THE NATIONAL CONGRESS SPLIT BETWEEN *MYTHOS* AND *LOGOS*: RELIGION AND SYSTEMIC CORRUPTION IN THE BRAZILIAN POLITICAL SCENARIO

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ABSTRACT: Religion, in its origin, arises to explain the transcendent, the *mythos*; while science deals with truths, therefore, the *logos*. Because of this function, religion played an important role in the construction of societies, with a very extensive field of activity. Since Modernity, there has been a gradual loss of relevance given to the Church, undermining its influence over different social systems. In Brazil, within the discourse of Brazilian public institutions, more specifically, in the political system, religion still occupies a privileged space. Within this old problem, the corruption of the systemic code persists, with its fragility and loss of credibility in organizations. The big question that needs answers is: is it possible to guarantee a political filter that breaks with the systemic corruption perpetrated within the framework of Brazilian political organizations? This article aims at explaining this social problem, from the perspective of Niklas Luhmann's systems theory, in order to reconstruct the social role of religion, taking as a paradigm the short story *El Aleph* by Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges. Likewise, it aims at reflecting on the secularizing movement, identifying the risks related to the systemic corruption of politics and, finally, pointing out the role of religion in contemporary times. As a result, it is noted that systemic corruption undermines democracy, and that process must be reversed.

KEYWORDS: Niklas Luhmann; secularization; religion and politics.

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1 INTRODUÇÃO

Religion, in its origin, came to explain what escapes logic, what cannot be explained by other fields. It happens that, before Modernity, logic had less fields of action, whereas religion occupied more space. At the beginning of societies, the latter came to elucidate phenomena that are now easily explained by science, such as the changing of seasons, diseases, pests, day and night. With Modernity and the Bourgeois Enlightenment Rationalism, the phenomenon called secularization, which, in an inverse movement to the previous one, is gradually taking place, represents the increase of the field of action of logic for the decrease of the field of religion, undermining the great influence that the latter exercised as the unique epistemology in the way of experiencing knowledge until then. It is the old waltz danced between the *logos* and the *mythos*, varying among themselves in the dominant position of the dance.

Secularization can be defined as the growing loss of space of religion in societies, with the transformation or passage of things, facts, people, beliefs and institutions, which were under religious domination, to secularism. It represents, therefore, the passage from the influence of religion to other fields, losing important functions, with the loss of its power as an institution that disseminates ideology, which exercised great discursive control until the Medieval era. It arises connected with the Enlightenment era's scientism – in the so-called Century of Lights, when the idea of the separation of State and Religion begins to gain strength. The framework of the Enlightenment, as the beginning of the secular archive, is explained by the culmination of scientism, with the consolidation of John Locke's ideas on the differentiation between State and Religion, the separation of powers under Montesquieu's inspiration, and changes previously provoked by the Protestant Reformation.

From the mark of modernity, science was accepted as the way of knowing the world best suited to the new times, with empirical criteria of verification based on falsifiability and provisionality (Popper, 1975), unlike the *Mythos*, which was based on the revelation of a sovereign and unquestionable truth.

Despite this phenomenon, advocated by several thinkers, who imagined that in the 21st century, religion would disappear, it continues to affirm its role, including broadening its field of action, through political discursiveness. As a paradox, in Brazil, instead of the phenomenon of secularization, there has been the continuity of a model in which religion still occupies a very privileged space. This can be revealed in an analysis of the National Congress, which in many cases uses the code of religion to motivate its decisions and in which this paradox is shown more anomalously, with the invasion of religion in the public spheres, extrapolating the limited space that was granted to it in Modernity.

The Brazilian Congress is composed of a large religious group, which is strongly influenced by the mixture or confluence of politics and religion, with the presentation of proselytizing law propositions, ignoring that, from the point of view of the State, all the Federal Constitutions, since the Constitution of the United States of Brazil of 1891, bring in their scope the separation between Religion and State. The scope of topics that are influenced by Religion in legal decisions is extensive, such as the prohibition of abortion, the resistance to the criminalization of homophobia (PL 122/2006), the "Gay Cure" proposition (PL 4.931/2016), the resurgence of abortion procedure in case of sexual violence 5.069/2013), the establishment of heteronormativity in the conceptualization of the family (PL 6.583/2013), the criminal immunity of religious leaders (PL 6.314/2005), among others.

It was even said that such thing as the idea of secularization would be false, because the world remains furiously religious, as it always was, emphasizing that religious movements did not really adapt to the culture in order to survive, but they created a new identity, intact in their beliefs and practices and, even, increasing their field of action.

The starting point is the idea that Brazilian politics does not have sufficient autonomy to maintain the sensibility to the pressures of the network of religious discourses and, at the same time, to maintain its own autopoiesis, with closure and autonomy. There is, in the political system, an intervention of religious communication, guided by the immanent/ transcendent code, in State guidelines that, in theory, should be secular, forming a religious semantics. It is the corruption of the systemic political

code, whose organizations appropriate the code of meaning from religion. The question that permeates this article is whether it is possible to guarantee a filter in the field of politics, in order to break with the mythical discourses in the political experiences that persist in Brazil, and also if the so-called crisis of legitimacy of the legislative power, can be explained by the ease with which the organizations that integrate it take ownership of other codes, be it economic, religious or other. Therefore, the main problem discussed in this research is: is it possible to break with the systemic corruption perpetrated within the framework of Brazilian political organizations?

In Brazil, since the Constitution of the Republic of 1891, there is no longer an official belief. Despite this, Catholicism only came to know some kind of ideological competition in the second half of the twentieth century, when religious pluralism began to emerge, but the problem of non-secularity has not been overcome. In the Constitution of the Republic of 1988, there was a concern to provide greater citizen openness, with the participation of the population in the drafting of the constitutional text, when the most diverse segments were heard by the Constituent Assembly, including religious movements, which, although not attacking secularism itself, tried to insert devices on morality.

From 1990 on, religion began to invade the media and the party-political sphere, which abandoned apolithism with slogans like *siblings vote for siblings* (Mariano, 2009, p. 115). This appropriation of political preaching by religious groups is rather alarming, since they not only select state discourse and support candidates, but often participate directly in democratic legitimation, anchoring their discourses openly in the religious code, and the astonishing number of seats occupied by the religious bench in Congress, in addition to their involvement in important legal proceedings[3].

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[3] The National Conference of Bishops of Brazil served as *amicus curiae* in the inconstitutionality judgment 4.277, which dealt with the recognition of gay union, and also of inconstitutionality act n⁰. 3.510, which dealt with the use of human embryos for the purpose of stem cell research. In addition to the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and the Medical-Spiritist Association of Brazil, the aforementioned entity also participated in a hearing about the pregnancy interruption of the anencephalic fetus. More recently, there was clear influence of the Catholic Church in the inconstitutionality judgment 4.439, which allowed for religious denominational teaching in schools.

In Brazil, secularism has suffered the interference of religion, which intervenes in selective discourses. The question that seems to arise – and which apparently will continue for some years without a definitive answer – is about how it is possible, in a democratic state, to neutralize the performance of religion in a legitimate way, strengthening the organizations of the political system, with autonomy necessary to maintain the sensibility to the pressures of the network of religious discourses and, at the same time, maintain its own autopoiesis, since the religious groups that are in power guide their parliamentary performance in their own religiosity.

This article proposes to explain this social problem, in order to reconstruct the role of religion, taking as a paradigm the short story *El Aleph*, by Jorge Luis Borges. Likewise, it aims at reflecting on the secularizing movement, identifying the risks related to the systemic corruption of politics and, finally, pointing out the role of religion in contemporary times.

El Aleph is a beautiful story by Jorge Luis Borges, which is published within the homonymous collection book of short stories and in which paradoxical themes are worked, with a sensible writing full of labyrinths and challenges. In this literary work that is taken as a paradigm, the protagonist encounters the possibility of knowing a tiny point of space, where all the reality of the universe is covered, in a very controversial place: in the basement of a house in Buenos Aires, about to be demolished. This point is called *Aleph*, which is the initial letter of the Hebrew alphabet, corresponding to the *alpha* of Greece and to the A of the Roman alphabet. With *Aleph*, Borges works on the theme of unity in multiplicity, related to religiosity, which should be attached to the private sphere: it is only a point in a basement, which can be found by anyone who wishes.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the contributions of Niklas Luhmann's theory of systems as a bibliographical research technique was used. As for the method of approach, this article used the second order observation – inspired by Heinz Von Foerster's cybernetics, which makes possible the observation of the observation that social systems perform, as well as their blind spots. This method of approach disconnects knowledge from reality, understanding it as a construction. It was adopted by allowing the analysis of the discourses, descriptions and records that a given system

makes of itself, with the reconstructive possibility, through the observation of its blind spots. Moreover, through the system/environment guideline distinction proposed by the German sociologist, it becomes feasible to understand the discursive dynamics undertaken by the systems of organization of politics and also of religion, in which one can see their contingent of observation, operations and registers.

2 BETWEEN THE *LOGOS* AND THE *MYTHOS*

In modernity, there was a weakening of religion and ethics as elements that could agglutinate power, creating a plural and fragmented society that questions the foundation of rules that can no longer legitimize, generating a deficit of reality, because the systemic operation that produced is no longer shared with most observers, generating new differentiations.

With the Enlightenment, there was a rupture of the Western religious world, demanding the separation of State and Religion, which should refrain from acting and influencing politics. Church authority was questioned as the only possible entity to promote mediation between God and humans[4], opening the way not only for religious pluralism, but also for the denial of ecclesiastical discourse on so-called secular issues, when the state becomes secular, with respect to the fragmentation of religion and the factual impossibility of establishing only one belief as official.

Secularization became possible, especially because of the Protestant Reformation in the Modern State[5], when it called for the de-sacralization of the law and the secular state. Karl Marx dealt with the issue of the political emancipation of religion, understanding secularization as a privatization of belief and making it clear that this was a liberation from the State of religion, but not from man (Marx, 2010, p. 19). Max Weber conceived a separation between religion and politics, thinking of a process of social differentiation between cultural values and the question of institutions,

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[4] Religion comes from the Latin *religare*, which means *connect again*. Thus the function of the link of religion, as a bridge between man and God.

[5] Protestantism made possible the deepening of the privatization of religion, through its differentiation from Catholicism, allowing the un-ritualization of the faith (Luhmann, 1977, p. 108).

arguing that there would be a decline of religion as a cultural value and replacing transcendentalism with rationalization (Weber, 1999).

Although several authors have worked with this issue, and far from wanting to establish unitarity on the subject, we adopted in this work the theoretical perspective of Niklas Luhmann, who inaugurates an important critical way to think society in general, providing instruments to articulate more adequately the discussion that is intended to be established in this article.

Luhmann understood secularization as a process of functional differentiation, with which the sacred of the public sphere was disarticulated, advancing in the discussions in a very differentiated way, since in systems theory everything comes down to communication. Systems arise in a process of functional differentiation and specification, when society becomes more complex. As a result of this increase of complexity, partial social systems are formed through the double function and code, when it is possible to transform the complexity of the environment into an organized complexity. They are autopoietic, which means that they are operationally closed and cognitively open.

Secularization would be the socio-structural relevance of the privatization of religious decision (Luhmann, 1977, p. 232), while other functional systems have to secure their own autonomy against the control of religion (Luhmann 1989, p. 291). The religious experience began to be privatized, which was made possible by the development of the press, which enabled the reproduction and marketing of the Bible, diverting the prevailing monopoly over its interpretation. At that time, the secularizing thought defended that technology and modernity could advance the culture in such a way that religion would inevitably decline, which did not happen.

Meaning is formed with operations of mutual inclusions and exclusions (Luhmann, 2006, p.23). Luhmann understood religion as an autopoietic social system, which, as such, has a mode of self-making, self-observation, self-description and reproduction, with respect to internal operations, which are based on the sacred/profane binary code (Luhmann, 2006, p. 10). Thus, for the system theory, religion, like politics, is a social

system that has its own code, according to which its functional differentiation, with no absolute beginning or necessary end, without rational or historical linearity, according to momentary contingencies, abandoning the dichotomy between subject and object and thinking in a more complex way, with the dichotomy between system/environment.

Thus, for Niklas Luhmann, the passage of old cosmological limitations, understood here as the idea of essence and nature, of *Aristotelian* origin, by distinctions related to rationality, occurred at some point (Luhmann, 1996, p. 135). Secularization would be a privatization of religion, when it becomes an individual matter, leaving public spaces and diminishing the scope of influence in other social systems.

Religion is guided by the immanent/transcendent binary code and its symbolically generalized means of communication is faith. Religion acts in a reactive way when the other systems gain autonomy, because, while they have separate functions in society, the function of religion is to bring together the systemic spheres, and their differentiation is done by reaction (Luhmann, 2007a, p. 250). With the autopoietic of the other partial social systems, which are recursively distinguished from their own codes, in an independent and autonomous way, the possibility of a conclusive metanarrative exists that can be a reference unit to aggregate all aspects of life, as it was before modernity.

According to Niklas Luhmann, as systems are constitutive of reality, religious themes – such as the question of the omnipresence of God and creationism, among others – can be observed as phenomena that are subject to the communicative sequences that reproduce, forming their own semantics about life, death, body or soul (Luhmann, 2007a, p. 44).

Secularization, in this context, would be the absence of foundations, of a higher order, in which the univocal starting points are abandoned (Luhmann, 1998, p. 148), when religion loses its function as a central element in politics, making with which it alone submits itself to its own code of immanence and transcendence, for formation and reproduction of meaning. Thus, when religion sees itself as a link (Luhmann, 2006, p. 179) between the sacred and the observer of the system, this must be kept secret,

under penalty of desacralization[6], and when this link becomes language, the symbolic generalization becomes possible. But this secret conflicts with complexity and with communication itself, making the sacred come to the sphere of culture and, sometimes, morality.

Secularization therefore brought the substitution of certainty for salvation for risks, with religion losing its space as an omnipotent narrative. Luhmann points to this increase in probabilities and the complexification of society as a major risk factor, which may lead to fundamentalisms or to the maintenance of socially constructed expectations (Luhmann, 1996, p. 126).

On fundamentalisms, it is important to mention Karen Armstrong, from whom this article borrowed the word play of *logos* and *mythos*[7]. According to this author, fundamentalism is not only a response of society that dichotomized *mythos* and *logos*, but is the fruit of modernity itself. The *mythos*, in this sphere, refers to the values and meanings that are realized in the experience of the universe, a way of being and living in the world, while the *logos* is all that refers to the practical applications. Therefore, when politics focuses on issues of economy, health, defense etc., it is at the service of the *logos*. On the other hand, when it uses the sign of the *mythos*, with the divine will as its foundations, the results are disastrous.

K. Armstrong analyzes one of the most alarming problems of the twentieth century, which is the religious fundamentalism of three great religious traditions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, including not only those who promote terrorist attacks or homophobic intolerance, but also those fundamentalists who are more peaceful and orderly, but declare themselves against most of the values of contemporary society, such as

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[6] This is a characteristic of religion which, although can distinguish the two sides of its operation, does not accept second-order observation. Religion demands secrecy (the sacred, the incomprehensible, the sacred sphere etc.), because it works with things that cannot be explained and, therefore, requires faith. Morality, although resembling this aspect of not accepting second-order observation, is not an autopoietic system, but merely a code, which remains at the disposal of society in order to problematize issues that are not resolved by the media.

[7] *Logos* and *mythos* are two expressions that refer to speech. While the first concerns the speech it demonstrates, the second concerns narrative speech. In this, their similarities are restricted, since the birth of the *logos* coincides with the emergence of philosophy, reason and civility, in what may be empirically demonstrable, while the *mythos*, in its etymological-cultural origin, concerns that narrative in which the listener simply believes in, giving credence to the narrator, linked to a premodern and ritualistically related mode of explaining. The *logos* is what has to do with scientific theories and discoveries, with the *mythos*' confrontation, although both are complementary forms of understanding the world.

democracy, pluralism, tolerance, religious separation, among others, rejecting the *logos*. According to Armstrong (2001), it was believed that secularism was irreversible and that faith would never again play an important role, restricting itself to the scope of the private sphere. However, as of 1970, the fundamentalists rebelled, in order to try to put religion back on the agenda.

In Brazil, the range of subjects in which religious authority is still heard is quite extensive, thus influencing the political themes of the State, which rely on media support, as well as participation in political party spheres, which is highly noticeable by its representation in the National Congress. Religion today experiences an attempt to de-privatize the sacred, taking an interest in political party life, with strong moral traditionalism. There is a real systemic corruption of the code of politics within the institutions, which appropriates these discourses, dissolving them within the code of religion.

Religion influences various general interest patterns, which are found in discussions that should be restricted to political power, such as abortion, gay union, stem cells, religious teaching in schools, as well as other topics that gain attention.

This clash is quite serious, signaling a redefinition of the boundary between the public space and the private space, since religious discussions, which should be attached to the private sphere, gain progress, denoting how fragile secularism can be as a republican value that truly acts in the activities of political power. Especially when, in the face of this clash, there are institutions that are corrupted by other codes that do not have the necessary autonomy to maintain the sensitivity to the networks of pressures of religious discourses, as is the case today with the National Congress.

3 SYSTEMIC CORRUPTION

Democracy dates back to ancient Greece. However, this Greek democracy did not imply an egalitarian democracy, in the modern sense of the term, since it provided exclusions. *Politikón* comes from *polis*, but every city dweller had such an attribute, since slaves, foreigners, women and

children were not considered citizens, and therefore could not participate in democracy[8].

The *polis* needed walls, and the *agora* was the place where citizens debated themes related to the life of the city[9]. However, in the face of an increasingly complex society, an *agora* was no longer possible, direct democracy being unfeasible, and the Athenian model became an ineffective paradigm for the contemporary world, which had to think of new forms of organization.

In the Middle Ages, democracy ceases to be a model of government, in view of the fact that religious power exerts a giant influence in the political sphere. It was the monarch who denoted a divine image of the ruler, who was to manage the common good in blind obedience to the divine laws.

With the Renaissance, the idea of divine power became very problematic due to the crisis of the medieval model. Skepticism transformed the social order, against the enlightened bourgeois rationalism. The questions of the State are treated with greater care, by thinkers such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, among others. In Leviathan, the conception of *homo homini lupus* arises – man is the wolf of man (Hobbes, 1997). For Hobbes, men would relinquish their natural condition to submit to the sovereign, whose powers were granted by the social pact. John Locke, in the analogous sense, approaches the state of nature, but does not attribute to it the aggressiveness that we find in Hobbes, starting from the assumption of equality and freedom of the human beings. Later, Rousseau emerges, who, in his famous work *On the social contract*, reformulates the understanding of the state of human nature: man is good, but corrupted by civilization (Rousseau, 2006). At this stage of nature, the proposal of a social contract that regulates the relationships among people arises, a conception that was very much questioned in contemporaneity.

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8 Plato understood democracy not as the people's government, but rather as an anarchy with subversion of values in Greek society. For him, the ideal state would be that commanded by the philosopher-politician, who could achieve the good. To know more about the subject, see Plato (1892).

9 *Agora* was a large square of enormous importance to classical Athens. It had an important role in Athenian democracy, since it was the place where public opinion manifested itself.

Finally, democracy came to be understood as the way to manage the relationship between individual, society and freedom. In the State, for this to be considered democratic, there has to be a power that can be transmitted by a deformed figure called people, to whom sovereignty belongs.

Faced with so many views on the subject and far from being established a consensus, in this work we opted for a theory based on new presuppositions, that were beyond tradition, that could be compatible with the requirement of universality and complexity of contemporary society. The chosen author is the sociologist and systems theorist Niklas Luhmann, who developed a non-linear, post-ontological, unparalleled style of thinking throughout sociology. For him, ideas that have been traditionally developed about democracy are mistaken simultaneously in addressing the problem, treating sovereignty or power as something transmissible, when in fact the problem is in an increasingly complex power (Luhmann, 1980 , p. 128).

According to Luhmann, in Modernity, politics loses its place as the center of society and acts in parallel and in conjunction with other social systems. Politics is governed by the government/opposition dichotomy, operates in the condensation of public opinions, and makes collective decisions (Luhmann, 2002: 490). The *Luhmannian* model of democracy starts with a new attempt, because, instead of asking *what* a democracy is, it asks *how* a democracy is possible.

The law, in order to reduce the complexity of the environment, goes through a process of positivation, which brings the idea of the relation of power, since it draws guidelines of possible behaviors, within various possibilities of the environment, that is, of natural complexity.

Its symbolically generalized means of communication, under which its exercise is accepted, is power, which offers obedience and provides society with a way of solving the specific problem of coordinating actions (Simioni, 2008, p. 156). Thus, when there is an action of *ego*, which has the action of *alter* as a premise, power arises, which divides a given situation into only two alternatives: either an order is fulfilled or disregarded, and in both cases, there was a relation of power (Simioni, 2008, p. 161).

Etymologically, democracy arises from the conjunction between d*emos* (people) and *kratia* (power), only that this conceptual vagueness becomes a damaging reductionism, for not being able to cover the nuances of complexity.

Luhmann eliminates the subject as something important to understand democracy, dissolving the people element as artifice of the will of citizens and breaking with the classical doctrine. Given this, democracy is conceived as a demonstration of the evolution of the political system as a new way of proposing collectively binding actions and norms in a highly complex world. This coincides, as regards law, with legitimacy through participation in procedures, ending with the invariable truths that rule the world (Luhmann, 1980, p. 08).

With the end of the myth of the subject, of the power from the people to the people, it is suggested that democracy is a rupture from above, with the division of the political system, through the government/opposition code (Luhmann, 2007b, p. 162).

After overcoming pre-modern society, democracy demarcates the separation between the political and legal systems, with the Democratic State of Law, in which each person acts autonomously and according to their own binary codes.

It is important to emphasize that the symbolically generalized means of communication is built within the communicative relationship, and not through an actor who holds power, making possible the bankruptcy of power and, consequently, circulation within it, by enabling the binary government/opposition code. Through the elections, mobility must be ensured between this code, provoking self-produced and self-founded uncertainty.

With parties and political representation, it is possible to manage the contingency, in which the issue of voters and elected officials is diverted and the legitimation of decisions through the procedure is conceived. However, institutional legitimacy for systems theory is not based on a consensus of people on the validity of norms or decisions, but on the possibility of thinking about their acceptance.

Thus, decisions are considered legitimate in which the members of society expect normatively that those affected cognitively adjust to the

decisions or rules transmitted, or, in other words, that the whole society is willing to assimilate what is regulated by binding decisions.

Although the *outputs* that the political system emits may not faithfully express the *inputs* (or demands) of voters, this is not exactly what would create a crisis, but rather when voters can no longer become recognizable to the representatives.

Legitimacy, in a democratic system, requires open decision-making criteria. What happens is that when the political system differs and becomes more complex, and because power is a symbolically generalized means of communication, other codes of power emerge, as in the case of religious power and financial power, among others. This power can exert two kinds of influence: either through external influence on decision-making bodies that are politically legitimized through the social mass, because one wants to push for a particular decision, or even for the power that is exercised within decision-making bodies, but which remains outside the relation of the political code.

Thus, the crisis of legitimacy seems to point not to the denial of the binary code of political power itself, which is the interchange between government/opposition, but rather in the non-suppression of that apolitical power that constantly threatens political power, both externally as well as internal. Its elimination is precisely what allows the continuation of systemic autopoiesis, making possible its evolution. Otherwise, democracy is ineffective, which is very serious for politics, since systemic corruption blocks autopoiesis.

There are, conventionally, two ways of solving this question: either through juridicization[10] or through democratization (Luhmann 1985, p. 78).

Juridicization consists in exporting political power to non-political systems, more specifically to the legal system, which lends its law/non-law binary code, in order to bring the situation into apolitical contexts without

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[10] A terminological correction is appropriate here. It is understood by juridicization the operation of reconstruction of the meaning of a social fact in a juridical fact, while the juridicialization is linked to the protagonism of the law in the determination of the sense of a social fact, to the detriment of the political, economic, moral etc. senses which the fact can potentially carry with it. The sense applied here is that of the juridicization, and not of the juridicialization.

politicizing them (Luhmann, 1985, p. 79). Obviously, there is the risk that this juridicization will become judicial activism, out of any democratic control.

Democratization, on the other hand, would be a more direct participation in power, which, on the contrary, seems to strengthen the diffusion of apolitical power, which remains outside politics, which is difficult to order, pointing to a point is the risk of pulverizing power, destroying political power and preventing it from being functionally differentiated from the environment.

Juridicization still seems to be the best way, developing a theory of interpretation, argumentation and legal decision that is careful not to extrapolate the judiciary, under the risk of slipping into a rather arbitrary judicial activism, which would mean the return to a pre-modern law. It is recalled that systemic corruption completely perverts democratic ideals and is an urgent problem that needs to be debated. Another possibility is, through juridicization, to point out the use by means of the systems of organization of the policy of codes of sense of others, such as the religious code, which, in the medium or long term, can provoke a self-immunization of the systems against these influences or networks pressure.

Election is, in fact, only possible if there is provision, but the reasons why a candidate is elected – whether for religious reason or economic interest – are uncontrollable, at least in the current stage of democracy.

Moreover, with the invasion of diverse discourses in the systems of organization of the policy by codes that are alien to them, such as economics and religion, for example, uncertainty is removed from the result of the election, which becomes a mere ritual that consecrates the already dominant discourses.

Castells (2013) understands that the current crisis is not only of the political parties, but of the representative democracy itself, with a lack of credibility in the political system, which – due to the technological manipulation resources employed by the media, scandal – has been losing its reliability. According to him, there are indications that democracy is being hijacked by professionals in politics and reduced to mere voting market (Castells, 2013, p. 179), when a sort of *particracy* is created, characterized by a media policy and systemic corruption, leading one to

believe that there is, in fact, no longer a *democratic democracy*. After all, as Žižek pointed out, the present enemies are no longer the same as in the last century, as understood by left-wing socialist ideas (Žižek, 2013, p. 23). It is not called capitalism, empire or anything else, but it is democracy itself, or rather, democratic illusion, that it is possible to use it in its traditional format to promote all changes (Žižek, 2013, p. 23).

This *particracy* legitimizes the invasion, by groups that centralize the theme religiosity, of the institutions, that cannot maintain the sensibility to the networks of pressures of the religious discourses. Society must break with this pattern, supported by a specific electoral model, through the strengthening of peripheral systems of organization versus the systems of political center that, in addition to self-immunization, may in the future strengthen democratic construction, neutralizing forms of apolitical power factors that constantly interfere with systemic decision making.

4 IRIDESCENT UNIVERSE IN THE INFINITE ALEPH

Religion must be attached to the private space of consciousness, since belief is fragmented. To remove it from the sphere of action of state policy, it is necessary not only to preserve state secularism, but also to allow religious freedom.

With the failure of the so-called promises of Modernity, some fundamentalisms reappear and revive the presence of religious groups in the public sphere, making the discussion of secularism necessary and urgent[11], and from this arises the concept of post-secularization or even un-secularization (Pierucci , 1998, p. 45). Regardless of how it is configured, it is important to develop new investigative strategies that allow to problematize the relations between the different formations of discourses, as well as the reproduction and contestation of the senses of religiosity in cultural, political and juridical arenas.

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[11] For Ladeur, one of the reasons for the new influence of religion in politics is the inability of the state to assume a superego position of diverse identities, when law could be constituted as a kind of symbolic order of the other (Ladeur, 2009, p. 2450).

In *Zohar, the book of splendor*[12], the dispute between the Hebrew letters, totaling twenty-two, is reported to occupy the first place of the alphabet, which would be the privileged space. The letter *Aleph* complained, therefore, unlike the others, it had only the singular form. God responds that it will reign over all letters, receiving a religious conformation: "thou art one and I am One" (Nascimento, 2008). The Aleph thus represents the secret of faith, for all the letters of it would derive. It is the symbol of unity, a metaphor of writing, through which narratives proliferate.

The theme *Aleph* is worked on in a short story by Jorge Luis Borges. At first, the character narrator can be identified with the author and also protagonist of the story, Borges, evidencing the natural undefinition of the borders between reality and fiction, in the mixture between personages and beings of the empirical world. The narrator, who calls himself Borges, tells of visiting the house on Garay Street where his beloved Beatriz Elena Viterbo had lived, every year, on her death anniversary. The image of the beloved in the numerous portraits scattered throughout the house gives him a devout contemplation of the mysteries. The figure of Beatriz Viterbo is becoming opaque by the absence that is only perceived by the frames of her photographs. Viterbo is like a lost text that one wants to rescue, and for this reason, Borges visits the same house every year to feel her present in her relatives and the details of her personality that could only be accessed by her frozen images in the room: Beatriz marrying, making the first communion, soon after the divorce, among others.

In the *Borgian* story, replicants of the scriptures are created, many *Viterbos* in their portraits, which can be confused with the original, dissecting the theme of the porosity of memory. There are three points where the story centers. The first of them is the veneration of the narrator by the late Beatriz and includes the story of a story of a frustrated love. After death, it is in the contemplation of the beloved that Borges seeks the consolation. The second point is about the relationship full of heartache, disdain, envy and contempt of the narrator with Daneri, Beatriz's cousin, who fears to lose *Aleph* and asks him to intercede in the case. However,

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[12] Around 1280, Moses of Leon was the author of the *Zohar*, inspired by materials obtained by collaboration of some Kabbalists. Some parts of this work were written in a sort of divine meditation or trance, a technique common among the Kabbalists of that time (Matt, 1995, p. 16-19).

when observing the *Aleph*, the narrator realizes that everything was intricate, being allowed to see all the images of Beatriz. Then he realized that there was a love rivalry, not just a literary one, between him and Daneri, sparking a desire for revenge, even if it represented the sacrifice of the marvelous *Aleph*, with the demolition of the basement. The third and most important relation established in the tale is *Aleph* itself with the narrator, who opposes and confronts the infinite, observing a point that contains all the points of the universe, which is only possible to see if one is lying down: something that should be the object of great adoration is revealed in the triviality, being the object of metaphysical and philosophical reflections.

The Aleph is an endless narrative, which presents itself in the scenario of possible ruin and the fragment of the narrator's memory. As Borges has contact with this point in the basement of Garay Street, he sees the proliferation of narratives that reconstruct meaning and his own way of seeing the world through the recomposition of beloved Viterbo. It is at this point that the narrator asks himself: "All language is an alphabet of symbols whose exercise presupposes a past that the interlocutors share, how to transmit to others the infinite *Aleph*, which my fearful memory barely encompasses?"

After that, the devotion of Viterbo is lost: the woman has no longer a place to be. When he sees the mystic, the narrator refuses the tradition and, in refusing, seeks a new type of language, one that is neither based on mysticism nor linearity, but on appropriation. In this way, the new and smooth paths that could be followed, with the distortion of meaning, are opened.

This withdrawal of Beatriz in the *Borgian* narrative is demonstrated by the displacement of the narrator's own archive, as a system of formation and transformation of statements (Foucault, 2014). The contemplation of *Aleph* gives the narrator the unique opportunity to rearrange the archive of his own tradition, which is no longer absolutized, but which constitutes an opening to oblivion: Viterbo, signs, memory of the author-narrator that can be reconstructed.

Thus, in a paradigmatic way, it can be said that religion must be inscribed in its own field, seeking not absolutism, with the invasion of

spheres and proliferation of discourses, the multiple *Viterbos* who seek to reoccupy a place no longer possible after their demise. As Borges seems to indicate in the story, when contemplating the *Aleph*, one must operate a spacing with the rearrangement of tradition, after all, *men usurp the name of Aleph*. One should shuffle the alphabetical order, assume oblivion, distort the image of the *Aleph*. Religion, far from controlling the archive and the system of enunciation of the social system, must be maintained for the private contemplation of each of the psychic systems that access it, and only then can it be preserved in its own function: to bring together the systemic spheres.

When searching, at the lowest point of the basement where the *Aleph* was, the reconstitution of all the memories of the deceased Beatriz, the narrator is mistaken. Just as it is wrong to transmute the sphere of religiosity through the representation in time of already forgotten functions, stretching the performance of religion into an abandoned space, as well as extending the memories of the late Viterbo. The retaking of Beatriz through the dusty memories of her old photographs and the *Aleph* may be, like fundamentalism, an attempt to extend the performance of the *mythos* in fields where the *logos* have long been present. It is not necessary to create a false infinitude, or to lengthen the function of religion, to an already abandoned public sphere, it is necessary the rearrangement of the archive, with its preservation in an intimate sphere and the privatization of its decision. This is how the narrator chooses to allow the destruction of the *Aleph*, along with the demolition of the basement of the house. The memory he kept of Beatriz Viterbo would only bring him eternal suffering, so he should re-signify her in new contexts.

The place of religion is in the private sphere. Its classic function is to give meaning to the plane of immanence, by referring it to transcendence (Luhmann 1989: 349-350). Its relevance lies in endowing spiritually the cumulative exclusion produced by the other functional systems of society, in order to attribute a transcendence to worldliness, in the face of unjustified suffering. Therefore, it acts in a reactive way to the other systems. Remember: secularization is not the loss of function of religion, but a natural process by which other social systems must ensure autonomy in relation to religiosity.

Obviously, this does not mean that it cannot produce any irritation to other social systems, obliquely, which actually happens. But religion must take care of its borders, under penalty of overrunning the confines of the political system, returning to pre-modernity and, by doing so, pulverize itself.

5 CONCLUSION

> I saw the Aleph from all points, I saw in the Aleph the earth, and in the earth again the Aleph and in the Aleph the earth, I saw my face and my entrails, I saw your face and I felt dizzy and I cried, because my eyes had seen this secret and conjectural object, whose name usurp men, but which no man looked at: the inconceivable universe (Borges 1998, p. 696).

As much as the Constitution and laws constantly demand the separation of political and religious systems, the mutual influence and exchange between these two instances in society is extremely present in Brazil. This is quite serious, because systemic corruption undermines democracy and, as it is seen, carries the risk of illegitimacy of power, generating a crisis of legitimacy.

Religion must remain neutral in relation to politics in order to preserve not only freedom of religious belief but also individual identity. Belief must be privatized – and maintained in this sphere, as a prerequisite for the removal of law and politics, which is only possible through discursive procedures based on the secular reason.

Democracy demands, by itself, discursive relativism. On the other hand, there is religious universalism. In this way, democracy cannot interdict religion as a performative element of society, because it provides precisely this procedural openness to the most varied arguments, based on the difference of discourses. The question arises as to whether a secular state is truly possible without the necessary secularization of the society that shelters it.

The public/secular and private/religious relationship comes to the fore. This is because religion must transfer its own *poiese*, from the religious communicative sphere, to the individual sphere of consciousness. Parallel forms of apolitical power must be taken care of, through a

juridicization that does not slip into activism, as well as new forms of representation, as a solution to the current *particracy*, which favors the fragility of the political system. Two simultaneous possibilities are: the autoimmunization of the political system and the strengthening of peripheral organization systems in the decision-making of the center systems.

Only through the strengthening of these institutions, through mechanisms of control of decisions, can one maintain in the political system the sensitivity to the multiple discursive networks that in the contemporaneity are constructed.

The transcendence/immanence binary code will undoubtedly continue to provoke irritations in other social systems. However, such irritations will not exert so much influence and religion will be transferred to the private sphere, otherwise it will be returned to a pre-modern period.

It would be left to religion only to give meaning to worldly existence (immanence), referring to transcendence; the religious code would continue to allow the understanding of life beyond the mundane, contemplating the *Aleph* in its necessary spacing.

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