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Article

Are Liberation Theologies Ready to Liberate *Maricas*? Reflections on the Challenges of Liberation Theologies Today

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Abstract: When speaking of liberation, a fundamental question inevitably arises: Liberation for whom? This enquiry becomes more complex when the sex-gender perspective is added. This paper presents critical points within Latin American Liberation Theologies (LLT) that must be addressed to move towards a liberation of sex-gender dissidences (*maricas*). The reflection, far from being speculative, seeks to resituate the question of contextuality as one of the most important theoretical-practical challenges in the elaboration of Queer Theologies from/in/by Abya Yala. Therefore, it will reflexively examine the urgent need to continue depatriarchalizing and “indecenting” the methodologies employed in LLT. To this end, it will draw on the contributions of Latin American indecent theologies, rarely considered by contemporary “liberation” proponents. Research through various reference works, past and present, leads to the following question: Are LLT ready to liberate *maricas*?

Keywords: queer theologies; Marcella Althaus-Reid; indecent theologies; Latin American Queer Theologies; Mysterium Liberationis Queer; Maricas Theologies; Abya Yala

Introduction

I want to start this talk with an anecdote. It was one of those weekend nights when I usually go out partying with my friends. That night, we were gathered in a discotheque, dancing among *maricas* and *travestis*. There was vogue and runway, lip-sync contest and many transvestites, it was a ballroom party. That night, we were joined by other Colombian and Venezuelan *maricas*, all of them exiled from many regions and survivors of the common cis-heteropatriarchal contexts, like me. During conversations and dancing, we introduced ourselves and tried to talk about our stories of resistance and survival. One of them introduced me to the others by saying that I was “a *marica* theologian.” Immediately, several of them started to ask me questions about religion, theology, spirituality, etc. I tried to talk about what I had learned in theological spaces that address gender diversity: I mentioned some ideas from LGBTIQ+ Theologies, I talked about Queer Theologies, I alluded to several books in which I began to discover the possibility of thinking and doing sexual liberation theologies.

For me, it was very important for my friends to know what I do, because I know that theology, religion and spirituality are often related, mainly, to the wounds that the hegemonic tradition has caused in the lives of people who enunciate ourselves as dissidents of the sex-gender system. One of them said to me, “Love, I think all that you are saying is for and about gays. The *maricas* never have room in families, nor in churches, much less in theology.” That and other similar messages walk with me through theological spaces and have become a compass that leads me to the questions that concern me most existentially, because I consider myself *marica* and theologian, or better, a *marica* theologian.

In this research, I am interested in continuing this reflective itinerary, which is why I am resorting to “theology in the first person,” as Marcella Althaus-Reid said (2003).¹ This implies the following: (i) to approach my life experience as a *marica* from the Global South, from the situated knowledge and local experiences of living in Colombia; (ii) to investigate the place of the *marica* life experience in Latin American Liberation Theology (LLT), recognizing its limits and proposing challenges. Thus, recognizing the “limits of liberation” (Vuola, 2002), I seek to make an inflection that exposes the *marica* experience in the queer horizon (Falconí Trávez, and others, 2013; Lanuza y Carrasco, 2025; Falconí Trávez, 2018).

I am interested, beyond the “systematic” theological reflection, in reflecting on some “symptomatic” aspects of the current LLT. Therefore, I intend to explicitly address some tensions, ruptures, disagreements and internal challenges within the liberationist movement, to discover and make explicit what Pablo Richard called “the violence of theology” (Richard, 1990). I will return to the bibliographical bases of Queer Theology to enunciate myself from there, while progressively trying to renounce some of its enunciations and epistemologies, which are proper to the Global North. I am interested in insisting on the risk of assuming Anglo-Saxon and European Queer Theologies in the Global South and end up phagocytizing and minimizing the dissident experiences of the South.

Thus, this presentation is a *theological queering* that, as a disruptive method, seeks to expose and engage with the messy edges and the parts that do not fit into the ordered structure of hegemonic theology. In returning to the realities of the territories of the South, with their complexities and particularities, theological reflection cannot be “generic,” nor can it be reduced to a matter of “translation,” because:

When you intersect theological reasoning with the experiences of human beings narrated at the level of class, race, gender and sexuality –especially when those vectors vivisect us carnally and intimately– you are not simply contributing to a pre-existing theological project; you are transforming the project and redirecting its theological conclusions (Aquino, 2024: 9).

1. Liberation for Whom? Towards Indecent Theological Liberation

Latin American Liberation Theology (LLT), according to Gustavo Gutiérrez (1975), has proposed a “permanent cultural revolution” (p. 62), promoting a theological praxis that responds to the concrete realities of the most oppressed people. However, with time, its transformative impetus seems to have cooled. *Mysterium Liberationis* (1990), a foundational text that consolidated the thinking of the first generation of liberation theologians, today rests somewhat quietly on the shelves of theological academies, witness to a revolutionary fire that has been, in part, stifled.

Despite the great historical impact of this liberating project, today this theological corpus faces contemporary criticisms that point to its limits, as the theologian Elina Vuola put it, speaking of the “limits of liberation” (Vuola, 2002). Although LLT was consolidated in the fusion of horizons beyond Roman Catholicism, involving Protestant, Anglican and Methodist theologians in a transversal movement within Latin American Christianity, an urgent question arises today: Are these theologies capable of confronting and transforming the intersectional oppressions experienced by LGBTIQ+ people, particularly sex-gender dissidence?

Thanks to the intersectional turn in LLT, which came with the visibilization of human rights activists (women and afro-latins and LGB people) in the last decades, it has been insisted that patriarchy, cis-heterosexism and racism not only *aggravate* a primary condition of poverty, but rather *engender* poverty. Thus, we face “a diversified poverty with economic, cultural, social and gender dimensions” (Aquino, 2024: 8). Thus, by intertwining itself with the structures of oppression that LLT has traditionally challenged, Indecent Theology invites us to “turn everything upside down” (Aquino, 2024: 10) by reorienting the theological project towards a liberation that is not merely inclusive and diverse but, above all, transgressive. Herein lies its *indecency*, in a question that “go

¹ In the words of Marcella Althaus-Reid (2003): “Queer theology, then, is a theology in the first person: diasporic, self-revelatory, autobiographical and responsible for its own words” (p. 8).

further" (Althaus-Reid, 2019: 31) the mere representativeness of diverse people and problematizes the modes of relationship and sex-political positioning, uncovering the countless abusive, violent and colonial practices that are harbored even in liberation projects. Marcella Althaus-Reid (2000b) defined her proposed *Indecent Theology* as follows:

Indecent Theology is a theology which problematizes and undresses the mythical layers of multiple oppression in Latin America, a theology which, *finding its point of departure at the crossroads of Liberation Theology and Queer Thinking*, will reflect on economic and theological oppression with passion and imprudence. An *Indecent Theology* will question the traditional Latin American field of decency and order as it permeates and supports the multiple (ecclesiological, theological, political and amatory) structures of life (p. 2).

Also, in her article "Marx in a gay bar," speaking about Indecent Theology as a queer but liberation theology, she states:

It is a *transgressive sexual theology*, but it uses twisted epistemology concerning the crisis produced by globalization, social exclusion, and savage capitalism. [...] We cannot understand consumerism and the spirituality of consumerism without analyzing the form of production. Therefore, an Indecent Theology is a *Feminist Theology of Liberation* (FTL) that uses sexual suspicion to dismantle the sexual ideologies that structure doctrines and organize churches (Althaus-Reid, 2019: 43-44).

Undoubtedly, Althaus-Reid opened the door for incorporating the intersection between Queer Theory and Abya Yala (Latin American) complexity in theological reflection. Previously, Queer Theory in Queer Theologies had been primarily understood from a Caucasian and Global North perspective. Her work sparked a movement of reflection that encouraged a reevaluation of traditional theological structures, promoting a more inclusive understanding adapted to the Latin context. Althaus-Reid's goal was not to dismantle LLT but to deeply explore this contextual and hermeneutical circle of suspicion by questioning the traditional approach to theology in the context of LLT. She promoted an indecent and Latin American theological project that represented both a continuity and a disruption of LLT, as well as of theologies specialized in addressing sex-gender diversity.

In this sense, and paraphrasing Pedro Lemebel's revolutionary question, it could be said that Althaus-Reid's indecent project sought to answer the question: Won't there be some *marica* or *loca* on some corner unbalancing the future of LLT?

But who are *maricas*, what is their place in Abya Yala, and what is their participation in LLT? These questions are the ones that have moved my theological work because, although they seem to be simple questions and constantly addressed in theological spaces that call themselves "inclusive" and "diverse," those of us who enunciate ourselves from *marica positionality* continue to find places and situations that do not usually assume our experiences in their radicality. They ask us for a certain "homosexual decency" and, in doing so, lead us to a dead end in which we are left with the choice of assuming the "impostures" and "composure" demanded, or abandoning those places forever. Moreover, most of us *maricas* cannot even have the option of deciding, but, because of our experiences, we are already exiled from theological spaces: because we are very indecent, so indecent that we cannot think of strategies of "imposture", much less of "composure". This is the existential situation of the *marica*.

When I speak of *maricas*, I am not talking about privileged homosexual people who celebrate their acquired rights and speak from their comforts (Santos Meza, 2024). When I say *marica*, I think of my own life and the lives of my friends, for whom the novelty is that we are still alive, that we manage to go to sleep with full bellies, that we can have a roof over our heads at night, that we have access to medicine and that every time we take public transportation we can return home safely. The *maricas* can't pretend to be anything else, because our bodies, our movements, our voices and our vulnerability give us away. In this sense, I borrow the words of Pedro Lemebel in his manifesto *Hablo por mi diferencia*: "Here is my face. I speak for my difference. I stand up for what I am. And I am not

so strange" [Aquí está mi cara. Hablo por mi diferencia. Defiendo lo que soy. Y no soy tan raro] (Lemebel, 2020: 121).

Returning to the theological sphere, we can recognize what Boff rightly said: "The Latin American Stations of the Cross have too many 'stations' for us to even enumerate them. Let's limit ourselves to stating that colonialism was transformed into neo-colonialism, and that the servitude of yesteryear persists, under different signs and different masters, to this day" (Boff, 1986: 48). Therefore, here I focus on a particular station: The reality of the *maricas*, *jotos*, *travas*, *travestis* and *veados* of Abya Yala, whom the conceptualization of "queer" fails to address, because it is insufficient.

From colonial times to the present day, the perception of Abya Yala (Latin America)² has been shaped through a "Eurocentric lens" (Mignolo, 2009; Mignolo, 2011) that determines its place in the world order, configuring the inhabitants of Abya Yala as *exotic objects* of study (Aquino, 1999; Althaus-Reid, 2000a; Althaus-Reid, 2009). In the theological realm, this externalist vision has also been replicated, leaving Abyayalenses voices as footnotes to Anglo-Saxon and European theologies. For decades, LLT has struggled to counter this marginalization, raising its own voice and demanding recognition as active subjects in the global theological conversation. Today, as in the past, it is still a primordial necessity to open "our" space, to speak with "our" voice, to discuss "our" issues and to announce with great insistence that people of Abya Yala are not a "pastoral problem" or a mere "bibliographical note" that exoticizes the theological works of European and Anglo-Saxon scholars (Córdova Quero, and others, 2024: 26).

Perhaps, today, liberation theologians no longer dare to ask the question that Marcella Althaus-Reid (2019) was asked: "And you, Marcella, what is your work, your theology?" (p. 32). However, it does seem that for many people today the question is: What do *maricas* have to do with Liberation Theology? For Althaus-Reid, theology urgently needs to face hermeneutically the irruption of the sexual subject in history, in the same way that liberation theologians had to face the irruption of the Church of the poor or the underprivileged of history. Precisely, when looking at the experiences of sex-gender dissidence in Abya Yala, especially of *maricas*, a new question arises: Is Liberation Theology as it has been formulated so far sufficient to embrace and emancipate those who live on the margins of sexuality and gender?

In this context, the term "queer" has gained popularity, but, as Hugo Córdova Quero points out, it is not enough to adopt this globalized concept without examining its limitations and its lack of rootedness in the experiences of the communities of Abya Yala (Córdova Quero, 2018). The experiences of queer life in Abya Yala can best be approached from the expression *marica* –which includes *jotos*, *travas*, *travestis* and *veados*–. In this way, it seeks to point out that they are complex realities that are often subjugated to the categories of the Global North –such as "gay" and "queer"–, in which the specificity of their experiences, with their peculiar histories and own contexts, are not widely captured. Just as the construction of a "Abya Yala (Latin American) space" in theological narrative prompted an inquiry into the sources of a theology that was rooted and incarnated in the lives of people, and had to go to the faith and the multiple spiritualities in the Continent to listen to the countless religious experiences and re-read the traditional narratives, Indecent Theologies must keep this exercise of returning, over and over again, to the lives of people, to their daily struggles and their own experiences.

² I have tried to use "Abya Yala" with insistence in this text, since this is the name that our ancestral territory has had. It is important to specify this, since "America" –and its derivatives– alludes to the name imposed in the genocidal process of colonization. I have left "Latin America" in the textual quotations and in the allusions to Latin American Liberation Theology (LLT) because that theological movement was so named. I propose, however, that this recovery of the language proper to our territory implies positioning in our narratives the words that have been taken away from us: we are not queer, we are *maricas*; we are not "Americans", but natives of Abya Yala.

For a long time, LLT ignored the sexual realities of poor people, presenting them as asexual and worthy of pity, as Marcella Althaus-Reid (2000b) points out. Today, this omission extends to many *maricas*, who have been subsumed under the normative categories of Anglo-Saxon queer discourse. Thus, the liberation proposed by these theologies remains incomplete and, often, ineffective and empty. Just as the irruption of the poor into liberation theology at its origin, the irruption of dissident sexual subjects demands a profound transformation of traditional theological categories, including the also traditional LGBTIQ+ categories (Córdova Quero, and others, 2024). Thus, when spaces for LGBTIQ+ theologians are currently being constructed in which *maricas* voices and spiritual experiences are not usually validated, nor is there the presence of *travestis* or non-binary people, the question arises: Are Liberation Theologies prepared to liberate *maricas*?

Being *marica* is not exclusively a matter of opening one's legs to someone of the same sex; it is a way of taking a sex-political position. Theologies at the service of *maricompreensión* [*marica-comprehension*] are understood from intellectual heterodoxies that allow the construction of situated epistemo(theo)logical knowledge, which are not superficial contextual allusions, but which activate a sort of "politics of localization" by pointing out a real position (Lemebel, 2020). For this reason, considerations of cultural translation will be relevant to the extreme of Gayatri Spivak's question "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (Spivak, 2004), you must ask yourself: Can the *marica* speak? Is what the *marica* says listened to in liberationist theological spaces? Is the theological reflection of a *loca* considered a valid interlocutor? Can *maricas* and *locas* inhabit liberationist spaces? Are *maricas* safe in such places?

2. The Horizon of Indecent Theologies: Towards Maricas Theologies

Althaus-Reid's Indecent Theology can be understood as an authentic expression of LLT, seeking to embody the nuances, pleasures, dilemmas, and ecclesial hopes, as well as to transform the social reality of the people of Abya Yala. Today, Latin American Queer Theologies make constant connections with contextual and regional approaches, seeking a more accurate understanding of the reality of sex-gender diverse people. These emerging local theologies are framed within the paradigm of Queer Theologies, even when they do not explicitly adopt that terminology, as in the case of Althaus-Reid's theology, which, as mentioned above, was called "Indecent Theology". I sense that this indecency can find a great emancipatory force by returning to the territory to inhabit it: Abya Yala is our place.

Between 2012 and 2024, Latin American meetings have been held to continue walking along the horizon opened by Althaus-Reid. In 2012, the First International Symposium on Queer Theology was held (San José, Costa Rica. 7-11 August), organized by the Ecumenical Research Department (Boehler, and others, 2013); this was followed by a series of congresses in São Leopoldo (Musskopf, 2024).³ In 2022, the Second International Symposium on Queer Theologies was held (San José, Costa Rica. 2-6 August 2022). From it emerged the recently published *Mysterium Liberationis Queer* (Córdova Quero, and others, 2024), a liberationist work that actively challenges the acts of violence of cis-heteropatriarchy and provides arguments and figures for new horizons in Latin American liberation

³ For more information, see: Musskopf, 2024: 441-465. There, Musskopf recalls the working groups on Queer Theologies "La economía de la carne" [The economy of the flesh] and "Microfísica de la vida queer: teoría, religión y sociedad en perspectiva presente y futura" [Microphysics of queer life: theory, religion and society in present and future perspective] that were presented at the IV Latin American Congress of Gender and Religion (São Leopoldo, August 5-8, 2015). Also, the creation of the Network of Queer Theologies and Pastorals from the articulations in the IV Congress in São Leopoldo (2015-2024); and the Meeting of the Global Interfaith Network for People of All Genders, Sexualities, Identities and Gender Expressions (GIN-SSOGIE) in the VI Latin American Congress of Gender and Religion (São Leopoldo, August 12-14, 2019).

theology. *Mysterium Liberationis Queer* is driven by an intersectional research impulse that destabilizes the foundations of the cis-hetero-masculinist liberation theology of that first generation. It is a book of more than 500 pages in which its authors attempt to resist theological normativity, proposing some paths of escape and dreaming of more just futures.

Indeed, when theological reasoning is intertwined with the lived experiences of individuals, particularly those shaped by dimensions such as class, race, gender, and sexuality—especially when these factors affect us on a profound, personal, and bodily level—it does more than simply contribute to a pre-established theological discourse (Aquino, 2024). This intersection has the power to challenge and transform the very foundations of that discourse. By engaging with these marginalized or often overlooked experiences, theological thought is not only enriched but also redirected, leading to new conclusions and perspectives that were previously excluded or misunderstood. In this way, the process becomes a dynamic reorientation of theology itself, pushing it beyond its traditional boundaries and opening it up to a more inclusive, holistic understanding of human life and suffering.

Such intersections, which have critiqued, resisted and confronted dominant theological logics, have been embodied in a series of liberationist “wokist” ghosts: feminism and queer theory, critical race theory and trans liberation (Aquino, 2024: 10). As a liberationist project, its purpose has been none other than direct and insurrectionary action in the face of the cis-heteropatriarchal violence of theology (Richard, 1990), which is why it strives to multiply liberationist horizons rather than exclude vital options.

In this sense, a critical appropriation of multiple belonging demands attention to the experience of the multiple who “don’t fit in”. Whether by choice or by accident, because of the cruelties of others or of our own positions, this is also a reality that the rhetoric of inclusion overlooks. In view of this reality, theologian Carmen Nanko-Fernandez (1990) asked:

Who is left out of our constructions of identity and community? Who is left out when we omit or ignore the histories of our intersections? Who is ostracized based on arbitrary criteria that determine the norm? Who is privileged and who is excluded when a particular norm is assumed to be common? Who is silenced? Who loses agency? Who are the gatekeepers who control access? (pp. 9-10).

Queer theological discourses, which in recent decades have been consolidated in the United States and Europe, have left out the experiences of Latin American sex-gender dissidences. Moreover, we can affirm that it is evident how “queer theologians from Latin America consult the works of queer theologians from the Global North, but the latter do not explore the contributions of their Latin American counterparts, even when their works are written or translated into English” (Córdova Quero, and others, 2024: 20). This is why we must remember what Althaus-Reid already observed: there is a difference between Queer Theologies—which are not necessarily liberationist theologies, nor are they interested in being so—and Indecent Theologies—understood as Latin American Queer Liberationist Theologies⁴.

The writer of this reflection enunciates himself from the second typology, because I do not wish simply to speak of queer representativeness in theology, nor of theological inclusion. However, I must say that it is difficult for me to do it at all, because I still feel insecure in these spaces. And it is from there that I want to ask: Are LLT prepared to liberate *maricas*, or is an insurrectionary act

⁴ Perhaps, this difference, already noted by the Argentine theologian, helps to observe a generalized reality in the production of theological knowledge: the Latin American liberationist project is not usually considered and if it is, it is only as a footnote to the theological developments of the Global North. Even in current theological research, which addresses queer issues, the effort to consider research that has been carried out in the Global South for more than three decades is still minimal.

necessary to take this cultural revolution to new depths? This reflection explores the challenges facing LLT today, pushing its boundaries to “go further” (Althaus-Reid, 2019: 31)⁵.

The questions of the theologian Nanko-Fernandez, formulated over 30 years ago, lead me once again to the initial story, because I do not stop thinking about all the *maricas*, *locas* and *travestis* who feel exiled from the LLT spaces, who find countless cis-heterosexual complicities, who feel that there is only room for “adequate” gays, lesbians and trans, that we are violated by homo-normativity, Christian-centrism –which is often supremacist and authoritarian–, pastoral and paternalistic condescension, as well as by the prevailing “ageist logic” that suggests that young people should maintain a kind of blind obedience to people who have been in the struggle longer. These are some of the aspects that I often feel in my own experience as a *marica* theologian. So, I am interested in insisting on this: We need *maricomprendernos*!

A few months ago, at a meeting of Latin American theologians, this became very clear to me. It so happened that I presented a conference in which I pointed out that it was urgent to promote spaces and exercises for theological *maricomprendación*. Several cis-gender people who were there listened to my intervention; but then, privately, they tried to correct the use of the expression “*marica*”, telling me that it was a term that applied only to “men who have sexual relations with other men” (MSM), and that women did not feel included and represented with that term. I have received this same argument several times from anonymous reviewers of specialized papers.

This had a great impact on me, because in spaces that are not enunciated from a gender-sexual “diversity” perspective, but from a gender-sexual “dissidence” perspective, the recognition of the queer term is not reduced to a question of sexual orientation and gender identity, but is much broader and more complex: there are *negras maricas*, *travestis maricas*, *bisexualas maricas*, *lesbo-maricas*, *putas maricas*, and others enunciations. The *mariquismo* is a very complex universe, which tries to draw the horizon of dissident minorities of the sex-gender system, but from the recognition of the complex mesh of intersectorialities that subsist in the history of dissidence.

Precisely for this reason, it is necessary that also in theology we enable spaces to understand the factual implications of *marica* experiences. If LGBTIQ+ people do not manage to consider dissident and disruptive experiences, without being shocked by the indecency, any effort to get cis-heterosexual people to do so will be futile (Santos Meza, 2023b). Thus, people of gender diversity should be the first to try to understand what Pedro Lemebel called *maricomprendación*.

3. An Urgent Need: Theological *Maricomprendiones*

The movement towards a theological *maricomprendación*, which articulates the realities of *maricas*, *travas*, *travestis* and other dissident bodies in Latin America, does not seek to adapt to “new” realities, but rather to revisit situated experiences and recognize the potentialities of Latin American sex-dissident contexts to transform theological, socio-cultural and political coordinates. Theologies for *maricomprendación*, being exercises of invasion and perversion of traditional liberationist theologies, of their discourses and habits of thought, can help to transform theological, political, epistemic and symbolic coordinates, to dispute the common meanings established in the spaces of legitimization of theological knowledge and practices.

But, for this, it is necessary to go beyond the identitarian and the nominalist, beyond that sort of naive voluntarism of the nomination (Cadahia, 2024) that can also co-opt the *marica*, because “it is not the deliberate self-denomination that will allow us to find the way out of the prison of phalocentric language” (Braidotti, 2004: 91-92). The simple fact of enunciation as dissidence from the sex-gender system does not imply an automatic transformation of the material structures of power that are present in theological practices. To liberate subjectivity requires more than mere acts of naming: we

⁵ Marcella Althaus-Reid is flying over Luce Irigaray’s borderline ideas. Precisely in her article “Marx in a Gay Bar”, Althaus-Reid begins by alluding to Irigaray’s words as a manifestation of her desire to extend LLT beyond its limitations.

need to free ourselves from socio-historical bonds through tropes of the popular collective imagination that allow for real socio-symbolic interventions, but, to do so, we need to begin to *maricomprendernos* through theologies situated in these wounded lands of Abya Yala, where, as Lemebel (2020) said, “there is passion and Calvary for a while” (p. 34).

As suggested by the intellectual heterodoxies of Lemebel and other situated *maricas* perspectives, Indecent Theologies propose a conceptual revolution that starts from the vital experiences of Latin American *mariquismo* and does not depend on Anglo-Saxon and European narratives. This approach is not about simply translating the queer discourses of the Global North, but about constructing situated epistemo(theo)logical knowledge, deeply rooted in the Latin American context, that recognizes the complexity of living as a dissident subject in these lands (Santos Meza, 2023a).

The proposal of a Theology for *maricomprepción* implies, then, dismantling cis-heterosexual narratives, but also homonormative logics that attempt to “domesticate” or “sanitize” the experiences of sex-gender dissidence. If its project of liberation is radical, theology must betray the normative frameworks that have shaped its development, renouncing the practices of exclusion and exoticization that have marked its history. This reflection is ultimately a cry of resistance, an insistence that Latin America’s *maricas*, *travestis*, *travas* and *veados* have not only a place in LLT, but a transformative power that can rewrite its foundations –or perhaps, rather, destabilize or fracture them–. At the heart of this proposal is the conviction that liberation cannot be achieved without fully including the experiences, bodies and subjectivities that have been marginalized and silenced for so long. Thus, Latin America calls for *Maricas Theologies* that not only understand but assume a radical commitment to liberation in which to occupy the *marica* is to betray the normative frameworks that brought us into existence. Why domesticate us in a cis-heterosexual system? Why assume an imported cis-homosexual normativity?

This approach to LLTs from the experience of *maricas* seeks to demonstrate that theological practices and narratives are capable of being thought, felt and constructed from the realities that are “materially inscribed in the subject” (Braidotti, 2004: 95) of their discourse, which in this case refers to the Latin American and *lo marica*, understood as places of oppression and political positions, since these realities are both social, cultural and historical “sediments” and possibilities of emancipatory “reactivations” (Laclau, 1990). This is a radical way of perceiving and perceiving ourselves, of constantly reassembling the imaginary according to survival strategies that allow us to find points of escape and *maroonage* during these cis-heterosexual societies that refuse to grant us life, pleasure and reality.

It is time for us to break into Latin American liberationist theological narratives as *maricas*, who do not ask nicely for the word, but speak without asking permission, without seeking approval to communicate our stories, which are also theological transits (Preciado, 2003).⁶ It is time to write trying to propose interruptions to the hegemonic logics of the production of theological meaning. And to do so by exercising scriptural pulsations that deny the triumph of cis-heterosexuality and homonormativity as a way of organizing life. To do so by trying to produce micro-fugues to the ways of representation that place some bodies in supremacist realities and reject others. It is time to

⁶ Preciado’s original expression is as follows: “Surgissent des gouines qui ne sont pas des femmes, des pédés qui ne sont pas des hommes, des trannies qui ne sont ni homme ni femme” (Preciado, 2003: 21). Although “gouines” is usually used to allude to “male lesbians” and “pédés” to “female homosexuals,” a contextual translation of “gouines” and “pédés” that goes beyond the feminine/masculine binary is proposed here. Thus, *maricas* is proposed. In the Colombian contextual usage, the term *marica* alludes to sex-gender dissidence, which implies the broad deployment of the term in the comprehensive horizon beyond the reference to gay, as it happens in other Latin American countries. In Colombia, we speak of *marica negra*, *travesti marica*, *transmaricona*, *maricas lesbocentradas*, *sidosa marica*, *maricón*, *mar icon*, *mariquismo*. In this sense, Pedro Lemebel’s expression used here takes on special relevance: “maricomprepción” [*marica-comprehension*].

produce liberationist theologies trying to dynamite the apparatuses of cognitive production that are aligned to classist, racist and transphobic narratives because the bodies that many of us have are neither heterosexual, nor cisgender, nor white.

From there, we try to propose critical and activist liberationist theologies –situated– that take a stand against the hegemonic ways of managing discourses and epistemological production in liberationist theologies. This is how many *maricas* have been able to find a place in the flows of circulation where we can deny a sympathy or a “being comfortable” within global (teo)capitalism, proposing concepts, practices, experiences, images and forms of organization that challenge what usually produces meaning within theological work.

Concluding Words

In this theological reflection, I have discoursed as a *marica* theologian, who refuses to renounce his *mariquismo* and his theological endeavor. Writing from the situated knowledge that runs through my own existence, I have tried to point out the need to push our queer theological perspectives beyond certain theoretical and foreign narratives, which can be colonial in our territories; therefore, it is not a matter of renouncing them altogether, but of recognizing that the exercise of “translation” of theories and practices is always at the service of the territory in which they are assumed, not the other way around. In Latin America, it is not possible to embed the queer experience as it is lived in other regions of the world, but the mutations, polysemies and particularities of the territory must be assumed. That is to say, the implications and complications of the contextualization of queer in the territorial and cultural reality in which the concept is intended to land must be recognized.

In the case of efforts to “queerize” the LLT, it is important to continue questioning aspects that can be counterproductive in our theological elaborations and in the pastoral/community practices that we carry out. In the exercise of questioning and suspecting the actions that are traditionally carried out, it can be recognized that the *Mysterium Liberationis*, in its mysterious horizon, always leads to untrodden paths, risky actions and rebellious practices. In this sense, when speaking of the *Mysterium Liberationis Queer*, it is urgent to address questions about those “queer” aspects that even escape that term. That “contextual excess”, which is usually minimized because it is considered a non-universal aspect, must be assumed with responsibility. This “contextual excess” alludes to lives, stories and people that are often placed in theological anonymity, or to be considered as a simple piece of information that makes research more inclusive or theological discourses more progressive.

The question of the concrete persons who are liberated by our theological discourses and pastoral practices is an urgent matter. It cannot be answered with anecdotes of yesteryear, but with current stories that speak of the theological liberations of today. In the present times, in which theological and ecclesial spaces in Latin America and the rest of the world, as well as universities and social movements, are undergoing significant generational changes, it is important to ask these questions: Who are still excluded? Who are not present in our spaces? Why do many people, especially today’s youth, not frequent our spaces? Why do the new generations not take part in the theological walks that began decades ago? I believe that the way in which these questions are assumed is determinant to consider the future of liberationist projects in Abya Yala and the rest of the world.

Moreover, it is fundamental that before responding hastily to such questions, those of us who enunciate ourselves from indecent theologies also think about the limits of our indecency, because perhaps we are not as indecent as we say we are and that is why many people continue to suffer because of our lack of determination, of our theological egoism, of our ecclesial rigidity and of our excessive effort to represent everyone, kidnapping other people’s experiences and speaking for others, when perhaps we should let them speak, doing our best to allow them to live autonomously in theological spaces. We can still achieve that “marginal theological praxis, gratuitous and great love” that goes beyond “so much encyclical and so many church” (Althaus-Reid, 2019: 33).

While gatherings, people and hearts appear to continue reflecting theologically on these questions that cross my existence, I end this presentation remembering the beautiful verses of Susy

Shock's song (2018) that I sing together with my *maricas* friends when something torments and hurts us: "No desesperes mariquita linda, no desesperes. No desesperes mariquita linda, no desesperes." This trans singer from the South knows what *marica* means when she sings this powerful song, which is a psalm of comfort and resistance for those of us who don't fit into the "queer" category of the global North, but neither do we fit into the cis-heteropatriarchal dynamics of many churches. Those of us who sing this song recognize that we have nothing left but our closest friendships and those indecent loves that taste like heaven because they write in our hearts loving commandments, more powerful than the old rules of the Old Testament.

Appendix A

Where in the text says	In the index should say
<i>Althaus-Reid, Marcella</i>	<i>Althaus-Reid, Marcella</i>
<i>Maricomprensión</i>	<i>Maricomprensión</i>
<i>Lemebel</i>	<i>Lemebel, Pedro</i>
<i>marica</i>	<i>marica</i>
<i>Queer Theologies</i>	<i>Queer Theologies</i>
<i>Maricas Theologies</i>	<i>Maricas Theologies</i>
<i>Latin American Liberation Theologies</i>	<i>Latin American Liberation Theologies</i>
<i>Indecent Theology</i>	<i>Indecent Theology</i>
<i>Mysterium Liberationis Queer</i>	<i>Mysterium Liberationis Queer</i>
<i>Mysterium Liberationis</i>	<i>Mysterium Liberationis</i>
<i>Shock, Susy</i>	<i>Shock, Susy</i>
<i>Global South</i>	<i>Global South</i>
<i>Richard, Pablo</i>	<i>Richard, Pablo</i>
<i>Vuola, Elina</i>	<i>Vuola, Elina</i>
<i>Nanko-Fernandez, Carmen</i>	<i>Nanko-Fernandez, Carmen</i>
<i>Gutiérrez, Gustavo</i>	<i>Gutiérrez, Gustavo</i>
<i>Queer Theory</i>	<i>Queer Theory</i>
<i>Abya Yala</i>	<i>Abya Yala</i>

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