

## OTHER WAYS OF THINKING AND DREAMING: THE ONEIRIC EXPERIENCE IN REINHART KOSELLECK, AILTON KRENAK AND DAVI KOPENAWA<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Starting from an epistemic practice that seeks to ensure difference, this work consists of a necessary dialogue between Theory of History and some of its related fields, such as Philosophy, and Anthropology, embracing a research on the thoughts of Reinhart Koselleck, Ailton Krenak and David Kopenawa about the oneiric experience. The intention here is to point out how the way those thinkers adopted an approach about dreams provides us with an alternative perspective to the ways of life and thought in the Western World. Therefore, the approach we are referring to has a powerful effect on our relationship with contemporary challenges on knowledge and sociopolitical issues. We begin with an overview on what would be the oneiric activity in the Western World. Then we try to demonstrate the thoughts of Koselleck and indigenous wisdom, which can be taken as opposed to this Western trajectory. In the conclusion, we explain our epistemological, ethical and political choices for those thinkers and subject, as we approach an overview of what, according to Koselleck, is the “history of the defeated” (or the history of those who have been silenced). We do this theoretical exercise in conjunction with an urgent reflection towards reevaluating colonial conceptions.

**Keywords:** Dreams/oneiric experience, Ailton Krenak; Davi Kopenawa; Indigenous American philosophy; Reinhart Koselleck.

## OUTROS MODOS DE PENSAR E SONHAR: A EXPERIÊNCIA ONÍRICA EM REINHART KOSELLECK, AILTON KRENAK E DAVI KOPENAWA

**Resumo:** A partir de uma prática epistêmica que procura assegurar a diferença, este trabalho se constitui em um diálogo necessário entre a Teoria da História e áreas afins, a saber: a Filosofia e a Antropologia, e integra uma pesquisa que investiga as reflexões de Reinhart Koselleck, Ailton Krenak e Davi Kopenawa sobre a experiência onírica. Neste artigo, procuro destacar que as abordagens dos autores sobre os sonhos oferecem aberturas críticas aos modos de vida e de pensar ocidental, impactando nossa relação com o conhecimento e também com os desafios sócio-políticos atuais. O artigo realiza, inicialmente, um breve panorama do que seria a atividade onírica no interior da tradição ocidental. Em seguida, na contramão dessa trajetória, são apresentadas as reflexões de Koselleck e dos autores ameríndios. Na última seção, justifica-se a escolha epistemológica, ética e política pelos autores e pelo tema junto à perspectiva da “história dos vencidos” (dos silenciados) proposta por Koselleck, buscando contribuir para os exercícios de desconstrução da colonialidade.

**Palavras-chave:** Sonhos/experiência onírica, Ailton Krenak; Davi Kopenawa; filosofias ameríndias; Reinhart Koselleck.

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The understanding of dreams as experiences that could put us in contact with divine truths, our ancestors or some future occurrence was on the basis of human history, and this is something that we can observe in different civilizations as were the Egyptian, the ancient Sumer, the Babylonian, the Chinese, the Indian and also in the Islamic traditions (RIBEIRO, 2019, p. 22, 67). In the Western tradition, the historical authority of dreams changed through time (RIBEIRO, 2019, p. 85-86). The role of oneiric life build up during the development of Christianity in the Middle Ages was changed by the intercession of the Church, for instance. According to the Book of Job: “In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they slumber in their beds, He may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn them from wrongdoing and keep them from pride” (Job 33: 15-17). This understanding of dreams, as experiences related to one particular person, capable of encourage a junction between the divine and the mundane, was deeply controlled by the Church.

Among the many reasons that justify this control we can emphasize the fact that if the dream was to be taken as an instance for the manifestation of the sacred an intermediation by the institution in the way to salvation would not be necessary. Then, this is one of the reasons why “the official leaders of the religious activities have positioned their culture against the temptations that could be created by the act of assigning too high a value to dreams” (SCHMITT, 1994, p. 69). Using the maneuvers of the demonization, the Church imposed suspicion about dreams in an attempt to keep a moral control over individuals. As we can read in the Bible, Satan could also use dreams to deceive the Christians: “And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light” (2Co 11.14,15). Thus, in the Christian culture, dreams were divided between true dreams (the ones coming from God) and false dreams (manipulated by the Devil).<sup>3</sup> In the Middle Ages, the distinction about the nature of those dreams was not up to the dreamer. The stories about the oneiric life over the course of Middle Ages could not be written down without the intercession of men “authorized” to interpret their meanings. There was a “Science of Dreams” carried out by specialists that, in the process of taking out meanings and lessons from dreams, turned themselves to the discoveries of signs and appropriate

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to say that the division of dreams in experiences of truth or in irrelevant experiences to the life of an individual or its community is not limited to the Christian world, but can also be found in other cultures (RIBEIRO, 2019).

standards of conduct for acting in everyday life (KOSELLECK, 2006, p. 247-265; 2017, p. 163-182; SCHMITT, 2018).

However, when laymen who could write started to write their own dreams down a crucial connection between the experience of dream and the autobiographical piece of writing emerged. It became possible to talk about oneself without the control and intervention of the Church and specialists. According to Jean-Claude Schmitt, this phenomenon is related to the appearance of a “literary subjectivity” (SCHMITT, 1994, p. 69). The documentation on dreams and the autonomy to narrate them were both essential to the constitution of what we would come to call “modern subjectivity”: the process of social, psychological, cultural and existential composition of the individual (COSTA LIMA, 1989; HADOT, 2017; TAYLOR, 2010). It is curious that as long as the “philosophy of the subject” or the “philosophy of conscience” were being formed, and the Christian assumptions were becoming secularized, dreams started to be a less mystical experience, gradually more private and rational.<sup>4</sup> So Modern Age accepted a new relation with oneiric life. From Renaissance to Illuminism, dreams started to be explained by natural and material means, and the oneiric inspiration eventually lost its relevance for religious and political decisions (KOSELLECK, 2017, p. 167). Modern Age overshadowed the mystical, enchanted and intuitive components based on which ancient traditions dealt with dreams. Therefore, men had ruptured with their form of communication with God (and with the Devil).

Descartes, for instance, in his work entitled *Méditations métaphysiques*, suspended all “truths” of Western tradition, looking for determine at least one element that could be considered “sturdy and constant in sciences”. That means he searched for at least one universal precondition to human experience. In the exercise of learning to doubt, Descartes argued about dreams in his meditations – “what occurs when we are sleeping does not seem to be as clear and distinct as all this [the world of vigil]” (DESCARTES, 1973, p. 94). Therefore, how could we know for sure and without tricks, whether we would be asleep or awake? When he felt confused between the “so-called reality” and the experience of dream, Descartes has questioned

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<sup>4</sup> In general, the transformation from a religious to a lay rule is a process in which state has become in charge of the central power in the organization of social life reducing religion to a “secondary role” (which remains very important, as we emphasize). As some of the consequences of this process, there is the advent of the philosophies of history in a modern sense, responsible for interpret history, in a systematic way, as an universal phenomenon, in which progress would bring together the events, leading them to the completion of human perfection on Earth, and not in Paradise anymore (LÖWITH 1949; KOSELLECK 1999, 2006, p.165-188).

existence itself. He compared dreams with an illusory unfolding of real, and not with reality itself. Or else, he compared them with an opening from which reality would also be at stake.

The Cartesianism questioned existence in an attempt to be sure about what exists, coming to the statement that we exist when we think. The definition of the essence of the subject (a subject which is under construction) became a premise that has a meaning which is especially similar of those related to doubt and understanding. However, all those elements could be manipulated by an Evil Demon, since God would never mislead men with lies. Consequently, the more effective support to Science would be the understanding that an Evil Demon could deceive us about everything, but never puzzle us about the reality of our own thoughts when we find ourselves thinking – doubting and understanding. Descartes replicated the transformation from a religious to a lay rule with regard to the Christian structure, in which a perfect God would have an Evil Demon comparable to him, and free will itself could make us to fail to distinguish between one thing and another. The way to avoid those possible errors did not consist necessarily in renouncing our sins, but on the means of the Cogito. So thought became an antidote against doubt that could be imposed by the experience of dreaming.

The tradition or Western metaphysical thought that we are describing – the one based on *logos* – related the sense of subjectivity present in the Modern World to the understanding of consciousness as something determined by some kind of essence. The aphorism – “I think, therefore I am” – was learnt as a definition of a self-evident and clear mind from which reality could show itself, doing so through doubt and understanding. A more systematic questioning about this notion of a simple and substantial consciousness occurred in the works of Edmund Husserl, and that is the reason why we are mentioning him. The studies on phenomenology presented conscience as a synthesis of acts whose structure – which we call time – is not executed without experience. It acts as a performance with no previous substance, and refers to the condition for accessing experiences in the sequence of time (HUSSERL, 2019). This approach, together with several critical perspectives proper to the 20th century, reflected on the questioning about an alleged universality of reason. However, at this point, the presumption of a universality of reason had already constituted itself, unfolding in many of the forms of violence and threat to epistemologies (ways of knowing), to ontologies (ways of describing reality) and to worldviews (ways of perceiving and explaining the world) typical of places and

peoples for which the world of dreams, for example, had never been presented as something to be denied.

In general, we can consider that thought, from 20th century onwards, has struggled to question the assumptions of Western metaphysics and its inheritances. Derrida, for instance, named this metaphysics “white mythology” as a provocation (DERRIDA, 1991, p. 249-314), since it was based on the exclusion of difference and on the *logos*, which is a characteristic myth of the West, doing so “from the assumption that this is not about a myth, but a narrative superior to all myths, and capable of representing (and nothing could be more mythical than that) the universal reason” (HADDOCK-LOBO 2020, electronic version). The criticism of Derrida and many others thinkers that could be included here points out to the fundamental experience of our times, which is the fact that Europe is not the gravitational center of the world anymore, resulting in a certain weakening of the modern project of knowledge (FOUCAULT, 2010; CHAKRABARTY, 2008; DOMANSKA, 2006, 2011; 2018; GUMBRECHT, 2010, 2015; MBEMBE, 2014; SANTOS, 2014).

So the process of rationalization typical of Modern Age had consequences on the devaluing of dreams and, therefore, on the impoverishment of our relation with the dreaming activity. On the other hand, we can observe that at the same time that the intellectual, political and religious value of the oneiric experience was diminished after Renaissance the popular booklets on interpretation of dreams, based on fixed codes for their decipherment were multiplied (RIBEIRO, 2019, p. 95). Those booklets were essential to the establishment of Freudian psychoanalysis. When we are dealing with the Western tradition there is no doubt about the fact that Sigmund Freud was the one who gave the highest scientific value to oneiric life, opening a scientific field to something new to other researchers that became so relevant as Jacques Lacan, Carl Jung and several others. The psychoanalyst believed that dreams could open a way to important inferences about the constitution of psychological theories and also to the diagnosis of mental pathologies. Freud defined dreams as meaningful mental structures and therefore subject to interpretation: “they [the dreams] are not meaningless, they are not absurd” (FREUD, 1999, p. 136). Freud did not consider dreams coming from a reality which was outside the world of man as it was for a considerable number of ancient cultures. Then, oneiric activities would be reflections of the subjective experiences orchestrated by the mental activities of the dreamer. Therefore, what is in question is not a way of organizing thought into concepts, but

into images that would give access to his main discovery: the unconscious, the grouping of memories acquired through life, repressed memories and the infinite compositions of their combinations.

However, according to Freud, the activity of dreaming would not be restricted to a reproduction of everyday experiences. It would go beyond that, configuring the representations of wish fulfillment and also some expressions of fears that would be revealed after interpretation. By remaining convinced about the possibility of interpreting dreams, Freudian science reflected, as Freud himself was aware, the ancient and popular belief that dreams have a message to be decoded. “An ancient popular belief [...] seems to be closer to the truth than the judgment of science prevailing today. I must say that dreams really have a meaning and that it is possible to have a scientific method to interpret them” (FREUD, 1999, p. 115).

Although Freud’s ideas have been considerably denied by his scientific peers, psychoanalysis had a great cultural and intellectual impact in the West through its psychoanalytical clinic and its relation with the Humanities and Arts in general. The Freudian conception that “dreams reveal hidden truths, bringing out repressed emotions” has become popular (RIBEIRO, 2019, p. 31). In the contemporary context, when we are seeing the advancement of neuroscience, many of the institutions and theories developed by Freud in the *Interpretation of Dreams* and his subsequent works that revised the oneiric theory (FREUD, 2018, p.126-157) were confirmed and responsible for the explanations of some phenomena linked to sleep and dream. On the one hand, Freud anticipated and confronted medical science conferring a fundamental value to dreams and to the unconscious in the understanding of human existence; on the other hand, the repercussion of his work on the question of dreams ended up being limited to psychoanalysis and did not become a recurrent object for the Humanities in a general way.

In the view of a part of the dream journey into the Western tradition, as we have briefly discussed above, I would like to highlight other possible relations opened up by oneiric experience and by the thoughts we articulate from it. I am referring to the fact that dreams can refer to elements broader than the desires and fears of the dreamers. Dreams can, for instance, act as indicatives of our temporal horizons and of our relation with knowledge, as well as they have an aesthetic value that is beyond their interpretative dimension. Moreover, we must not forget that the process of disenchantment of reality throughout modernity has obscured the

understanding of dreams as being openings to different worlds, which has resulted in physical and epistemic violence to the peoples who manifest the necessary relation with other realities in their dreams. The German historian Reinhart Koselleck and the Indigenous philosophers Ailton Krenak and Davi Kopenawa, authors whose insights on the basis of those problems I have investigated and on which I share my first impressions here, present reflections of the same kind to us.

I have been researching the place that dreams occupy in the Theory of History of Koselleck and in the philosophies and cosmovisions of Krenak and Kopenawa. I believe that this study will identify repertoires and theoretical instruments for important approaches for the Humanities in general and for History in particular, being these approaches related to temporality and difference. The field of Theory of History as a context for the thematization of temporal experiences, historical consciousness and its social, cultural and political consequences, serves as a support for the identification of the historicities acting in the contemporary world (ARAÚJO, 2013). Thus, I present in this article some diagnoses and criticisms of the Western way of life and thought (metaphysics) that these authors build through oneiric thinking. We are not proposing a comparative analysis between Koselleck's reflections and those of the Indigenous philosophers. However, the final section of this article presents the epistemological, ethical and political reasons that led to the choice of this theme and authors. In this sense, we highlight the perspective of the "history of the defeated" (silenced) proposed by Koselleck, which we do to contribute to the exercises of deconstruction of coloniality.

### **Reinhart Koselleck: dreams, latency and the limits of language**

In 1966, Charlotte Beradt published a book entitled *The Third Reich of Dreams: The Nightmares of a Nation, 1933-39*. The book consists of a collection of dreams of three hundred people collected between 1933 and 1939. These dreams reflected the distressing effects of propaganda and terror after Hitler's rise to power on the daily lives of citizens who were generally on the opposite side of the regime (BERADT, 2017). The book affected Reinhart Koselleck in a very deep way when it was published, and he recorded his impression about what he read in a text entitled *Terror and Dreams – Methodological Remarks on the Experience of Time during the Third Reich* (KOSELLECK, 2006, p. 247-265). Those oneiric narratives

confirmed a fundamental intuition about the historical experience and temporal structure developed by this German historian in his *Historik* (KOSELLECK, 2006, 2014).

Beradt's book had been published almost twenty-one years after the end of Nazism. At that time, the experience of the Third Reich itself was becoming "distant" and the historical research on the event began to "organize it" into narratives in which causes and effects were weighted up from the criticism of sources and testimonies. And it was with this gesture proper to the historical activity with which Koselleck was concerned. What are the possibilities and the effective risks of organizing an experience of terror in a historical explanation that is inadequate to confirm its absurdity? It was through this problem that Koselleck believed that the dreams collected by Beradt were fundamental (KOSELLECK, 2002, p. 327-339). They witnessed the absurdity which no research or narrative could explain without running the risk of justifying it. The same Nazism that Koselleck defined as an experience of the absurd was a testimony to the limits of Western historical practice in the sense that there are experiences which language cannot and must not redeem. Unless it is to confirm its absurd character, as we can state once again.<sup>5</sup>

Another reason that would attest Beradt's accounts as valid would be her refusal to present dreams only as testimonies of personal conflicts. Those dreams had a historical importance because they reflected a political and social content which was beyond the private life of dreamers. But Koselleck's interest was not limited to a defense of a social history of dreams. He was fascinated by the character of prognostic contained in those descriptions. The dreams "anticipated" the reality after 1939, when the experience of Nazism triggered the experience of terror in a much more radical way (ARENDR, 1990, p. 390-531). They had a premonitory character. Many of the "absurd" images and situations dreamed up came true. These dreams captured a hidden structure that later was revealed as an everyday reality during the period of terror, but which was assimilated in the first place in an intuitive and corporal form during the times of propaganda and conception of Nazism.

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<sup>5</sup> When we look at his discussions with Heidegger and Gadamer, we can see that Koselleck argued that historicism, relativism and hermeneutics, all of them born from the crisis of modern perspectives, would be doomed to react to every event through the production of senses. The exercise of understanding the world through the (re)elaboration of narratives would seek to integrate (and thus justify by the logic of cause and consequence) all the realities of history, including the most absurd ones. This debate is important for this research, but it can be explored another time. The subject requires a relatively independent reflection on the approach to the critical heritage that Koselleck established with the phenomenological hermeneutic tradition (KOSELLECK 2014, p. 91-109, 111-118).



Koselleck began to argue, based on reports grouped by Beradt that dreams would reveal structures that could come to light in the waking state. Those structures that were not necessarily visible could be sensed through the body. This would occur because oneiric life, like the other dimensions of existence, would accumulate temporal layers, but those layers would not be domesticated by a casual and linear logic. In this case, experience and desire (expectation) would be confused. Past, present and future would compose a context of simultaneities in a way that our conscience would no longer be able to determine the limits between them. In a certain way, we could say that Koselleck anticipated what some researchers on the field of neuroscience, such as Sidarta Ribeiro (2019), are defending today about the relation between dreams and temporality. Our unconscious does not correspond only to the accumulation of our memories, but also to their infinitive combinations. This means that our dreams have the power to inspire and “anticipate” possible realities.

Thus, the dreams that were grouped by Beradt, according to Koselleck, would constitute experiences of latency. These were intuitions that the body could perceive, but about which it was not possible to verbalize. “There is a reason of the body, which goes beyond what fear allows the dreamer to when he finds himself in a waking state” (KOSELLECK, 2006, p. 255). Then, we can assume that dreams constituted a kind of “nonverbal” experience – stories that had not yet been elaborated, remnants of structures which were already available, although not possible of being completely identified or explained, but only assimilated by the body. The analysis in question reflects a concern that Koselleck feels in identifying and describing a relation with reality, which is no hermeneutically founded.<sup>6</sup> It was from this concern that Koselleck proposed “a political anthropology of dreams”, despite the fact that his assumptions were already present in his *Historik*, especially in what I identify as his “philosophy of time”.

The concerns of Koselleck about the delimitation of what could be “historical science” have two basic elements. The first one concerns a theory of temporality itself or a conjecture

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<sup>6</sup> We can follow Koselleck’s concern about this which would be a non-hermeneutic relation with reality from his discussions with Heidegger and Gadamer, as we mentioned in the previous note. In an interview with the historians Sebastián and Fontes, he clarified: “Gadamer did not accept this ambiguity in language. For him, following Heidegger’s footsteps, language implicitly contains the totality of experience. There is no doubt that in the process of transferring many concepts from Greek into German philosophy, Gadamer’s hermeneutical philosophy transformed language into the key to all human reality. There is a very strong argument to backing up this position, but for me, as a historian, it is impossible to accept it as a unique and exclusive truth. As a historian I cannot limit myself to the linguistic domain, that is, to what was in fact said, I must also occupy myself with that which could be said” (KOSELLECK *Apud* SEBASTIÁN; FUENTES, 2006, p. 126). See also: (KOSELLECK 2014, p. 91-109, 111-118; GADAMER 1997).

on the formal structures of time. This moment has equivalence with its philosophy of time, and here we are referring to an equivalence that aims to denaturalize the identitary character of historical realities. The second element of his *Historik* is the historiography or a form of organization of what the philosophy of time allows us to access. It is about a component that only becomes relevant when the text expresses the tensions and differences which were historically sedimentated. In this way, the *Historik* of Koselleck does not only refer to a methodology for the discipline of history, as we could understand from the title. It is the question about the conditions of possibility of histories the ways in which we can know them and, finally, of how we tell them. At first, the author faces a philosophical problem, from which the question of temporality is imposed.

In his research, Koselleck argued that the historical reality or the organization of men in a given time/space would take its place from a split of two fundamental dimensions. The present would keep legacies that would articulate modes of behavior sedimented both in the conscious and in the unconscious. We are referring to the “space of experience” – the accumulation and generational repetition of experience throughout history. Reality would also be crossed by what has not yet been experienced, but which in one way or another we can sense or desire. Surrounded by imagination and curiosity, what is projected can result in existences which are surprising, unknown and/or frustrated. This “horizon of expectations” although unattainable, determines the decisions taken in the present (KOSELLECK, 2006, p. 305- 327). It is important to emphasize that the categories developed by the author do not refer to something specific, because they are *the very conditions* for the contents and phenomena, as well as for their identification. Koselleck refused to historicize the key categories of his philosophy of time using conceptual analysis.<sup>7</sup> With this refusal, he assumed that the anthropological dimensions of “space of experience” and “horizon of expectations” would be what would make the stories possible, but without a universality in the contents emerging from them.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Koselleck’s relation with the history of concepts is related to the theoretical-epistemological and political disputes in the field of Social History in Germany (GUMBRECHT, 2012, p. 15-59; OLSEN, 2012, p. 77-80; HOFFMANN, 2010, p. 212-236).

<sup>8</sup> In addition to the categories “space of experience” and “horizon of expectations”, Koselleck also outlined the antithetical analytical pairs that can be summarized in superior/inferior (hierarchical dimension); internal/external (politics of enmity and the territorial issue); anterior/posterior (generational issue). These categories are intended to provide a stable analytical basis from which is possible to describe historical movements, highlighting their limits and plurality, as well as the conflictive dimension of human relations (KOSELLECK, 2006, p. 191-231, 2014, p. 91-109, 111-118).

Therefore, the philosophy of time elaborated by Koselleck had the intention to reach the historical plurality provoked by the tension between certain “spaces of experiences” and “horizons of expectations”. The category of “strata of time” or the “simultaneity of the non-simultaneous” was born from this hypothesis: the accumulation and sedimentation of experiences, the presentification of the past and also of the desires and fears in a given space. The “time strata” are the layers of time with different durations and “origins” that cohabit a space. Therefore, the history could not be deduced only from what has passed, but also from what appears on the horizon as desire, possibility or frustration. And because of this understanding dreams have gained a definite power of exemplarity in their work. This happened because in the descriptions collected by Beradt, the experience of the Third Reich between 1933 and 1939 could not ignore the future that presented itself antagonizing the wishes of those who dreamed.

In considering dreams as an experience of latency and premonition, Koselleck affirmed the limits imposed by reality on logical-formal thinking. So he also argued for the proximity of dreams to the fictional dimension. The notion of fiction here is not only about what is unreal or untrue. In emphasizing the fictional and literary component of dreams, Koselleck sought precisely to highlight *the possible* and viable eventualities that the control of the imaginary obscured throughout the Modern Age (AUERBACH, 2004; COSTA LIMA, 1989). In this sense, dreams, by having effects on us, even if we cannot clearly define them, would correspond, beyond a historical experience, to an aesthetic experience. The oneiric life assimilated corporately would not be just a representation of what had already been lived in the past or in the latent future. But an experience of the past and the future themselves. While historical experience claims the production of meaning, a language and a narrative that explains it and consoles it; aesthetic experience has to deal with the discomfort that no narrative (at least not the narratives that fit the conventional Western molds) can represent or redeem it (GUMBRECHT, 2010, 2014).

Starting from the interpretative possibility of dreams in Koselleck, as experiences of latency and also of aesthetics, we can highlight the proximity between his thought and that of Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht. My research has led to a perception that Gumbrecht is among the most advanced thinkers when it comes to Koselleck’s perceptions. The philosophical reflections made by Koselleck on dreams could not be expanded only by him. This happened, among other

reasons, because of his constant negotiation with the German intellectual context, which made it more difficult for History to come closer to Theory and Philosophy by prioritizing Social History.<sup>9</sup>

When we begin to explore the relationship between the thoughts of Koselleck and Gumbrecht, according to the interests of this research, it becomes relevant to remember that Gumbrecht has discussed the contemporary situation of the Humanities in his works. In this sense, he criticized conventional scientific protocols that would be subordinated to “rational schemes of proof and other constraints of the system” inherited from the exact and biological sciences (GUMBRECHT, 2015, p. 12). Gumbrecht calls attention to the possibility that the Humanities relate in a particular way to things, beings, the body and knowledge, overcoming and contesting an anthropology in which reason would be superior to bodily and material elements. This criticism is also ontological and, in Gumbrecht’s works, it stands out from his considerations on presence, latency and *Stimmung*. At this point, we do not consider it necessary to explain these categories in detail and how they, especially the category of latency, relate to a certain intuition that was opened by Koselleck’s work. We consider it sufficient to mention that Gumbrecht’s concern unfolds from/with a commitment to a non-hermeneutics way of relating to the world. There is an intellectual commitment related to the attention on things themselves, the return to experiences and their forms of apprehension through the body. It is also a desire – the desire of presence – that would act as a resistance to the domestication of the body by the world of technique. This is precisely a critique of the “transcendental foundation in the structure and functions of human consciousness” that resulted in the triumph of Cartesian rationality (GUMBRECHT, 2015, p. 131-141).

Koselleck presented his introductory notes to the text *Terror and dreams* for the first time during a colloquium organized by the group “Poetik und Hermeneutik” at the Reimers Foundation, in Bad Homburg. Gumbrecht, a member of a younger generation, was present at

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<sup>9</sup> As the studies of Niklas Olsen reveal, Koselleck sought an approach to the writing of history that could be different from Friedrich Meinecke’s historicism. This meant a certain distance from the very discipline we call history in that context, which is also the reason why he seemed so often as a stranger to that field. Koselleck was interested in an approach that emphasized crises and ruptures, the historian’s own place of speech, and political and existential perspectives (beyond exclusively scientific ones). In the first version of his doctoral thesis there was a note with these critical remarks to Meinecke, which were eventually excluded. Such criticism of one of the leading names in the discipline in Germany, if published, according to Olsen, could have sounded disrespectful, making Koselleck’s career difficult. Moreover, there was the fact that History Theory and Social History were at opposite poles in that context. Koselleck’s attempt to “renew” the field by being closer to the Theory of History and Philosophy could have made him be treated with a certain suspicion (OLSEN, 2012, p. 77-80).

the time. In an interview, he told me personally that the reaction of one of the German Professor of the Koselleck generation was absolutely negative: “negative in a very strange way”. Koselleck’s defense of the text and the intuitions he had presented had to be almost physical. The German of the same generation as Koselleck was Hans Robert Jauss, an author widely read from the mid-1960s by those interested in the literary studies called “aesthetics of reception”. Jauss was Gumbrecht’s academic advisor at the time. Later, Gumbrecht broke his relations with Jauss and began to refuse to pronounce his name. This happened because of Jauss’s Nazi past. Gumbrecht says he never understood very well why the denial of the ideas presented by Koselleck was so strong at that meeting. However, today he believes that the fact that Koselleck presented a historical and philosophical problem from the basis of a thought about dreams was one of the reasons. However, I think there was something else at stake.

This episode reveals something important about the relationship between Koselleck and Gumbrecht that concerns the vision they had about the role of the Humanities. Perhaps that presentation was one of the moments in which Gumbrecht’s decision to take some distance from his advisor (what only happened later) was latent. The decision for a non-hermeneutic work, contrary to Jauss’ proposal, could have emerged for Gumbrecht (GUMBRECHT, 2016, p. 131-158). After all, what Koselleck was presenting, with his philosophy of time and his anthropology of dreams, was the limit of the West in terms of learning and living with something beyond the meaning or its own logical-formal statements. With this gesture, Koselleck identified the pathogenesis of the modern world and its legacy, which, in the name of reason – a universal moral judgment to be reached by posterity – cultivated the seed of 20th century authoritarianism and had consequences for the Humanities, causing the disposal of the non-domesticated character of reality (KOSELLECK, 1999). Koselleck used dreams as an example of what his philosophy of time struggled to clarify: dreams play with language and conceal what we call reality. However, they do not deny reality. In that sense, dreaming would have something to teach us. Even so, our conscience, attached to vigil and to the visible – to the sense – would resist the process of learning from dreams.

### **Dreams and Indigenous philosophies: hope in a place of safety**

If, on the one hand, in the western tradition the relationship with dreams was mediated by a process of rationalization that went hand in hand with the loss of socio-cultural protagonism, in cosmovisions and Indigenous philosophies, on the other hand, dreaming remains a primordial experience. On this theme, we will highlight the reflections of Ailton Krenak and Davi Kopenawa, two important thinkers and political leaders who act in defense of the right of the native peoples of Brazil to their own existence. First of all, we would like to point out that the dream, from Indigenous perspectives, in addition to forming the structural basis of their cosmovisions and philosophies, also acts epistemologically in a political critique and self-defense through the structural violence of the state, society and the great economic powers that threaten their right to life historically and on a daily basis (VIVEIROS DE CASTRO, 2019, p. 38).

In the process of explaining the role of the “indigenous” intellectual, or the role he plays as an historian, Ailton Krenak defined the task as a permanent responsibility to be in the midst of his community, narrating a collective history. This is a fundamental commitment, since this exercise is responsible for constantly updating the sense of cultural heritage to which they belong. This narrative brings to life the memory of the “creation of the world” – the origin of the rivers, the mountains and the forest. This ritual remembrance ritualizes the event of creation in the daily life of their community, which is expressed in the dances, songs and deep relationship of reverence for nature. Therefore, the Indigenous intellectual is responsible for the care of this memory, because it keeps the spirit of his people, the sense of tradition that supports life, “the true answer” that justifies the collective existence/resistance of community, making the political struggle possible, for example. As Krenak explains, the ritualization of this memory is the source that feeds the dreams, the “big dreams”: those dreams from which some knowledge is acquired. To take care of the memory means to take care of the dreams or the house of wisdom, a place where the fundamental learnings are revealed. Therefore, he understands that dreams are institutions, spaces, that admit different resources and languages that help human beings to deal with the challenges that appear to dreamers. The dream prepares people for everyday things. That is why Krenak says he never makes a decision without dreaming of this experience before (KRENAK, 2019, p.10-17). The dream also has a dimension to the

community. In addition, narrating it to its components feeds a network of affections, at the same time as it alters and builds subjectivities.<sup>10</sup>

The oneiric experience is defined as the house of wisdom, as an institution, because it is an experience of exchange and conviviality with the ancestors. This is not just about those who are close to someone, like, grandparents, parents... However, about all the ancestors, the founders of their world, their “enchanted” ones (KRENAK, 1992, p. 202). In this way, we understand that the dream is a space of connection with the most fundamental ancestry, because it is the presence of the ancestors that projects meaning to the collective existence, reaffirming the connection with nature and with the (sacred) space they inhabit, care for and celebrate. It is important to clarify that the experience of this memory seeks much more than a memory of the past. It is about a constant updating or (re)experience of the past, from which the present and the future gain meaning and energy, directing them to a world that (re)creates itself every day.

However, Ailton Krenak revealed in a narrative recorded in the text *Antes o mundo não existia* (1992, p. 201-204), that because of the uninterrupted violence experienced by the native peoples and in the face of the power of technique, he began to doubt whether the tradition and culture of his people would be able to resist this concrete, practical and calculated Western power. “I started to doubt [...] I got scared. I kept thinking: what will happen to us now?” (KRENAK, 1992, p. 203). At that moment, he “received the gift of a dream”. The “dream of truth” that allows them to feel, communicate and recover the ancestral memory. He associates this kind of dream with diving in a river – “we enter these waters, learn and feed the spirit” (KRENAK, 1992, p. 203).

In that dream, he was with his first ancestor present in the creation of his world. This is not about a god, but about his older “brother” (Kiãnkumakiã), and in that dream they both had a vision of their ancestors, young warriors, in a vast and beautiful field. In the left hand they carried packets of sticks used for arrows, on the ends of which there were no blades, but hangers like flourishing wheat. There was a lake leveled with the land. Walking towards this lake, his ancestors transported themselves to the other shore in a canoe of light, “with a gesture of will, only with their own will” (KRENAK, 1992, p. 204).

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<sup>10</sup> About Krenak’s definition of dreams as institutions, see: Sonhos para adiar o fim do mundo, com Ailton Krenak e Sidarta Ribeiro. Evento *Na janela festival*. Companhia das Letras. 24/10/2020. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95tOtpk4Bnw>

That dream reassured Krenak about the future of his people. As he explains to us, “this ‘future’ has already happened in the creation of the world. My older brothers already knew all about it” (KRENAK, 1992, p. 204). From this oneiric experience, Krenak reveals his learning about the fact that the future he feared for his own people was somehow “predicted” in that same origin. This is not about the assimilation of a destiny, but about an understanding of a radical integration between realities. The oneiric image of his ancestors crossing one bank to the other “only” with the power of will revealed a more fascinating and powerful force than the technique could be. He came to see it as a simulation or a false power. And he also understood that the foundation of his ancestral origin consists precisely in the radical capacity to accompany the different worlds along with that basic force of existence which means telling, living and dreaming old or new stories.

According to Krenak, a dream like this can only be given as a gift from a path made in tradition. The dream gave him the certainty that his way of life would safeguard a truth that would be manifested in the ritualization (narration and worship) of his world. The care with the ancestral memory guaranteed an acceptance of a way of life – a tranquility that the Western world would have lost, with the falsification of the power of the technique as one of its consequences. This process linked to the oneiric experience “puts hope in a safe place”, reflects the acceptance of the way in which these people live – in a relationship of profound intimacy with nature, which personifies it – and also the construction of secure bases for the future.<sup>11</sup>

“I got scared. I kept thinking: what’s it going to be now?” (KRENAK, 1992, p. 203). Krenak’s fear became present because the technique “imposed” itself on his perspective, even temporarily. That dream with his ancestors helped him to identify the fragility of the technique and revealed the existential strength of his own paradigm. The world of technique, marked by performances composed of a multiplicity of elements, has no determinations beyond itself (or at least it has no determinations beyond the calculation and destruction of nature). The conjunctures that are armed are volatile, imposing over-requisitions that change continuously and that men are not able to meet. The worlds through modern technique have no determinations, the conjunctures do not last, making existential and historical sedimentations beyond this over-requisition impossible (HEIDEGGER, 2007). When it reveals the self-

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<sup>11</sup> See: *Ailton Krenak: O Sonho da Pedra*. Marco Altberg, 2017. 52min, (documentary film).



destructive capacity of men, the technique collapses the capacity of projecting new possibilities beyond itself, reducing the breadth of the future. In his dream, Krenak understood what Heidegger needed time to systematize.

The strength of this paradigm conquered through a dream (the dream being understood here as oneiric experience and also as a disposition for the future) is the source of *Ideias para adiar o fim do mundo* (*Ideas to postpone the end of the world*) – “So they preach about the end of the world as a if it was a possibility to make us give up our dreams. And my provocation to postpone the end of the world is exactly to always be able to tell one more story. If we can do this, we’ll be postponing the end” (KRENAK, 2019, p. 27). From what Ailton Krenak presents to us, oneiric life is like a source of experience and energy from which the coexistence with ancestors and tradition realizes the constant openness of the future together and in spite of the most present and concrete threatening and distressing realities.

It is something similar to the Krenak reflection we find in the book *A queda do céu* (*La Chute du ciel*). In the preface to this work, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro highlights a passage in which Davi Kopenawa states that “white people do not dream as far as we do. They sleep a lot, but they only dream of themselves” (KOPENAWA; ALBERT, 2019, p. 390). This statement, according to Viveiros de Castro, exposes one of the most precise judgments regarding the “central anthropological characteristic” to the West and its differences in relation to Indigenous thought.

The White people’s epistemic devaluation of dreaming goes hand in hand with their solipsistic fascination – their inability to discern secret humanity of non-human beings – and their ‘fetishist’ avarice, as ridiculous as it is incurable, their chrysophilia. In short, white people dream about what *makes no sense*. Instead of dreaming of the other, we dream of the gold (VIVEIROS DE CASTRO, 2015, p. 37- 38).

In the book *A queda do Céu*, Bruce Albert gathered in the cosmovisions, ontologies, philosophies and way of life of the Yanomami people from the experiences and stories of the shaman David Kopenawa. In this already classic book of recent Anthropology, Kopenawa makes explicit the understanding of the dream as a space of truth, as it appears in the way of life described by Krenak. What for the whites corresponds to school, the institutional spaces of learning, for the Yanomami people is realized in/with dreams, especially those of the shamans. When they drink the *yãkoana* powder, food of the *xapiri* – the invisible beings of the air and the forest – they conquer images from the time of dreams, an experience in which the knowledge

of the past, the present and the future is accomplished. Thus, sleeping and dreaming are a condition of the Yanomami learning process and also the place from which their way of life gains permanent guidance/stimulus.

Dreaming refers to an ancient knowledge given by Omama - the great dreamer and creator of that world - but this knowledge is constantly updated by the shaman. This update is similar to the one presented by Krenak. In other words, it is necessary to follow the time and the constant demands of the reality in which they find themselves; although the founding and ancestral perspective does not change, the worlds change. “That’s why our memory is great, it’s strong” (KOPENAWA; ALBERT, 2019, p. 75) – says Kopenawa - because it is founded on the need for the evocation of ancestry and its renewal by shamans. According to Viveiros de Castro’s explanation, in the Indigenous perspective the way of seeing the world is not transformed (that is why there is a permanent relationship with ancestry), but what is transformed is the world itself. This is different from Western logic. The new anthropology has sought to affirm an equivalence between Western and non-Western thought based on the affirmation of a radical difference. Indigenous thinking differs from ours not because it has different points of view about the same objects, but because they think/live also other worlds (VIVEIROS DE CASTRO, 2002).

“We, shamans, we possess within us the value of the dreams of the spirits” (KOPENAWA; ALBERT, 2019, p. 75). The experience of dreams corresponds for the Yanomami to an experience of truth – because a knowledge about/for the real is obtained. To know in the Indigenous perspective means “to personify, to take the point of view of what must be known” (VIVEIROS DE CASTRO, 2009a, p. 51). This knowledge also corresponds to an experience of exteriority as it creates a contact with the invisible world made accessible to shamans when they use the powder of *yãkoana*. “In the night we sleep in a ghost state” (KOPENAWA; ALBERT, 2019, p. 461). When they dream, there’s the spirit leaving the body. The exit of the spirit from the body allows the shamans to travel far away, to make friends with the *xapiri* and thus to know, for example, the threats that surround the *aldeia* (Indigenous villages).

The continued access to the words of *Omama* by the shamans is what presents itself as the future in this worldview. “What you call the future for us is this” (KOPENAWA; ALBERT, 2019, p. 506). It is about thinking that their children, grandchildren, sons-in-law will continue

to have the right to become shamans, meeting the *xapiri*, broadening their knowledge about their ancestors and carrying out the healing of their people. The early death of the shamans – which is a result of the presence of whites on indigenous lands – is a threat to the future of native peoples, but also to the West. This is because the work of the shamans is not only about their own peoples, but they “hold” the sky, with the help of the *xapiri*, over the head of all humanity. The suspension of heaven is a ritual performed by shamans who keep threats away. It is also a metaphor that concerns the possibility of expansion and a continuous production of new horizons. Therefore, the future depends on the right of shamans to continue being able to become “others”, depends on the right to dream. In this world to which we refer, to dream means to exist.

The dream that gives access to knowledge is an experience of opening up to non-visible worlds during the vigil; it is an experience of relationship and welcoming of what Westerners call spectra and ghosts. Viveiros de Castro defines shamanism as “the ability to cross bodily boundaries and adopt perspectives of foreign societies” (VIVEIROS DE CASTRO, 2009a, p. 49). Therefore, the body assumes a non-biological, but metamorphic concept, which can be “dressed” and “undressed”, depending on the circumstances, as well as of the necessary encounters (VIVEIROS DE CASTRO, 2009b, p. 237-268). Shamans enjoy a type of dual citizenship, having the condition of living and dead (under special and controlled conditions). They see two incompatible perspectives simultaneously. They do not seek a common reference for different worlds. “The perspectivism supposes a constant epistemology and variable ontologies: same representations, but other objects; single sense, but multiple references” (VIVEIROS DE CASTRO, 2009a, p. 68).

Rafael Haddock-Lobo, taking the exercise of Derridean deconstruction as a criticism of coloniality, presents us with a reflection on the spectrality and difference which I associate with the practice of shamans before the worlds that are presented to them/ lived by them in dreams. Haddock-Lobo claims that:

Derrida teaches us that, unlike the traditional philosophical position, which is more like an exorcism, the philosopher’s task must consist of a kind of invocation, acceptance and reception of every other who appears, because the logic of apparition is that of the *event*, since we will never, in fact, know what or who will come (HADDOCK-LOBO, 2019a).

Shamans do not translate – and thus do not exorcise – the perspectives with which they find themselves in the world of dreams, seeking a synonym or a referential basis similar to the world of vigil. However, the commitment is precisely to safeguard the difference that presents itself, accepting and welcoming the dance and the words of the *xapiri*, for example. Therefore, the dreams of the shamans correspond to an experience of *cruzo* (crossing) of incorporation of the other, an event from which the sky can be suspended and the future can also be built.

### **For new possible dreams: a history of the silenced**

A series of recent works have been dedicated to affirming the difference discussed in the previous section, which does not presuppose translating distinct worldviews, but rather directing the possibility of coexisting worlds. The Indigenous perspective in Anthropology is just one example of what we are addressing. We can find other efforts to incorporate plurality (not only Indigenous pluralities) into this Literature (LIBRANDI-ROCHA, 2012; 2014) and in Philosophy (RUFINO, SIMAS 2018, 2019; HADDOCK-LOBO, 2019; 2020). I believe that the Theory of History, in view of the structural bases on which it is anchored, can also contribute even more with this exercise of questioning the correspondent thought (BIANCHI, 2019; DOMANSKA, 2018, RODRIGUES, 2019).

As we follow the thought and political trajectory of Ailton Krenak and Davi Kopenawa since the 1970s and 1980s, we realize that the struggle against the Brazilian state and the economic groups that put their communities at risk is not only about demanding civil rights. The 1988 Constitution promulgated, especially for the merit/conquest of these very peoples, the first constitutional achievements, such as the right to land demarcation (not yet fulfilled and constantly threatened), to speak and learn their own languages, not to attend schools that would integrate them into Western life, etc. In addition, Law 11.645/2008, which made it compulsory to teach the history and culture of the native peoples of Brazil, sought to correct a historical absence with regard to the political, social and educational rights of these peoples (BRASIL, 2008). However, what we are dealing with here is beyond legislation. These achievements are not guaranteed if openings for other ways of thinking and relating to the real are not at stake. It is in this sense that we perceive Krenak and Kopenawa's emphasis on explaining to the Western

world the epistemologies, cosmovisions and philosophies that are at the basis of the daily life of their communities.

The academic and school environments stand out among the fundamental spaces in the exercise of listening and repercussion of this knowledge. Otherwise, the interruption of systemic violence against native populations will be even slower. Paulo Freire gives us an important example of this. On April 20, 1997, when a group of young people in Brasilia, who claimed to be just “playing”, burned the Pataxó leader, Galdino Jesus dos Santos, alive – one of the most emblematic examples of the trivialized violence against the native peoples of Brazil – the pedagogue wrote:

What a strange thing, a game of killing Indigenous, killing people. I think here, thrown into the abyss of deep perplexity, amazed at the intolerable perversity of these young men who are *de-humanizing* themselves, in the environment where they've *declined* instead of discovering some *growth*. I think of their homes, their social class, their neighborhood, their school. I think, among other things, of the testimony given to them [the murderers] to think and how to think (FREIRE, 2000, p. 66).

*I think, among other things, of the testimony given to them to think and how to think.* Paulo Freire presented the place from which the problem of this murder and of so many other historically constituted murders is structured: in Eurocentric, technicalist and epistemicidal thinking inherited from the colonial experience. In mentioning the houses, class, neighborhood and school of the murderers, Freire draws our attention to the historical, cultural and epistemic dimension of this crime, reaffirming its non-occasional and not isolated character. Freire summons us to the responsibility of also welcoming other testimonies and ways of thinking different from those we inherited.

After these considerations, the research in progress, as presented in this text, seeks to study western and non-western epistemologies, cosmovisions and philosophies related to the oneiric experience. The aim is to make curricula, teaching practice, the academic and school world more accessible to other perspectives and possibilities of relationship with knowledge, with the whole. From the reflections of Reinhart Koselleck, we identify with his “anthropology of dreams” a philosophy of time that senses a non-hermeneutical relationship with reality. This means that not all experiments would be subject to the exhaustion of logical-formative explanations or to interpretation and meaning. In the case of the Indigenous philosophers, dreams – when considered the place of truth – we can say they offer a radical difference in relation to the perspective of Western knowledge, being also one of the primordial places in

which memory, tradition and the projection of new futures gain its strength. Since this is an ongoing research, I emphasize that the reader can be frustrated, expecting in this conclusion comparative analyses between the reflections of Koselleck, Krenak and Kopenawa. That's not our point. The intention was only to show that from the theme of dreams the authors call us, each in their own way, epistemically and existentially, to other possible forms of imagination and historical practices. The authors invite us to experience challenges that involve other ways of relating to the dream and dreaming, and therefore to know, experience and to mobilize ourselves ethically-politically (RANGEL; ARAUJO 2015; RANGEL, 2019).

Since the ethical-political dimension is not disassociated from this research, we also take forward one aspect of the historical movement proposed by Koselleck: the commitment to a history of the “defeated”, those who are violently silenced, burned alive, for example. Although “spaces of experience” and “horizons of expectations” are the definitely meta-historical and theoretically indispensable categories to the philosophy of the time of Koselleck, the antithetical pair, “winners” and “defeateds”, constitutes an important dimension in his reflections. The defeated would be responsible for the pulse of the historical movement. In the short to medium term, the winners would be able to sustain a certain reality. However, in the long run, the maintenance of these structures becomes difficult, because in the long run, the frustrations surrounding the sedimentary experiences appear more precisely. It is up to the “defeated” to propose (combat) new futures. Therefore, Koselleck proposed that knowledge of history is achieved by observing the relationship between “experience” and “expectation” and also from the perspective of the defeated and their historians. It is important to say that the category “defeated” does not assume a pejorative value in his thinking. On the contrary, it is the silenced who can summon different horizons by being faced with experiences that are antagonistic to their expectations. It does not correspond to an historical dimension that is deprived of agency. This is how Koselleck's notion of history comes close to Walter Benjamin's idea of “brushing history against the grain”.<sup>12</sup> “Defeat contains an inexhaustible potential for the acquisition of knowledge” (KOSELLECK, 2014, p. 72), as it imposes the need to break the silence, allowing other possible dreams, indispensable to the mobility of history.

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<sup>12</sup> “He [Benjamin] used to say that we should also celebrate those who have been defeated and that we should invite people to see things from their point of view. So, why not?”. KOSELLECK *Apud* SEBASTIÁN; FUENTES, 2002, p. 125.

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