

RECOMBINANT REVELATIONS: 2012 IN MILLENARIAN AND NEW AGE CYBER-APOCALYPTICISM

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SYMBOLISM AND VISUAL RHETORIC IN TWO DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS PREDICTING THE 2012 APOCALYPSE

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This article investigates apocalyptic spirituality in the contemporary globalized context of re-emerging religiousness and New Age spirituality, in which millennial calendrical anxieties, a conspiracy mentality, and crisis consciousness are bolstered up by the visual flood of old and new electronic media. Two types of religious or spiritual digital environments are presented through their characteristic imagery: the rather traditional environment of Christian millennialism and the hyper-eclectic atmosphere of New Age networks.

Keywords: *New Age, apocalypse, spirituality, millenarism*

Avtor raziskuje apokaliptično duhovnost v sodobnem globaliziranem kontekstu ponovno nastajajoče religioznosti in novodobne duhovnosti, v kateri so tisoletne tesnobe koledarskega leta, miselnost zarote in krizna zavest še podkrepjene z vizualno poplavo starih in novih elektronskih medijev. Dvoje religioznih ali duhovnih digitalnih okolij se kaže s svojimi značilnimi podobami: na eni strani precej tradicionalno okolje krščanskega tisočletja, na drugi hipereklektično ozračje omrežij new age.

Ključne besede: *new age, apokalipsa, duhovnost, milenarizem*

INTRODUCTION

This article investigates apocalyptic spirituality in the contemporary globalized context of re-emerging religiousness and New Age spirituality, in which millennial calendrical anxieties, a conspiracy mentality, and crisis consciousness are bolstered up by the visual flood of old and new electronic media. Two types of religious or spiritual digital environments are presented through their characteristic imagery: the rather traditional environment of Christian millennialism and the hyper-eclectic atmosphere of New Age networks. The main focus is on images circulating in these spaces, sometimes shared and transferred from one environment to the other. The high diversity of this fantastic imagery can be handled by a typological approach and comparative iconographic analysis. At the first level, an iconographic approach based on Panofsky's (1955, 1972) three-layered model¹ is used. At the analytical level, the archetypal criticism of Northrop Frye (2000 [1957]) offers an optimal first methodology, completed by Gilbert Durand's (1999 [1963]) structures of the archetypal imaginary, and the second method combines the mythanalytic-semiotic models elaborated by Kapitány and Kapitány (1995, 2002 [2001]) and Lucian Boia's (2000 [1998]) schemes of the imaginary to compare and follow the changes in given images and

¹ Erwin Panofsky's (1955, 1972) model—however much it is criticized (see de Hulster, 2007: 218–223), and although there are newer and more sophisticated methods for iconographic analysis (e.g., van Straten, 1994)—is used in this article because of its simplicity as a first (three-level) approach to the images investigated: representation (elements), motifs, and symbolic values.

mythemes. The always-mutating recombinant elements (Cardone, 2007) occurring on the web spaces studied form and support sustainable ritual narratives (Howard, 2009) of various apocalyptic myths that may be approached using visual rhetorical analysis.

The study proceeds from a theoretical foundation necessary for discussing the use of apocalyptic pictorial rhetoric in digital social media. The key concepts are elaborated in the theoretical sections. First, attention is turned to the essence of apocalyptic imagery, understood as a visual revolution, its pictorial motifs, and recombinant traditions surviving from Middle Eastern Antiquity to the virtual environments of digital media. The second section briefly presents contextual aspects: it starts by discussing the problematic term *apocalyptic*, with a brief explanation of the apocalyptic paradigm and some variants of apocalypticism, then points out the modern re-enchantment of the world and the role of New Age spirituality, and finally shows how this apocalyptic milieu contributes to the proliferation of recombinant images as a subversive new millennial(ist) rhetoric.

The study analyzes apocalyptic imagery through two examples chosen from dozens of images. These two were chosen precisely due to the fact that they typically represent two environments of the contemporary Western apocalyptic religious mentality—the Christian millennialist and the New Age contexts—and because these two collages exemplify in a perfect manner how the principles of apocalyptic visual (visionary) composition can be applied today. The two examples—which both reveal the apocalyptic 2012 (and this is also a reason why they were chosen: doom and salvation are expressed in one single composition)—are submitted to a thorough semiotic, symbolic, mythological, and rhetorical analysis. The complex interdisciplinary analysis reveals very similar schemes and strategies, such as the common characteristics of intertextuality, pictorial quotations, biblical allusions, actualization, the use of several different sources, and recombination of images. It also points out essential differences originating from diverging spiritualities, arsenals of motifs, and also the creators, sources, publics, and distribution of the images. The study concludes with the observation that all these structures and (persuasive) strategies preserve and continue the old recombinant manners of visual apocalyptic rhetoric in a new environment, and with the new means of the digital universe.

APOCALYPTIC IMAGERY: REVELATION AND REVOLUTION

The apocalyptic mind, with its literary and pictorial aspects of end-oriented spirituality, represents a fascination for contemporary popular culture. As religiosity finds its way into the channels of hypermedia (Campbell, 2005; Howard, 2009), the apocalyptic ideas and images so persistently present in popular culture also move into the social media of the digital environment. Pictures, stories, and argumentations of apocalyptic origin are imported and converted for contemporary messages in various fundamentalist, conspirationist, esoteric, (pseudo)scientific, or political online networks and communities. Various individuals,

groups, and even organizations are propagating their apocalyptic visions by making use of ancient fantastic images and bestiaries involving and (re)combining old motifs, and inventing newer iconographic elements. Along with the texts—or even only by themselves—the visual elements are essential contributors to the formation of the contemporary online apocalyptic rhetoric of religious websites, groups, and forums. The power of apocalyptic rhetoric lies inherently in its images, both textual and visual alike (Farrer, 2007; Nyíri, 2013; Hubbes, 2017).

It may seem controversial that the lush imagery of Western apocalypticism was essentially rooted in the non-iconic culture of ancient Judaism (see Bychkov, 1981), where figurative images are banned by suppressive religious rigor (Exodus 20:4–6). (However, as Kristóf Nyíri (2011) explains, based on David Freedberg's *The Power of Images* and David Gelernter's *Judaism: A Way of Being*, Judaism actually has a passionate affection for images, and the will for figurative images cannot be suppressed.)² Heavenly images presented replete with blinding angelic apparitions, heavenly throne rooms, and cataclysmic landscapes, together with nightmarish demons, sprang from an aural–textual tradition in which religious rigor banned every figurative visual expression. Hubbes (2008, 2017) proposes that, paradoxically, the apocalyptic imagination was the catalyst of the visual turn in late biblical times: “through apocalyptic imagery, visions not only gained legitimacy but they acquired a particular force in the Jewish mentality repugnant of any (even if ‘only’ literary) imagery” (Hubbes, 2008: 84–85). The apocalyptic imaginary in itself by its very concrete revelatory nature of imagining, showing (originally by description) the unseen, the unimaginable, represents a pictorial turn in the ancient Judaic context. Austin Farrer (2007 [1949]) names this turn a “rebirth of images” (although he involves in this “rebirth” a Christian reinterpretation of the old biblical imagery). Revelation thus can be conceived as a “revolution of the eye” by which the spectacular, at least at the level of mental images, gradually invaded the anti-iconic ancient Israelite and later Christian cultic environments between the third century BC and the third century AD. It may also be interpreted as a reconquering of religious expression by the visual imagination or a resurfacing of suppressed images—in fact, recycling the Canaanite, Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Persian imageries,³ completed with elements of the newer Greco-Roman pictorial traditions (Hubbes, 2008).

The special imagery of the apocalypse(s) is a product of a highly visual thinking built upon the cognitive metaphors (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980) of analogical logic (Hamvas, N.d. [1994]). In this sense, the apocalypse is no less than showing what is hidden (or rather, projecting the invisible) by analogical images.

Thus, relying on the projections of the imagination, apocalyptic imagery produces and reproduces fantastic representations that gain strong expressiveness by combining images of

² See the exact references in Nyíri (2011: 88–89); in English, see Nyíri (2013).

³ On the role of Canaanite, Mesopotamian, and Babylonian pictorial traditions in the formation of apocalyptic imagery see Homsher 2005, and for biblical iconography in general see Keel 1972; Keel, Uehlinger 1998; de Hulster 2007.

the real and the uncanny, the monstrous, and the desirable. Northrop Frye (1957) emphasizes the organization of these images according to an archetypal grammar into opposed apocalyptic and demonic mythical structures of the imaginary (Frye, 1957: 139).⁴ Austin Farrer (1949) points out a radical transformation of the Old Testament matrix of images into new reinterpreted structures and symbolic patterns in Christian revelation, and D. H. Lawrence (1932) gives a detailed and sharply critical overview of how the fantastic figures of Middle Eastern imagery and Babylonian astrology fused into intricate complex apocalyptic allegories. This strange complexity makes apocalyptic imagery extremely spectacular with grandiose scenery and hosts of sometimes unrecognizably collaged bricolage-beings (such as cherubs, tetramorphs, and scorpion-tailed-lion-headed horses) that might well be most eye-catching, but at the same time are mind-bogglingly difficult to interpret due to the abstract symbolism⁵ of any elementary detail (e.g., eyes, horns, wings, tails, etc.). This sophisticated symbolic prophetic-visionary language has always been allusive, obscure, and nevertheless very captivating not only for religious seers and audiences. It also provided a rich treasury for art and literature from the earliest times, excelling in creations of great beauty and grim grotesquery in painting, sculpture, poetry, music, or film, and digital multimedia technology has only added to the possibilities of expression inherent in its revelatory character.

BASIC CONCEPTS: THE APOCALYPTIC PARADIGM, MODERN RE-ENCHANTMENT OF THE WORLD, NEW AGE, RECOMBINANT IMAGES, AND SUBVERSIVE MEMES

Before turning to the analytical work proper, some brief definitions must be elaborated regarding the basic concepts or ideas supporting the investigation; namely, the paradigmatic nature of the apocalyptic, the recent re-emergence of religiosity, the millenarian thread in New Age spirituality, and the rhetorical use of recombining visual and narrative elements, including the notion of internet memes.

⁴ It is important to note that the term *apocalyptic* used in this study diverges from Northrop Frye's terminology elaborated in *The Anatomy of Criticism* (1957). In Frye's interpretation, the imagery of the "apocalyptic world, the heaven of religion, presents, in the first place, the categories of reality in the forms of human desire, as indicated by the forms they assume under the work of human civilization" (Frye, 1957: 141), whereas "[o]pposed to apocalyptic symbolism is the presentation of the world that desire totally rejects: the world of the nightmare and the scapegoat, of bondage and pain and confusion" (ibid.: 147) However, as the analysis of the images shows, the collage pictures would lend themselves to Frye's approach as well, encompassing both desirable, apocalyptic imageries and undesirable, demonic ones.

⁵ Also, as Jean Borella explains in his *Crisis of Religious Symbolism* (1990) concerning the accessibility of religious symbols for modern interpretation, this is due to the loss of the transcendental (or metaphysical) referent.

With regard to the concept of “the apocalyptic,” the use of the terms *apocalypse*, *apocalyptic*, and their derivatives in the academic literature is at least problematic. As Hubbes (2016) explains, the core of the problem lies in the paradigmatic nature of a distinct kind of mentality or structure of the imaginary, regardless of its different manifestations, as atypical as they may appear, and also regardless of how these are termed by various authors. Although there is much debate in several fields (e.g., Collins, 1979, 2003; Hanson, 1992; Grabbe, 2003; dePriest, N.d.) regarding these latter aspects either in terms of interpretation or in applying the proper terminology to given genres or phenomena, still we can clearly delimit the realm of apocalyptic studies: it is anything that pertains to the apocalyptic paradigm. According to Hubbes, the apocalyptic paradigm denotes a common religious worldview that acts as a reciprocally influencing model of and model for reality, built upon a basic set of beliefs, like the linear development of human history, which is to be disrupted by an imminent divine intervention; a theodicy-oriented rejection of the world, inseparable from certain fears of destruction and hopes for salvation and regeneration for the elect, being expressed in and manifested through apocalyptic works and movements, messianic, millenarian, and utopian ideas, and often (but not necessarily) going hand-in-hand with phenomena of subversiveness, fanatic exaltation, fundamentalism, dualistic exclusivism, paranoia and scapegoating, or demonizing. It is a conglomerate leading to events that provoke massive, radical, long-term changes in a given society or culture (Hubbes, 2016: 148–149).

It is worth adding that an implicit religious character may be discovered even in scientific, materialistic, and/or secular apocalyptic world views, which is important because people tend to believe that apocalypticism occurs only in religious contexts. Although this is definitely not the case—just consider the numerous apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic movies—religiosity is nonetheless a significant constituent in any linear concept of time involving some conviction about the end-of-the-world idea, or a “sense of an ending” (Kermode, 1967).

On the other hand, religion is neither unconditionally apocalyptic (quite the opposite) nor absolutely constitutive for contemporary global culture. With regard to religion, apocalypticism is characteristic predominantly of the Abrahamic monotheisms,⁶ which have a linear concept of time and an idea of a final judgement. In contrast, the polytheistic and even older animistic religions have a cyclical or atemporal concept of time and, as a consequence, are not so much centered on eschatological, millennial, or apocalyptic myth—or, at least, such narratives do not constitute the essence of those creeds.⁷ With regard to modernity (and implicitly the postmodern world of globalization), the world is generally considered

⁶ Persian religions, such as Zoroastrianism, Mazdaism, and Zurvanism, as well as later syncretistic religious systems as Manichaeism or the more recent Bahá’i, are also to be taken into account because of their linear and proto- or quasi-apocalyptic time-view.

⁷ Of course, there are significant exceptions, such as the Hindu concept of Kali Yuga, the Maitreya in Buddhism, the Native American Ghost Dance movement, and the cargo cults of Melanesia, to name only a few.

disenchanted in Weberian terms (Jenkins, 2012); that is, a secularized, nonreligious society. Nonetheless, a counter-phenomenon of re-enchantment is also present (Partridge, 2004, 2005; Jenkins 2012). Re-sacralization, a revitalized sense of transcendence adapted to the modern world, is observable in countless new pseudo-religious patterns such as urban legends, conspiracy theories, occult racism, science(-fiction) utopianism, UFO mythologies, parapsychology, and alternative medicine. These converge into a colorful popular (oc)culture sometimes labeled New Age spirituality, which permeates elite, middle, and peripheral societies alike in the form of “stigmatized knowledge” (Barkun, 2003; see also Partridge, 2015). This highly eclectic reemerging religiousness is combined with a generalized suspicion and aversion towards rationalism, science, and contemporary social establishments (Hubbes, 2012), a phenomenon termed *conspirituality* by Ward and Voas (2011).

In the second half of the twentieth century, approaching the end of the millennium, apocalyptic ideas (both religious and secular) gradually permeated this reenchanting milieu (Wojcik, 1997) of postmodern culture, especially its countercultural/occultural segments described above, leading to what Andrew Fergus Wilson (2016) describes as an “apocalyptic milieu.”⁸ It is in this general modern countercultural apocalyptic context that one has to understand New Age apocalypticism, which at first sight may appear self-contradictory. Not only is the New Age generally regarded as a spiritual movement rather than as a religion proper, but its syncretistic construction is built upon various ancient esoteric teachings, Eastern wisdom traditions, modern Western spiritism, and countercultural ideologies as well as contemporary fringe sciences (“stigmatized knowledge,” as Barkun (2003) terms this conglomerate), none of which excel in apocalyptic thinking. However, as several researchers (among others, Hanegraaff, 1996; Barkun, 2003; Defesche, 2007; Wilson, 2016) point out, there are multiple connections between apocalypticism (or millennialism) and New Age, especially with regard to the envisioned coming astrological Age of Aquarius.

In a sense that is synonymic with the concept of the apocalyptic, Michael Barkun distinguishes three types of millennialism: in addition to the traditional religious and secular-ideological millennialism (i.e., apocalypticism), he proposes a third, improvisational type, which “is by definition an act of bricolage, wherein disparate elements are drawn together in new combinations” relying “simultaneously on Eastern and Western religion, New Age ideas and esotericism, and radical politics, without any sense that the resulting *mélange* contains incompatible elements” (Barkun, 2003: 11). This improvisational nature is characteristic of the New Age discourses concerning the apocalyptic year 2012, where syncretistic esoteric spirituality turns toward a millennial mentality and fuses with various recombinant apocalyptic images and narratives, creating a brand-new type of (suspicious and aversive “conspiritual”) apocalypticism.

One more concept is yet to be explained in close relation to this last phenomenon of improvisational New Age millennialism: the idea of recombinant apocalyptic narratives

⁸ Based on the term *cultic milieu*, coined by Colin Campbell (1972)

in cyberspace proposed by Dino Enrico Cardone (2007). Adapted and further developed here, I apply it on the one hand to the web-rhetorical use of images, and on the other hand to the similar syncretistic nature of New Age discourses. Cardone assigns an intense subversiveness to the online recombinant apocalyptic narratives, both because of the inherent subversive nature of apocalyptic rhetoric and also because of the relative lack of gatekeeping functions on the internet (Cardone, 2007). In a similar way, this subversive character of rhetoric may be extended to New Age narratives to a certain extent, especially in the “conspiritual” discourses (Ward, Voas, 2011), where New Age ideas are mixed with conspiracy theories, ufology, paranormal phenomena, or pseudo-sciences. Again, textual narratives are not singular in terms of their subversive quality because Cardone (2007: 149–151) emphasizes that images serve as an even better means of unsettling persuasion.

The recombination of images is an old apocalyptic tradition (Hubbes, 2017), which is enhanced by the possibilities offered by the means of the new digital technologies, ensuring easy editing, combination, and wide, unrestricted distribution for the newly created visual works (Cardone, 2007). The most convenient (and trendiest) examples of these image recombinations are internet memes, including the apocalyptic memes that circulate in social media (Vacker, 2012; Huntington, 2015; Konior, 2019). Visual memes on the internet—both in the classic sense (Dawkins, 1979), in which case they may be considered ideas or motifs) and according to newer interpretations (Davison, 2012; Shifman, 2014)—are instantaneous, ephemeral, and highly variable minute digital works of art (Bown, Bristow, 2019), and, as such, they possess strong argumentative and persuasive rhetorical power (Huntington, 2013), and they are polysemantic (Babič, 2020); they are visual rhetoric at the highest level (Hubbes, 2017). Not only are these meme-images persuasive devices of visual rhetoric, but, in accordance with Cardone’s assertions concerning the subversiveness of recombinant apocalyptic narratives, they can also be considered subversive forms of argumentation. Because memes “may be viewed as a form of subversive communication in a participatory media culture” (Huntington, 2013: n.p.), these observations also apply to the recombinant apocalyptic visual memes, even more characteristically in both traditional millennialist and New Age environments.

A NEW AGE APOCALYPTIC

Let me return to the unusual case of New Age apocalypticism. It is the first time one can acknowledge a genuine, purely apocalyptic thread produced by the New Age and disseminated (thanks to the internet and popular culture) at the global level: the so-called Mayan apocalypse or the 2012 phenomenon (Sitler, 2006; Defesche, 2007; Gavriluță, 2012; Wilson, 2016).

This global phenomenon builds and unites mythopoeic elements such as the ending of the thirteenth *b’ak’tun* of the pre-Columbian Mayan astronomical Long Count calendar on

December 21, 2012,⁹ ancient calculations of the Chinese *I-Ching*, Native American prophecies, calculations of a returning mysterious Planet X or Nibiru of the Sumerian pantheon, a new, higher stage of human cosmic consciousness, and visions generated by psychedelic hallucinations (Sitler, 2006; Defesche, 2007; Wilson, 2016). New Age apocalypticism uses rhetoric similar to the more familiar classic Christian millennialists. It propagates a new era of peace, harmony, and prosperity for all of humanity, just like the biblical promise of the New Heaven and New Earth. What is more, it reaches back to the same set of images that are found in the Book of Revelation—as is the case in Stanislav Grof’s description of his own experiences of the holotropic state in psychedelic therapy:

In the center of this monstrous hurricane of primordial forces were four giant herculean figures performing what seemed to be the ultimate cosmic saber dance. They had strong Mongolian features with protruding cheekbones, oblique eyes, and clean-shaven heads decorated by large braided ponytails. Whirling around in a frantic dance craze, they were swinging large weapons that looked like scythes or L-shaped scimitars; all four of these combined formed a rapidly rotating swastika [...]. Then the experience opened up into an unimaginable panorama of scenes of destruction. In these visions, natural disasters, such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, crashing meteors, forest fires, floods and tidal waves, were combined with images of burning cities, entire blocks of collapsing high-rise buildings, mass death, and horror of wars. Heading this wave of total annihilation were four archetypal images of macabre riders symbolizing the end of the world. I realized that these were the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse [pestilence, war, famine, and death]. The continuing vibrations and jolts of my pelvis now became synchronized with the movements of this ominous horseback riding and I joined the dance, becoming one of them, or possibly all four of them at once, leaving my own identity behind. (Grof, 2010: 13–15)

This description of very familiar apocalyptic visions is a fragment of those that Grof intones. In context, it appears organically embedded into a larger system of New Age spirituality, which focuses on the doomsday event “prophesied” by the Mayan calendar for December 21, 2012. It shows a clear example of how old images can gain new meanings, extend their connotative fields, and integrate into new myths of variations by recombination with other visual elements. Below, I offer some brief analyses of such evolutions and recombinations used in online environments.

⁹ Theorized, among others, by authors such as José Argüelles (1984), Terence and Dennis McKenna (1975), Daniel Pinchbeck (2002, 2006, 2007), and John Major Jenkins (1998).

TWO KINDS OF APOCALYPTIC IMAGERY?

As László Hubbes repeatedly (2011, 2017) pointed out, it is possible to distinguish two clearly delimited parallel apocalyptic traditions in art history:

[T]wo separate traditions influencing each other have evolved in apocalyptic art from the Book of Revelation. The first one is a plastic figurative line of depictions materializing in Last Judgments, illuminations—and interestingly, in the *Dies Irae* movements in music, *Day of Wrath* poems in literature and so on; while, on the other hand, a dramatic-narrative line—overwhelmingly present in literature, medieval drama, manuscript illuminations, in music by the oratorios built on the Revelation, and—in recent times: movies—*Antichrist/Armageddon* stories, *Rapture* stories, and the popular culture or video games built on them. These two apocalyptic traditions in art can be clearly separated on the basis of their characteristics. (Hubbes, 2011: 60–61)

The two lines of tradition are present not only restrictively in the arts but at a more general level, in all the fields of symbolic representation of the apocalyptic mentality, including popular culture and digital social media. Online recombinant apocalyptic narratives, just like the pertaining imageries, draw naturally from both lines of tradition and produce new creations in both of them. However, given the high improvisational bricolage nature of the recombinant images, it is sometimes difficult to decide which tradition a given digital apocalyptic vision may belong to, and there are cases when—not unlike in traditional art—the elements of the two lines fuse into a complex collage, where such a distinction becomes impossible and irrelevant.

Having in mind these representational traditions, two images are analyzed below. They were selected from among a large number of visual materials collected from various websites as most representative of the two environments of contemporary digital religiosity investigated in this study: Christian millennialism and New Age–Mayan 2012 apocalypticism. The reason for selecting these two images was also because they raise the question of whether one may speak of two distinct types of apocalyptic imagery based on the differences between the specific apocalyptic discourses of the two different environments. **1**

As a first approach to Figure 1 (Mosser, 2011),¹⁰ the classic iconographic description elaborated by Erwin Panofsky (1972: 5–9) offers important information. At the level of

¹⁰ Illustration from Chris Mosser's blog entry "What do we do now?" (<http://faithandsurvival.com/?p=3257>, image: *apocalypse_080703_mn.jpg*, August 30th, 2013). The illustration, posted on December 21st, 2011, is neither the first nor an original collage image. The picture appears on both religious and non-religious sites, in Christian and New Age environments alike, on eighty-seven different (among them Arabic, Greek, Persian, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Thai, Turkish, and Urdu) websites (as of February 21st, 2020), and the earliest occurrence of the image (that a Google search could find)

pre-iconographic description, the illustration is a collage of four images with a number in the center overlapping all four pictures. The top left image is a painting with a central figure surrounded by shining clouds; in the lower part of the image, under heavy dark clouds, is a multitude of running, crying, and falling figures. The top right image is a photo of a ruined, collapsed building in the background with a man standing, leaning on what appears to be a mailbox. The bottom left image is a photo of a flooded area with only treetops visible. The bottom right image is a photo of a branch swarming with locusts.

At the second level, iconographic analysis clarifies that each of the four images represents a given sequence from the Book of Revelation. However, apart from the top left image, which is recognizably a painting depicting the Second Coming of Christ and the Last Judgment (specifically, *The Last Judgment* by the seventeenth-century Swiss painter Conrad Meyer), the images are real documentary photos representing various recent natural catastrophes.¹¹ There is a suggestion that all of them occur in (expectably, or at least refer to) the apocalyptic year 2012, which is why the year is highlighted in the center.

Entering into deeper details of the iconographic analysis, as Panofsky suggests, one can accurately identify each of the elements in the composition based on knowledge of biblical traditions. Meyer's inserted painting, like all classical Last Judgment compositions in art, shows Jesus Christ returning in glory in Heaven, angels announcing the Second Coming, and the resurrection of the dead, some of them rising to Heaven, while others are dragged down into the fires of Hell by devils. The sequence of the other pictures points to the narrative line of apocalyptic representations. They evoke various episodes from the Book of Revelation and other biblical apocalyptic texts. The second image in the composition (top right) refers to an earthquake, evoking several lines from the Book of Revelation, such as: "At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven" (Rev. 11:13; see also Rev. 6:12; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18). The third image (bottom left) depicts a severe flood. Although it is not directly from the Book of Revelation, it nevertheless points to another apocalyptic event, Noah's Flood, evoked several times throughout the scriptures, especially in the so-called "little apocalypse,"¹² exemplified in these verses:

But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the

was attached to an article by Christine Brouwer: "Will the World End in 2012?" from July 3rd, 2008 (http://abcnews.go.com/author-/christine_brouwer#45_date; as of March 10th, 2020, it does not show up on the website), and it also seems to have borrowed the illustration from an unknown source.

¹¹ Concerning the argumentative power of visual representations of natural disasters, see Eszter Deli's (2018) work *Visual Rhetoric in Disaster News Communications*.

¹² With the term "little apocalypse," theologians refer to the Olivet discourse, presented in the synoptic Gospels, namely in Matthew 24–25, Mark 13, and Luke 21, where Jesus warns his disciples about the signs of the end and the tribulations they must suffer before his Second Coming.



Figure 1. Signs of apocalypse. Collage from faithandsurvival.com (Chris Mosser © 2011. Image Courtesy of faithandsurvival.com).

coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. (Matt. 24:36–39)

The fourth picture (bottom right), shows a close-up image of locusts, reminiscent of another tribulation of apocalyptic connotations (one of the ten plagues sent by God as warning and punishment upon Egypt, described in Exodus 10), also an explicit suggestion to the infernal army of demonized locusts:

And out of the smoke locusts came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They were not allowed to kill them but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes. During those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them. The locusts looked like horses

prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. (Rev. 9:3–7)

As for the last element, the number 2012 imprinted over the four pictures of the collage is an “extra-biblical” import, from the New Age spiritual environment, referring to the Mayan apocalypse discourses. One can also observe here that the collage uses elements from both the dramatic Last Judgment tradition (explicitly inserting a Last Judgment painting) and the Revelation narrative line tradition (the three documentary photos of an earthquake, a flood, and locusts).

At the third level, from an iconological aspect, one finds that the collage, published on a Christian millennialist/survivalist website,¹³ is intended to be a warning and a call for repentance. By displaying the catastrophic images in a sequence, it is composed to provide evidence for the signs of the end as they are prophesied in the Book of Revelation. They are preceded by the painting of Christ’s Second Coming as a clear call for repentance to sinners (and possible referral to premillennialist or postmillennialist milieu) and also of hope for born-again Christians.

Looking at this collage with the method of archetypal and symbol analysis, some principal archetypes must be highlighted in conjunction with the symbols by which they are expressed. According to Frye’s (1957) typology, the photo components of the collage belong to the category of demonic imagery due to their catastrophic content. The painting of the Second Coming pertains to what Frye labels as apocalyptic within this same typology. Following Durand’s (1999 [1963]) archetypal classification, the definitions turn out to be more varied: two of them (the collapsed houses and the flood) fall under the diurnal reign of images with nyctomorphic, malign connotations, and the locusts, which also belong to the diurnal reign, represent sinister chthonic, theriomorphic forces. The Second Coming image is predominantly diurnal imagery, with strong diairetic (dividing) features, and both ascensional aspects (Christ shining above the clouds and rainbow, saints rising to Heaven, and angels) and catamorphic ones (the damned falling and dragged down into Hell, and devils).

As principal symbols, for each component image one can identify (top left) the Savior, the Judge, the Heavenly King (represented by Christ), light, clouds, people (resurrected, beatified, and damned), angels, and devils; (top right) houses, ruins, and man (victim); (bottom left) flood: malefic water, trees (garden), and houses; and (bottom right) locusts. In Jungian terms (see Ostow, 1995; Edinger, 2002),¹⁴ these symbols together are emphatic expressions of the apocalyptic complex or, in Edinger’s formulation, the archetype of the Apocalypse.

¹³ Available at <http://faithandsurvival.com/?p=3257>.

¹⁴ Carl Jung’s psychoanalytical approach to apocalyptic spirituality was applied by two of his followers in significant works dedicated to the phenomenon: Edward F. Edinger’s *Archetype of the Apocalypse: Divine Vengeance, Terrorism and the End of the World* (2002) and Mortimer Ostow’s *Ultimate Intimacy: The Psychodynamics of Jewish Mysticism* (1995), in particular, chapter two: “The Apocalyptic Complex”.

Taking the collage as the representation of a myth following the methodology of Kapitány and Kapitány (2002), it is a composition following the patterns of medieval pictorial compositions¹⁵ of a classical mythic narrative; namely, the Christian story of the Apocalypse and Last Judgment, as described in the Book of Revelation (primarily based on Rev. 20:11–15). It also reminds one of the tribulations (earthquakes, floods, and locust plagues) to be suffered by the world before Christ's Second Coming (Rev. 6:12, 8:5, 9:3–7, 11:13–19, 16:18, as well as Matt. 24:36–39). In Lucian Boia's (2000: 17–19) interpretation of the patterns of the imaginary, six major archetypal constructions (of his proposed eight structures)¹⁶ may be recognized: the primary archetype of an invisible, transcendental world; the hope (and fears) of the afterlife; the strangeness of the physical world through the menaces of natural disasters;¹⁷ the scouring of the future; escape from the world (from history); and the dualist structures of confrontation of opposites. Although the apocalyptic mentality actually encompasses all eight schemes (to variable degrees), the analyzed collage image explicitly refers to the six named above. The inserted Last Judgment painting by itself evokes transcendental reality (Heaven, God, and angels), the hopes (of salvation) and dreads (of damnation) concerning the individual fate in the afterlife following the Last Judgment, which is to happen soon (2012), ending the suffering and evils of this earthly history; it also depicts the grand cosmic oppositions (this world versus Paradise, and Heaven versus Hell). The sequence of the other three images refers to Boia's first, third, and fourth archetypal

¹⁵ According to Hubbes, the classic composition of the Last Judgment depictions follows a very strict pattern from the earliest Byzantine mosaics through the Gothic sculpted portals to the late Romantic, and even modern paintings:

[...] the Pantokrator-scene, the row of saints and/or angels, Michael archangel, and, very prominently, the Tartaros with the damned falling into it, organized into two or three registers. By contrast, the East maintains the larger composition prescribed by its icon-theology, even in the larger and more complex Parousias. Especially from the Renaissance on, the West tends to return to this more or less "simplified" set of motifs, using rather only the Maiestas Domini-composition with the angelic hosts and the interceding Virgin and John the Baptist, the figure of Michael archangel, the general resurrection and finally the souls going either to Heaven or to Hell, but unlike their Eastern counterparts, these Last Judgments are not divided in stripes and sectors any more, while the classic left-right, up-down spatial division is further maintained. (Hubbes, 2016: 38)

¹⁶ Lucian Boia enlists eight archetypal universal structures of the human imaginary that "highlight a certain structural permanence surpassing cultural and historical boundaries: [1.] belief in an essentially superior reality that governs the material world; [2.] hope in the afterlife; [3.] the wish to ensure the greatest possible coherence for the world and for the communities; [4.] amazement and uneasiness over the diversity of the world, especially concerning the Other's otherness; [5.] striving to grasp the origin, essence, and reason of the world; [6.] the strategies to control individual fate, history, and future; or, contrarily, [7.] refusal of history, and the attempt to escape into an immutable harmonic time; and finally, [8.] the dialectic of the collision and synthesis of the opposing agencies" (Boia, 2000: 19).

¹⁷ Cf. in this regard, especially chapter one in Elemér Hankiss' *Fears & Symbols: Understanding the Role of Fear in Western Civilization* (2001), where he explains the fears caused by the strangeness of the world we live in due to the threatening dangers of our natural environment.

schemes; namely, the unbearable strangeness of this world, in which natural disasters are interpreted both as signs of the approaching end and as tribulations (punishments) sent by God to try the perseverance of the faithful (or for the evil ways of this world).

The last approach relies on visual rhetoric and discourse analysis. According to Dino Enrico Cardone (2007: 5, 8), who interprets contemporary online apocalypticism as subversive recombinant narratives, this image is a perfect example of his view. The editors combined documentary photos of present cataclysmic events to represent old apocalyptic narratives in an actualizing manner. Their purpose was to unsettle and persuade the internet audience to reform. The realism of the photos is meant to be a strong argument: this is going to happen very soon, in the coming end-time year of 2012. As a powerful instrument of (rhetorical) pathos and logic (Deli, 2019), the pictures are combined into an inductive logical succession to reinforce the introductory image of the Second Coming calling for repentance and preparation for the Last Judgment (and/or Rapture in the interpretation of dispensationalist millennialism).

In the last instance, to sustain the persuasive and subversive power of the *2012 Apocalypse* image, I wish to point out some external factors as well. Due to the strong actualizing message, partly because of the year 2012 superimposed over the four pictures, the collage started on the path to memeification, turning into a successful meme. As mentioned earlier,¹⁸ the image was shared and reused on at least eighty-seven different (among them American, Arabic, Greek, Italian, Latvian, Persian, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Thai, Turkish, and Urdu) websites between 2008 and 2020. Although absolutely unaltered in every new appearance, it nevertheless manifested high variability in the aspect of its use: among the multitude of websites publishing this image as an illustration, one can find Christian millennialist, “prepper” survivalist, or esoteric (New Age) sites, Buddhist or ecologist blogs, entertainment video channels, news portals, and skeptical personal social media profiles in both religious and secular contexts. Far from being only an image strictly targeted at faithful audiences and used in the ritual deliberations of the virtual ecclesia (Howard, 2009), the *2012 Apocalypse* collage escaped its millennialist environment and spread out in the worldwide public arena of discourses. **2**

Figure 2, taken from Valum Votan’s (a.k.a. José Argüelles) 2000 website,¹⁹ which contains articles related to 2012 and New Age prophecies, is a multilayered collage. From an iconographic aspect, I look at two distinct layers of this collage: the background images and the foreground elements.

On the left side, the viewer follows these steps: 1) First, we see a stone carving, an unrecognizable human figure. 2) Through iconographic consideration, we may assume that it shows a Mesoamerican, possibly a Mayan stone sarcophagus lid carving representing

¹⁸ See note 9 above.

¹⁹ Illustration taken from José Argüelles’ 2002 article “Revelation Prophecies: The Bible and Pacal Votan” on his own website *LawofTime.org* (<http://www.lawoftime.org/timeshipearth/articlesbyvv/revelation-prophecies.html>).

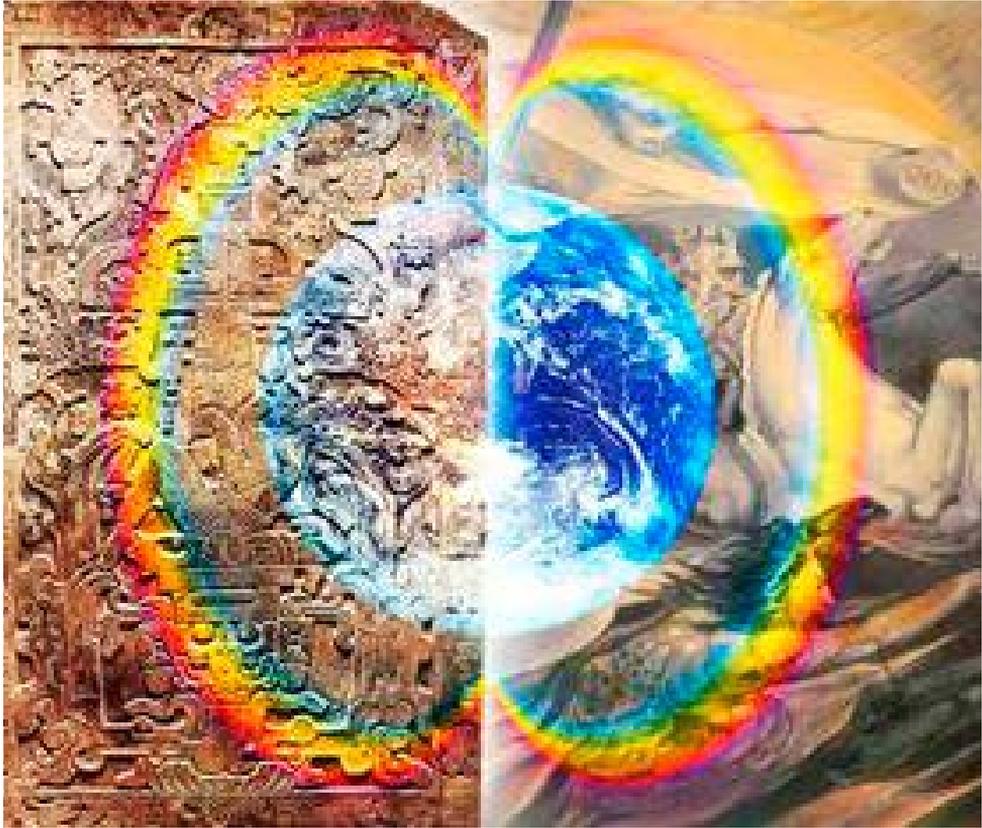


Figure 2. Signs of Apocalypse. Collage from José Argüelles' (Valum Votan's *lawoftime.org* New Age 2012 website. Ernest Blackwell © Image Courtesy of *lawoftime.org*).

King Pacal Votan / K'inich Janaab' Pakal (603–683, the great *ajaw* or ruler of the Mayan city state of Palenque). This is important because Pacal Votan is one of the most notorious paleoastronauts made famous (“created”) by Erich von Däniken (1968), turned into an iconic figure for the New Age connected to pseudoarcheology, and later indirectly (but inevitably) to the Mayan apocalypse. 3) At an iconologic level, its primary function is allusive: by showing a Mayan *ajaw*, it is intended to refer to the presumed ancient Mayan prophecy concerning December 21, 2012 as an apocalyptic date. This may be precisely the reason why José Argüelles / Valum Votan used the figure of King Pacal Votan (considered by him a prophet of the coming New Age).²⁰ The background picture on the left is more meaningful in connection with the next paired image and the frontal composition.

²⁰ See José Argüelles / Valum Votan's (2002) explanations in the online article “The Revelation Prophecies: The Bible and Pacal Votan” (<http://www.lawoftime.org/timeshipearth/articlesbyvv/revelation-prophecies.html>). The text of the prophecy (probably also Argüelles' own creation, but referred to as the “transcription of Blue Spectral Monkey”) can be found on the same webpage under the title “The

The background image on the right might seem more familiar. 1) The first level is apparently a watercolor image representing three human figures and a white horse. 2) From an iconographic aspect, one can recognize a detail from William Blake's *Death on a Pale Horse*, cast as one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. 3) At the iconologic level, the primary function of this image is again allusive; it represents the Book of Revelation (Rev. 6:8), thus pointing to the Apocalypse in Christian tradition, but it gains sense only in connection with the next paired image and the frontal composition.

The foreground composition appears 1) at the first, pre-iconographic level as a blue ball surrounded on two sides by colorful belts. 2) At the iconographic level, one can recognize the planet Earth seen (photographed) from space with a double rainbow bridge around it.²¹ To understand the significance of this composition, one has to know the mythical narratives from which the two elements are brought forth: a realistic photo (or CGI) of the Earth often symbolizes Mother Earth (or Gaia), especially in ecologist and, even more importantly, in New Age visual environments, and the rainbow (with its Biblical origins standing as a sign of God's covenant with Noah and humanity, Gen, 9:13) has gradually grown into a universal symbol of peace and indirectly also an allegorical representation of New Age spirituality. Both the globe and the rainbow, however, also bear "classic" apocalyptic connotations: they often appear in the iconography of Last Judgment compositions, serving as a throne or support for Christ as Pantocrator. 3) In an iconologic approach, Gaia is an allusion to all of humanity (and, more generally, all Her children: every living thing) and, together with the rainbow bridge, they symbolize the new era of peace and harmony that awaits us in the coming age of Aquarius. At this point, it is probably not irrelevant to mention that the double rainbow belt is displayed in a strangely familiar form around Gaia. One often sees figures of the Earth's magnetic fields visualized with lines, resembling this image. Moreover, this is a strong reminder of the apocalyptic event of the geomagnetic reversal of the North and South Poles caused by a gigantic solar flare expected to happen in 2012 (widely circulated in the New Age milieu and popular culture as well; Vacker 2012).

This foreground image overlapping both background images in the central position emphasizes the correlation or possibly the convergence of the two apocalyptic traditions and points to the same mystical event.

In terms of archetypal analysis, the left background image presents several archetypes: beyond the fact that these are expressions of (or rather allusions to) fantasy, exotism, and antiquity (emphasizing the authenticity of the ancient wisdom of the Mayans), the most important of these is the figure of King Pacal Votan. Due to Erich von Däniken's (re) interpretation (1968), he is the *par excellence* archetype of the ancient astronaut (seen by

Telektonon of Pacal Votan. The Talking Stone of Prophecy Which Unites the People of the Dawn with the People of the Book" (<https://lawoftime.org/timeshipearth/telektonon.html>).

²¹ It should be noted that the foreground composition image of the analyzed collage showing the Earth surrounded by a double rainbow serves as the background of José Argüelles' / Valum Votan's *Law of Time* website.

the bestseller author and his followers as a pilot sitting in a sort of stylized space vehicle). In this sense, it represents two very important archetypes: the ancient wish of humans to ascend to the stars and, in an equally significant way, the celestial origins of humans. Coming closer to the explicit meaning of the image, the king figure is also an expression of the archetype of prophecy, interpreted by José Argüelles, who considered himself Valum Votan: an end time reincarnation of Pacal Votan, the Mayan prophet of the dawning new age of humanity. According to Frye's archetypal typology, here there is a clear wishful apocalyptic imagery as far as Pacal Votan is seen as a representation of the cosmic (and divine) human being—almost an apotheosis (which is implicitly promised by New Age spirituality). In the sense of Gilbert Durand's archetypal structures, one can recognize allusions to the diurnal, ascensional archetypes of the man flying to the stars and rising to unprecedented (spiritual) elevations. The right background image contains essential archetypes. The main archetype is death, surrounded by its corollary archetypes of malefic time and violence. The fourth horseman, the pale rider, originates in the biblical Apocalypse (Rev. 6:7–8). As a central figure, he represents the concentration of the sinister complex of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Here, it is loaded with ulterior, sedimentary symbolism; nevertheless, one can uncover its archetypal basis, which belongs to the demonic imagery in terms of Frye's categorization. A Durandian approach similarly assigns it to the terrifying realm of nyctomorphic, theriomorphic images of time in its malefic aspect. Together with the terrifying horse (the *nightmare*), it stands out as the purest personification of death and destruction. The main symbols are the old (warrior) king, the horse, the scroll (or book), and the guide (or herald). Death and destruction, as bearers of the end, are central archetypes in the apocalyptic complex; in common perception, they erroneously represent the essence of the apocalypse.

For the entire composition, the planet Earth (or Gaia) with a rainbow bridge superimposed over the two background pictures provides a new connotation. Although the globe already appeared in ancient times as a representation of the totality of the world (the “whole round Earth” is a term occurring in many languages), the image of the planet itself is a newer development in the manifestation of the symbol. The rainbow, in addition to the biblical sense of peace and divine reconciliation, is a universally preferred symbol. All its connotations pertain to paradisiac (in Frye's terms: apocalyptic) connotations. In Durand's classification, the rainbow pertains to the diurnal, ascensional regime of images. In many cultures and traditions, the rainbow is identified as a bridge connecting the earthly and heavenly world. In this context, the planet Earth surrounded from both sides by a double rainbow bridge emphasizes the New Age character of the collage. Taken integrally, the symbolism of this collage is only allusive with regard to the apocalypse. Its two expressive background components reveal a bright and promising celestial (cosmic paradisiac) view of the 2012 phenomenon.

In a mythanalytic aspect, it is a new manifestation of an eschatological myth of emerging transcendent reality awaiting humanity at its next stage of spiritual development.

It is symbolized here by correlating the traditional apocalypse concept with the new(ly “discovered”) ancient Mayan “prophecy” (McKenna, McKenna, 1975 ; Argüelles, 2002), both brought under the unitary vision of New Age spirituality that prepares for a radical transformation of humanity in a new era of peaceful global cosmic consciousness. José Argüelles (2002) explicitly elaborates this idea in the prophetic text to which the image is attached as an illustration. He explains that the Book of Revelation and Pacal Votan’s prophetic Book of Kin foretell the same future. “Chapter 21 [of Revelation] says: ‘And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.’ This is the fulfillment of the coming sixth sun of consciousness. The prophecy of Pacal Votan and Quetzalcoatl about the sixth sun says that the passage to the New Jerusalem, which opened in 2004, is the beginning of the establishment of the New Time, which is the inner sun burning within us and the new solar millennium.” This ancient idea of (post-)apocalyptic paradise gained a brand-new formulation in the Aquarian, Orientalizing spiritual trends and psychedelic quasi-religious experiments (from the McKenna brothers, through Argüelles, Wilcock, and Pinchback to Stanislav Grof) in the second half of the twentieth century in the western world.

Boia’s patterns of the imaginary fit this composition from two aspects: the archetype of a transcendental world (in which humanity as a whole “suffers” an apotheosis), and the projection of the future. Dualist archetype structures are weak or irrelevant in the image, which is a surprise given the two-sided composition of the picture and is also unexpected in apocalyptic connotations.

With regard to the persuasive power of visual rhetoric, the recombinant apocalypticism (Cardone, 2007) of Argüelles’ New Age Apocalypse image is neither meant to be subversive, nor is it such in effect. This image, although also a collage (with a more complex technique of juxtaposition), represents a distinguished level of bricolage work. Its author (very probably José Argüelles himself) used three different works of art, less known to the general public. On the other hand, the combined pictures, with the exception of Blake’s *Death on a Pale Horse*, do not originate from the classic pictorial tradition of apocalyptic imagery. In this sense, the image corresponds more aptly to Cardone’s idea of the recombinant apocalyptic and Barkun’s (2003) improvisational millennialism. Still—or exactly for this reason—the image has not become a genuine meme. Aside from Valum Votan’s *Law of Time* site, the image occurs only on two Italian New Age blogs, both with reference to José Argüelles.

Finally, even if it is a message that reaches a restricted audience, the composition contains a rather allusive narrative: “rejoice, all traditions point to the end of the old world to give room to a brighter, happier new age.”

CONCLUSIONS

Given the limitations of this study, I can only refer to the rest of approximately a dozen similar images taken from millennialist and New Age contexts. Their investigation convinced me again that the online apocalyptic rhetors—whatever their allegiance—utilize the same wide-ranging set of universal archetypal images, ingeniously recombining them for their own specific purposes. As a general observation, I can conclude that, although the basic visual elements of the applied imagery are broadly the same in both contexts, the manner of visual rhetoric makes the difference. Grim, terrifying, harsh images of global cataclysms, fleeing people, and mysterious ruins juxtaposed with soothing images of greening landscapes, shining heavens, and scenes of earthly paradise abound on Christian and New Age websites alike. However, millennialists tend to use these same images in a rather menacing tone and exclusivist stance, in what Stephen O’Leary (1998) calls a “tragic frame” as opposed to the brighter, enthusiastic, and integrative tone of apocalyptic New Agers.

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REKOMBINANTNA RAZKRITJA:
 2012 V MILENARIJSKEM IN NOVODOBNEM KIBER-APOKALIPTIZMU:
 ANALIZA DISKURZA SIMBOLIZMA IN VIZUALNE RETORIKE V DVEH
 DIGITALNIH OKOLJIH, NAPOVEDUJOČIH APOKALIPSO 2012

Avtor raziskuje apokaliptično duhovnost v sodobnem globaliziranem kontekstu ponovno nastajajoče religioznosti in novodobne duhovnosti, v katerih so tisočletne tesnobe koledarskega leta, miselnost zarote in krizna zavest še podkrepljene z vizualno poplavo starih in novih elektronskih medijev. Dvoje religioznih ali duhovnih digitalnih okolij se kaže z značilnimi podobami: na eni strani precej tradicionalno okolje krščanskega tisočletja, na drugi hipereklektično ozračje omrežij new age. Veliko raznovrstnost te fantastične podobe je mogoče obravnavati s tipološkim pristopom in primerjalno ikonografsko analizo. Na prvi ravni je uporabljen ikonografski pristop, ki se opira na triplastni model Panofskega (1955, 1972), druga metoda pa združuje semiotični model analize mita (Kapitány, Kapitány, 1995, 2002 [2001]) in sheme imaginarija Luciana Boie (2000 [1998]).

Avtor gleda na apokaliptične podobe kot na vizualno revolucijo; slikovni motivi in rekombinantne tradicije so preživele od bližnjevzhodne antike do virtualnih okolij digitalnih medijev. V drugem delu raziskovalec na kratko predstavi kontekstualne vidike, najprej problematični izraz apokaliptika, nato pa poudari sodobno novo očaranje sveta in vlogo novodobne duhovnosti; pokaže se, kako je to apokaliptično ozračje prispevalo k širjenju rekombinantnih podob kot subverzivne nove milenaristične retorike.

Študija je analiza apokaliptične podobe z dvema primeroma, izbranimi izmed več deset slik. Izbrana sta bila prav zaradi tega, ker značilno predstavljata okolji sodobne zahodne apokaliptične religiozne miselnosti – krščanski milenarijski in novodobni kontekst – in ker kolaža na popoln način ponazarjata, kako lahko načela apokaliptične vizualne in vizionarske kompozicije uporabimo še danes. Kompleksna interdisciplinarna analiza razkriva zelo podobne sheme in strategije, npr. skupne značilnosti medbesedilnosti, slikovne citate, biblične aluzije, aktualizacijo, uporabo več različnih virov in rekombinacijo podob. Avtor sklene z ugotovitvijo, da vse te strukture in prepričevalne strategije v novem okolju in z novimi sredstvi digitalnega vesolja ohranjajo in nadaljujejo stare rekombinantne manire vizualne apokaliptične retorike.