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Article

Detoxifying Theology, Theological Pathologies and Liberative Antidotes from Palestine and Queer/Cuir/Marica Dissidence

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Abstract

This article advances a systematic theological diagnosis of the contemporary crisis in Christian thought, contending that dominant modes of theologizing have become epistemically, politically, and spiritually toxic. Beginning with a critical analysis of the *habitus* of theologization, it demonstrates how inherited theological dispositions reproduce and normalize forms of violence embedded within colonial, cisheteropatriarchal, and necropolitical regimes. The study then interrogates the proliferation of theological narratives of terror and the corrosive effects of decent, docile, and obedient theologies that legitimize exclusion, dehumanization, and imperial projects—most starkly exemplified in the deployment of theological discourses to rationalize the ongoing genocide in Palestine and the systematic marginalization of queer/cuir/maricas, trans, and gender-nonconforming bodies. Against this backdrop, the article proposes two liberative antidotes. The first is Palestinian Liberation Theologies (PLT), which reclaim theological imagination through situated resistance, political commitment, and forms of spiritual endurance. The second emerges from Latin American Liberation Theology (LLT), as reconfigured through queer/cuir/marica dissident experiences, whose embodied, indecent, and decolonial imaginaries disrupt regimes of theological purity and open pathways for insurgent, life-affirming practices. Taken together, these antitoxic interventions articulate a decolonial and emancipatory horizon for theology—one grounded in relationality, insurgent imagination, and activist commitment. In this sense, theological detoxification is not merely a critical task but an indispensable condition for envisioning alternative worlds amid ongoing civilizational collapse.

Keywords: theological detoxification; theological pathologies; habitus of theologizations; decolonial critique; Palestinian liberation theologies; indecent theologies

In this historical moment—marked by the intensification of genocide perpetrated by the Western imperial bloc and by the anticolonial resistance of the Palestinian people and the broader Third World—the global colonial order appears with renewed clarity: its humanitarian hypocrisies, its civilizational brutality, and its psychopolitical architecture of death. Under such conditions, theological labor can no longer remain silent. While acknowledging the unequal vulnerabilities that shape who can speak and at what cost—including precarious scholars and Palestinian academics under direct threat—the failure of theological discourse to name, identify, and resist ongoing violence must be confronted. In this sense, theological silence becomes a form of complicity, revealing a failure that is at once ethical, sociopolitical, theological, and spiritual. Since 7 October 2023, more than six hundred days of systematic violence have exposed the limits of internationalism, the timidity of Western progressivism, and the centrality of Palestine for any theology that aspires to liberation.

Within this conjuncture, liberation theologies—formed in the Global South as insurgent praxis and as an art of survival amid imperial devastation—must recover their generative force. Rather than functioning as belated moral commentary, they must reassert themselves as spiritual, collective, and sociopolitical practices capable of exposing and interrupting contemporary regimes of domination. From this urgency arises the present analytical project. It begins from the premise that theology—its

epistemologies, narratives, and practices—is deeply compromised, and proceeds as a critical investigation into its pathologies. In this sense, it resonates with the task assigned to critical theory by Adorno and Horkheimer: to unmask forms of social distortion,¹ later elaborated as “pathologies of reason.”² As a world-constituting language, theology produces totalizing fictions, legitimates violence, and can itself function as a mechanism of theological-spiritual intoxication. From this diagnostic starting point, the article proposes that contemporary theological work, which is committed to taking responsibility for the global situation, be understood as a process of detoxification, opening space for a broader project of re-enchantment: the recovery of life’s powers, a commitment to justice and peace in all their dimensions, the averting of the imperialist and neoliberal catastrophe, and the emergence of new relationships and communities rooted in care³. Therefore, according to Silvia Federici, re-enchantment is not a nostalgic return but a reconstruction of the relations capitalism has fractured: with nature, bodies, communities, and possible futures.⁴ Yet such a project requires recognizing, as Paul B. Preciado suggests, that our bodies remain entangled in and dependent upon the circuits of colonial, heteropatriarchal capitalism—driven by logics of excess that are never satisfied.⁵

If all writing/thinking operates as contagion, theology—writing/thinking the spiritual world of communities—also spreads its influence. What is needed, then, is a deliberate strategy to disrupt the circulation of pollutants and poisons. This entails a rupture with epistemo(theo)logical institutions that reproduce exhausted theological forms, and a turn toward the margins, the crossings, and situated knowledges from which dissident, insubordinate, indecent, and emancipatory theologies might emerge. Only through such risks and detours—through encounters and complicities—can the prevailing logics of devastation be unsettled.

This article develops its argument through six analytical movements: (1) an examination of the *habitus* of theologizing as an embodied disposition of obedience to institutional and spiritual hegemony; (2) a diagnosis of theological poisoning across epistemic and practical registers; (3) an analysis of diverse narratives of terror; (4) a critique of decent, docile, and obedient theologies aligned with colonial, cisheteropatriarchal, imperial, and necropolitical orders; (5) the presentation of Palestinian Liberation Theologies as a first antidote; and (6) the articulation of dissident queer/*cuir/marica* theologies as a second. Taken together, these two antidotal interventions interrupt dominant doctrinal grammars, destabilize sacrificial imaginaries, and open up alternative ways of imagining other worlds.

These two antidotes converge on a central claim: the Palestinian struggle constitutes a decisive site of ethical, sociopolitical, and theological-spiritual discernment today. Palestine is not an exception but a lens through which the infrastructures of the imperial capitalist world-system become visible.⁶ Likewise, queer/*cuir/marica* dissidence operates not as a thematic supplement but as a critical force capable of breaking the enchantments of hegemonic religion and confronting the conditions of contemporary violence.

¹ Theodor W. Adorno, and Max Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente* (Fráncfort del Meno: S. Fischer Verlag GmbH, 1969).

² Axel Honneth, *Patologías de la razón* (Buenos Aires: Katz, 2009); Laurent Jeanpierre, “Shaping Criticism in Times of Disaster?,” *Critique d’art* vol. 60 (2023): 17–27.

³ Anderson Fabián Santos Meza, “Conjurar la catástrofe: escrituras disfóricas, hechizos con la palabra y rituales disidentes,” *Cuadernos de Música, Artes Visuales y Artes Escénicas* vol. 20, no. 2 (2025): 16–37.

⁴ Silvia Federici, *Reencantar el mundo: el feminismo y la política de los comunes* (Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños, 2020).

⁵ Paul Beatriz Preciado, *Dysphoria mundi* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 2022), 73; Anna L. Tsing, *La seta del fin del mundo: sobre la posibilidad de vida en las ruinas capitalistas* (Madrid: Capitán Swing, 2021).

⁶ Daniel Dennett, *Romper el hechizo: La religión como un fenómeno natural* (Buenos Aires: Katz, 2007); Henri Bergson, *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (Paris: Culturea, 2024).

In sum, this article (1) diagnoses the toxic character of hegemonic theology—and of those theological ideas and practices that refuse to demarcate themselves from such dominant operations—and (2) advances Palestinian Liberation Theology and queer/*cuir/marica* theologies as practices of critical re-enchantment. Both function as forms of radical commitment to the oppressed and as exercises of insurgent imagination amid civilizational crisis. At a moment when the centrality of Palestine demands an unequivocal and radical theological response, this work contributes to the reconstruction of a theology committed to resisting violence, sustaining life, and opening new possibilities where the world appears exhausted.

This analysis is shaped by the author's positionality as a Latin American, queer/*cuir/marica* theologian and activist. Rather than a "neutral" standpoint, it emerges from a situated engagement with the intersections of theology, embodiment, and political struggle, foregrounding the commitments that inform both its critique and its constructive proposals. Therefore, "I don't claim to speak for a people, but I do write from a place."⁷

1. The *Habitus* of Theologization

Our first task is to reflect critically on the discipline in which we situate ourselves: Theology. It is a field that often eludes me, perhaps because I resist being domesticated into a specific *habitus* of theologization—a disciplinary formation shaped by intellectual sanitization, depersonalization, and appeals to authorized voices.⁸

Theology and Theologizing, as a situated and embodied practice, are never neutral. Following Bourdieu, *habitus* can be understood as a system of dispositions that shapes perception, judgment, and action.⁹ Transposed into the theological field, the *habitus* of theologization names the assemblage of epistemic, discursive, and ritual matrices that regulate who may speak of God, how, from where, and with what effects. It is not simply an intellectual exercise, but an embodied form of power.¹⁰ This *habitus*, however, is not a transparent medium of transcendence. It has been historically configured in ways that sustain domination.¹¹ Its toxicity exceeds doctrinal error, operating instead through affective economies, selective hermeneutics, liturgical grammars, and metaphysical architectures that establish hierarchies between lives deemed worthy and unworthy. In this sense,

⁷ Chelsea Watego, "Always Bet on Black (Power)", *Meanjin Quarterly* 80/3 (2021): 22–33.

⁸ Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 1 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 44, 46; Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2001), 152–153, 179–181; Glenn K. Fluegge, "How Is Theology a *Habitus*? Voices from the Past and Why It Matters Today," *CTQ* vol. 89 (2025): 3–31;

⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977); Gisèle Sapiro, "Habitus: History of a Concept," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd ed., vol. 10, edited by James D. Wright (Oxford: Elsevier, 2015), 484–489.

¹⁰ Hemberg Darío García Garzón, "Habitus de teologización," *Reflexiones Teológicas* vol. 2, no. 1 (2008): 55–65; Anderson Fabián Santos Meza, "Folding, (Un)Folding, and (Re)Folding the World. An Approach to the Intellectual Itinerary of Darío García Garzón," in *Dare Primer on Global Queer Theologies*, edited by Lisa Isherwood and Hugo Córdova Quero (London: SCM Press, 2025), 329–352.

¹¹ Clodovis Boff, *Theology and Praxis*, trans. Robert Barr (Mayknoll: Orbis Books, 1987); Christopher Craig Brittain, "Can a Theology Student be an Evil Genius? On the Concept of *Habitus* in Theological Education," *Scottish Journal of Theology* vol. 60, no. 4 (2007): 426–440.

hegemonic Christianity has not only spoken about God; it has normalized forms of theological expression that reproduce exclusion while presenting themselves as revelation.¹²

A particularly effective mechanism within this system is the corpus of “texts of terror.” These are not simply scriptural passages historically mobilized to justify conquest, slavery, misogyny, or the criminalization of sexual dissidence. Rather, they function as theopolitical devices that produce a pedagogy of fear: fear of bodies, of non-normative sexualities, of feminine autonomy, of racialized and colonized worlds, and of spiritual practices that exceed institutional control. Their power lies not in the text itself, but in their deployment as instruments of existential domestication, securing obedience at the cost of critical consciousness and imaginative possibility.

This textual regime is sustained by a broader socio-theological formation: sacralized cisheteropatriarchy. Here, white supremacy, hegemonic masculinity, sexual regulation, colonial epistemologies, and clerical authority converge to produce theology as a technology of normalization—enforcing compulsory gender, binary ontology, and institutional obedience, and other terrible prisons. The problem is not merely that cisheteropatriarchy operates within Christianity, but that it has been naturalized as part of its revelatory structure. What is culturally white, cisheterosexual, and male becomes divine; the dissident and the peripheral are pathologized, as the richness of plurality and diversity is rendered suspect.

Under these conditions, the hegemonic *habitus* of theologization generates perceptual frameworks incapable of encountering alterity without translating it into threat.¹³ The issue, then, is not only the existence of toxic theologies, but the normalization of theological toxicity as an environment so pervasive that it obscures the distinction between the divine and the theo(ideo)logical apparatus that speaks in its name.¹⁴

However, the Christian tradition is not monolithic; beyond the hegemony that presents itself as singular, forms of resistance have always existed. Alongside its hegemonic forms, a critical and prophetic lineage persists—one that gives rise to insurrectionary practices of theologization emerging from the margins of social death. If the dominant *habitus* operates through fear and hierarchy, these alternative practices cultivate dignity, relationality, and emancipation. They do not abandon theology but reconfigure it: transforming scripture from an instrument of control into a space of expanded habitation, and faith from obedience into collective imagination.

Detoxifying theology and processes of theologizing, then, is not merely an academic task but a form of theo-spiritual public health. It requires interrupting the reproduction of symbolic violence, dismantling pedagogies of fear, and learning to name God beyond the colonial grammars of domination. This entails constructing a *habitus* of theologization that enables life: where mystery does not legitimize power but shelters difference, and where theology ceases to function as moral surveillance of cisheteropatriarchal order and becomes a site of liberation.¹⁵

¹² Enrique Dussel, “Epistemological Decolonization of Theology,” in *Decolonial Christianities. Latinx and Latin American Perspectives*, edited by Raimundo Barreto and Roberto Sirvent (Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2019), 25–42.

¹³ Santos Meza, “Conjurar la catástrofe: escrituras disfóricas, hechizos con la palabra y rituales disidentes,” 16–37.

¹⁴ “[Epistemological ‘decolonial turn’] consists in becoming critically aware on Eurocentrism, from the view point of the post-colonial world, of Eurocentrism as the setting of discourse (*locus enunciationis*). This is a generalized *habitus* of the thinker, the scientist, the philosopher, which penetrates so deeply into the subjectivity of the theoretical and the objectivity of theories (and the human and social sciences), that is practically impossible to free oneself from its limitations, which are unanimously accepted by all – That makes it practically impossible to go beyond its narrow deforming limits” (Enrique Dussel, “The Epistemological Decolonization of Theology,” *Concilium* vol. 2, no. 350 (2013): 21-31, here 26).

¹⁵ That is why ethnographic practices, which are so undervalued within theological and ecclesiastical communities, are a fundamental resource for unmasking these toxic habits. In the words of Mary Moschella,

The theology that emerges from Palestine, from sexual and gender dissidence, and from other global margins points in this direction. It is a theology that does not fear bodies, domesticate resistance, or sanctify power—a theology not only about life, but capable of sustaining it. The future of Christianity, therefore, does not depend on new doctrinal formulations but on dismantling the conditions that have rendered it uninhabitable for so many.

2. General Diagnosis: Our Epistemologies, Discourses, and Practices Are Poisoned

Theology has not merely been affected by the world's toxicity; it has actively participated in its production.¹⁶ It has shaped and legitimized forms of violence within the collective imagination under the guise of the sacred. If global institutions warn of the poisoning of the planet and its inhabitants, theology must recognize its own role in this process.¹⁷ Dominant representations of the divine—embedded in doctrines, images, and interpretive traditions—function as persistent symbolic contaminants: they accumulate, resist transformation, and sediment across generations. In this sense, they operate as theological “forever chemicals,” colonizing religious consciousness and requiring long historical processes to be dismantled.¹⁸

These toxic formations do not arise in isolation. They are embedded within broader regimes of symbolic extractivism and necropolitics. Just as extractive economies produce territories of sacrifice,¹⁹ hegemonic theologies have generated spiritual “sacrifice zones”: bodies and communities made to

ethnography serves “to explore the habitus, the sum of the unspoken and yet firmly entrenched rules or patterns that govern the way a group of people practice their faith” (Mary Clark Moschella, “Ethnography,” in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, edited by Bonnie Miller-McLemore (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2012), 225).

¹⁶ Kevin García, *Bad Theology Kills: Undoing Toxic Belief & Reclaiming Your Spiritual Authority* (Independently published, 2020); Hanna Reichel, “Theology and Design,” *Journal of Systematic Theology* vol. 3, no. 3 (2023): 1–18; Hanna Reichel, *After Method. Queer Grace, Conceptual Design, and the Possibility of Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2023).

¹⁷ David R. Boyd, *Derecho a un medio ambiente limpio, saludable y sostenible: el medio ambiente no tóxico* (Consejo de Derechos Humanos, 2022).

¹⁸ Hubertus Brunn, Gottfried Arnold, Wolfgang Körner et al., “PFAS: Forever Chemicals—Persistent, Bioaccumulative and Mobile. Reviewing the Status and the Need for their Phase Out and Remediation of Contaminated Sites,” *Environmental Sciences Europe* vol. 35, no. 20 (2023); Bridger J. Ruyle, Colin P. Thackray, Craig M. Butt et al., “Centennial Persistence of Forever Chemicals at Military Fire Training Sites,” *Environmental Science & Technology* vol. 57, no. 21 (2023): 8096–8106; Daniel Renfrew and Thomas W. Pearson, “The Social Life of the ‘Forever Chemical’: PFAS Pollution Legacies and Toxic Events,” *Environment and Society* vol. 12, no. 1 (2021): 146–163; Pierluigi Conzo and Francesco Salustri, “A War is Forever: The Long-run Effects of Early Exposure to World War II on Trust,” *European Economic Review* vol. 120 (2019): 103313; John Ashton, “The Globalisation of the Chemical Industry and the Public Health Scandal of Forever Chemicals,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* vol. 116, no. 5 (2023): 183–184.

¹⁹ Omar Cano Ramírez, “Capitalismo fósil en el siglo XXI. Mecanismos económicos, energéticos, militares y elitistas para desencadenar el colapso planetario,” *Estudios latinoamericanos* vol. 44 (2019): 73–102; Ernesto Román, “‘El último dinosaurio europeo’. El concepto de fósil desde la perspectiva de una historia natural del capitalismo en Walter Benjamin,” *Constelaciones: Revista de Teoría Crítica* vol. 15 (2023): 251–282; John Saxe-Fernández (coord.), *Sociología política del colapso climático antropogénico: capitalismo fósil, explotación de combustibles no convencionales y geopolítica de la energía* (México: Centro de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias en Ciencias y Humanidades/DGAPA, UNAM, 2018).

bear the weight of a God constructed in the image of domination.²⁰ The critical question, then, is not whether theology contaminates, but how its categories, narratives, and practices distribute harm and legitimize exclusion.

The highest concentrations of this toxicity emerge where theology functions as a legitimating apparatus for hierarchical and sacrificial orders. Contemporary forms of capitalism—understood as a quasi-religious system—demand continuous offerings: feminized, racialized, precarized, migrant, and dissident lives.²¹ What doctrinal oil spills suffocate critical thought? What invisible gases circulate like sacred incense, choking those who inhale them? What semantic landmines explode in the corridors of dogmatics, destroying those who dare to walk there?

In this context, theology often does not merely accompany violence but renders it meaningful, even necessary. When it refuses to interrogate such structures, silence itself becomes a liturgical act—one that normalizes devastation, even as we acknowledge the unequal risks faced by those who choose to speak.

Hegemonic theology, when it refuses to interrogate these structures and opts instead for silence, does not merely bless them—it liturgizes them. It must be acknowledged that, for some theologians, speaking out and acting in such a context may entail persecution, exclusion, and significant risks to personal security. Yet the prevailing silence remains overwhelming; it reverberates like an echo that, through its indifference, tacitly consents to genocide.

I pose these questions to those who encounter this reflection, and simultaneously to myself: Is there truly nothing to be said? Is there no contribution I am able to make? Am I entirely constrained, with no room for action? Is there not a local community in which my hands and feet—my prayers and my songs—might participate meaningfully? Is even a modest act of material support beyond reach? Have I, at the very least, attempted to reach out to any community—whether theological or otherwise—to offer solidarity?

The honest answers that each theologian can offer to these questions mark a present, personal diagnosis. Moreover, if in this kind of examination of conscience we include the contextualization and characterization of terms such as “Palestine,” “Sudan,” “Congo,” “Iran,” “queer people,” “trans people,” “immigrants,” “Black people,” “victims of sexual violence,” “survivors of spiritual and religious abuse,” and so forth, we can readily recognize all that—sometimes near, at other times more distant—we have ignored.

The current situation in Gaza makes this complicity particularly visible. Genocide is not an “external” tragedy to the theological field; it is a visceral symptom of its long-standing complicity. In the name of a supremacist biblical hermeneutic, a discourse has taken root that not only explains violence but sanctifies it. Richard Dworkin warned that certain cultures may justify even genocide if they believe it protects their identity: “many cultures insist that the destiny of one religion or ethnic group or nation is far more important than that of others, such that genocide becomes permissible to

²⁰ Tanesha A. Thomas, *Is the South (Still) America's Sacrifice Zone? A Regional Analysis of Toxic Emissions, 1987–2017* (New York: University of New York, 2020); Yogi Hale Hendlin, “Surveying the Chemical Anthropocene: Chemical Imaginaries and the Politics of Defining Toxicity,” *Environment and Society* vol. 12, no. 1 (2021): 181–202; Peter C. Little, “On the Micropolitics and Edges of Survival in a Technocapital Sacrifice Zone,” *Capitalism Nature Socialism* vol. 28, no. 4 (2016): 62–77; Jill Harrison, “Abandoned Bodies and Spaces of Sacrifice: Pesticide Drift Activism and the Contestation of Neoliberal Environmental Politics in California,” *Geoforum* vol. 39 (2008): 1197–1214; Ivan Strenski, *Theology and the First Theory of Sacrifice* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Sarah Stewart-Kroeker, “Sacrifice in Environmental Ethics and Theology,” *The Journal of Religion* vol. 102, no. 2 (2022): 237–261; Ryan Juskus, “Transforming Sacrifice Zones into Sacred Zones: A Christological Vision and Practice of Environmental Justice,” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* vol. 44, no. 1 (2024): 45–63.

²¹ Preciado, *Dysphoria mundi*, 45.

protect religious, racial, or national identity.”²² Today, this logic is embodied in fundamentalist religious Zionism, which has instrumentalized Scripture to justify exclusion, occupation, and extermination.²³ The problem is not love for a sacred text but its (theo)ideological kidnapping: The Bible reduced to a property deed, to a certificate of ethnic exceptionality, to a celestial authorization for dispossession. This hermeneutic, far from declaring justice, suffocates “the voice crying out for justice, peace, and sovereignty;”²⁴ it distorts the sacred to make it compatible with domination. Narratives calling for universal compassion or care for the stranger are drowned out by the theological noise of exclusive privilege.

This literalist, selective, decontextualized use of Scripture is not an interpretive accident but a political strategy. When one insists that everything must occur precisely as it appears in the Scriptures, what is being defended is not the integrity of a religious tradition but its instrumentalization to fortify power.²⁵ What is presented as theology is a technology of supremacy. Similar logics operate in other religious nationalisms that, as numerous analyses show, mobilize the myth of being a “chosen people”²⁶ to consolidate exclusionary, hierarchical, exceptionalist projects. This “poison of nationalism” is not an isolated case but part of a global pattern in which religious fundamentalism and state projects feed one another.²⁷ As a religious, colonial, and nationalist fundamentalism, it carries with it “repression, poverty, and humiliation, all combined to push [Palestinians], by means of genocide, out of their land until it is cleared, as in the legend of the Promised Land.”²⁸

Fundamentalist Zionism—and its geopolitical alliances with empires, economic lobbies, and theo-political evangelicals—is a conspicuous example, but not the only one.²⁹ It is one node within a broader historical structure: a Christianity that invented crusades,³⁰ evangelized by the sword, blessed colonialism, nourished supremacies, legitimized enslavement, molded hegemonic

²² Richard Dworkin, “Derechos y terror,” *Precedente: Revista jurídica* vol. 7 (2007): 13–43, here 29.

²³ Mitri Raheb, “Palestine: Time for a Paradigm Shift,” *Academia Letters*, Article 1848 (2021).

²⁴ Nancy Cardoso Pereira, Sandra Nancy Mansilla and Larry Madrigal Rajo, “Introducción,” *Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latinoamericana* vol. 93 (2024): 7.

²⁵ Raef Zreik, “Zionism and Political Theology,” *Political Theology* vol. 24, no. 7 (2023): 687–705; Amir Mashiah, “Religious Zionism – Theology and Social Integration,” *Israel Affairs* vol. 26, no. 6 (2020): 819–832; Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* (London/Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2004); Dov Schwartz, *Faith at the Crossroads. A Theological Profile of Religious Zionism* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2002).

²⁶ William Hutchinson and Hartmut Lehman (eds.), *Many Are Chosen: Divine Election and Western Nationalism* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994); Reuven Firestone, *Who are the Real Chosen People?: The Meaning of Chosenness in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2008); Slavica Jakelić, *Collectivistic Religions: Religion, Choice and Identity in Late Modernity* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010); Anthony D. Smith, “Chosen Peoples: Why Ethnic Groups Survive,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* vol. 15, no. 3 (1992): 436–456.

²⁷ Howard Zinn, “The Poisons of Nationalism,” *Tikkun* vol. 23, no. 3 (2008): 89.

²⁸ Agustín Velloso, *Palestina. Textos antisionistas* (Madrid: Ediciones Bajo Cero, 2007), 34–35.

²⁹ Alan Hart, *Zionism: The Real Enemy of the Jews, Volume 1: The False Messiah* (UK: Paramount Publishing Enterprise, 2009).

³⁰ Christopher Tyerman, *The Debate on the Crusades* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015); Sophia Menache, “Love of God or Hatred of Your Enemy? The Emotional Voices of the Crusades,” *Mirabilia* vol. 10 (2010): 1–20.

masculinities, and exported an armed God.³¹ This pattern of sacralized violence produces not only physical deaths but also “social deaths”: bodies expelled from networks of recognition, removed from legitimate speech, stripped of the right to name God, etc. This violence is not merely to kill but to erase, disappear, invalidate, and silence.

Yet this process not only destroys the lives of others; it also corrodes the theological-spiritual experience of those who uphold it. Fundamentalist, cisheteropatriarchal, anti-rights structures do not merely administer violence—they internalize it. They generate anxiety, shame, desire-repression, control of subjectivity, imposition of binary norms, and mutilation of moral, political, and theological imagination. They produce docile believers, unable to recognize that they have been catechized into sustaining theologies that dehumanize them and spiritualities that demand suffering and penitence. Colonization, therefore, is not merely territorial; it is psychological, affective, erotic, corporeal, and spiritual. As incisive analyses note, the fundamentalist project does not seek liberation but the “masculine return”³² of power: the fabrication of a phallogocentric world,³³ a theopolitics in which the divine upholds the empire of the male, white supremacy, nation, doctrinal purity, and corrective violence.

Given this diagnosis, theology cannot offer cosmetic improvements or decorative reforms. The task is not to “clean up” language, nor to insert fashionable terminology to appear progressive, nor to perform inclusion by speaking in the first person about experiences not lived. Theology that refuses to consent to catastrophe must commit to concrete actions and responsible narratives that enable the detoxification of theological imaginaries—a detoxification urgently needed because theology has been one of the most effective weapons of imperial and colonial projects. In Hanna Reichel's words:

How do we live in these ruins, if not by attending to their distinctly theological formation? What can we rebuild from the rubble? Can we at least remove some of the theological bullets that have been shot at people and are bleeding them out? In which theological swords may we recognize repurposed plowshares, and which devices of war might we yet be able to turn into instruments of peace?³⁴

We must acknowledge the diagnosis: our epistemologies, discourses, and practices are poisoned. I repeat insistently: The task is not merely to revise language but to dismantle the structures that render theology harmful and to generate alternative epistemologies, non-exclusionary narratives and practices no longer grounded in sacrifice or domination of any kind. This requires a deliberate

³¹ Raphael Israeli, *Poison: Modern Manifestations of a Blood Libel* (Boston, MA: Lexington Books, 2002).

In relation to this matter, it has been noteworthy to observe how certain representatives of the Israeli government, such as Raphael Israeli, have sought to construct a narrative that mitigates the evidence of that government's authoritarian and imperialistic conduct. The case of Raphael Israeli is particularly striking: he is an Israeli historian and writer, but he also served as a career officer in the Israel Defense Forces' Military Intelligence for twelve years before entering academia. In his 2008 book *The Spread of Islamikaze Terrorism in Europe: The Third Islamic Invasion*, he asserted that Europe was in danger of becoming “Eurabia” within half a century. Moreover, since the publication of that work, the author has portrayed Israel as a defender of the counter-jihadist worldview. Later, in his book *The Arab Minority in Israel, Open and Hidden Processes* (2017), he referred to the Arab minority as a “fifth column” that receives more from the State than it contributes and lamented that they were not confined to camps like Japanese Americans during the Second World War. In the context of the current Palestinian genocide, Israeli's narrative has been revived, according to which Palestine is a poison spreading throughout the world as a modern manifestation of a “blood libel.”

³² Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of Jewish Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 222.

³³ Orian Zakai, *Fictions of Gender: Women, Femininity, and the Zionist Imagination* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023).

³⁴ H. Reichel, *After Method*, 3.

process of detoxification: unlearning sacralized violence, interrupting alliances between religion and necropolitics, and undoing the cisheteropatriarchal, classist, misogynistic, and racist logics sedimented across generations.

Such work is not only intellectual. It must also be affective, embodied, and communal, confronting the gap between theological discourse and lived realities. Detoxification entails recovering what has been condemned, refusing death-driven mandates, and decolonizing the language of the divine. It also requires leaving behind both the security of orthodoxy when it functions as control and the insulation of academic enclaves, to engage the margins where alternative spiritualities and forms of life persist.

If theology has contributed to the poisoning of the world, it may also participate in its healing—but only by reconstituting itself from below. The task is not to manage toxicity but to dismantle it, within theological practice and in the relational worlds it shapes. Only then can theology become a practice that sustains life, fosters dignity, and helps render the world more habitable for all.

3. Highly Toxic Potions: Theological Narratives of Terror

I reiterate: the act of theologizing has never been neutral. It has produced languages capable of sustaining hope, but also doctrinal formations that circulate as everyday “potions”: consumed, taught, and institutionalized as salvation while functioning to regulate, discipline, and harm bodies, territories, and subjectivities. Within Christianity—understood not only as a religious tradition but as a historical and civilizational formation entangled with colonial expansion— theology has not merely interpreted the world; it has participated in shaping colonial regimes of domination. While not all theological production is reducible to such dynamics, significant strands of its dominant habitus have generated configurations that normalize violence, legitimize it, or render it sacred.

To name these dynamics requires moving beyond an exclusive focus on overtly extremist actors. Theological terror does not emerge only from spectacular acts of violence or from self-identified fundamentalist groups; it is also produced within the ordinary operations of theological discourse, institutional practice, and religious subject formation. What is at stake, therefore, is the identification of theological-spiritual dispositifs that function as *terrorist assemblages* of fear, control, obedience, and legitimation.³⁵

Recognizing this requires acknowledging complicity. As Judith Butler reminds us, critique does not operate from a position of exteriority; it is always entangled in the very relations of power it seeks to contest.³⁶ Accordingly, the problem is not limited to particular doctrines or interpretations, but extends to the mechanisms that shape theological subjectivity itself: the formation of desire, the regulation of speech, the authorization of certain voices, and the affective economies that orient bodies toward obedience. Transforming these dynamics demands more than doctrinal correction; it requires intervening in the symbolic infrastructures that render theology a medium for fear, exclusion, and silence.

One of the most enduring mechanisms within this infrastructure is the use of Scripture as an instrument of harm. Phyllis Trible’s notion of “texts of terror” designates passages whose narrative force has been mobilized to legitimize oppression and violence.³⁷ These texts are not inherently

³⁵ Bryan Rennie and Philip L. Tite (eds.), *Religion, Terror and Violence: Religious Studies Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2023); Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). See, also: Yasmine Rishmawi, “Palestinian Christian Youth: A Clash of Identities”, in *Let the Waves Roar. Perspectives of Young Prophetic Voices in the Ecumenical Movement*, edited by Joy Eva Bohol and Benjamin Simon (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2021), 177–186.

³⁶ Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power. Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 17.

³⁷ Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

terrorizing; their effects depend on how they are activated within interpretive, doctrinal, and institutional frameworks.³⁸ When deployed as theopolitical devices, they operate as tools of discipline, producing a pedagogy of fear directed toward particular bodies and forms of life.

The biblical corpus includes narratives in which violence is not explicitly condemned but narrated as part of the religious imagination: the dismemberment of the concubine in Judges, the rape of Tamar, Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter, the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael, or the destruction of Sodom, later mobilized in homophobic discourses despite alternative prophetic interpretations.³⁹ These narratives have functioned historically as matrices through which sacred violence is normalized, especially when detached from critical hermeneutical engagement.⁴⁰

Trible's intervention does not seek to resolve or redeem these texts, but to dwell in their violence, preserving their memory without neutralization. In doing so, she reconfigures the hermeneutical task: rather than transforming victims into abstract moral figures, she restores their status as subjects whose suffering demands recognition. This approach reveals that theological harm does not arise solely from misinterpretation, but from interpretive practices that align scripture with structures of domination. Following South African liberation hermeneutics, the Bible must be understood as a "site-of-struggle," a field of political contestation rather than a neutral repository of transcendent truths.⁴¹

It is worth asking whether, when we hear one of these biblical texts deployed as a lethal weapon against others, we do anything at all: Do we challenge and critically contest such interpretations? Do we defend those harmed by these forms of preaching? Do we at least withdraw from spaces that wield scripture as a machine gun, firing relentlessly at excluded populations? Do we refuse to minimize phobic narratives and insist that those who utter them be held accountable for their words? Do we simply remain silent—acquiescing in indifference, looking away, and leaving their victims alone because we are not the ones under attack? If we choose the latter path, we must acknowledge our exceedingly high level of theological and spiritual toxicity.

The effects of theological terror, however, cannot be reduced to textual content alone. They must be understood across multiple, interrelated registers. First, scriptural texts whose narrative or rhetorical force can be mobilized to authorize exclusion or violence. Second, doctrinal formations that stabilize and systematize such readings, embedding them within institutional teaching and pastoral practice. Third, broader theopolitical deployments in which these elements are translated into projects of governance, territorial control, and social regulation. Harm emerges through the articulation of these registers: through the pulpit that activates the text, the doctrine that canonizes it,

³⁸ Tom Hanks, *Biblia y prejuicios: 40 mitos. Crítica de la manipulación homofóbica de textos usualmente citados. Análisis y exégesis* (Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires: Editorial Epifanía, 2011); Daniel A. Helminiak, *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality: Millennium Edition* (Tajique, NM: Alamo Square Press, 2000); Ken Stone, *Practicing Safer Texts: Food, Sex and Bible in Queer Perspective* (Londres: T&T Clark, 2005); Robert Shore-Goss, "La homosexualidad y la Biblia: Practicando textos seguros," *Conexión Queer: Revista Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Teologías Queer* vol. 3 (2020): 71–101.

³⁹ Norman Karol Gottwald and Richard A. Horsley (eds.), *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1993).

⁴⁰ Bruce Hoffman, "'Holy Terror': The Implications of Terrorism Motivated by a Religious Imperative," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* vol. 18, no. 4(1995): 271–284.

⁴¹ Itumeleng Mosala, *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology in South Africa* (Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989); Charlene van der Walt, "Hearing Tamar's voice: How the margin hears differently. Contextual readings of 2 Samuel 13:1-22," *Lectio Difficilior* vol. 2 (2011): 1–25; Gerald West, "Biblical Hermeneutics as a Site of Struggle: South African Sites of Contestation in the Late 1980s and Early 1990s," *Scriptura* vol. 124, no. 1 (2025): 1–18.

the institution that enforces it, the political order that benefits from it, and the congregant who acquiesces to what is said.

In this sense, theological terror operates not as an isolated phenomenon but as an accumulation of practices that shape both social structures and individual subjectivities. As Hannah Arendt observed in a different context, systems of violence often depend less on exceptional cruelty than on ordinary forms of compliance and the suspension of critical reflection.⁴² Similarly, theological terror is sustained through everyday practices: liturgies that normalize hierarchy, pedagogies that discourage questioning, and institutional cultures that reward conformity.

Critical voices within Christian traditions have long recognized these dynamics. Dorothee Sölle argued that any theology that legitimizes oppression ceases to be authentically Christian, insofar as it abandons its ethical commitment to the other.⁴³ Leonardo Boff, reflecting on the affective architecture of fear within religious systems, exposed how doctrines such as hell can function as instruments of control when deployed to secure obedience. These critiques highlight that theological violence operates not only through explicit coercion but through internalized fear and moral regulation.⁴⁴

The contemporary relevance of these dynamics is evident in contexts where theological narratives intersect with geopolitical conflicts, systematic genocidal actions, neocolonial dynamics, and neoliberal projects. If the twenty-first century has been described as an “age of terror,”⁴⁵ this characterization must also account for the role of theological-spiritual narratives in producing and sustaining environments of fear, control, and domination. The devastating situation in Gaza, for instance, illustrates how certain supremacist hermeneutics can be mobilized to justify exclusion, occupation, and violence. Predominantly, in the majority of cases, Scripture is transformed into an instrument of authorization, and theology becomes entangled with political projects that claim divine legitimacy.⁴⁶

This becomes especially evident in the ascendant Christian Zionism—or Zionist Christianity⁴⁷—an eschatological-geopolitical dispositif that converts territorial occupation into a theological mandate, militarism into a prophetic sign, and sexual/ethnic/racial cleansing into an inevitable appendix of the divine timetable.⁴⁸ This is no accidental phenomenon; it is theopolitical engineering. Christian Zionism understands the State of Israel not as a modern national construction but as an accelerator of apocalypse, the stage for celestial consummation of power. Supporting Israel thus

⁴² Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: HarperCollins, 1973).

⁴³ Dorothee Sölle, *The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance* (Minneapolis, Fortrees Press, 2001).

⁴⁴ Leonardo Boff, *Hablemos de la otra vida* (Sal Terrae, Santander 1987), 95–96.

⁴⁵ Strobe Talbott and Nayan Chanda (eds), *The Age of Terror: America and the World after September 11* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

⁴⁶ Marcella Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God* (London: Routledge, 2003).

⁴⁷ Although this chapter makes special reference to “Christian Zionism,” it is vital to maintain a broader perspective. Distinctions are drawn between “Christian Zionism” and “Zionist Christianity” to highlight specific differences. However, in most cases, it is difficult to clearly separate these concepts, as they form a complex and often indistinguishable amalgam.

⁴⁸ Nicolás Panotto, “Christian Zionism as Geopolitics and Public Theology: A Latin American Perspective,” *Contending Modernities* (September 26, 2024), available at: <https://contendingmodernities.nd.edu/global-currents/christian-zionism-latin-america/>. Anderson Fabián Santos Meza, “‘En nombre de Dios, del amor y la inclusión’. Fundamentalismo religioso y homonormatividad como dispositivos del genocidio en Palestina,” *Vida y Pensamiento* vol. 44, no. 2 (2024): 161; Hugo Córdova Quero and Anderson Fabián Santos Meza, “US Missionaries, Christian Zionism in Abya Yala, and Latin American Liberation Theology”, in *Christian Zionism in Latin America. Empire, Public Theology and Palestine Responses*, edited by Jude Lal Fernando (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2026).

becomes not merely a political option but a theological and spiritual obligation.⁴⁹ Theology becomes an engine of geostrategy; prophecy, an operational manual; the Bible, a tactical map; salvation, a colonial reward. In Abya Yala, this dispositif has been disseminated through U.S. missionary interventions, religious diplomacy, neo-Pentecostal imaginaries and prosperity theologies, foreign policy alignments, media industries of faith, and alliances between political and clerical elites that consolidate what Rodrigo Karmy Bolton calls the “Israelization” of politics.⁵⁰ Here, theology does not interpret history; it places it in the service of the powerful, reshaping it to their advantage and, in the process, sacrificing countless lives.

This “sacred terror”⁵¹ operates within broader matrices of coloniality described by Mbembe, Mignolo, Spivak, Quijano, and Castro-Gómez as regimes of knowledge, extraction, and death.⁵² Paul B. Preciado frames this as a rationality: “we have ruptured the earth to extract fossilized sunlight and burned it incessantly; transformed nonhuman animals into digestible protein packages; and rendered the subaltern human body an energetic package from which to extract labor, reproduction, and *potentia gaudendi*.”⁵³ What role has theology played in this sacrificial economy? A liturgical one: consecrating extraction, blessing conquest, declaring hierarchy divine, moralizing accumulation, spiritualizing dispossession, and stigmatizing dissidence as enmity against God. Theology has gregorianized and pontificated the funerary sound of a collapsing world.

Terror does not operate only by narrative excess but also by narrative saturation: “a dense forest with disappointingly homogeneous contours,”⁵⁴ where violence ceases to be an event and becomes an unalterable, inevitable echo. Theology, by omission or direct participation, has served the construction of terror-spaces nourished by myth and silence in which violence persists.⁵⁵ Theological terrorism does not speak only when it screams; it also speaks when it falls silent—when it spiritualizes death, resigns injustice as divine design, individualizes social guilt, privatizes political suffering, and depoliticizes hope.

What remains, then, for theology expelled from the paradise of interpretive privilege? What remains is radical detoxification. The task is not merely to craft new hermeneutics, but to dismantle the economies of fear, the grammars of extermination, the canons of exclusion, the colonial metalanguages, the pedagogies of hatred, and the liturgies of submission. What is needed is a theology that does not treat terror with more pious versions of the same power, but interrupts it, confronts it, and delegitimizes it. A theology that acknowledges that the problem is not only re-reading the Bible but imagining life beyond Christianity’s monopoly over the sacred. A theology no

⁴⁹ Motti Inbari, Kirill Bumin, and M. Gordon. Byrd, “Why Do Evangelicals Support Israel?,” *Religion and Politics* vol. 14, no. 1 (2020): 136.

⁵⁰ Rodrigo Karmy Bolton, “¿Una Operación Cóndor 2.0? O sobre la ‘israelización’ de la política latinoamericana,” *Bordes: Revista de Política, Derecho y Sociedad* 15 (2019-2020): 101–107.

⁵¹ Bruce Hoffman, “‘Holy Terror’: The Implications of Terrorism Motivated by a Religious Imperative,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* vol. 18, no. 4 (1995): 271–284.

⁵² Achille Mbembe, *Critique de la raison négre* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2013); Gayatri Spivak, *Crítica de la razón poscolonial: Hacia una historia del presente evanescente* (Madrid: Akal, 2010); Walter Mignolo, “The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* vol. 101, no. 1 (2002): 57–96; Santiago Castro-Gómez, *La hybris del punto cero: Ciencia, raza e ilustración en la Nueva Granada (1750- 1816)* (Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2005); Anibal Quijano, “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality,” *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2-3 (2007): 168–178.

⁵³ Preciado, *Dysphoria mundi*, 49.

⁵⁴ Fernando Coronil and Julie Skurski, “Dismembering and remembering the nation: the semantics of political violence in Venezuela,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* vol. 33 (1991): 288–337, here 333.

⁵⁵ Michael Taussig, “Culture of Terror-Space of Death. Roger Casement’s Putumayo Report and the Explanation of Torture,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26/3 (1984): 467–497.

longer aspiring to be privileged, universal, normative, or regulatory, but situated, wounded, decentered, vulnerable, litigating, impure, decolonial, anti-patriarchal, anti-racist, trans-feminist, trans-affirming, post-Christian, and fiercely anti-theocratic.

Theological detoxification will not consist in purifying the doctrinal deposit, but in dismantling the laboratory. It requires abandoning the fantasy of an innocent, naïve theology in need only of exegetical refinements or conceptual updates. Rather, it calls for recognizing that theology is compromised not only in its conclusions but in its very conditions of possibility: in who is authorized to speak of God and who is consigned to silence; in which bodies the sacred is deemed credible and in which skins grace is rendered suspect; in which languages God becomes unintelligible and in which geographies faith becomes an instrument of occupation.

A detoxified theology will not offer new formulas of universal salvation. It will resemble instead a practice of political healing, critical memory, and embodied justice. It will have fewer cathedrals and more archipelagos; fewer dogmas and more covenants of care; fewer prophetic heroes and more reparative communities; less apologetics and more listening. It will not aim to reclaim the world for God, but to protect the world from those who have destroyed it in God's name.

For the salvation that is needed today is not salvation *through* theology, but salvation *from* theology. Not saving the world with our gods, but saving the world from our gods. Not protecting faith from terror, but protecting people from faith weaponized as terror. That is the detoxification still pending. That is the antidote yet undistilled. That is the inescapable risk—and ethical imperative—of theological thought in the twenty-first century: never again to repackage the poison under new labels of benevolence, and never again to turn God into a weapon, Scripture into a club, doctrine into a border, or hope into an alibi for extermination. I dream of this other theology, even if only as a possibility.

4. Decent, Docile, and Obedient Theologies in the Service of the Cisheteropatriarchy

As previously indicated, theology—far from being an aseptic discourse or an ethereal reflection—has often functioned as a doctrinal apparatus serving a civilizational project that fuses religious supremacy, coloniality, racism, and cisheteropatriarchy. This project, still incarnated in institutions, methods, and theological sensibilities, operates as a slow-acting poison: it does not destroy immediately, but infiltrates, anesthetizes, normalizes, and ultimately reorganizes the entire body of faith. The problem is not merely conceptual errors or interpretive missteps; it is, as noted earlier, a *habitus* of theologization that has learned to discipline bodies and domesticate God to sustain an order in which the masculine, the white, the heterosexual, the cisgender, and the imperial function as the exclusive mediators of the sacred.

Daniel Boyarin captured this pathology with striking symbolic clarity when he described Christian Zionist fundamentalism as a “masculine return to Phallustine, not Palestine”⁵⁶: a return not to an actual land or real peoples, but to the fantasy of phallic, territorial, and military domination cloaked in messianic and eschatological language. In this gesture, the deepest impulse of theological cisheteropatriarchy becomes visible: to conquer to interpret, to occupy to redeem, to possess to save. Elizabeth Stuart articulated the urgency in her incisive question: “What is the ultimate value of incorporation into an institution which even heterosexuals are asking serious questions about, an institution which was born, formed, and structured for and by patriarchy?”⁵⁷ Her question exposes the mechanism: dominant and institutional theology does not seek reform or pursue structural change; it demands adoption, submission, obedience, and compliance.

This poison has produced an obedient and timid theology—narratively impoverished and politically complicit. A theology that, as Nicolás Panotto warns, has lost bodily, aesthetic, and social

⁵⁶ D. Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, 222.

⁵⁷ Elizabeth Stuart, *Just Good Friends: Towards a Lesbian and Gay Theology of Relationships* (London: Mowbray, 1995), 174.

relevance because it fears everything that does not conform to its preconfigured grammar.⁵⁸ A theology reduced to anecdote—devoid of present and bereft of critical futurity—able to speak of the world only by looking backward, recounting what was lived in other times, incapable of surviving the incursion of new bodies and *sentipensares* that unsettle the cisheteropatriarchal syntax of the sacred.⁵⁹

Against this backdrop, queer/*cuir/maricas* and trans theologies have not emerged as mere “thematic niches” within the broader theological enterprise—though they may at times appear as such—, but as movements that denaturalize the sex-gender, epistemic, and temporal scripts that hegemonic Christianity has imposed as inevitable. When queer/*cuir/marica* and trans studies argue that time itself has been molded by cisheteronormativity,⁶⁰ they are not speaking metaphorically: they are naming a technology of power that distributes life rhythms, defines legitimate biographies, assigns credible genealogies, and determines which bodies are allowed a future.⁶¹ For centuries, this matrix has decided not only who can love, but who may inherit, who may teach, who may be remembered, who may embody God, and who may speak in God’s name. This is why Marcella Althaus-Reid insisted on *indecenty* as method: liberating God from the closet of traditional theological thought is not a rhetorical flourish but an act of insurrection against a regime that has made sexual morality its preferred device of surveillance and expulsion.⁶²

The same regime is evident in the field of biblical studies, where—as critical scholars have repeatedly demonstrated—a profoundly white, cis, heterosexual, and androcentric orientation continues not only to dominate interpretation but to define which interpretations are even thinkable⁶³: “in Christian queer and liberation theologies decenter the cisheteropatriarchal scripts that are accessories to, yet oppressively interpellated with, traditional thought and practice.”⁶⁴ Biblical reading is thus not a neutral activity but a political project that has legitimized colonization, slavery, territorial annexation, and the execution of dissident bodies. Re-reading the texts historically used to justify sexual and gender terror is not an auxiliary hermeneutical exercise; it is the dismantling of technologies that organized moral panic as a mode of governance. The historical fury unleashed

⁵⁸ Nicolás Panotto, *Descolonizar el saber teológico en América Latina. Religión, educación y teología en clave pos/decolonial* (Montevideo: Amerindia, 2023), 111.

⁵⁹ “In other words, an obsession with reconstructing a past that authorizes a present. I refer to liberation theology as a style of doing theology, and contemporary, present praxis. Not anecdotal theology because when theology becomes anecdotal, it is because it does not have a current project, and it has to look back” (Marcella Althaus-Reid, “Marx in a Gay Bar: Indecent Theology as a Reflection on the Theology of Liberation and Sexuality,” *Conexión Queer: Revista Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Teologías Queer* 2 (2019): 29–48, here 33).

⁶⁰ Dana Luciano, *Arranging Grief: Sacred Time and the Body in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2007); Mariela Solana, *Historia y temporalidad en estudios queer* (Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2015); Anderson Fabián Santos Meza, “Quaerite et Invenietis: Tras el Rastro «Queer» en la Edad Media,” *Conexión Queer: Revista Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Teologías Queer* 5 (2022): 173–216.

⁶¹ Melissa M. Wilcox (ed.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Queer and Trans Studies in Religion* (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2025).

⁶² M. Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God*.

⁶³ Jimmy Hoke, “Biblical Studies,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Queer and Trans Studies in Religion*, edited by Melissa M. Wilcox (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2025), 449–470, here 455.

⁶⁴ Bee Scherer, “Queer Dharmology,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Queer and Trans Studies in Religion*, edited by Melissa M. Wilcox (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2025), 265–286, here 268.

against sexual dissidence is not an emotional excess, but the logical effect of a system that transforms sexuality into a theological border, a political laboratory, a civilizational marker.

If sexuality has been a border, territory has been its mirror. Christian Zionism, particularly in its dispensationalist form, represents the convergence of eschatological, imperial, and bodily theologies in their most distilled expression.⁶⁵ Its logic is linear and brutal: supporting the State of Israel is not a political stance but an eschatological command; occupying Palestine is not a tragedy but a necessary prelude to the consummation of the divine plan revealed in Scripture, especially in texts such as Genesis 12:3 and the Revelations.⁶⁶ The destruction of Palestinian lives is thus not a scandal for this supremacist, fundamentalist, and hegemonic theology, but a kind of “prophetic rubric.” It is no surprise, then, that Boyarin describes the project as a “phallic return”: its goal is not redemption but geopolitical erection, military domination, and cosmic authorization to rule.

In Abya Yala, this eschatological imaginary translated into a teopolitical enthusiasm that unabashedly embraces coloniality: evangelical missions that exported biblical interpretation as an instrument of occupation; leaders who celebrate Israel not out of political solidarity but apocalyptic expectation; theological dialogues rendered timid and complicit, unable to pronounce the word *Palestine* without doctrinal anxiety.⁶⁷ As theologian Sarojini Nadar has reminded us, “the bodies of Palestinian children in Gaza do not lie. They tell a story of real suffering. Bodies do not lie, and bodies are imbued with names, identities, and characteristics.”⁶⁸ To refuse to name the crime as it unfolds—in theological, religious, and spiritual terms—is to administer it; to fail to denounce it is to enact a liturgy of complicity; to pray for peace while maintaining economic pacts with entities that promote occupation, apartheid, and genocide is to empty prayer of all moral legitimacy and convert it into a contradictory gesture. I will repeat it as many times as necessary.

The vast majority of theologians worldwide have remained silent during this time of genocide, as though a “preferential option for the Palestinians” were not urgent—precisely the charge Nadar leveled in her keynote address at the DARE 2025 Conference, “Beyond Neutrality: An Epistemological Preference for Palestine.”⁶⁹

Even the notable silence and timidity of a significant number of “intellectual voices” within Liberation Theologies regarding the genocide in Gaza is a symptom that exceeds the current moment: it is evidence of an epistemic and theological limit. The “preferential option for the poor” appears to shrink its prophetic grammar when the poor are Palestinians and the aggressor quotes the Bible, and likewise when the poor are dissident from the sex-gender system.

It is here that Elizabeth Phillips’s warning becomes crucial. If Christian Zionism has been studied more through journalism or pastoral caution than through academic theology itself, the issue is not the absence of evidence but the refusal to break the pact of complicity and face its consequences.⁷⁰ The critique has been descriptive, not structural and anatomical. Christian Zionism is not merely a dangerous doctrine; it is a mode of world-ordering. A mode that entangles theology, white supremacy, empire, militarization, and cisheteromascularity as technologies of destiny; a mode

⁶⁵ M. Inbari, K. Bumin and M. G. Byrd, “Why Do Evangelicals Support Israel?,” 1–36.

⁶⁶ Thomas D. Ice, “Lovers of Zion: A History of Christian Zionism,” *Article Archives* vol. 29, available at: https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/pretrib_arch/29.

⁶⁷ In this context, Palestinian theologian Yasmine Rishmawi points out the close relationship between “Colonial Theology” and “Colonial Alienation” (Yasmine Rishmawi, “Palestinian Christian Youth: A Clash of Identities,” 181–182).

⁶⁸ Sarojini Nadar, “Beyond the ‘Ordinary Reader’ and the ‘Invisible Intellectual’: Shifting Contextual Bible Study from Liberation Discourse to Liberation Pedagogy,” *Old Testament Essays* vol. 22, no. 2 (2009): 385.

⁶⁹ Prof. Sarojini Nadar’s keynote lecture can be heard on the official Youtube account of the Council for World Mission (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2KznePwPV0>).

⁷⁰ Elizabeth Phillips, *Apocalyptic Theopolitics: Dispensationalism, Israel/Palestine, and Ecclesial Enactments of Eschatology* (Apolo: University of Cambridge Repository, 2009).

characterized as the “Israelization” of politics—the transfer of securitarian, colonial, and theocratic logics into the organization of state and religious life.⁷¹ This Israelization is not a simple importation; it demands active adoption, facilitated through political alliances, theological narratives, and cultural mechanisms that allow it to take root. It offers a mythic script in which power is assumed as divine right and violence is authorized as redemptive mandate, inviting local actors to embody and reproduce it as their own. This has historically found its primary terrain of expansion within Christian churches (Catholic, mainline Christian, Protestant, Evangelical, and Neo-Pentecostal, etc.).

Thus, to speak of the poisoning of theology is not an aesthetic maneuver: it is a diagnosis. The toxic element is not the terminology, but the assemblage produced by the following convergence: cisheteronormativity + coloniality + imperial eschatology + white supremacy + extractivist biblicism + teopolitical masculinism. From this assemblage emerges a Christianity that not only tolerates oppression but requires it to confirm itself as true.

Detoxifying theology requires more than new topics; it demands a new *sensorium*, a reconfigured perceptual apparatus. It requires recognizing that what has been presented as “tradition” is, in many respects, a pedagogy of subjugation; that what has been defended as “orthodoxy” constitutes a choreography of power; that what has been narrated as “mission” is a story of territorial and theological-spiritual expansion; and that what has been glorified as “morality” is essentially a sexual grammar of control.

Liberative, antipatriarchal, antiracist, decolonial, transfeminist, queer/*cuir/marica*, trans, and nonbinary theologies are not contemporary addenda—they are dismantling operations. Their aim is not to dialogue with theological cisheteropatriarchy as one reforms an institution, but to interrupt it as one disables a machine. They refuse neutrality because they know neutrality, indifference, and silence are the courtesies of executioners. They refuse elegance and respectability because they recognize that moderation is a pedagogy of docility and training. They refuse obedience because they have identified that every obedient theology ultimately blesses and reproduces the violence it claims to oppose.

Let us speak metaphorically, once again: the task is not to add voices to the choir, but to alter the score. Not to demand seats at the table, but to question the table itself. Not to reform the traditional theological subject, but to destabilize the conditions of its possibility. The aim is to speak not of inclusion but of interruption; not of recognition but of epistemic insurrection; not of a God who tolerates diversity but of a God who collapses the hierarchies that made the divine name the empire’s preferred password. Only then can theology cease to be the characteristic language of submission and become, at last, the sacred grammar of liberation. This is precisely what the Palestinian people have historically taught us.

5. An Antidote: Palestinian Liberation Theologies

Contemporary theology—ailing from its complacency with supremacy, its domestication of Scripture, and its alliance with violent geopolitical projects—requires antidotes that do not merely alleviate the surface but reconfigure the very conditions of possibility for theological thought. Raheb argues that empires cultivate an “imperial theology”: theological and ideological frameworks that justify imperialism through religion, because empires cannot survive “by their military, political, and economic power and might alone.”⁷² In contrast, Palestinian Liberation Theology (PLT) emerges as a theological praxis that confronts the poisoning of the *habitus* of theologization and offers a situated, decolonial, and visceral alternative: a theologization that does not presume to heal the social body from an ivory tower but rather sustains besieged bodies and territories amid the catastrophe (*al-*

⁷¹ Julio Córdoba Villazón, “Viejas y nuevas derechas religiosas en América Latina: los evangélicos como factor político,” *Nueva Sociedad* vol. 254 (2014): 112–123; R. Karmy Bolton, “¿Una Operación Cóndor 2.0? O sobre la ‘israelización’ de la política latinoamericana,” 101–107.

⁷² Mitri Raheb, *Faith in the Face of Empire: The Bible through Palestinian Eyes* (New York: Orbis, 2014), 64.

Nakba), which also provoked a “Nakba of faith,” shaking the very core of the Palestinian Christian belief system.⁷³

From its inception, PLT relocates Christology in the flesh of expropriated land and wounded bodies: Christ ceases to be an imperial liturgical icon and becomes a colonized and displaced body again. In this reorientation, the cross sheds its status as an atemporal emblem and becomes a political memory of state executions; walls are material structures of apartheid; and resurrection becomes a daily practice of insurrection against genocidal erasure. This theological displacement is not merely metaphorical. It elaborates ethics and hermeneutics that place concrete life—bodies, land, contexts, names—at the center of theological discourse. It is no surprise, then, that the Palestinian landscape has been described as the “fifth Gospel.”⁷⁴

PLT is, in its genesis and ongoing development, a response to the sacred instrumentalization of the colonizing project. Ateek articulates this clearly in the preface to his work: “Palestinian liberation theology, as other liberation theologies, begins with its context and takes that context very seriously.”⁷⁵ This implies a hermeneutic that attends first to the place of enunciation and to the victims of dispossession, and only then to the readings that, from the centers of power, have legitimized occupation.⁷⁶ The Kairos document encapsulates this stance: “In this historic document, we Palestinian Christians declare that the military occupation of our land is a sin against God and humanity, and that any theology that legitimizes the occupation is far from Christian teachings because true Christian theology is a theology of love and solidarity with the oppressed, a call to justice and equality among peoples.”⁷⁷ PLT does not evade the socio-political nature of the text; it claims it as a criterion of moral truth.

PLT also confronts the colonial epistemology embedded in many of its own early articulations. The Munayer brothers identify a crucial problem: while Naim Ateek and Mitri Raheb were indispensable pioneers, their work—predominantly oriented toward Western audiences—risks anchoring Palestinian theology within epistemic frames of coloniality.⁷⁸ As they state: “The main theological focus of PLT is hermeneutics; PLT seeks to critique Christian Zionism and other forms of

⁷³ Following Munther Isaac, Yasmine Rishmawi defines the theology and faith of the Palestinian people as a profound experience that seeks to answer the questions that the Palestinian people ask themselves, especially the believing community that identifies as Palestinian Christian: “Where is God in our Nakba? Where is God in the occupation? Where is God in this injustice and oppression?” (Yasmine Rishmawi, “Palestinian Christian Youth: A Clash of Identities”, 183). See, also: Cedar Duaybis, “The Three-Fold Nakba,” *Cornerstone* vol. 66 (2013): 1–15; Naim S. Ateek, *A Palestinian Liberation Theology: The Bible, Justice and the Palestine-Israel Conflict* (New York: Orbis Books, 2017); Naim S. Ateek, *Call and Commitment: A Journey of Faith from Nakba to Palestinian Liberation Theology* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2023).

⁷⁴ Yohanna Katanacho, “Theology of the Land (*al-Lāhūt al-Ard*),” in *Introduction to Palestinian Theology (Madkhal ilā al-Lāhūt al-Filastīnī)*, edited by Munther Isaac (Bethlehem: Diyar Publishers, 2017), 174–178, here 175.

⁷⁵ Naim S. Ateek, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation* (New York: Orbis, 2008).

⁷⁶ M. Raheb, “Palestine: Time for a Paradigm Shift.”

⁷⁷ Kairos, *A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering*, 3. Available at: <https://www.kairospalestine.ps/index.php/about-kairos/kairos-palestine-document>.

⁷⁸ These works are some examples: Naim S. Ateek, *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1989); Naim S. Ateek, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation* (New York: Orbis, 2008); Naim S. Ateek, *A Palestinian Theology of Liberation: The Bible, Justice, and the Palestine-Israel Conflict* (New York: Orbis, 2017); Mitri Raheb, *I Am a Palestinian Christian*, translated by Ruth Gritsch (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); Mitri Raheb, *Faith in the Face of Empire: The Bible through Palestinian Eyes* (New York: Orbis, 2014).

colonial theologies that oppress Palestinians.⁷⁹ Their critique is accompanied by a methodological reflection on sources, audiences, and priorities: decolonization is not only the denunciation of Christian Zionism; it is the construction of theologies born of local experience that fortify communities within their own contexts.⁸⁰ Thus, in the midst of settler colonialism and the ongoing genocide, they underline the urgency of decolonizing faith.

In this spirit, Nur Masalha calls for the decolonization of methodologies and sources, proposing a “civil liberation theology” that recovers indigenous knowledge, genealogies, and resistance practices.⁸¹ The task is not to translate Palestinian experience into languages that comfort the Global North, but to strengthen a theology that empowers those living under oppression. The Munayer brothers synthesize the challenge: “Decolonising and indigenising theology are difficult tasks... as we too are influenced and affected by coloniality and its epistemic and academic dominance.”⁸² PLT must therefore articulate itself as an autonomous practice that dialogues with neighboring traditions (Islam, critical Judaism, popular cultures) and with emancipatory theologies (womanist theology, Black theology, queer liberative thought), without being subsumed by the demand for external validation.⁸³ Instead of maintaining theologies of empire and domination, we can embrace theologies of compassion, truth, and justice to navigate the desert of genocide.⁸⁴ True transformation emerges from within. It begins with unlearning every form of hatred—racism, sexism, homophobia, anti-Blackness, Islamophobia, xenophobia—that we have been conditioned to internalize about the other.⁸⁵

A central virtue of PLT is its retrieval of indigenous categories of resistance as theological sources: *Sumud* (steadfastness) and *Intifada* (uprising) are, as the Munayer brothers assert, “the Gospel of Liberation in twentieth- and twenty-first-century historical Palestine.”⁸⁶ These categories reconfigure the theological imagination: faith expresses itself in the resolve to remain, in collective care, and in forms of resistance that exceed violence and instead constitute practices of subsistence, memory, and dignity.

Sumud is theology in the flesh, a mode of inhabiting the land as sacrament and of understanding the relationship to land as a theological and ethical foundation. This is why Palestinian theological thought emerges as a theology of the oppressed and stands as a form of *spiritual ṣumūd* and resistance against Western colonial, exclusivist, and racist theological constructs.⁸⁷ In 1988, several Palestinian Christian leaders signed a declaration supporting the Intifada, “calling on their churches and

⁷⁹ John S. Munayer and Samuel S. Munayer, “Decolonising Palestinian Liberation Theology: New Methods, Sources and Voices,” *Studies in World Christianity* vol. 28, no. 3 (2022): 287–310, here 292.

⁸⁰ John S. Munayer, *Liberation Theology in Dialogue: Palestinian Liberation Theology Engaging with Black Liberation Theology*. Master’s dissertation (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2021).

⁸¹ Nur Masalha, “Naji Al-Ali, Edward Said and Civil Liberation Theology in Palestine: Contextual, Indigenous and Decolonising,” *Holy Land Studies* vol. 11, no. 2 (2012): 109–134.

⁸² J. S. Munayer and S. S. Munayer, “Decolonising Palestinian Liberation Theology: New Methods, Sources and Voices,” 306–307.

⁸³ Matthew Vega, “Black and Palestinian Christians’ Struggle for Freedom,” *Sojourners*, June 14, 2021, available at: <https://sojo.net/articles/black-and-palestinian-christians-struggle-freedom>.

⁸⁴ Azmera Hammouri-Davis, “A New World Is Coming: She Is on Her Way,” in *The Cross and the Olive Tree. Cultivating Palestinian Theology amid Gaza*, edited by John S. Munayer and Samuel S. Munayer (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2025), 51.

⁸⁵ A. Hammouri-Davis, “A New World Is Coming: She Is on Her Way”, 60.

⁸⁶ J. S. Munayer and S. S. Munayer, “Decolonising Palestinian Liberation Theology: New Methods, Sources and Voices,” 303.

⁸⁷ Rafiq Houry, *Palestinian Local Theology 1967–2019: A Comprehensive Perspective [Al-Lahūt al-Mahāly al-Falastīny 1967–2019: Ru’ya Shamilah]* (Bethlehem, Palestine: Al-Liqa Publications, 2019), 207–213.

congregations to assist the resistance efforts.”⁸⁸ Thus, Palestinian Christian support for the First Intifada provided significant foundations for a Palestinian Liberation Theology.

PLT also articulates a forceful critique of the instrumentalization of the Hebrew Bible and sacred scriptures as a theopolitical justification for settlement: “Zionism has methodically leveraged the Hebrew Bible to confer theological normativity for the purpose of establishing an exclusive Jewish sovereignty in Palestine through settler-colonial practices.”⁸⁹ De-Zionizing the Bible is not an apologetic endeavor but a hermeneutical repair that disarms instrumental readings that have naturalized colonization. In *Justice and Only Justice*, Ateek outlines the central pillars of PLT: faith, context, and justice. These three pillars function as primary interpretive principles through which Palestinian theology seeks to “de-Zionize” Scripture and restore its spiritual and liberative impetus.⁹⁰ This resonates with the broader claim:

Theology is not exempt to the hegemony of the West, even if it is written by those suffering under colonial power structures and norms. So, being aware of the challenge coloniality possesses, we must question epistemological assumptions and approaches to ‘doing’ theology – particularly when such theology is meant to depict the experience of, advocate for and empower the weakest in society.⁹¹

There is an undeniable urgency to interrogate the categories of theological legitimacy.

PLT also inaugurates a fraternal dialogue with other struggles against racial and gender hierarchies. As the literature on interdependent resistances makes clear: womanist theology prompts Palestinian liberation theologians to confront questions of race and gender, while Palestinian Liberation Theology challenges Black and womanist theologians to unlearn the erasure of Palestine.⁹² This mutual recognition embodies Fannie Lou Hamer’s famous axiom: “Nobody’s Free until Everybody’s Free.”⁹³ PLT is therefore not an isolated movement; it is a node within a theological ecology that insists on interconnected resistance.

The potency of PLT is also aesthetic and testimonial: Palestinian poetry – such as “God is a Gaza Refugee” (Ramzy Baroud)⁹⁴, “Syllogism for Palestinian Grief” (Summer Awad)⁹⁵, or “Sumud” (Lucas Al-Zoughbi)⁹⁶ – does not function as ornamental supplement but as theological vocabulary that retrieves the affective memory and spirituality often eroded by traditional academic theology. These texts make explicit that “God is Palestinian,” as S. Awad writes – not as a theoretical provocation but

⁸⁸ Laura C. Robson, “Palestinian Liberation Theology, Muslim–Christian Relations and the Arab–Israeli Conflict,” *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* vol. 21, no. 1 (2010): 39–50, here 45.

⁸⁹ Badarin, “Decolonising Faith: Palestinian Liberation Theology in the Context of Settler-Colonialism”, 2025, 722.

⁹⁰ Naim S. Ateek, *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation*. On this point, I find this reflection significant and important: Y. Rishmawi, “Palestinian Christian Youth: A Clash of Identities”, 177–186.

⁹¹ J. S. Munayer and S. S. Munayer, “Decolonising Palestinian Liberation Theology: New Methods, Sources and Voices,” 295.

⁹² Toni Morrison, *The Origin of Others* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 5.

⁹³ Fannie Lou Hamer, “Nobody’s Free until Everybody’s Free,” in *The Speeches of Fannie Lou Hamer*, edited by Thomas P. F. Hegarty (New York: Random House, 1992), 125.

⁹⁴ Ramzy Baroud, “God is a Gaza Refugee”, available at: <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/my-god-is-a-gaza-refugee-a-poem/>.

⁹⁵ Summer Awad, “Syllogism for Palestinian Grief”, available at: <https://adimagazine.com/articles/two-poems-awad/>.

⁹⁶ Lucas Al-Zoughbi, “Sumud”, available at: <https://www.brethrenlifeandthought.org/2022/07/26/sumud-the-river-two-poems-by-lucas-al-zoughbi/>.

as an affirmation that divinity is revealed in the lived experience and suffering of the oppressed. I include the poem here in full:

Jesus is Palestinian.
 Jesus is God (or so they tell me),
 Therefore God is Palestinian.
 God is Palestinian,
 And so the Mother of God lives in Gaza,
 And there are so many of her,
 And there are so many of her son, splayed
 Like a cross on the floor of Al-Shifa Hospital.
 And she picks up his flesh, limp and lifeless,
 The color missing from his lips, the lips
 That learned to give Mama boosa
 Before he was weaned from her milk.
 And the Mother of God is sobbing through a zaghroota,
 She is wailing Yamma, Yamma, Habibi, in that curious way
 That Arab parents address us by their own names.
 Ibni shaheed, she cries, Yamma, Yamma, ibni shaheed!
 Would all these Maryams have denied what God placed
 In her womb, declined a boy destined to die,
 Kan maktoob min al-bidaya, it was always maktoob
 To lose him. Would she have gifted him back to God
 Before it all began, refused to use her body
 To usher him earthside?
 The Mother of God pulls the white
 Of the shroud back from her son's face
 To stroke his hair for the last time, takes a deep
 Breath before committing him back to Allah.
 God is Palestinian, and we have all killed him,
 Snuffed him out, missile by missile.
 But the Mother of God knows,
 By a primal, maternal intuition,
 Inno maktoob for him to rise again.

This poem by S. Awad displaces theological discourse toward a zone of trembling where Christology becomes flesh in the shattered bodies of Gaza. By declaring that "God is Palestinian," the poet dismantles the borders of abstract Christian universalism and reinscribes divinity in the concrete pain of a massacred people. Here, the mystery of incarnation stops functioning as a metaphysical category and becomes a historical experience of dispossession, mothering, and grief. Mary is not an idealized figure or iconic virgin but a Palestinian mother who "picks up his flesh, limp and lifeless" from the ruins of a bombed hospital. The scene is theologically subversive: passion and crucifixion do not unfold in first-century Jerusalem but in the corridors of Al-Shifa; resurrection is not a distant promise but the obstinate persistence of Palestinian life that, "by a primal, maternal intuition," knows that "Inno maktoob for him to rise again." Palestinian Liberation Theology can thus be understood as a hermeneutic of wounded incarnation: God is not revealed in the temples of power but in the mothers, who mourn, in the defiled land, in bodies crucified by colonization. This theological poetics embodies a radical inversion: the task is not to worship the god of empire who blesses missiles, but to recognize the murdered divinity who rises in the resistance of the people.

Undoubtedly, PLT offers a theological-practical horizon for detoxifying theology: prioritizing context, decolonizing methods, rebuilding communal fabrics, articulating interracial and interethnic solidarity, and dismantling instrumental readings of sacred texts that legitimize violence. It is a theology that aims not to preserve privilege but to redistribute it; not to homogenize suffering but to translate it into emancipatory praxis. As the Kairos document affirms, any theology that legitimizes

occupation is far from Christian teachings; PLT instead advances “a theology of love and solidarity with the oppressed.”⁹⁷

If the dominant *habitus* of theologization has been corrosive, PLT offers an antidote: a situated theological practice, irreversible in its commitment to land and life, and grounded in the understanding that liberation is necessarily collective. It is not merely an academic gesture but an ethical imperative that calls theologians, communities, and churches to interrogate their complicities, abandon “neutrality” as a form of collaboration, and embrace a theology whose first addressee is the concrete humanity that suffers. At the heart of this imperative pulses a simple and decisive question: with whom are we truly doing theology – with the powerful who legitimize oppression, or with those who resist? PLT answers with radical clarity: with those who resist.

6. Another Antidote: The Liberationist Potential of Queer/Cuir/Maricas Theological Voices

If the first antidote emerged from Palestinian theological resistance, the second springs from the lived experiences of queer/*cuir*/*maricas* dissident bodies—those who refuse to be treated as objects of theological-moral sacrifice.⁹⁸ Here, queer/*cuir*/*marica* existence is neither a late cultural category nor a mere academic neologism. Instead, it manifests as an epiphany of spiritual subversion: a disruptive force that dismantles the symbolic architecture used by hegemonic theology to police bodies, domesticate pleasure, and canonize violence.⁹⁹

These theologies do not “erupt” into history by seeking permission to exist. Rather, they stand as acts of spiritual self-defense—embodied, insurgent responses to a theological poisoning that long pathologized sexual and gender diversity as deviations from the divine order.¹⁰⁰ Their emergence

⁹⁷ Kairos, *A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering*, 3.

⁹⁸ The use of the term “queer/*cuir*/*marica*” emphasizes the urgent need to break with colonial and monolithic approaches that address the complexity of gender-sexual dissidence from an explicitly Anglo-Saxon universalization that engulfs and minimizes the contextualities of communities in the Global South. Although the term “queer” has allowed for the construction of important theories in the advancement of reflection on gender- and sex-based violence, it has now become a term that leaves aside the experiences of dissident populations in other parts of the world. To expand on this discussion, see: Anderson Fabián Santos Meza, “Tránsitos, desvíos y dislocaciones. Hacia otro no-lugar con Paul-Beatriz Preciado y Marcella Althaus-Reid,” in *El hilo de Ariadna Entretejiendo saberes en clave interdisciplinaria*, edited by Hugo Córdova Quero and Cristian Mor (St. Louis, MO: Institute Sophia Press, 2023), 129–162; Anderson Fabián Santos Meza, “Folding, (Un)Folding, and (Re)Folding the World. An Approach to the Intellectual Itinerary of Darío García Garzón,” in *Dare Primer on Global Queer Theologies*, edited by Lisa Isherwood and Hugo Córdova Quero (London: SCM Press, 2025), 329–352; Anderson Fabián Santos Meza, “Invadiendo y pervirtiendo etnografías para *maricomprendernos*: apuntes para repensar las prácticas etnográficas desde el horizonte de lo queer/*cuir*/*marica*,” *Jangwa Pana* vol. 24, no. 3 (2025): e6015.

⁹⁹ Hugo Córdova Quero and Anderson Fabián Santos Meza, “Trans and Queer Latin American Theologies,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Queer and Trans Studies in Religion*, edited by Melissa M. Wilcox (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2025), 371–390.

¹⁰⁰ Anderson Fabián Santos Meza, *Quid autem ista loquor? El sentido económico de la confessio en las Confessiones de San Agustín* (Missouri: Institute Sophia Press, 2024); Anderson Fabián Santos Meza, “Desviaciones teológicas para retornar al Edén. Aproximaciones, preguntas e indagaciones desde las teologías queer/*cuir*,” in *Mysterium Liberationis Queer: Ensayos sobre teologías queer de la liberación en las Américas*, edited by Hugo Córdova Quero, Miguel H Díaz, Anderson Fabián Santos Meza, Cristian Mor (Missouri: institute Sophia Pres, 2024), 369–422.

constitutes a radical reconfiguration of the theological field, one that places desire, embodiment, and vulnerability at the center of liberative reflection and praxis.

A theologizing *habitus* reveals its cisheteropatriarchal toxicity when it asks: “What does sexuality have to do with LLT?”¹⁰¹ As argued in the previous sections, hegemonic theology (T-Theology) has functioned historically as a regime of purity and decency.¹⁰² Its sacrificial logic requires bodies that expiate systemic tensions: subalternized, discarded, racialized, feminized, impoverished, or dissident bodies cast to the margins of the sacred, the ecclesial, and the communal. Against this theological economy of sacrifice, queer/*cuir/marica* thought operates as a de-sacrificial dispositif—a mode of thinking and living that interrupts the equivalence between purity and divinity, between sexual-bodily discipline and sanctity. In this sense, queer/*cuir/maricas* theologies rewrite the symbolic economy of sin and redemption, disarming their theopolitical uses as colonial instruments of exclusion, domination, and control. Their gesture is neither nihilistic nor merely iconoclastic, but profoundly theopoetic. They cultivate liturgies of survival and communities of unconditional grace—sacred spaces where spirituality unfolds through the erotic plurality of bodies, embracing all their vulnerabilities, affects, and transitions.

Marcella Althaus-Reid identified this theological poisoning with pioneering clarity when she asked: “How did Liberation Theology lose the body [and sexuality]?”¹⁰³ In her critique of “decently dressed theology,” she demonstrated that even emancipatory theological projects reproduced the sanitizing mechanisms of colonial Christianity by excluding desire, pleasure, and unruly corporealities from their redemptive narratives. For that reason, she proposed an “indecent theology,” not as rhetorical provocation but as a methodological and spiritual act that subverts sex-gender assumptions and reformulates their foundations.¹⁰⁴ Such a theology knows itself to be “without underwear”—a theology that exposes its own sexuality, declares its desires, and acknowledges the sexed and gendered constitution of its discourse.¹⁰⁵ This indecency functions as a practice of detoxification, revealing that theological neutrality never existed: all theology has a body, a desire, and a positionality. Hugo Córdova Quero extends this insight by noting that

Many of these stories remain untold and are filtered through moral judgments, especially when they involve the intersection of sexuality and religion. In some way, society segregates these stories

¹⁰¹ M. Althaus-Reid, “Marx in a Gay Bar: Indecent Theology as a Reflection on the Theology of Liberation and Sexuality,” 32.

¹⁰² M. Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God*, 2, 11, 12, 26, 31–33, 65, 109–110, 141.

¹⁰³ Marcella Althaus-Reid, “Feetishism. The Scent of a Latin American Body Theology,” in *Toward a Theology of Eros: Transfiguring Passion at the Limits of Discipline*, edited by Virginia Burrus and Catherine Keller (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 134–152, here 143.

¹⁰⁴ Marcella Althaus-Reid, *From Feminist Theology to Indecent Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2004); Marcella Althaus-Reid, *Indecent Theology: Theological Perversions in Sex, Gender and Politics* (London: Routledge, 2000). See, also: Anderson Fabián Santos Meza, “Walking Indecently with Marcella Althaus-Reid: Doing Dissident and Liberative Theologies from the South,” *Religions* vol. 14, no. 2 (2023): 270.

¹⁰⁵ According to Althaus-Reid, “theology without underwear” implies two things: (i) a theology without supposed theological sexual neutrality, because such neutrality does not exist and never has existed in either the church or theology. A theology that openly declares its sexual interests and denounces sexual ideological formation in Christianity and theological reflections; and (ii) a theology that questions the role of the theologian and her theological integrity in relation to her context of sexuality. Basically, a theology that broadens and radicalizes the field of suspicion in the hermeneutical circle of liberation theology (M. Althaus-Reid, “Marx in a Gay Bar: Indecent Theology as a Reflection on the Theology of Liberation and Sexuality,” 29–48).

into cultural closets from which only certain heterosexual narratives have the privilege of emerging.¹⁰⁶

Theology cannot continue as a “catalog of topics authorized by the Church.”¹⁰⁷ Its place is in exiled stories, in the cultural closets where what was deemed impure or improper has been sequestered. From there, queer/*cuir/maricas* theologies not only expand the canon; they reconfigure theological epistemology by showing that sexuality is not a peripheral addition but the very mode through which the divine becomes incarnate in human life.

Within this horizon, imagination becomes a theological category. As Mouton (2008) argues, “theology is the capacity of human imagination to redescribe reality, to rename experiences, to recount stories from new angles.”¹⁰⁸ Althaus-Reid radicalizes this claim by warning that imagining a map of redemption not preceded by the colonial territorialization of the sexual body marks the beginning of a truly liberating theology.¹⁰⁹ Thus, queer/*cuir/maricas* theologies become heroic forms of indecency—theologies born from embodied knowledge, from rebellious spirits that refuse to perpetuate the fiction of a theo(ideo)logized normality.

The danger, however, comes not only from religious orthodoxies. Neoliberal sexual politics have also deployed new mechanisms of domestication under the guise of inclusion or universalization. Jasbir K. Puar has shown that *homonationalism* constitutes a mutation of contemporary biopolitics:¹¹⁰ homosexuality, once stigmatized as a sign of death, is now recast as a symbol of life, progress, and liberal citizenship, incorporated into the imaginaries of the nation-state while other bodies—Arab, Muslim, migrant—are “queerized” as threats.¹¹¹ This increasingly widespread assimilation produces *homonormativity*, a sexual politics of consumption and respectability that reinforces rather than subverts the cisheteropatriarchal order through its “inclusive” façade.¹¹²

Israeli *pinkwashing* exemplifies the most sophisticated expression of this strategy. Under the veneer of a “gay-friendly” state, Israel instrumentalizes LGBTIQ+ rights to conceal its occupation and genocide of the Palestinian people, presenting sexual diversity as a marker of civilization against supposed Muslim homophobic barbarism. Critical scholarship notes that “it would seem that Zionist homophobia, rooted in religious fundamentalism and biblical literalism, becomes muted, while

¹⁰⁶ Hugo Córdova Quero, “Teo-queer-nautas. Teologías queer explorando nuevos horizontes en el siglo XXI,” in *Teorías queer y teologías: estar... en otro lugar*, edited by Genilma Boehler, Lars Bedurke and Silvia Regina de Lima Silva (San José, Costa Rica: Departamento Ecueménico de Investigaciones, 2013), 97–135, here 102.

¹⁰⁷ M. Althaus-Reid, “Marx in a Gay Bar: Indecent Theology as a Reflection on the Theology of Liberation and Sexuality,” 34.

¹⁰⁸ Elna Mouton, “Christian Theology in the University: On the Threshold or in the Margin?,” *HTS Theologise Studies* vol. 64, no. 1 (2008): 431–445, here 431.

¹⁰⁹ M. Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God*.

¹¹⁰ Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. See, also: Gilly Hartal and Orna Sasson-Levy, “Failing Homonationalism? Gay Israeli Eurovision Geeks Negotiating Nationalism and Masculinity,” *Journal of Homosexuality* vol. 70, no. 8 (2023): 1585–1608; Gilly Hartal and Orna Sasson-Levy, “Re-Reading Homonationalism: An Israeli Spatial Perspective,” *Journal of Homosexuality* vol. 65, no. 10 (2018): 1391–1414.

¹¹¹ Jasbir K. Puar, “Citation and Censorship: The Politics of Talking About the Sexual Politics of Israel,” *Fem Leg Stud* vol. 19 (2011): 133–142.

¹¹² Jasbir K. Puar, “Rethinking Homonationalism,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* vol. 45, no. 2 (2013): 336–339.

systematic discrimination is camouflaged beneath the rainbow."¹¹³ This theopolitical dispositif not only colonizes sexuality but also produces a domesticated "Theology of Pride," a sacramental narrative of liberalism that sanctifies colonial violence under the colors of inclusion.

Because "unsurprisingly, the mainstream gay movement has not sought to challenge Zionism, but instead to be welcomed into its fold,"¹¹⁴ distinguishing *diversity* from *dissidence* becomes urgent. Diversity can be absorbed by neoliberal rights and markets; dissidence entails an epistemic rupture. To "dissent" is to sever oneself from common doctrine—from hegemonic logics of citizenship, nation, and church.¹¹⁵ As Susan Stryker reminds us, sex-gender dissidences do not merely describe orientations; they traverse and destabilize the very category of identity, exposing its instability and constructedness.¹¹⁶ Dissidence thus emerges as an urgent theological imperative: a mode of resisting the sacred fictions that sustain moral order, a way of imagining alternative spiritual grammars of existence, and a practice of fracturing any project invested in rendering theology respectable. In this sense, dissidence is not merely oppositional but generative, opening spaces where theological language can be unsettled, reworked, and reinhabited from the margins.

This dissidence has taken concrete political form in movements such as al-Qaws for Sexual and Gender Diversity in Palestinian Society (*al-Qaws li-ta'addudiyya al-jinsiyya wa-al-jandariyya fi al-mujtama' al-filastini*), which emerged after the Second Intifada (2000) and articulates queer radicality as a decolonizing and de-Zionizing praxis.¹¹⁷ Their work seeks to dismantle three intertwined hegemonies: (i) Palestinian patriarchal culture, (ii) Western LGBT hegemony, and (iii) the fundamentalist colonization of Zionism.¹¹⁸ As Walaa Alqaisiya's *Decolonial Queering in Palestine* (2023) compellingly demonstrates, such formations are best understood not as the application of external queer frameworks to Palestinian realities, but as expressions of a decolonial queering that destabilizes the Zionist sensual regime from within anticolonial struggle itself.¹¹⁹ Read in this light, al-Qaws is not invoked here as an object of uncritical celebration, but as a Palestinian-led praxis that has long refused both pinkwashing and Western homonormativity, grounding theoretical claims in a situated and ongoing political practice.

¹¹³ A. F. Santos Meza, "En nombre de Dios, del amor y la inclusión'. Fundamentalismo religioso y homonormatividad como dispositivos del genocidio en Palestina," 184.

¹¹⁴ A. F. Santos Meza, "En nombre de Dios, del amor y la inclusión'. Fundamentalismo religioso y homonormatividad como dispositivos del genocidio en Palestina," 184.

¹¹⁵ Gabriela González Ortuño, "Teorías de la disidencia sexual: de contextos populares a usos elitistas. La teoría queer en América Latina frente a las y los pensadores de disidencia sexo-genérica," *De Raíz Diversa. Revista Especializada en Estudios Latinoamericanos* vol. 3, no. 5 (2016): 179–200, here 182. See, also: A. F. Santos Meza, "En nombre de Dios, del amor y la inclusión'. Fundamentalismo religioso y homonormatividad como dispositivos del genocidio en Palestina," 185–186.

¹¹⁶ Susan Stryker, "Transgender Feminism: Queering the Woman Question," in *Third Wave Feminism. A Critical Exploration Expanded Second Edition*, coordinated pby Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie and Rebecca Munford (Nueva York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 66.

¹¹⁷ Walaa Alqaisiya, *Decolonial Queering in Palestine* (Routledge, 2023), 2.

¹¹⁸ Haneen Maikey and Mikki Stelder, "Dismantling the Pink Door in the Apartheid Wall: Towards a Decolonized Palestinian Queer Politics," in *The Global Trajectories of Queerness: Re-thinking Same-Sex Politics in the Global South*, edited by Ashley Tellis and Sruti Bala (Leiden: Brill/Rodopi, 2015), 83–103. The authors point out that alQaws explicitly rejected putting "LGBT" in its name, noting that "queer" animates and defines alQaws' work only to the extent that it is understood to encompass feminism, sexual and gender diversity, anti-colonialism, and decolonial projects in the ongoing project of liberation.

¹¹⁹ Alqaisiya, *Decolonial Queering in Palestine*, 4–10.

Within this horizon, Palestinian dissident existence exceeds the register of sexual identity; it becomes an embodied act of spiritual resistance. It becomes theology-in-action: a praxis that “brings to light what has become unintelligible and foregrounds political subjectivities and voices that have been further marginalized,”¹²⁰ thereby enabling the labor of unmaking and remaking divine language from bodies that do not fit the empire’s theological cartographies.

In response to pinkwashing, *pinkwatching* has emerged as a global counter-narrative. Palestinian queer activists and allies expose the cooptation of LGBT struggles by states and corporations, reclaiming pride as riot and community, not corporate parade. The movement Queers for Palestine, for instance, invokes the memory of Stonewall—led by Black and Latina working-class trans women—to recall that queer and trans liberation was, and must remain, a collective, communal insurrection, not a neoliberal or capitalist slogan, nor an individualistic academic enterprise.¹²¹ Confronting the ongoing genocide in Gaza, Queers for Palestine insist on the decolonization of Pride:

Pride has become a silencing device. We have been collectively alienated from the landscape of our own homosexuality, where we now find police, deportation facilitators, TERFS, banks, and corporations that have nothing to do with queer liberation and justice, and everything to do with oppression, queer and otherwise. They have shown us who they are and who they stand for time and time again over the years, despite constant rejection from the community. The first Pride was a riot, and it came from a queer community led by working-class Black and Latina trans women, so united in resistance that they knew if one of them threw the first brick, the others would follow and throw the next. As trans Palestinian MX Yaffa said, “A riot is about community. There are no riots without community, so what are you doing for community?” It is community, collective trust, that allows us to fight back.¹²²

This insurgent community is not founded on identity but on collective trust—on the political and spiritual gesture of caring and resisting together against the necropolitics that decides who deserves to live and who may die.

The concept of queer necropolitics, inspired by Achille Mbembe, names the increasing indifference of certain LGBT elites toward trans, Black, migrant, or Palestinian lives.¹²³ This necropolitics constitutes the shadow side of rainbow liberalism: a narcissistic, intimist spirituality that replaces solidarity with consumption and desire with competition.¹²⁴ Against this, dissident gatherings reactivate the communal and affective dimension of liberation, recalling— as the Latin

¹²⁰ H. Maikey and M. Stelder, “Dismantling the Pink Door in the Apartheid Wall: Towards a Decolonized Palestinian Queer Politics,” 100.

¹²¹ Queers For Palestine (@queers.for.palestine), available at: <https://www.instagram.com/queers.for.palestine/>.

¹²² Queers For Palestine, “Pledge to Opt Out of Corporate Pride, and Opt in to Building a Community of Resistance”, available at: <https://airtable.com/app4fSEj2ExnfEvBk/shrgjPk5LHFIS9Oj8>.

¹²³ Achille Mbembe, *Necropolítica seguido de Sobre el gobierno privado indirecto* (Madrid: Melusina, 2011); Jin Haritaworn, Adi Kuntsman and Silvia Posocco (eds.), *Queer Necropolitics* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Enrique Vega-Dávila, “Patriarcado y Patriarcabro: Homofobia, Discursos Religiosos y Violencia. Identificando Algunos Rasgos de las Necroeclesiologías. Una Reflexión desde una Perspectiva Crítica de Género,” *Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latinoamericana* vol. 88, no. 3 (2022): 152–166.

¹²⁴ Alisa Solomon, “Viva la Diva Citizenship: Post-Zionism and Gay Rights,” in *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*, edited by Daniel Boyarin, Daniel Itzkovitz and Ann Pellegrini (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003), 149–165, here 153; A. F. Santos Meza, “‘En nombre de Dios, del amor y la inclusión’. Fundamentalismo religioso y homonormatividad como dispositivos del genocidio en Palestina,” 181.

American *marica* Pedro Lemebel testifies— that *mariconaje guerrero* is a form of embodied spirituality, a mode of resisting necropolitical individualism through shared tenderness and rage.¹²⁵

Within this framework, decolonial queerness/*mariquisimo* emerges as an integral theological-political project: it does not seek mere recognition but the abolition of the colonial categories of sex, gender, race, class, and nation. To decolonize theology is to dismantle the religious foundations of cisheteropatriarchy, Christian supremacism, and fundamentalist Zionism—that is, to break the alliance between theology, patriarchy, state, and capital, and to reclaim desire as a creative force of community and transcendence. Queer/*cuir*/*marica* existence thus becomes a theological antidote because its potency lies not in supplying doctrinal answers but in keeping wounds and desires open—in disorganizing orthodoxy and restoring to theological thought its insurgent and imaginative character. Indeed, these liberationist theologies grounded in sex-gender dissidence remind us that the theologizing *habitus* “has never been and will never be a monolithic enterprise.”¹²⁶ Dissident, polyphonic, dissonant, and resonant voices will always cultivate plural horizons that intersect in shared struggles.

Althaus-Reid called this gesture “theology without underwear,”¹²⁷ proposing a radical displacement: the task is not to speak about bodies but from bodies in their nakedness. Theological detoxification requires abandoning the asepsis of theological, academic, and ecclesial discourse, allowing the experiences of dissident bodies—their joys, traumas, fluids, loves, and resistances—to become a hermeneutical principle. Ultimately, this decentering functions as a form of redemption: not the sacrificial redemption of purity and decency, but the communal redemption of desire—redemption as care, rebellion, and insubordination.

Thus, queer and trans dissident voices reveal that the problem was never diversity itself, but the theological regime that needed to produce “abnormalities” to sustain itself. Therefore, this theologization seeks not inclusion but transformative disruption; it does not aspire to a seat at the ecclesial, hegemonic, or academic table, but reshapes the table itself, breaking those legs that lift it above the people and bringing it down to the level of the lived realities of majoritarian communities: poor, exiled, oppressed, and dissident. In times of genocide and pinkwashing, this dissident antidote consists in re-enchanting theology through skin and desire, in practicing a spirituality without purities or borders, in imagining—as Mouton would say—new ways of recounting the divine story from the margins.¹²⁸ The detoxification discovered in dissidence is therefore a political, theological, and spiritual act of imagination that liberates theological thought from its own fear of the flesh and the realities of embodied life.

I wish to pose a series of questions to gauge the level of gender and sexual toxicity that may be permeating our ecclesial and theological communities: Do we continue to read, predominantly, white cisheterosexual authors? Are our engagements with theologies of gender and sexual diversity still limited to the voices of gay men? What specific configurations of gender-diverse theologies are being disseminated within our communities? Furthermore, are the LGBTQ+ individuals we recognize as theological authorities exclusively white, cisgender, and academically privileged? From what socioeconomic realities do these recognized LGBTQ+ theologians speak? Is their work anchored in responsible community-based commitments, or is it merely the dissemination of “armchair” theological ideas? How many LGBTQ+ theologians do you know who are unemployed, impoverished, HIV-positive, sex workers, or survivors of structural violence? Are your references

¹²⁵ Pedro Lemebel, *Loco afán. Crónicas de sidario* (Bogotá: Editorial Planeta, 2020).

¹²⁶ Hugo Córdova Quero, “Risky affairs: Marcella Althaus-Reid Indecently Queering Juan Luis Segundo’s Hermeneutical Circle Propositions,” in *Dancing Theology in Fetish Boots. Essays in Honor of Marcella Althaus-Reid*, edited by Lisa Isherwood and Mark Jordan (London: SCM Press, 2010), 207–218, here 207.

¹²⁷ Marcella Althaus-Reid, “On Wearing Skirts Without Underwear: “Indecent Theology Challenging the Liberation Theology of the Pueblo.” Poor Women Contesting Christ,” *Feminist Theology* vol. 7, no. 20 (1999): 39–51.

¹²⁸ E. Mouton, “Christian Theology in the University: On the Threshold or in the Margin?,” 431–445.

strictly from the Global North? Do you make a conscious effort to recognize the work of non-English speakers? I could extend these inquiries further, but I hope these questions allow us to confront our current methods of theologizing and identify some of its potential “poisonings.” Engaging honestly with these inquiries is a necessary step toward decontaminating our theological practices.

Concluding Reflections

The trajectory developed throughout these sections reveals that contemporary theology stands at a historical inflection point. This is not merely a matter of diagnosing the persistence of theological apparatuses that reproduce epistemic, political, and bodily violence; it is, above all, a matter of recognizing that hegemonic practices of theologizing have become insufficient—and indeed dangerous, even lethal—in the face of the magnitude of the civilizational crisis we inhabit. From this perspective, the present work has insisted that the theological task is, in its deepest sense, a labor of liberation; therefore, as has been explicitly stated, liberation is the very *raison d’être* of theology and necessarily requires sociopolitical and communitarian activism.¹²⁹ This assertion is not an external addendum to the theological enterprise, but rather the retrieval of its oldest vocation: to interrupt logics of oppression, to forge livable worlds, and to accompany the struggles of bodies subjected to regimes of domination.

Each section of this project has demonstrated, from its own vantage point, that theological intoxication does not operate solely at the level of ideas. What is at stake is a profoundly poisoned *habitus* of theologizing whose symbolic, emotional, and ritual architecture has been shaped by centuries of sacralized cisheteropatriarchy, doctrinal coloniality, and economies of terror, fear, and guilt. What Pablo Richard once called “the violence of theology”¹³⁰ is no longer a mere collateral effect of certain discourses or institutions; it is a system of producing obedience, normalization, and exclusion that has configured the spiritual respiration of entire generations. In this sense, theological poisons are not isolated hermeneutical errors, but repertoires of spiritual governmentalities that have molded imaginaries, subjectivities, and bodies.

Yet this diagnosis does not culminate in theological pessimism, but in the urgent need to reconstruct another mode of theologizing. The planetary catastrophe we endure—that “dysphoric” condition which Paul B. Preciado describes as “a foot stepping into the void, pointing the way toward another world”¹³¹—forces theology to recover its critical agency and to imagine possibilities where previously only closures existed. Preciado reminds us that these ruins are, despite everything, “better than capitalism, better than the heteronormative family, better than the global social and economic order. Better than any god. Because they are our present condition: our only home.”¹³² Thus, we find ourselves confronted with the impossibility of continuing to operate within theological frameworks that attempt to restore an idealized past or a precritical doctrinal order. What lies in ruins is not only the edifice of traditional metaphysical, religious, and theological certainties; it is the world itself. For this reason, theology cannot persist in a project of preservation: it must become a practice of critically inhabiting the ruins.

It is from this horizon that the six proposed sections insist on the urgency of disobedient and rebellious theologies—anti-patriarchal and anti-colonial, queer/*cuir/maricas*, trans, and radically situated in their contextual particularities—capable of “lacerating the polished, immune surface of dictionaries to narrate an (im)possible insurrectionary world [...] narrating death, boycott, tremor, to lacerate the narrow and suffocating imaginary of our present;”¹³³ capable of speaking from our

¹²⁹ Esther McIntosh and Anupama M. Ranawana, “Silence is Complicity: Theological Failure in the Face of Genocide,” *International Journal of Public Theology* vol. 18, no. 4 (2024): 463–487.

¹³⁰ Pablo Richard, “1492: The Violence of God and The Future of Christianity,” in 1942-1992. *The Voice of the Victims*, edited by Leonardo Boff and Virgilio Elizondo (Londres: SCM Press, 1990), 59–67.

¹³¹ P. B. Preciado, *Dysphoria mundi*, 44.

¹³² P. B. Preciado, *Dysphoria mundi*, 32.

¹³³ Vir Cano, *Borrador para un abecedario del desacato* (Buenos Aires: Madreselva, 2021), 82–83.

bastard tongues, those that—as val flores notes—“corrupt official lexicons with the impurities and immodesty of waste.”¹³⁴ Such theologies cannot emerge from institutional neutrality or disciplinary asepsis; they require bodies willing to speak from the borderlands, from theological precariousness, and from spiritual insubordination. As María Galindo declares, it is a matter of writing to ignite fires, writing like someone tearing apart a straitjacket, writing something more vital than the old patriarchal commandments of the Old Testament.¹³⁵

It is precisely in this vein that Preciado’s work—particularly his “funeral orations”—illuminates the need for an insurrectionary mysticism, a mode of prayer that does not seek to restore a lost order but to provoke a perceptual displacement capable of opening possibilities amid devastation. This exercise “does not depend on spiritual clairvoyance or apocalyptic premonition, but on an aesthetic revelation,”¹³⁶ and its function is to modify the perspective of what occurs, to transform the theological frameworks through which we interpret the global crisis: to change the questions to propose new responses, because imagining and questioning are already forms of action. To reclaim imagination as a force of political transformation is already to begin to mutate. This article, then, becomes a form of prayer—a prayer among ruins—offering an example of the theological fugitive practices we need to halt, as Theodor Adorno urged, humanity’s march toward inhumanity.¹³⁷

This investigation deepened that intuition in the context of Palestine, showing how theologies forged in territories of social death and extreme coloniality are today among the most generative sites for rethinking theological praxis. As Munayer and Munayer caution, “Palestinians ought to build on the strengths of PLT, but also go beyond our forebearers’ work... Together, we must celebrate our identity and heritage through theological reflection and a political commitment to the oppressed.”¹³⁸ This statement extends far beyond the Palestinian framework; it articulates a compass for any theology aspiring to meet the demands of its time. I encountered this not only in the writings of the Munayer brothers—my Palestinian friends—but also in the passion carried by their words, in the crystalline glow of their tear-filled eyes, in the faith transmitted through their calm gazes, and in the warmth of their embraces.

I have written this paper recognizing that the place from which one *sentipienso* is never a minor detail.¹³⁹ Thus, I have not intended to speak on behalf of a people, but I have written from a place—and from that place, marked by the intersecting violences that shape my existence as a Latin American, a victim of conflict, a poor Colombian *marica*, a theologian, and a pro-Palestinian activist—it becomes possible to weave alliances between struggles which, though diverse, face shared toxic

¹³⁴ val flores, *Interrucciones: Ensayos de poética activista. Escritura, política, educación* (Neuquén: La Mondonga Dark, 2013), 75.

¹³⁵ María Galindo, *Feminismo bastardo* (México: Canal Press, 2022).

¹³⁶ P. B. Preciado, *Dysphoria mundi*, 32.

¹³⁷ Theodor Adorno, “Sociedad,” in *Escritos sociológicos I. Obra completa 8* (Madrid: Akal, 1965), 9–18, here 12.

¹³⁸ J. S. Munayer and S. S. Munayer, “Decolonising Palestinian Liberation Theology: New Methods, Sources and Voices,” 307.

¹³⁹ Orlando Fals-Borda, *Ciencia propia y colonialismo intelectual: Los nuevos rumbos* (Bogotá: Carlos Valencia, 1987). From Orlando Fals-Borda’s perspective, *sentipensar* is a methodological approach that seeks to integrate emotional and rational knowledge into the social research process. In proposing this notion, Fals-Borda emphasizes the importance of connecting the feelings and thoughts of communities in their struggle for social justice. This approach highlights the need to value the lived experiences and intuitive knowledge of subjects, especially those who are marginalized, recognizing that knowledge is not only an intellectual construct, but also an affective and experiential expression that must be understood and respected in its entirety.

adversaries: the global machinery of fundamentalism and Zionism, expansionist necropolitics, and academic and theological extractivism.

In this sense, the project has shown that sex-gender dissidences, anti-colonial movements, liberation theologies, and Palestine are not isolated fields but territories in which the very meaning of the human and the divine is currently contested. We inhabit a moment in which theological discourses, sex-gender dissidences, and Palestine demand to *sentipensarse* themselves in relation, for the same doctrinal mechanisms deployed to exclude, persecute, and kill sex-gender dissidents are those used to justify the genocide in Gaza.¹⁴⁰ This historical convergence requires a theology willing “to risk decentering the privileged vantage point of white Eurocentric modernity [...] to confront the possibility of radically different ways of being in the world.”¹⁴¹

Taken together, these reflections allow us to affirm that theological detoxification is not an academic gesture but an act of collective survival and historical responsibility. It entails deactivating the devices that have turned theology into a laboratory of poisons—textual, symbolic, affective, and practical—and reconstructing it as a practice that generates life, dignity, and futurity. Theology, in its deepest sense, can only justify itself insofar as it helps conjure the catastrophe we inhabit and opens the horizon toward a more just world: a world still capable of breathing that fragile breath of life which, at this moment, seems to dissipate.

This conclusion, then, invites us to continue theologizing from within the ruins, understanding that in them lies not only the testimony of an order that collapses, but also the uncomfortable, fragile, and yet real possibility of other ways of believing, loving, resisting, and living. For even amid devastation, a prayer can become an ode to the possibility of change. And it is precisely this possibility that must guide, from now on, every theological practice aspiring to liberation.

I still hold on to a hope that allows me to pray amid these ruins, and I do so like this, with a poem that is born as both conclusion and beginning:

I write with the remnants of a god
who did not survive our hands.

From Gaza, I learned
that resurrection is not a miracle
but a mother gathering bones
and still daring to utter a name.

My body—*marica*, borderland, wound—
does not ask permission to exist:
it burns.

There are theologies that smell of confinement,
of airless closets,
of scripture weaponized as stone.

But there are others:
those that tremble,
those that sweat,
those that kiss in secrecy
and then set the temple ablaze.

God no longer resides above.

God breathes below,

¹⁴⁰ A. F. Santos Meza, “‘En nombre de Dios, del amor y la inclusión’. Fundamentalismo religioso y homonormatividad como dispositivos del genocidio en Palestina,” 153–204.

¹⁴¹ S. Stryker, “Transgender Feminism: Queering the Woman Question,” 63.

among the ruins,
in the fractured mouth that insists.

And if I pray,
it is not to redeem heaven,
but so that the earth
may cease to bleed in its name.

آمين