> "What's it like?" he asked.
> Vitoria said it was full of red-hot spits and bonfires.
> "Did you see them?"
> Irritated by what she considered insolence, Vitoria gave him
> a crack on the skull (...)
> "Hell, Hell-"
> He couldn't believe that a word with so musical a ring could
> be the name of something bad. He had decided to argue with
> Vitoria. If she had said that she had been there, all well and
> good.[33]
>
> *Graciliano Ramos*

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[33] For reference, see footnote 1.

Graciliano Ramos' narrative objectifies the hardships of the arid hinterland. Not just the environment, but lives are barren as well. For the eldest son, who knew no other reference, there is a lack of conceptual counterpart to the harshness of life that allows him to conceptualize *hell*. Everything he knows is inhospitable. Furthermore, his young age leads him to search for an experiential, non-figurative concept. In the film adaptation of the work, the excerpt taken as the epigraph to this conclusion is played with the eldest son repeating the word while looking around, as if searching for an empirical referent that would give concreteness to what he could not even imagine. If the character lives a semiotic drama, the reception of the literary or cinematographic work activates the cultural domain compressed in *hell* to process the acuteness of the character's suffering. For the reader of the novel or viewer of the film, "red-hot spits" and "bonfire" are not associated with a festival, such as the traditional feast of São João. In contrast, they refer to a highly negative and dismissive semantic domain available in the Western repertoire.

In this paper, there is no way to reconstruct in detail the semantic trajectory of the conceptualization created centuries before the Christian Era until it ended in a Brazilian novel from the beginning of the 20th century. The fact is that *hell* does not cause any difficulty of interpretation in its reception even almost a hundred years after this token in Brazilian literature. This is evidence of how successful the conceptual permeation process we are dealing with here is. It is not necessary to share Christian beliefs to share the values spread outside the religious field.

From the Jewish biblical canon, Old Testament to Christianity, experientially based concepts are deduced. Gehenna names a concrete place known to Jews in the context of production of the source texts. Likewise, Sheol designates the grave in which bodies are buried. By metonymy, the idolatrous practices carried out in Gehenna and the inert condition of the bodies in the grave produce polysemy, and the semantic domain is expanded. In the New Testament, these Old Testament references are reworked and re-accentuated enlarging the already polysemic concept. However, moving away from the more experiential concept seems to favor dialogic relationships with other cultural repertoires, such as Greek and Babylonian mythology. These relationships also operate through figurativization, spreading values that are increasingly less restricted to the religious field.

In the Middle Ages, a historical period in the West that was crucial for the permeation, especially of Christianity, through other fields of ideological creation, the prosaic dimension of the concept of *hell* signals the degree of penetration of axiological references into sociocultural conditions far away from those on which the so-called Judeo-Christian religious tradition was founded. Even in the hybrid field of sacred painting, for example, one notices how *hell* seems to activate a punitive moral-causal domain that, at the same time, defers to Christian values and denies religious principles, making the sacred and sublime also prosaic; not alternatively, but simultaneously, as typical of dialogic tension (Katerina Clark; Michael Holquist, 1984).[34] That is the ambivalence of the concept of hell spreading throughout Western culture.

In general terms, in the process of semiosis indicated by the trajectory of conceptualizations forming the semantic domain *hell*, two interrelated processes of language can be noted. The distancing from more experiential concepts towards more figurative concepts, whether through metonymy or metaphor, makes Christian-based values conducive to the permeation from other cultures – Greek and Babylonian, for example – and through other fields of ideological creation – painting, literature, for example. This conceptual transit between different cultures and different fields promotes the diffusion of the semantic domain under study, which starts to structure an ambivalent way of making sense, a worldview and, thus, participates in a Western structure of collective memory.

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Statement of Contribution of Each Author

The authors declare to be responsible for the manuscript in question, considering the conception of the project, analysis and interpretation of the linguistic-discursive phenomena taken as object of study; writing and review of the intellectual content; final approval of the published version.

Research Data and Other Materials Availability

The contents underlying the research text are included in the manuscript.

Reviews

Due to the commitment assumed by *Bakhtiniana.* Revista de Estudos do Discurso [*Bakhtiniana.* Journal of Discourse Studies] to Open Science, this journal only publishes reviews that have been authorized by all involved.

Review I

The article is well written, brings an interesting topic and useful theoretical articulation for observing the object, but it needs to be better intertwined. The promised articulation between Bakhtinian studies and studies of collective memory is pertinent, but it loses space for reflection for approaches to cognitive linguistics. The concept "dialogical resonance" could save the effort of articulating distant theories. In this sense, there is some disconnection between the importance of Bakhtinian concepts - less explored in the analysis - and their presence in the bibliography. Likewise, the article promises a reading of the semiosis of the hell category, taking as support the concept of collective memory as understood by Halbwachs, but this central concept is little discussed in the text. Given the profile of the Journal, it would be desirable for theoretical reflection to focus on the Bakhtin-Halbwachs Circle articulation.

As for methodological procedures, it is worth explaining the steps taken in conjunction with the objectives and the chosen theoretical framework. The *corpus* is not delimited and the selection criteria for the excerpts and images visited were not highlighted, mixing different eras and cultures, without being able to group them under the generic "Western culture." The title needs to be appropriate as it demonstrates a very broad scope for what is presented as examples of analysis. Some comments and suggestions were left in the text, but it is worth emphasizing that they indicate points that raise doubts in the reader, and it is not enough to resolve them to resolve the structure of the article. Therefore, it is

worth restructuring the proposal, cutting the scope of analysis, reducing the theoretical framework in order to find a more modest objective - for example, analysis of the apocrypha - and methodological procedures that bring greater security to the conclusions. The jump from medieval representations to Graciliano Ramos can leave the reader quite confused. The final considerations do not correspond to the entire article.

Finally, if the idea is to articulate dialogue, polysemy and collective memory, it is essential to consider the political and everyday uses of the hell category, but to do so a chronotopic approach is also necessary, since everyday life is one of the protagonists when one intends to work with collective memory.

When restructuring the article, it is worth considering that the Journal requires around 45 thousand characters with spaces and the article has more than 64 thousand. It is also necessary to indicate the bibliographical references as requested by *Bakhtiniana*, both in the body of the text and in the references at the end, as they are in disagreement. It is worth reviewing the use of quotation marks and italics for the word hell.

The paper has potential but needs significant changes. I believe it is important to highlight more explicitly the influences of Platonic thought on the construction of Christian hell; as well as important titles and authors for the study of the subject, such as Georges Minois - History of Hell; Hanna Arendt - Human condition; Between the past and the future; Le Goff with the birth of purgatory, among others that reflect on the connections between hell, history, politics, the devil and good vs. evil, among others. If the Brazilian cultural context is considered, dialog with other religious traditions will be important.

In the end, the reader is unable to understand which images of hell were fixed, disappeared or updated to have a vision of the process/semiosis of the category and its relationships with everyday life where the study of collective memory is based. REVISIONS REQUIRED [Revised]

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Reviewed on September 15, 2023.

Review III

The paper has an interdisciplinary approach that involves Sociology (collective memory), Cognitive Linguistics (semiosis, conceptualization, categorization, figurativization) and the Dialogism of the Bakhtin, Medvedev and Vološinov Circle (field, statement, refraction, reaccentuation, assimilation, dialogical relations). At the border of these scientific fields, it investigates the concept (notion, sign) of hell in a corpus containing 7 canonical texts from the official religious field and 6 apocryphal apocalyptic texts from the unofficial religious field.

The tension between the dialogic relationships between official and unofficial texts in the religious field allows the authors to construct for us, readers of the article, a narrative path that aims to "identify the verbo-ideological conditions through which values in tension are installed as Western collective memory even outside the religious field."

The originality of the discussion and the contribution to the field of interdisciplinary knowledge, on the border between the approaches of Dialogism, Sociology and Cognitive Linguistics, are articulated with an updated and relevant bibliography, notably those of the BMV Circle, and inserts us readers as participant addressees of this collective memory

of "Christian hell" that goes beyond the official and unofficial religious field in all fields of ideological creation.

An utterance from these other fields that guides our reading from the initial epigraph, and ends up framing the article until the Conclusion epigraph, is from the literary field: *Barren lives*, by Graciliano Ramos. The opening one with the concept of hell in the narrator's description of an interaction between Sinha Vitória and the eldest boy, who, upon hearing "hell" from Sinhá Terta's mouth, wanted to know what it was from his mother. And the closing one, with the eldest boy's provocative question that children still ask us today: "Did you see it?"

The ingenuity with which the authors operate scientific language, "this conceptual transit between two different cultures and diverse fields" of science and ideological creation, becomes another link to remind us and invite us to participate in the debate on contemporary "religious" wars and their values inherited from this Western collective memory, from this "infernal ambivalence." This paper should be published, considering the few suggestions for adjustments that were indicated in the evaluator's file with comments. ACCEPTED WITH SUGGESTIONS [Revised]

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Review IV

The paper aims at "frame a worldview." In other words, it aims at "demonstrating how the polysemic conceptual repertoire built from the notion of hell functions as a vector of collective memory, breaking the fluid limits of the religious field and outlining a way of seeing the world."

To this end, it highlights, as a discursive corpus, canonical sources (official biblical) and apocryphal texts (extra-canonical sources), dialoguing/articulating, methodologically, the contributions of Cognitive Linguistics, the concept of collective memory by Maurice Halbwachs (1991) and Bakhtinian studies, with the understanding that verbo-ideological relationships are dialogical relationships (Bakhtin, 1984;[35] 1986b;[36] 1986).[37]

Considering the objectivity and the required references, the study appears to be suitable, both theoretically and methodologically, for the proposed theme, showing textual and thematic progression, with special relevance for the processuality of the semiosis of hell based on the articulation between dialogism, collective memory and the polysemic inherence of the term.

Therefore, this is original and relevant thematic research, demonstrating an update of the bibliography regarding the in-depth analysis carried out. Its effective contribution to linguistic-discursive studies and other linguistic approaches, in general, is understood.

It is also discussed that Graciliano's text (*Barren lives*), in the epigraph, satisfactorily combined for the understanding of the original object acknowledged from the analytical path: the infernal ambivalence constituted by the sacred-prosaic simultaneity.

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[35] For reference, see footnote 17.
[36] For reference, see footnote 18.
[37] For reference, see footnote 19.

The text presents formal adequacy, demonstrating, in general, textual coherence and cohesion, with rare points that require revision regarding the linguistic-textual aspect. A new reading is suggested, with a view to giving priority, in a few passages, to more objective syntactic structures, in order to enable greater precision in terms of the required understanding. Some excerpts are highlighted in the attached file (notes in review boxes). Some suggestions are highlighted whose consideration and understanding of their relevance must be evaluated by the authors:

- As for the title, by deepening the theoretical concepts presented and the original object explained in the summary, corroborated throughout the text and in the conclusion, the inclusion of a subtitle is suggested, with a view to transparency of the thematic breadth developed. One possibility: "Dialogic Notes on the Origins of the Ambivalence of the Concept of Hell in Western Culture: the Sacred-Prosaic Simultaneity." Regarding the summary, it is understood that it presents all the necessary constituent parts. It is suggested, aiming at greater clarity regarding the discursive corpus, the mention of the canonical texts highlighted. Possibility: "Methodologically, it uses apocrificity as a resource for surveying source texts to trace the conceptual path constitutive of the semiosis of hell, in a movement of dialogicity with canonical texts."

It is recommended to adapt to the new ABNT rules (ABNT NBR 10520/2023) and pay attention to the constant changes in the Journal's rules, especially regarding the following points:

- "Indication of authorship by an individual, within the parentheses, must be in upper and lower case letters."
- "The first time an author is cited, their full name must be used without abbreviations."

Based on the considerations given, a statement in favor of the approval of the text is presented, highlighting the proposed suggestions as possibilities, and not, therefore, as conditioning elements for its publication. ACCEPTED

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