

Body, scar, memory and identity: theological reflections from the other side

Abstract

This text is set out from the autobiographical narratives of the author that from the view of the cultural studies and the meeting with the Bible, invites us to read our body from the unconventional categories, challenging us to make theology from the other side. The interpretation of the Bible from women and blackness, on the other hand, is related to the way the author understands her life story, that is why methodologically she starts with a biblical text that has to do with the proposed categories, immediately she goes from the story to life and then to an analytical reflection of the chosen category to finally present a theological illumination of that situation. It is not an exegesis in the strict sense of the word, the text is just a pretext to allow us to read life from the other side, that is, from the margins of officially.

Keywords: body, scar, memory, identity

Volume 6 Issue 1 - 2024

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Received: February 06, 2024 | **Published:** February 23, 2024

Introduction

I am a woman,

I am Afro-American,

I am a black Colombian woman,

I am much more than beauty, much more than a stereotyped body,

I wear marks on my body, symbols of struggle, resistance and conquest.

The postmodern discourses have been characterized by their openness to diversity, plurality, interculturality and intertextuality, putting in checks the static and univocal paradigms of modernity. It opens up to other discursivities that are constructed from the margins. In this way, the meta-stories lose validity and give way to the micro-stories and little by little the differences are finding a place to be from their space and symbolic.

When speaking of difference I understand that human knowledge is constituted from multiple and unfinished experiences, so my intentionality is not to exhaust and / or establish a normative rhetoric for all women. I assume this partiality from the reality of my being a black woman, doing the opposite to my way of seeing would be dishonest and more in the reality in which I am today as a middle class academic, therefore, I do not speak for all poor women and Black, I speak more from the environment in which I build knowledge and this is, from my own body. In that sense, I take a step beyond what I have done in recent decades, which is the inclusion of life stories as an approach that has helped me in the understanding of how the identity of the black subject is constructed, and in this occasion, I take as my guide thread my own autobiographical narrative¹ as a possibility of access to knowledge.¹ In particular, I assume a critical stance towards Eurocentrism, risking including unconventional categories when exposing my theological approach.

Autobiographical narratives- the stories we tell about ourselves- do not simply represent the self. Nor do they fully express it ... if autobiographical narrations constitute the self,² these narratives are socially structured.²

This testimonial story can be analyzed from the geopolitical

category of knowledge coined by Mignolo³ according to which, it is decolonized intellectually and epistemically in a double dimension: on the one hand, highlighting the existing correlation between the geo-cultural place and the mediatized theoretical production by the power.^{3,4} On the other, incorporating the knowledge of the marginalized in the spaces of production and reproduction of knowledge.

This epistemological turn allows African-American testimonial narratives⁴ to be "recounted" from other contexts, valuing and recognizing this as a process of knowledge reconstruction, thus questioning institutionalized Eurocentrism.⁵

The interpretation of the Bible from women and blackness, on the other hand, is related to the way I understand my life story, that is why methodologically I start with a biblical text that has to do with the proposed categories, immediately I go from the story to life and then to an analytical reflection of the chosen category to finally present a theological illumination of that situation. It is not an exegesis in the strict sense of the word, the text is just a pretext to allow us to read life from the other side,⁵ that is, from the margins of officially.⁶

Instead of beauty, scar

Then, instead of perfume, a stink; instead of belt, a rope, instead of hair elaborately dressed, a shaven scalp, instead of gorgeous clothes, sacking round the waist, and brand marks instead of beauty (Is 3,24).⁶

Talking about black and feminist theology means talking about my own experience. From the search for my roots and the valorization of the traditions of my people. I was born in Cali-Colombia and there I lived until I was seven years old, after that time we went to live for four years in the department of Chocó, the great Colombian palenque. I am from a traditional family, Catholic and native, formed by a mestizo mother and a black father. In Chocó I discovered that Christianity, the one that I knew until then, was different from cultural practices of African heritages. There I lived celebrations where the typical songs of the region such as: the arrullos, chigualos and alabaos,⁷ were integrated into the religious celebrations.

³Mignolo, *Los estudios culturales* 401-415.

⁴García-Huidobro, *La narrativa como método*, 155-178.

⁵Villalobos, *Cuerpos adyectos*.

⁶For the English version: Wansbrough, H. (Ed.). (1985). *The new Jerusalem bible*. Doubleday Religion.

⁷The arrullos and alabaos are funerary songs of farewell to the deceased adult and the chigualo or guali is the ceremony of wakefulness of a child under seven years.

¹Cortes, *la autobiografía como narrativa*, 267-278

²Zusman, *Autobiographical occasions*, 5

The return to Cali had a primary goal: my mother had to take me for a surgery because of congenital birth problems. I had to live until I was 5 years old with a heavy cast, after this, I had to learn to walk with orthopedic devices since my knees had no mobility and my hips had suffered dislocation in the delivery. From this time I remember my failed attempts to run, the bullying⁸ or “matoneo” that I received on the street, children gave me different nicknames. Also come to my memory statements like these: “poor girl, what kind of karma is she paying?”, “It must be a punishment from God”, “she is a spawn of the devil” “black child scares the virgin”, etc. That’s how I grew up with the idea of a bad and punishing God. And consequently I always wondered what was I paying?

In short, the artisan process of recovery of my body was hard, I spent internally in a hospital for about a year and there I underwent four surgeries of hips and knees, to then stay for a year in a wheelchair, crutches and attending physiotherapies.

During the time of hospitalization, a nurse gave me an illustrated Bible, after an episode of attempted suicide, because I wanted to throw myself from the fifth floor and end once and for all with my suffering. She introduced me to a nearby God who was with me even now and who would not allow anything bad to happen to me. Despite my conviction that God had abandoned me. However, that Bible was my waiting companion for a Sunday visit that often did not arrive because my family did not have money to pay for the tickets.

This nurse presenting the Bible also made me her assistant, she showed me different situations that some children went through in the hospital, I had to see children burned, with hydrocephalus, with various deformations or in different states of illness and suffering. In those years of recovery, besides feeling discriminated against by other children of my age who saw in me an extraterrestrial, I felt the cruel weight of a society that discriminated as much by your physical deficiencies as by the color of your skin. I experienced the experience of racism always and especially within my maternal family that did not admit the two black daughters that my mother gave birth.

I remember the day of the marriage of one of my sisters, at that time I walked with crutches, the priest who presided over the Eucharist scolded me, told me irreverent and disrespectful, because I did not get on my knees, he also scolded my mother. My eyes filled with tears and sobs, at that moment I showed him the crutches and told him that it was not disrespect but because he could not. This experience was traumatic for me and from that moment I yearned for my employer’s holidays. As incredible as it may seem during my stay in the Chocó I have no memories of bullying, I danced with my limitations and everything. That contrast between the town and the city marked me deeply.

That irreverence and disrespect of which the priest spoke became my flag and somehow I understood that I was on the “other side”, that I did not fit in that rite, that I could never fully participate in a Eucharist because of my physical limitations. The words of the priest certainly opened a door to the insulting language against my body that did not fit within “normality” and thus established the social place to which one is confined when one has a physical problem: the place of non-being, of the disrespect, irreverence and transgression. Since then the theological question that follows me to this day is: Will it be possible to be black and disabled at the same time Christian?⁹ That is to say, is it possible to recover my African identity and self-esteem as a physically handicapped woman within catholic Christianity?

⁸Bullying or matoneo in Colombia consists of any form of mistreatment or harassment in the school stage, but it can be extended in a general way to the level of interpersonal and specifically labor relations.

⁹My first written work was called “blackening theology and the church”.

The encounter with my father’s family and especially with the situation of poverty that the black people live marked me deeply and influenced my theological and spiritual searches. And they are just reflections that start from the heart of my experiences that I want to share with you. For certainly black and feminist theology has as its starting point the experience of women. Experiences that are far from being accepted by the traditional theological canon, perhaps because of the emotional that they usually are.

I remember that this was the constant problem that my PhD tutor saw in my research, he told me that I wrote as black and that the academy was white and that I should write with reason and not with my heart. Maybe in a moment I had to take on that logic to be able to get a degree, but now and on the occasion of the invitation to participate in this workshop, I dare to take up issues that I have already elaborated and others that are still pending, such as being able to do theology from these Marked, scarred, deformed and stigmatized bodies. With this intuition I bring up categories that evoke my past and that impel my present to make more integrating theologies of life in its diversity. So the narrative or life story is the budget from where I place myself when reading the Bible.

The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the way in which human beings experience the world. From this general idea derives the thesis that education is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social histories; Both teachers and students are storytellers and also characters in each other’s stories and their own (...) (that’s why)⁷ we understand that narrative is both the phenomenon being investigated and the research method.¹⁰

I am aware of the effort made, in recent decades, by social science scholars to integrate narratives into the production of knowledge¹¹ so what I propose is not new, perhaps the novelty is given by the fact that we take a step further, from a simple conceptualization, validation and use of these forms of acquiring knowledge, by including my self-biographical testimony.⁸ However, I do not intend to fall into a simple self-referencing of what I am, I simply expose myself by speaking from my scarred and stereotyped body as a builder of relationships and knowledge. As Bruner warns,⁹ “narration is a way of thinking and expressing the world view of a culture.”¹²

Who knows, this experience may help us to think about unconventional theological categories, so: instead of a rope belt; instead of aromatic perfume rottenness (stink): instead of long hair baldness; instead of fine clothes the rags; instead of rigidity the dance; instead of beauty ... instead of beauty, scar!

Instead of belt, rope: who is really the disabled?

Jonathan son of Saul had a son who was lame in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she hurried to leave, he fell and became disabled. His name was Mephibosheth. (2 m 4,4)

I remember the first day when my mother and my sister took me to school, I was wearing my orthopedic devices from the waist to the ankles. The teachers immediately told them that this was not a school for special children and that they had to enroll in a school for the disabled. They fought before the competent authorities for keeping me in that school of “normal” children because they argued that my problem was not mental but physical. The text of 2 Sm 4,4 reminds me of a scene that I also lived at 5 years old, when one of my brothers slipped from a mountain of pilgrimage and I rolled with my heavy plaster to the floor, of course I continued to cripple my feet.

¹⁰Connelly - Clandinin, *Stories of experience*, 11, 12.

¹¹Sparkes - Devis, J. *Investigación narrativa*.

¹²Bruner, *La educación, puerta de la cultura*, 15.

So we see how all these representations¹³ addressed to people in situations of disability in many cases become barriers to the recognition, promotion and fulfillment of their rights.¹⁰ Facing an extreme otherness like the disability each one tries to understand it from its own cultural framework, integrating it to its own figure of the world.¹⁴ The family and the school are the first spaces in which these relationships are established and the first social encounters of participation, exclusion or marginalization are configured.¹¹

The family is the place where the first skills, learning, socialization experiences are developed, there the personality is molded, the personal image, the character and the particular way of facing everyday situations. The arrival of a new member brings illusions, hope and expectations. When this birth is accompanied by a defective, different, disabled body, these become guilt, fear and rejection. These are the first feelings that accompany his welcome, added in most cases to pessimistic forecasts by doctors. As Vain says:

The question of the denomination: deficient subjects, with deficiency, carriers of deficiencies, disabled with special educational needs, special students.¹² It appears as a debate on euphemisms to put a name to otherness.¹⁵

Accepting this unexpected arrival that challenges the conceptions of beauty, success, normality, without experience, without prior preparation is a challenge that many families assume by transforming themselves around the disability that accompanies their new member.

Living with disability imposes the challenge of shaping social functions according to the new and difficult demands placed on families. Parents are not just parents, they have to become medical experts, physical and emotional therapists, special educators and even specialized stretcher-bearers.

The disability alters the family organization,¹⁶ its functioning, the way of doing things, many times the support networks disappear and there is a tendency to avoid contact with other people, to isolate oneself.¹³ It is at this moment that we begin to speak not only about a body with special needs, but also families with special needs. It comes from fear, love or ignorance to attitudes and situations of overprotection and / or rejection, both equally harmful that limit the possibilities of participation and integral development of the person.

This denomination of the body as special, corresponds to an ideological apparatus that classifies and categorizes humans, to the point of invisibilizing diverse identities, under the mantle of a "normalizing" discourse of "being". The use of the term disabled to refer to everyone who has a distinctive and distinctive feature of their being, is a clear sign of symbolic violence and the exclusion of which we are objects those who do not fit the pattern of normality required. It is clear that this reality has been contemplated in government educational plans under the theme of inclusion, but is not this another way of exclusion and non-recognition of diverse alterities?

The biblical text that we have taken as a reference can be a clear example of that inclusion or not in the history of these people who, in most of the times, as well as being discriminated against, go invisible in the great meta-narrative, as is the case of the history of the Israelite monarchy.¹⁴ The text of 2 Sm 4,4 is located within the narrative of enthronement of David as king of Judah and within a context of holy war.¹⁷

This story records a period of famine so David consults Yahweh and he tells him that the fault lies with Saul and his house, then as revenge, David takes the two sons of Rizpa and the five of Michal, freeing Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan (2 Sm, 21, 7) because of the oath that Yahweh had made to Jonathan, and gave them to the Gibeonites who caused a dreadful death, were smashed on the rocks as an expiation for the sins of Saul.

The question that arises is whether it was necessary that the defenseless children and grandchildren of Saul deserved to die in this way and what the intentionality of the editor in ridding Mephibosheth's skin. In 2 Sm 9,1-12 we have the answer, the king protects him for the supposed love he once had for Jonathan. But why is this just the son that comes out well? To the naked eye it seemed that the great king had compassion for the state in which the child finds himself, because he gives back his goods and feels it at his table. But I think we should suspect this, Mephibosheth because of his physical condition does not constitute a real threat to the house of David and the other children and grandchildren of Saul, who do not have the same luck as 2 Sm 21 relates where his grandmother Rizpa¹⁸ he enters the scene claiming the bodies of his dead.¹⁵ And it is important to recover it since the grandmothers at first glance, seem to be the great absent of the patriarchal stories, but she is there doing the dirty work, she collects the bodies of her loved ones.

The approach to the history of Mephibosheth allows us to question the concept of disability that we usually use to address people. According to history, clearly the disability points towards those who cannot govern without going through the dynamics of revenge, war and death. For one who painlessly dashes infants on the rock for fear of losing his reign. This allows us to understand disability not as something that is strictly biological and individual, because this category goes beyond that, since it includes the social framework of relationships.¹⁹ In this case, it is important to question the concept of normality that demarcates and stigmatizes socially under the mantle of the inclusion of the needy.²⁰ Is not this another type of control and dominion over the body that does not fit socially within that model of normality?^{16,17}

Instead of aromatic perfume rot (stench)

"I sent a plague among you after the manner of Egypt;

I slew your young men by the sword along with your captured horses,

And I made the stench of your camp rise up in your nostrils;

Yet you have not returned to Me," declares the LORD. (Am 4,4)

For almost two decades I have been dedicated to teaching in prestigious faculties of theology in my country, where we have a constant presence of students from different countries of Africa and the Caribbean. Most of my colleagues complain that "Africans stink" and the most interesting thing is that they come to complain to me. On one occasion even one of them put his armpit on my nose to check that the whites if they smell good. This was in the context of the launch of a book and among doctors and administrators of a prestigious university where he worked at that time. I also hear constant complaints with reference to black students from the Colombian coast, regarding their academic performance, I have heard phrases like this: "It is rare to find an intelligent black, much less a black." Well, I want to dare to do theology from the stench and why not,¹⁸ from the rottenness of the innumerable dead of the Colombian Pacific that the war has taken.²¹

¹³Angulo, N. *Representaciones del docente frente a la inclusión*.

¹⁴Villoro, *El pensamiento moderno*, 6.

¹⁵Spes, M. *Educación especial: inclusión educativa*, 39

¹⁶Núñez, B. *Familia y discapacidad*.

¹⁷Müllner. *Books of Samuel*, 141.

¹⁸Exum, *Rizpa*, 264.

¹⁹Rosato et., *El papel de la ideología*, 90.

²⁰Rosato et, *Discapacidad e ideología*.

²¹Coalico. *Informe conflicto armado en Colombia*.

But why the stench?¹⁹ Because I want to take up Kusch's²² intuition by portraying the faces of Latin America from the stench as a category that goes against the common parameter of the aesthetic and that embraces the great majorities rejected and located in defined temporal spaces.

The scrupulous rejection of everything that embarrasses human beings, materialized in the bad smell of the streets, the shops full of ragged and drunk people; in short, it is the image that is contrary to the aesthetic paradigm of each historical moment;²⁰ which would mean that the nature opposed to the magnificence of the temples of modernity also stinks.²³

That rejection that is perceived in middle class intellectuals, who have clearly ascended from stratum,²⁴ in some way reflects the fear of a possible return to the stench that one day they left. It is the reflection of a city model where the aesthetic is linked to neatness, whiteness, radiance. In Colombia, the sociological stratification carried out in 1994 not only served to collect taxes, but also to designate social exclusion sites, hence the possibility of promotion places us in a privileged position.

With the above statement I do not mean that the poor and blacks are dirty, on the contrary I want to claim the smell as a category that will enable us to go beyond the established canons, because certainly, all humans expel stench. The oracle with which we open this item refers to the bad smell of the dead of a well-to-do urban elite that was established in the palace of Samaria in the 7th century BC, with luxury,²¹ riches resulting from the oppression of the weak and poor (Am 4.1).²⁵

In the retribution dynamics of this prophetic theology, well-off Israelites also receive punishment, just as Egypt received it because of its evil ruler, Pharaoh. I am not convinced that ends justify the means, or that to punish the heart of one or more men, all the people have to be put to the sword. The editor of the prophecy of Amos uses the military and violent metaphor to punish those who have turned away from God. It is a colonialist and retribution power in which only those who blindly obey the God of Israel are saved. Before this I ask myself: how long will we continue to legitimize a theology based on the death of those on the other side, of those who get out of the canon of normality and normativity? With this I do not pretend to be in favor of the exploitation of the weak, on the contrary, I wonder about the mechanisms used by patriarchy for the control and mastery of bodies: plague, sword, stench.

Instead of artificial hairstyle, baldness: from stiffness to movement

However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain. (Gal 4,8-11)

I still remember the festivities, where singing, drums, dancing, and body were an essential part of religious celebrations. I lived an inculturated Catholicism,²⁶ even though I did not know that expression.²² I also remember the rituals of mourning, especially in

my memory the image of women mourners with their songs of lament, children integrated with dances, the gentlemen around table playing cards, the ladies in the kitchen preparing the food. In the same scenario aromas of flowers, food, sweaty bodies were combined. I remember the smell of Chocó,^{23,24} the smell of earth mixed with sweat and drizzle typical of that humid tropical climate.²⁷

In the Colombian Pacific, the patron saint becomes the ancestor of the community, that is, a personification of someone who gives us unity and dignity. In Quibdó, for example, the patron saint is San "Pacho", that is, San Francisco; in Salahonda (Nariño) is the Lord of the Sea; in Itsmina is Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes; in Guapi (Cauca) is the Virgen del Carmen;²⁵ in Barbacoas (Nariño) is the Virgin of Atocha.²⁸

In the feasts of the saints it is customary to make a procession accompanied by Chirimías or drums, songs of arrullos and alabaos.²⁹ The lifting of the grave is done on the last day of the novena to dismiss the body and leave in peace to heaven:²⁶

Lift the grave

Of present body

The soul is dismissed

in life and in death.

My friends cry

Also my mom

Lift the grave

That the dead man is leaving.

Until today I accompany you

To these reczanderos

Lift the grave

That the soul is from heaven.³⁰

There is then a close relationship between life and death in the African worldview. It is a theological conception where there is no place for dualisms, death interacts with life, it is continuity and not an end in itself. That relationship is mediated by the mother as we see in this alabao, she cries death in community. In addition, these songs are sung by women, by the mourners, as did the ancestors of Israel before the destruction of Jerusalem in the book of Lamentations. This ritual of passage mediated by women also has the idea of recovering the harmony of the community, balancing the poles, life / death.

The Gualy or lullaby is sung and played when a child dies and represents joy. Annually in order to preserve the customs and traditions of the region located around the San Juan River in the Colombian Pacific, the alabaos of San Juan are performed.

Rorro, your godfather and your godmother who give you the blessing

that they throw it at you well that reaches your heart,

Cute child, beautiful child, child, where are you going,

boy,²⁷ if you go to heaven, you will not delay.³¹

²²Kusch, *América profunda*, 9.

²³Lara, *Aproximación al pensamiento existencial*, 80.

²⁴Congress of the Republic of Colombia. Law 142 of 1994 (July 11), article 102. This law gives the guidelines for socio-economic stratification in order to collect taxes according to purchasing power.

²⁵Verdi, *El lujo despreocupado*, 48-49.

²⁶Pérez, *La inculturación de la fe*, 307-323.

²⁷I take as reference in this item a work of mine on Marian spirituality and the Afro-American diaspora.

²⁸Sánchez, *Salvaguardia del patrimonio cultural*, 15.

²⁹Jaramillo, *Los alabaos, los arrullos y los chigualos*, 277-298.

³⁰Sánchez, *Salvaguardia del patrimonio cultural*, 17.

³¹Codhes, *Rituales mortuorios*, 64

The sounds are fundamental for the transition from the hereafter to the hereafter, hence the presence of drums in funerary rituals is necessary. The bore moves through the drum from one dimension to another. The women around the dead dance and sing heartfelt songs.

In the Marian religiosity, Afro communities find alternatives of solidarity relationship. In the patron saint festivities of the Virgin, community work, bonds of compadrazgo, feelings of solidarity nurture and strengthen the extended family networks that are woven with each member of the community, because each person feels indebted to others.

The pure virgin walks, the virgin goes to Bethlehem

In the middle of the road the Child asked what to drink

Do not ask for water, my life, do not ask for water, my good

That the waters are turbid of not being able to drink.

Oh blind, who sees nothing, how does he make me a mercy?

Give an orange to the Child to quench the thirst

How blind with such joy,²⁸ open your eyes and see!³²

She represents the women of the community who ask for water for their children, but due to the lack of conscience of the humans, the waters are contaminated. In the midst of this reality of poverty a blind man in similar conditions offers him an orange so that the child can drink. Then whoever receives the favor when recovering the sight is the blind man. In this way the lullaby manifests the role that Mary plays as a merciful mother who acts in favor of those who need it, of those who are also in solidarity, there is then a relationship of reciprocity. In this lullaby María vindicates the universal principles, also called elemental: land, as a migrant, water, justice, life, love, peace, etc.

Evoke joy, singing, dancing, in Afro communities may even sound paradoxical. For we have always considered these elements as vital in our resistance processes. However, the danger is to fall into a simple folklorism, we must return to these symbols as fundamental elements of our spirituality. The dance is highly spiritual in the world view of Afro girls. The dance puts us in tune with the original rhythm of the universe, as interpreted by our ancestral memory. In the African continent, we find dancing in celebrations such as funeral rites, rituals of war, parties, initiation rites for young people, marriage rites, gathering parties ... Dancing is a divine act and also a form of resistance to suffering. It is not danced alone, the dance is community, and it helps the group's integration. There is a sense of socialization in the act of dancing. There is a desire to give each gesture a meaning.

But dance is linked to one of the most important elements of afro identity and spirituality, it is the drum. This instrument collects millenarian echoes between the folds of the wind and the volatile bends of time. The drum and its interpreter are a symbiosis of trunk and nerve, of fluidity of movements and hardness of resistant material, of rhythm and counter-rhythm, of blows and counterattacks, which combine the living cares of the blood with the implicit rumor of the ancestral voices.

The dances also support us in our basic activities, contribute to represent, synthesize moments of work such as washing clothes, sweeping the house, lulling a baby, in the work of the field, fishing, hunting, fighting preparations, wars or procedures that they imitate animals. The dances are also distinguishable by the ethno-styles of African nations, in which the sound of the drum and the human

voices invite the body to move and place the community and people in relation.

Our body has a relevant importance, because movements are and are part of life. While the Westerners do the separation in a higher part and a lower one, the African-Americans in the ceremonies express themselves with the whole body. These, among other elements, characterize us as cultures of popular struggle and resistance.

The holidays are also the heart of the religious life of Israel, they recall important moments of the revelation of God in the life of the people. Each one refers us to the origin of the festival of Ancient Israel. A ritual origin governed both by the phases of the moon of the nomadic world, and by the agricultural activities of sowing and harvesting the sedentary Canaanite life that followed the natural rhythm of the seasons of the year. They were celebrations that celebrated life and by extension evoked the functions that all women have in this world with respect to human life and life of the same nature. Precisely because of this, they are related to fertility rituals as Maertens warns when studying the religions of the Ancient East regarding the periods of the moon.

Mythology²⁹ will explain this lunar rhythm by saying that, on the last day of the month, the moon-god is removed to his nuptial chamber to celebrate the hierogamy and to be born to a new life that will spread throughout the world during the following month.³³

The text of Galatians 4.8-11 referenced on page 13 is bringing to mind feasts of celebration of the life of the people, of an Israel that used the cycles of nature to express its gratitude to God for the fruits received. The problem is that the holidays implicitly bring back the memory of a time when Israel had not known the monotheism introduced by the patriarchs and, according to this centralizing model,³⁰ recalling the syncretic practices goes against the will of God.³⁴ But why does the rigidity of one cult precede the movement of the other? How long will that dualistic and exclusionary model continue to impose itself as the only one capable of saving souls?

Instead of fine clothes, rags

I am black but lovely,

O daughters of Jerusalem,

Like the tents of Kedar,

Like the curtains of Solomon.

"Do not stare at me because I am swarthy,

For the sun has burned me.

My mother's sons were angry with me;

They made me caretaker of the vineyards,

But I have not taken care of my own vineyard. (Song of song 1,5-6)

Once my body acquired the characteristics of "normality" expected, the next step was the self-acceptance of my scars and this process occurred just in the adolescence. This was not easy, I remember the trauma that caused me to wear a bathing suit. An image comes to my memory, in one of those neighborhood walks when, as usual, I sat on the edge of the pool without any courage to enter the water for fear of being rejected. With a boy we passed glances and his friends were envious. The moment arrived when I took courage and

³²Velasco, *las cantoras de la región norte*, 4.

³³Maertens, *Fiesta en honor de Yahvé*, 5.

³⁴Zorrilla, *La fiesta de liberación*.

took off the towel, then the expected thing happened, the boys made fun of me and the young man who was watching me. From there I never again took a bath in a walk. I assumed I did not show my body, even when I constantly understood that it was a body that aroused the lust of young people. Thus I felt in my own flesh what was inciting the body of a woman and more than that of “black woman”, a markedly stereotyped body.

The experience of my negative body until now needed to be recovered, but how can I claim my corporeality in the midst of a society that rejects and also mocks the difference? This is where the idea of returning to the female body as a theological category comes into play in order to recover the fullness of life and understand the relationship established between bodies and transcendence, the corporeal-spiritual feminine. This spirituality then implies rewriting as black in the middle of an academy that today remains white and racist. This theological turn moves us to get rid of the false dichotomies camouflaged between reason and feeling, between pleasure and the virtue of this patriarchal logic, where the divine, spiritual and superior was assigned to the masculine.

Before the appearance of the patriarchy the dichotomies were not present but the women were considered sacred, their bodies for housing life were guarded for being the place where the divinity manifested itself.³⁵ The pleasure that one day was sacred in some cultures of antiquity, became a reason for chastity, virtue and obedience.³¹

From the first centuries of Christianity, the Catholic Church accepted the Stoic idea about sexual pleasure and accepted it under the judgment of procreation. This position is reinforced by Gnosticism that insists on the goodness of the soul and the diabolic of the body. Clement of Alexandria (2nd century), states that “sexual desire and passion were sinful animals and at the same time birth and procreation were sacred”.³⁶ The idea of the sacred of marriage is introduced in the s. IV, being considered as permission granted between sin and virtue. Where procreation is the primary good of marriage, while sexual pleasure and desire were problematic.³²

As a consequence of this, the condemnation of sexual relations has been permanently behind all the moral teachings of the church on: marriage, contraception and abortion. What is paradoxical about this finding is that sexual crimes against women, girls and boys are not condemned so emphatically, officially by the Church, ethically or morally, nor are the perpetrators of these acts of violence explicitly condemned.

Faced with this reality we ask ourselves about the historical silence of the Church, although in recent days the pontiffs have expressed with some forcefulness their rejection of all forms of sexual violence, there is no explicit reference to femicides, even if they condemn and consider these acts violent as crimes against humanity as expressed at the summit meeting of judges in the Vatican against trafficking in persons and organized crime, on Friday, June 3, 2016:

These are crimes against humanity that must be recognized as such by all religious, political and social leaders, and embodied in national and international laws.³⁷ In the face of the scourge of these sexual crimes, what to say, about the evil caused against the bodies of so many girls and women abused, attacked, raped and murdered? Is it possible to make a theological discourse capable of curbing this situation? How to read the tradition in the light of respect for the sacredness of these bodies?³³

³⁵Stone, When God Was a Woman.

³⁶Clemente de Alejandría citado de Mejía, *La Iglesia católica en la sexualidad*, 56.

³⁷Oficina de prensa de la Santa Sede.

Violence towards women's bodies has worsened in recent times. This fact affects the growing dehumanization of people (individualization) and the growing social injustice in Latin America. Hence, throughout this article was present the critical analysis of the genealogy of violence proposing feminist theology as a tool of political cut that from the values of the gospel, promote the dignity of these sacred bodies that for centuries have been destroyed, fragmented and invisible.

It is necessary to talk about sexual violence, rape and femicide because they are crimes suffered by millions of women in the world, and because in situations of individual and collective struggles and conflicts, women are subject to aggression. And what scares the most of this reality is that the aggressors and rapists are men of the church, understanding this term in a broad sense. However, official theology does not deal with specific issues that involve the daily life, and even less those that affect the lives of women and girls. For this reason, the question is necessary because of the role that the church has historically had in the moral treatment of sexual crimes.

Understanding this phenomenon, in its very roots: social, political, anthropological, psychological ... it is important to be able to say something that is theoretically illuminating for the chaos that we are living in Colombia and in Latin America where these topics are a daily reason for news in the media. Social communication, but that does not pass from there, from a simple journalistic material, despite the progress in the national and international legal framework.

From my work as a black theologian and feminist, I have come to the understanding that our body should be stripped of guilt. Pleasure, corporality, relationality, the way we dress or our physical characteristics cannot be used as an excuse to violate our body.

I claim and claim the autonomy of our body, we should not be afraid to feel pleasure. As clearly the young woman does the Song of Songs who for taking care of the other vineyards, he did not know how to keep her. This delicious song speaks of the beauty of the body, of the delight of the enjoyment of the honey of the beloved. This poetry evokes female emancipation at a time when the feminine body was more stigmatized, as is the post-exilic period, because in that context the laws of purity and feminine impurity marked these bodies as sin and lust.³⁴

As well as that emancipated freedom of the Shulamite, has been my way of living my femininity and my corporeality, my body has become that place from which I can meet God and from which I can show to others that Divine Wisdom that It does not exclude or mistreat, it does not marginalize those of us who are at extremes, but it walks with us as it does with everyone. Recover the bodily, sexual, mind and soul pleasure and from there feel the beauty of which the text that we take as the background of this section speaks to us.

To finish the unfinished

So far I have exposed only fragments of stories that can help us think of other places and categories valid for theology. Such as the following:

Up to this point I have only presented fragments of narratives that can help us to think about other places and valid categories for doing theology, such as the following:

- i. The autobiographic narratives based on one's own life experience, as possibilities for the construction of knowledge, with this is challenging the Cartesian hegemonic knowledge built from the so-called scientific rationality, and opens to other forms of construction of thought from the peripheral knowledge.

- ii. The recognition of other cartographies that go beyond the canon of the aesthetic and the beautiful, proposing aesthetics that integrates the stench, fluids, the ugly, the “abnormal” of the denied corporeities.
- iii. The intersectionalities of race, gender, class and disability as possibilities of struggle, resistance and real and concrete political transformation. The mere evocation of these intersectionalities is not enough if there are no forceful political actions to put an end to these intersecting oppressions.
- iv. The recognition of the body and everyday life as fundamental tools for teaching and learning processes.
- v. The need for a prophetic denunciation of the patriarchal meta-narratives that invisibilize and fragment the bodies of women, girls and boys in the normative meta-narratives.
- vi. The need to resort to other symbolic-mythical, aesthetic tools that allow us to read narratives from the edges, from what is said, what is not said, beyond the so-called historical-critical methods that often prevent texts from having life.
- vii. The black and feminist hermeneutic mediation that helps to reread tradition from orality, the festive and celebratory as real resistances to the colonial domination of ancestral religions.
- viii. The vindication of the autonomy and power of our diverse bodies with the right to enjoy and enjoyment of our emancipated sexuality.

Conclusion

In short, behind this writing is the realization that the life of our communities is marked by exclusion cartography. This impels us to look at their space, that is, their stigmatized body. Considering the ambivalence and conflictivities of the globalizing processes and their tentacles of development and poverty. We denounce the use and distribution of the resources of privileged groups and we visualize the geographical contexts marked by exclusion.

Geography has a social value and a political value. Not only where we are but also how we are. The ambivalence of this geo-corporal and spatial territory has made possible the preservation of life in the midst of struggles and conquests. Assuming the theology from these categories that subvert and transgress the limits of the established, rather than impact, its first intention is that we can do the exercise of putting myself in the shoes of the other, of learning to walk from other realities, that is, from the other side!!!

Acknowledgments

This article is part of the State research project on the issue of biblical foundations for an outgoing theology.

Conflicts of interest

I declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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