

PEDAGOGICAL GUIDE

for reading the work of Carlos Medoza-Álvarez



Mendoza-Álvarez, Carlos.

A theology of mutual accompaniment.

Pedagogical guide for reading the work of Carlos Mendoza-Álvarez

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INVITATION¹

... THAT THIS GUIDE WILL BE BREAD THAT IS SHARED AND WINE THAT NOURISHES OUR OWN THINKING AND ACTION.

Since 2016, *compañeres*, *compañeras*, and *compañeros* from various countries and contexts have been walking in Spiritual and Theological Mutual Accompaniment with Carlos Mendoza-Álvarez in our search to discern hope amid horror and global violence.

Such searches in our compañero Carlos are animated by the question

How and where does redemption take place here and now?



"This guide is the fruit of that and an open invitation to anyone who wishes to delve into the questions and quests that such intuitions invite."

Those of us who have been exploring Carlos's works and writings over the last three decades have found good food and drink in his intuitions, sustenance we now wish to share

The journey that follows and sustains this question becomes an invitation to join that same search but nourishing one another with our own steps reflected in the categories felt and thought by Carlos in his quest to name, problematize, and respond to the foundational question of how to receive divine revelation and redemption in times of violence and growing exclusion.



NOTES

1This guide, which we would also like to call an invitation, was developed by: Juan Jesús Vázquez (Mexico) and Cleusa Caldeira (Brazil), colleagues and friends, who posed key questions to the theologian and had beautiful conversations with Carlos with whom they worked on their undergraduate and doctoral theses; Bosque Iglesias and María Fernanda Díaz Trejo, who highlighted and pointed out the content points; Sarah Loose and Cassie Trentaz, who translated this guide from Spanish to English; and, Juan Carlos La Puente Tapia, who planted the seed for this guide, and planned, articulated, and revised the final translation and structure, which brings together the various grains that everyone contributed.



SOURCES AND ONGOING QUESTIONS WITHIN CARLOS MENDOZA ALVAREZ'S THOUGHT-WORK

1

Bring to mind moments in your life when you were awakened or ignited to resist oppression in the midst of your vulnerabilities. How would you tell your personal and community story of vulnerability and resistance? How does that memory connect you to the stories of other people or communities who face violence with outrage, memory, justice and hope?

Who are the faces of alterity, difference, otherness that call you to a life of shared outrage, empathy with victims and compassion with survivors in order to resist violence?

This guide is also an invitation to add our steps. For this reason, we have proposed a series of questions at the beginning of each of the three parts of this guide. These questions act as windows that we open from within ourselves, from our community, from our collective efforts to continue imagining, sustaining, summoning and promoting those other possible worlds. Carlos's theological proposal calls for opening windows instead of building walls, as an inversion of the logics of domination, hegemony, privilege, and the sacrificial religion that sustains them.

The intellectual genealogy of Carlos Mendoza-Álvarez is interwoven from his own life journey and experiences ²

THOMISTIC THOUGHT³
EUROPEAN PHENOMENOLOGY,
AND LIBERATION THEOLOGY
(IN THE MODERN CONTEXT)

Distinct from "Thomism", which became a doctrinal school, "Thomistic thought" explores the historical sources that contributed to the synthesis of Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century, while listening to Jewish, Arabic and Greek

**MIMETIC THEORY AND
DECOLONIAL THOUGHT ⁴**

Formed within European thought began to understand that the dialogue with the modern world passed through a critical vision of how the modern western narrative had been constructed, in particular of subjectivity.

**LISTENING TO THE ACTION-WISDOM
OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS ⁵**

These experiences meant the opening to the socio-political dimension of faith, with the insistent need to think critically about it in order to contribute to its incarnation in these struggles.

These three threads, united in Carlos by his passion to "give reason for hope to those who ask for it" (1 Pet 3:15), ground his own intuitions in the face of the foundational question:

HOW AND WHERE DOES REDEMPTION TAKE PLACE HERE AND NOW?
HOW TO RECEIVE DIVINE REVELATION AND REDEMPTION
IN TIMES OF VIOLENCE AND GROWING EXCLUSION?



Out of our quest to enter and deepen a dialogue with the resistances of life in the face of the hegemonic dynamics of death, arises the challenge to name and rely on philosophical and theological reference points that allow us to share together a common horizon of life, action and thought.

The quotations mentioned here are from a conversation held on December 17th, 2021

For the purpose of this guide, Cleusa Caldeira ⁶ will accompany us as readers through a creative conversation with key points of Carlos's theological work.



Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Brazil, interlocutor of Carlos Mendoza. She did doctoral research at the Faculdade Jesuíta de Filosofia e Teologia following the master ideas of Carlos's work

Cleusa proposes two initial works to approach Carlos's thought:

THE BOOK

*"El Dios escondido de la posmodernidad. Deseo, memoria e imaginación escatológica"*⁷ (SUJ, Guadalajara: 2010)

THE ARTICLE

*"Hasta la muerte. Reflexión filosófica y teológica sobre la compasión"*⁸ (Ciencia Tomista, T. 139, núm. 447).



The critique of modernity presented in these works, from the perspective of vulnerable and wounded subjectivities, allows us to understand in a new sense why liberation theology insisted so much on the "preferential option for the poor." From French phenomenology it is possible to deepen this explanation by shedding light on the creative agency⁹ of the poor to resist and re-exist. In this way, Carlos refers to the two genealogies that shape his thought: on the one hand, liberation theology, highly conscious of the suffering of the poor and of the urgency of a solidarity that transforms the structures of sin; but also the acute modern post-Enlightenment liberal consciousness of the importance of a person's autonomy, rights, and freedom:

"I discovered that in order to do a Fundamental Theology at the end of the 20th century, I had to incorporate a rigorous philosophical analysis of the phenomenology of subjectivity and the epistemology that arises from it [...]. By accompanying and listening to social movements, I began to understand, while working at the Universidad Iberoamericana [the Jesuit University in Mexico City], that faith not only had implications in the public sphere, but that it took on new meaning when we listened to the clamor, the resistance, the outrage, and the creativity that arises from social movements that fight for the dignity of the victims".¹⁰

For this reason, from listening to the wisdoms within social movements, Carlos has been concentrating more and more on dialoguing with authors of both critical thought (from Adorno¹¹, to Judith Butler¹²), and decolonial thought (in the Latin American context Rita Laura Segato¹³, Boaventura de Sousa Santos¹⁴ or Aída Hernández yand the colleagues of the Red de Feminismos Descoloniales¹⁵).

Totally different from fundamental-ism, Fundamental Theology provides a basis for theology to remain open in dialogue with all disciplines

Carlos' proposal allows us to make sense of our own intuitions of resistance in the face of global violence, to ask the questions about how those "violences" concern our own body, thinking, feeling, and acting. Cleusa shares her experience: "The theology of the mystery of God's weakness has challenged me to renounce all desire for power and to continue in a process of conformation to the forgiving victim. In this way I can respond, in imitation of Christ, to the innumerable intersectional violences that pierce my diasporic body."

Again, the reader of Carlos' work is not someone who approaches empty-handed. On the contrary, is someone who, from their own categories, experiences of faith, of violence, of solidarity, as well as from their own questions, desires and inspirations, sits down at a common table to share their bread and water, to form together a commensality open to understanding and savoring the gifts of the Kingdom ¹⁶ offered by the divine Sophia. Carlos thus reaffirms with his theological proposal the interdisciplinary collaboration associated with the charism of the Dominican Order, from which he draws his experience: "To do theology is to search for truth in the midst of fraternity/sorority."

We find here a different relationship with the thought work of Carlos Mendoza than what is customary in the academic world: transcending the hierarchical and scholarly academic relationship to rather live it as a theology that challenges us; as a cross-threading of categories, sources, and provocations in which we can recognize and discover ourselves as subjectivities in conflict and resistance, as systemic victims, but in what Carlos calls messianic insurrection. In the end, it is a matter of immersing ourselves in an understanding of the subversive power of the new life of the "Awaken Crucified" that animates the survivors of yesterday and today



NOTES

2 Within the formation as a Dominican friar, in dialogue with the critical thinking of National University of Mexico (UNAM) at the Faculty of Philosophy, with a non-religious vision of the world and, in parallel, the studies on Thomistic thought, forged an "interstitial" identity, an invitation to translate the fundamental Christian identity and conviction in the midst of a-religious contexts. His time at the Centro Universitario Cultural (CUC) as an expression of the Dominican University Parish close to the UNAM in Mexico City allowed him a first approach to dialogue with the academic world and the arts, as well as with social movements; mainly with the community of refugees from El Salvador, who worked in the Socorro Jurídico Cristiano founded by Monsignor Romero for solidarity with the victims of the military dictatorship and the preservation of historical memory. Together with Miguel Concha OP and brothers Benjamin and Roberto Cuellar, they rethought the theme of justice as a question intimately linked to the Gospel. And from the Dominican tradition, they deepened the theological contribution of Brothers Bartolomé de las Casas and Francisco de Vitoria together with the School of Salamanca in the new context of 16th Century. Their theology is understood as part of a generation that was the daughter of the Second Vatican Council, which understood dialogue with the modern world as absolutely necessary, with the urgency of updating the message of Christianity in this context.

3 Distinct from "Thomism", which became a doctrinal school, "Thomistic thought" explores the historical sources that contributed to the synthesis of Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century, while listening to Jewish, Arabic and Greek thought, as highlighted in the 20th century by the school of theology of Le Saulchoir in France.

4 Formed within European thought, mainly French phenomenology (Paul Ricoeur, Emmanuel Levinas, Jean-Luc Nancy and others), Mendoza began to understand that the dialogue with the modern world passed through a critical vision of how the modern western narrative had been constructed, in particular of subjectivity. The conviction of a path marked by

critical thought, now expressed as a "critique of modernity that has to go to the root: the deconstruction of Cartesian subjectivity". Moreover, this process led him to understand that this root had to reach the Hebrew world to explore the sources of redemption. This second phase helped him to build his own thought, the fruits of which are offered in his Doctoral Thesis "Deus Liberans" (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1996), on the God who liberates. It is the praxis of liberation from a perspective of theological aesthetics: aesthetics in the sense of a theory of subjectivity and of the perception proper to the vulnerable subjectivity that receives the gift of redemption.

5 In particular, the indigenous peoples of Chiapas (Mexico) and pastoral work with the LGBTQ+ community in the context of the emergence of HIV-AIDS in the 1980s. These experiences meant the opening to the socio-political dimension of faith, with the insistent need to think critically about it in order to contribute to its incarnation in these struggles.

6 Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Brazil, interlocutor of Carlos Mendoza. She did doctoral research at the Faculdade Jesuíta de Filosofia e Teologia (FAJE) following the master ideas of Carlos' work on the event of redemption in a postmodern and decolonial key for vulnerable and wounded subjectivity. From this doctoral thesis Cleusa is developing a Fundamental Black Theology in dialogue with decolonial thinking and critical black thought, especially Brazilian black thought. Cleusa describes her first personal experience of Carlos' proposal as "a provocation to her own desire for power, a challenge in the conformation with this forgiving victim, responding to the innumerable intersectional violences that cross the diasporic body itself [...] it exposed my unassumed vulnerability, my own contradiction".

7 You can find it in digital version in the following link: https://www.academia.edu/42356326/El_Dios_escondido_de_la_posmodernidad

8 The full article can be found in digital version in the following link: https://www.academia.edu/4842129/CMA_Vivir_hasta_la_muerte_Reflexi%C3%B3n_filos%C3%B3fica_teor%C3%B3gica_sobre_la_compa%C3%B1a_2012

9 This type of agency would be related to what Carlos explain as the "potencia of the poor." Instead of "poder" (power), he uses the Latin word *potencia* which is different from the Latin word *potestas* (power). *Potencia* of the poor is about resistance and

re-existence that open up new ways to live beyond hegemonic promises.

10 Here Carlos points to decolonial thinking and mimetic theory as two ways of understanding that “violences” or networks of violence need to be dismantled at the systemic level (patriarchy, racism, colonialism). Themes that he discovered as highly relevant for a critical and compassionate theological reflection because those who face violence in their own bodies have another way of understanding life.

11 In Spanish, we can find, among others, works such as: *Dialectica de la Ilustración* (Ediciones Akal, 2007), *Teoría estética* (Ediciones Akal, 2005), *Escritos sociológicos I* (Ediciones Akal, 2005), *Crítica de la cultura y sociedad, II y II* (Ediciones Akal, 2008 and 2009), *Educación para la emancipación* (Editorial Morata, 2002).

12 For the purpose of this guide, we recommend the following works translated into Spanish: *El género en disputa* (Paidós, 2007), *Cuerpos que importan* (Paidós, 2002), *Lenguaje, poder e identidad* (Ediciones Síntesis, 2003), *Vida precaria: el poder del duelo y la venganza* (Paidós, 2006), *Dar cuenta de sí mismo* (Paidós, 2005), *Violencia de Estado, guerra y resistencia* (Katz editores, 2010).

13 The following works are recommended: *La nación y sus otros: raza, etnicidad y diversidad religiosa en tiempos de políticas de la identidad* (Prometeo Libros, 2007), *La escritura en el cuerpo de las mujeres asesinadas en Ciudad Juárez* (Tinta Limón, 2013), *Aníbal Quijano: Founding Texts* (Del Signo, 2014), *Des/decolonizing the University* (Del Signo, 2015), *Critical Genealogies of Coloniality in Latin America, Africa, the Orient* (CLACSO, 2016), *The Critique of Coloniality in Eight Essays* (Prometheus Books, 2016).

14 *De la mano de Alicia. Lo Social y lo político en la postmodernidad* (Siglo del Hombre Editores and Universidad de los Andes, 1998), *Crítica de la Razón Indolente. Contra el desperdiciar de la experiencia* (Desclée de Brouwer, 2000), *La universidad en el siglo XXI. Para una reforma democrática y emancipadora de la universidad* (Miño y Dávila Editores, 2005), *Conocer desde el Sur: Para una cultura política emancipatoria* (Plural Editores, 2008), *Una epistemología del SUR* (Siglo XXI Editores, 2009), *Descolonizar el saber, reinventar el poder* (Trilce Editorial, 2010), *Para descolonizar el occidente. Más allá del pensamiento abismal* (CIDECI Unitierra, 2011), *Si Dios fuese un activista de los derechos humanos* (Trotta, 2014), *Construyendo*

las Epistemologías del Sur. Essential Anthology (CLACSO, 2018).

15 This network proposes a feminism arising from women who assume the intersections of diverse oppressions from a communal version of subjectivity. Cf. Millán, Mágina et al. *Más allá del feminismo: caminos para andar* (Mexico: Red de Feminismos Descoloniales, 2018).

16 In Carlos’ epistemological itinerary, this conviction was reaffirmed in the Congress on the actuality of the option for the poor, held at Notre Dame University in the year 2002, organized by Virgilio Elizondo and Gustavo Gutiérrez, where he was invited –together with other theologians of a new generation– to respond to the central question of the Congress: what is the actuality of the option for the poor?



EPISTEMIC SUBVERSION: key categories in the thought of Carlos Mendoza-Álvarez

2

What experiences of embodied caring resistance (*acuerpamiento*), communality and networks of life and thought do you recognize as a priority in your own personal and communitarian itinerary? How do you join these processes?

What new ways of life, community organizing, and spiritual path do you discover as a horizon of common life? With whom do you explore these new worlds that are emerging from today's survivors?

In Carlos' thought and work there is a constant invitation to rebel against anything that promotes the quality of being sacrificial. By denouncing the mechanisms of scapegoating and exclusion in systemic structures, he stays in dialogue with the Latin American proposal of Liberation Theology, refined with the perspective of mimetic theory proposed half a century ago by René Girard.

But together with his generation, Carlos seeks to take a fundamental turn to promote a subversion in how to *embody-caring-resistance*¹⁷ in the accompaniment of the excluded. He changes the *place of enunciation* from condescension to mutuality. In this way he also approaches the currents of decolonial and critical thought.

A) Vulnerable and wounded subjectivity

B) A Otherness

C) Intersubjectivity

D) Memory

E) Redemption

A) VULNERABLE AND WOUNDED SUBJECTIVITY

This category reiterates the understanding of the person between two situations:

on the one hand, constitutive and ontologically affected by otherness;

and, on the other, as a being that always exists as being-in-relation¹⁸.

This condition puts in crisis the idea of the modern Cartesian ego, of the enlightened dream, of the emancipation of the individual; rather, it leads us to its urgent deconstruction. As an expression of this phenomenon of being affected by the world, mimetic-sacrificial processes arise that then become systemic violence which radically affects subjectivity.

For this reason, naming vulnerability is a disruptive act. Even more so when it is done by the families of the disappeared searching in clandestine graves for their sons and daughters, or by migrants in forced or precarious mobility, or by the precarious lives of disabled bodies. Then vulnerability takes on new dimensions and perspectives, with ethical, political, and spiritual demands.

This subjectivity is historically harmed and politically wounded: there are not only structures, but there are processes, there are systems of exclusion, which have to do with gender (heteronormative patriarchy), white supremacy (racism, a modern invention), and the-other-bodies (which are not useful to the production system, not even used as goods or services for consumption as they were tragically before; bodies dumped by globalized economies)¹⁹.

Mimetic theory²⁰, as an innovative anthropological tool, tells us that there is a sacrificial logic, a logic of mimetic desire that explains why every culture exists based on a process of exclusion of the weakest. For this reason, the subjectivity that is constitutively vulnerable because it is open to otherness, now becomes “harmed and deeply wounded”, that is to say, a subjectivity that has been sacrificed for the sake of the power of a group of people, of a supposed group peace that in reality is false. It will be there, in the violation and damage of subjectivity, where we find the causes to understand violence and are able to overcome it.

A paradox then emerges in Carlos’ thought: subjectivity is cornered in processes of exclusion and violence, but therein arises a *potentia*²¹ of outrage and hope. It is what ancient wisdoms call “the *potentia* of the poor.” A creative agency to resist and re-exist in new ways beyond the hegemonic promises. It is the *potentia* that emerges from where there seems to be only death. A life that emerges as a “cry that rises to heaven,” like the blood of Abel, and that finds an echo in God. Therefore, there is a fruitful dialogue that emerges from the open wounds to find the path of redemption possible amid violence.

Therefore, Carlos goes on to analyze the structures and hegemonic violence that produce these modes of exclusion. In his proposal, following Afro-descendant feminist theologies in the United States, he incorporates the need to speak in a more complex way of systemic victims in terms of intersectionality; where to speak of violence is to speak of an issue that connects diverse exclusions such as gender, race, social class, disability, and others.



Following this intuition, Carlos goes even further: a violated subjectivity is not defeated but has a *potentia*²² that allows it to “turn the world upside down” and begin to build another type of relationship in a moment of overcoming the fatality of sacrificial violence.

This is how Carlos has been shaping the idea that subjectivity and intersubjectivity are the capacity to build *communion* when vulnerability is shared, when wounds are shared, but also resistance, outrage, struggles for life; in that sense it is an agonizing struggle for life²³

This category of vulnerability, then, leads Carlos to propose a fundamental or philosophical theology relevant to the late modern world and open to dialogue with the systemic victims who are outraged (*digna rabia*), who resist, and re-exist. It is a theology that opens windows where there are walls, that creates categories that help to move beyond the groups of confrontation, beyond the exclusionary practices of modern peoples and the criminal mafias that build division.



B) Otherness

Following Emmanuel Levinas and modern Jewish thought (M. Buber, H. Cohen, F. Rosenzweig, W. Benjamin and J. Butler), Carlos Mendoza-Álvarez proposes understanding alterity as an ethical-Political-spiritual challenge that manifests itself as the ability to build mutual recognition as *acuerpamiento*²⁴.

In this sense

it is a negative alterity on the one hand because it can be aggression, but it can also be a positive alterity that calls us, that embraces us, that inspires us, that sustains us.

Taken in theological terms, the vulnerable Other that is capable to be affected by our cries and pains is then also understood as divine vulnerability from the perspective of superabundant love, which means an encouragement to the deconstruction of the idea of the omnipotent God. Herein lies, in Carlos' words, the heart of the Hebrew and Christian revelation: God as that radical *potentia*²⁵ that allows itself to be impacted and gives itself as an overabundance of love.

"The alterity of other knowledges, of other ways of knowing, of other spiritualities, is like what gives us air, space, and time in another way; in the key of an ecology of knowledges, as Boaventura de Sousa puts it, in the key of mutual recognition, in the key of mutuality."



C) Intersubjectivity

How do we embody?
- nos acuerpamos²⁶ -

From the Hegelian thought that deals with the dialectic of mutual recognition in history, Carlos questions the theological possibility of such recognition: precisely where life is denied, such as in clandestine graves, the execution of hate crimes, forced migration, how the community of life lived by the victims emerges there.



This is the *potentia*²⁷ of the poor: the strength that emerges from what is apparently defeated. And this is a strength of *acuerpamos*²⁸. It also entails a radical critique of the hegemonic system; a way of rethinking ourselves from another point of view, not from a merely rationalist (Descartes) or emancipatory (Kant) account, but from the wounds that heal (Second Isaiah).

"When we are weak, then we are strong" (2 Cor. 12,9b-10).

In Carlos' theological proposal we find the powerful affirmation that the *acuerpamiento* of those who seem to be weak, insignificant, or discarded becomes the *potentia*²⁹ of life for *all*. It is there where redemption insurges as messianic temporality. The wounded subjectivity thus becomes a theological place by the force of the divine *Ruah* that passes through these wounds communicating life

D) Memory

Memory not only as an act of bringing a past to the present, but as a political act linked to truth and restorative justice³⁰ for the victims and their survivors.

As a result of the manipulations and abuses to which memory is subjected, either by ideologies that impose forgetting, or by forced commemorations that impose remembrance, Paul Ricoeur (*Memoria, historia y olvido*, Trotta, 2003) postulates a politics of just memory



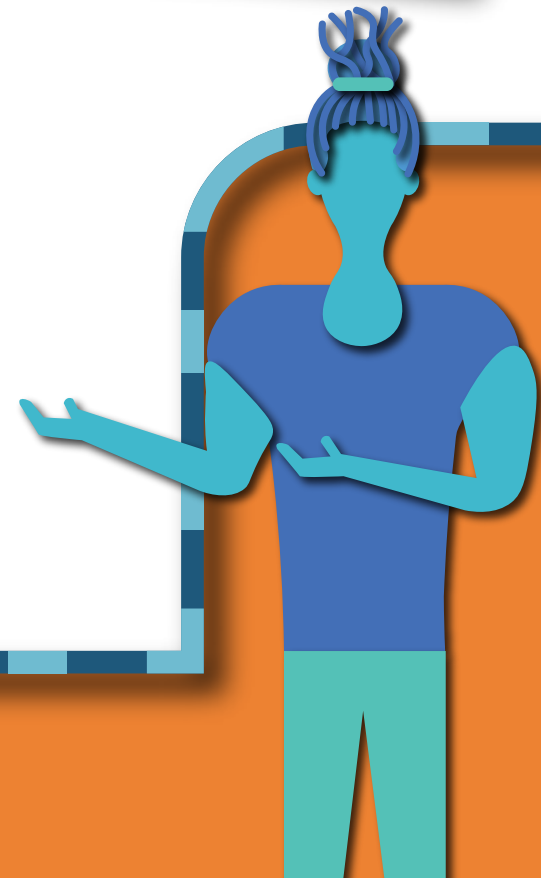
The category of memory is part of the phenomenological reconstruction of subjectivity. The reconstitution of a vulnerable and wounded subjectivity is impossible without memory. A memory that leads to the reconstruction of a history in pieces; a traumatized history, of total exposure, vulnerability and that can mean the annihilation of the person. Those who do not manage to somehow transform this experience of trauma, perhaps see suicide as the only escape route. But when vulnerability is assumed in this other perspective, where the presence of *others* helps us to tell what happened and to let go of resentment, to create new ways of being, then it turns into a *potentia*³¹ of life that not even death can silence.

E) Redemption

Following the philosopher Franz Rosenzweig³², Carlos approaches redemption from a contemporary philosophical and political context. He understands this category within a "contracting temporality," as St. Paul says. And this messianic time is already redemptive, since it is experienced by the people who shine justice and forgiveness, those who live Life as a gift and share their lives as a gift. We can thus understand that the way out of the spiral of violence and mimetic rivalry occurs through "contractions" experienced by those people who we acknowledge on the side of justice across time in history: by giving birth to another way of existing, they embody in their bodies the birth of "another possible world":

"Redemption is possible here and now only thanks to those who give their lives in the distinct logic of self-giving, of gratitude: not of violent reciprocity, but in the messianic gesture of self-giving. These are people who have succeeded in breaking down the wall of hatred in their own body (cf. Ef. 2,14)".

"Redemption is God giving Godself in superabundance, the divine Sophia, the divine Ruah, the Abba of Jesus - however we want to name this relationship of loving communion - the unfathomable source of being and of being against death³³".



NOTES

17 Carlos uses the word in Spanish *Acuerparnos*. It is about embodied caring resistance, embodied solidarity. It is about how we embody our efforts to have each other's backs. *Acuerparnos* is about embodying with our whole bodies how we backed up one another when coming together as a social body, a social body that collectively does not deny its own wounds and deepest memories but that is capable to heal the world with them.

18 A disciple of French phenomenology and mimetic theory, Carlos brings to the conversation authors such as Emmanuel Levinas, Paul Ricoeur, René Girard or Jean-Luc Nancy, who help us to interpret that this is a constitutive vulnerability. That is to say, that we humans are beings who lack something, we are incomplete, and therefore open to a relationship of transcendence in immanence.

19 Mendoza-Álvarez, Carlos. Conversation with Juan Jesús Vázquez, June 4th, 2021. All these subjectivities have a face and a body. The violated subjectivity is the one that Queer/Cuir Theory or Decolonial Theology tries to put in first place as the source of its reflection. For more on this, see: Althaus-Reid, Marcella, *Teología indecente: perversiones Teológicas en sexo, género y política* (2000), *El Queer Dios* (2003), Carlos Fonseca Hernández and María Luisa Quintero Soto *La Teoría Queer: The de-construction of peripheral sexualities* (UAEM, 2009), Méndez Montoya, Ángel *Trans-corporalidades en resistencia y resiliencia: hacia una "cuirización" decolonial decolonial de la dicotomía utopía/distopía en tiempos de pandemia* (Revista Iberoamericana de Teología, UIA, 2021), Metropolitan Community Church (<https://www.mccchurch.org/>), Francesca Gargallo, *A propósito de lo queer en América latina. ¿Existe, se expresa de algún modo el pensamiento queer en América latina?* (Revista Blanco Móvil, pp. 94-98. 2009), André Musskopf, *Teologías Queer: Becoming the Queer Body of Christ* (Concilium, 2019), Rubem Alves, *A Theology of Human Hope* (Corpus Books, Washington and Cleveland, 1969), etc

20 Developed by René Girard in works such as *El chivo expiatorio* (Anagrama, 1986), *Veo a Satán caer como el relámpago* (Anagrama, 2006), *La violencia y lo sagrado*

(Anagrama, 2005), *Geometrías del deseo* (Sexto piso, 2011), among others. The centrality of the systemic victims constitutes the core of this proposal. It strongly denounces the logic of sacrificial mechanisms in the existing structures of domination and exploitation; and, at the same time, it recognizes the subversive power that comes through creative and provocative rebellions of systemic victims, who meet and conspire inspired by the spirit of outrage.

21 See footnote 9

22 See footnote 9

23 Paul Ricoeur (*Alive until death*, FCE, 2008) struggles with the hope of survival, while he finds himself in the intellectual and spiritual impossibility of accepting some naive version of another world in the afterlife that is a mere double or copy of this finite world. That is why it is necessary to mourn every image, every representation in order to speak of resurrection. In 1996, at the age of 83, Paul Ricoeur asked himself: "What can I say about my death? How can I 'mourn the desire to exist after death'?" This long reflection on dying, on the dying and their relationship with death, and on the afterlife (resurrection), passes through two mediations: texts by survivors of the camps (Semprun, Levi) and a confrontation with the book of the great exegete Xavier Leon-Dufour dedicated to resurrection."

24 See footnote 17

25 See footnote 9. The divine 'potentia' is revealed through the 'potentia' of the poor.

26 See footnote 17

27 See footnote 9

28 See footnote 17

29 See footnote 9. The 'potentia' of Life is revealed through the 'potentia' of those who shine creative agency to resist and re-exist in ways that are beyond the hegemonic promises.

30 As a result of the manipulations and abuses to which memory is subjected, either by ideologies that impose forgetting, or by forced commemorations that impose remembrance, Paul Ricoeur (*Memoria, historia y olvido*, Trotta, 2003) postulates a politics of just memory. He takes up the problematic of historical narration, focusing on the representation of the past and thus dealing with two aspects that had been omitted: memory and forgetting. The phenomenology of memory, the epistemology of history and the hermeneutics of the historical condition are the

three methods chosen to address these issues. Ricoeur approaches the question of the representation of the past with a concern for forgiveness, an issue that somehow conditions the constitution of memory and history and marks forgetting.

31 See footnote 9

32 In his major work, *The Star of Redemption* (1921), Rosenzweig analyzes how the uniqueness of each human being, the reality of the world, and the transcendence of God challenge the idea of totality, showing how these three singularities find meaning, one in relation to the other. Creation unites the world to God, revelation allows human beings to be guided by the divine word, and redemption gives them the task of saving the world, essentially through love.

"The idea of redemption in Rosenzweig's book *Lösung* has a historical-political charge, but I would also say that at its core it is theological, which is precisely where the enigma of intersubjectivity is resolved," Carlos points out. We can situate Franz Rosenzweig as a disciple of Hermann Cohen, the predecessor of Emmanuel Levinas. Carlos values his thought insofar as it helps to understand history from the critique of modernity from the rational logic that comes from Jerusalem.

33 Carlos conceives himself as a "son" of Emmanuel Levinas, whose lectures he followed in Fribourg and Paris, while the ontology of his thought is built thinking about "the being that ages and dies". To understand in greater depth the thought of this Jewish author, we recommend works such as: *De la existencia al Existente* (Arena: 2006), *Dios, la muerte y el tiempo* (Cátedra: 1994), *El tiempo y el otro* (Paidós: 1993) and *Totalidad e infinito: ensayo sobre la exterioridad* (Sígueme: 1997).



EMBODYING EPISTEMIC SUBVERSION: accompaniments, spiritualities and practices.

What images, names, symbols and rituals do you recognize in your experience as representations of accompaniment towards a full life that connect you to the divine Sophia

3

How do you live spirituality in the midst of violence? What signs of messianic anticipation and time of grace of the God of Life do you recognize in the fractures of violent history? How would you describe the radical hope that emerges as diverse spiritualities for these apocalyptic times?

As our reading of Carlos' work develops, we might arrive at a key question:

Can we situate his theological proposal within the tradition of liberation theology in Latin America or some other current such as mimetic theory or decolonial thought?

How is "the preferential option for the poor" actualized in his theological proposal?

Underline that in mid-twentieth century, theologies were colonized by patriarchal, clerical, and homophobic forms of leadership and empowerment, coupled with the control and substitution of collective agency via the representation of those who "have no voice."

Carlos' theological proposal is inscribed within this critique: the change of the place of enunciation from a much more horizontal and diverse perspective, assuming the recognition of one's own contradictions, one's own wounds and one's own vulnerability, that is to say, one's own subjectivity as a place of theological enunciation.

Thus, the "condescending" logic, from the top down, is turned upside down, and theology is done from solidarity, empathy, and mutual accompaniment.

At this point in his thinking, we encounter the "Decolonial turn," which emphasizes that it is not only systemic violence that is important to point out, address, and understand, but the resistances and re-existences that victims create to heal a wounded world

In other words, the theological vision proposed by Carlos understands that systemic victims generate, in a creative and provocative way, a certain conspiracy of dignity and hope where we can trace the presence of the divine Ruah. Outrage then becomes a political and spiritual force that gives rise to a different way of living:

Resistances refer to bodies and territories, including gender and political dimensions, so they are epistemic and spiritual resistances. And at the bottom of these diverse forms of resistance to global violence, there is a potentia of life and hope. Not of power in the hegemonic sense as the capacity to control and crush the other; **but a *potentia*³⁴ that reveals itself as the wisdom of the impoverished who have a voice, a heart of their own, a rebelliousness.**³⁵



By assuming the wound as that theological, ethical, and political place, and by being willing to share vulnerability and conspire from vulnerability in mutuality (“holy” mutuality), we embody this epistemic subversion in our epistemic, political, and spiritual practices.



Subjectivities that are vulnerable and vulnerated, but in resistance, in resilience, in re-existence, with eschatological imagination. It is there where the world can be recreated in many ways. In this way, Carlos invites us to enunciate our own spaces-bodies-territories from where we dialogue with *others*, and from which it is worthwhile to weave a collaborative theological reflection, because it is relevant for those who are resisting on the borders of life and death.

CONTEXTS OF RESISTANCE

Thus, the "condescending" logic, from the top down, is turned upside down, and theology is done from solidarity, empathy, and mutual accompaniment.

Cleusa Caldeira ³⁶ is currently developing her theological thought as *theoquilombismo* from an epistemology proper to Afro-Brazilian *Négritude*. Maddie Jarret, a doctoral student in theology at *Boston College*, begins her research on the theology of disability by proposing as a main criterion the messianic temporality that emerges from the disabled body of the Crucified-Who-Awoke, thus deepening a fundamental category developed by Carlos in his trilogy on the tradition currently underway.

A research group in Germany, in coordination with Professor Martin Kirchner at the University of Eichstätt, is working on a performative theology for Europe, in dialogue with diverse voices from other contexts, which is why they invited Carlos as an interlocutor from the epistemic South. One of the provocations of the dialogue problematizes the issue of "European identity." And, from the theology that Carlos has proposed, it considers how to think Europe:

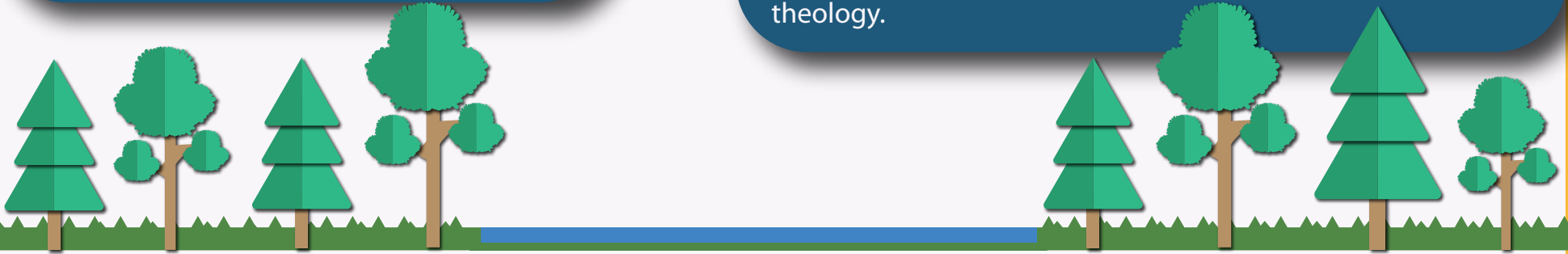


"Thinking Europe from the point of view of white supremacy? Or what does it mean to think Europe from its suburban neighborhoods inhabited by African, Middle Eastern and Central European migrants? Are we talking about Europe from above or from below? From where do we want to enunciate what Europe is? And in epistemological terms, do we propose categories of thought from the Kantian Enlightenment, from the performativity of the Frankfurt School or from the social movements of migrants that 'invade' Europe? These are provocations that have generated some extraordinary conversations. "extraordinarias."



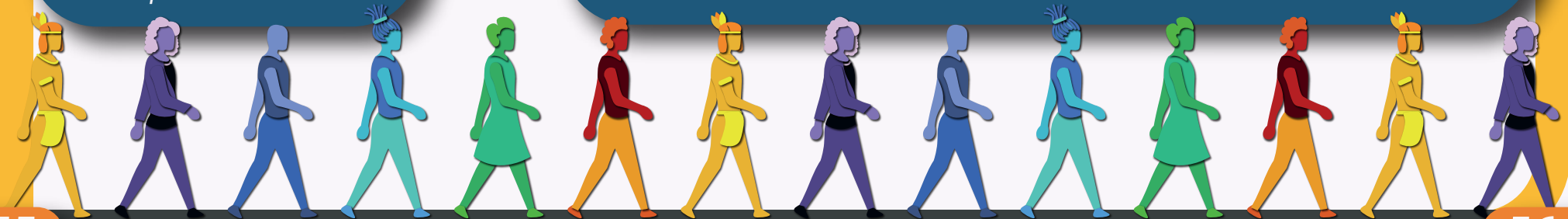
A major challenge for decolonial theologies, in times of systemic and global violence, are social movements in resistance defending their space-territory-body.

in Lake Texcoco located in the Valley of Mexico, the people of Atenco are defending the lake not only as a habitat in the modern sense, but as a place of their ancestors and as a sister creature: the water and the fish that populate it, the birds and amphibians, the hills and forests, with an ancestral cosmivision and cosmo-life-experience. Their resistance is paradigmatic for understanding the scope of a decolonial theology.



Another significant experience of the implications of the theological proposal developed by Carlos brings together people from different latitudes and experiences of resistance. It is *Mutual Spiritual and Theological Accompaniment*.

A proposal of mutuality in vulnerability and resistance, which began seven years ago in Puerto Rico, in the context of the annual congress of the Catholic Theological Society of America. From the concerns for a meaningful theology for people and communities close to vulnerable lives in search of spirituality, this space represents an exchange of “knowledges” that emerge from the intersection between social commitment and the spirituality of those who participate. Working as activists or as religious companions with migrants, women, indigenous movements, the LGBTQI+ community, etc. we seek to share knowledges, resilience and spirituality that “empower” us from shared vulnerability and resistance.

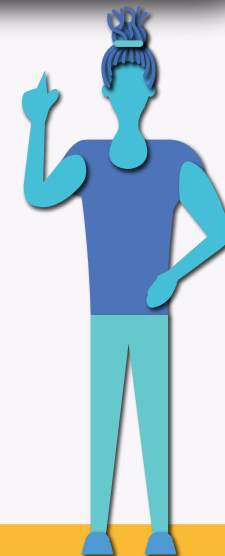


The theology that Carlos has been weaving over the course of 30 years, as a weft with various warps of thought, brings together the French phenomenology of subjectivity and the mimetic theory of sacrificial violence, with liberation theology and decolonial thought.



The possibilities remain open to weave other experiences and knowledges from one's own vulnerabilities and resistances, as a creative and collaborative reception of a particular work open to the plurality of subjectivities in times of global systemic violence and resistances creating new worlds.

The messianic and kairological temporality has been emerging as the resulting fabric of all his work. In the end, it is about living, thinking, and acting vulnerable and vulnerated subjectivity in resistance as a theological place of redemption where the power of the divine Ruah recreates the broken history of humanity from the wounds of systemic victims and their survivors who re-exist.



NOTES

34 As explained in note 9 'potentia' cannot be measured by comparison with any type of power. The measure of any kind of power is by comparison with hegemonic power since any power is trying to defeat hegemonic power. On the contrary, 'potentia' dismantles power, removes power, and by doing so, liberates Life, and unties Life.

35 Interview with Juan Jesús Vázquez.

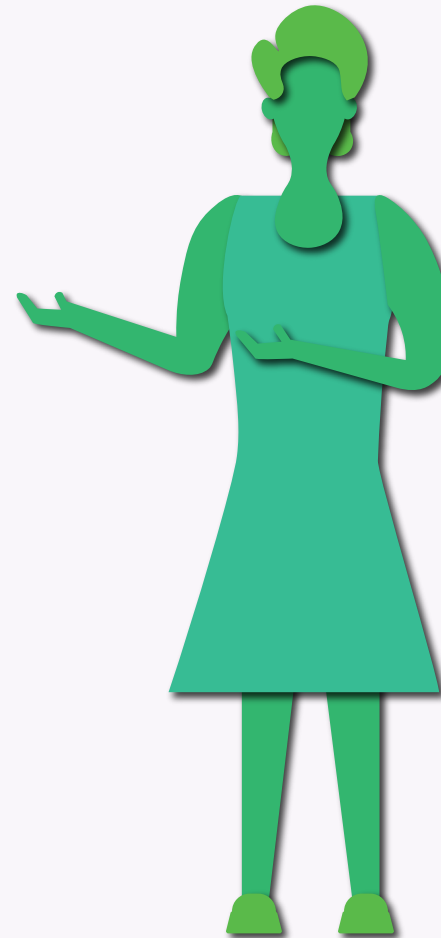
36 Caldeira seeks to think Black theology in a decolonial perspective and from the keys of mimetic theory; that is, leaving behind the idea of a resentful victim who has impulses of vengeance and hatred, to give way to a horizon of reconciliation with justice and truth. Because, as Cleusa rightly affirms, it is a theology that empowers her. It is a theological perspective that addresses those who have been systemic victims, whose roots have been made invisible: *"Now you can speak. Your time has come, this is your moment."*



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