



**DISENCHANTING THE THEOLOGY OF CHRISTIANITY:
THINKING GOD OTHERWISE AND ENDING THE MAGIC OF
GREEK WISDOM**

Desencantando a teologia do cristianismo: pensar Deus outramente e o fim da magia da sabedoria grega

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ABSTRACT: The research aims to reconstruct the expressive contribution of the philosophy of otherness to (re) thinking the status of Christian theology in Latin American lands, as well as the disenchantment of that kind of philosophy. First, it is about evoking the contribution of *the wisdom of Love* to think Christian theology otherwise in light of a broader background that re-establish the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Secondly, we intend to explain the impact of the Levinasian approach on the problem of God and its developments in our continent from a theological point of view. Without denying that theology has a discursive character, it is a matter of retaking what the Lithuanian-Frenchman philosopher evokes about the service to the love of the wisdom of love. And by way of conclusion, it is intended to propose some brief notes about the urgency of a poststructuralist turn of Latin American theology in function of the centrality of ethics and their respective languages in the manner of a *Canticle of the Canticles*.

KEYWORDS: Philosophy. Ethics. Alterity. Theology. Christianity.

RESUMO: A investigação visa reconstituir a expressiva contribuição da filosofia da alteridade para o (re)pensamento do estatuto da teologia cristã em terras latino-americanas, bem ao modo de um *desencantamento* da magia que a persegue. Primeiro, trata-se de evocar a contribuição da *sabedoria do amor* para pensar *outramente* a teologia (cristianismo) em função de uma questão de fundo mais ampla

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que sugere a necessidade da reposição da relação entre Judaísmo e Cristianismo. Em segundo lugar, pretende-se explicitar o impacto da abordagem levinasiana sobre o problema de Deus e seus respectivos desdobramentos do ponto de vista da teologia em nosso continente. Sem negar que a teologia tenha um caráter discursivo, trata-se de retomar, a partir da intriga Dizer/Dito, aquilo que o filósofo franco-lituano evoca a respeito da especificidade do Dito como *serviço ao amor da sabedoria do amor*. E à guisa de conclusão, almeja-se propor algumas breves notas a respeito da urgência de uma viragem pós-estruturalista da teologia latino-americana em função da centralidade da ética e de sua respectiva linguagem ao modo de um *Cântico dos cânticos*.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Filosofia. Ética. Alteridade. Teologia. Cristianismo.

Introduction

With a leaning intuition to address the problematic reception of the Levinasian thinking through the theology produced in Brazil, an initial emphasis should be made that the term *disenchantment* takes on a very specific connotation due to the positivity of *the wisdom of love to the service of love* (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 176), as formulated by Levinas. Through this path, one has access to the configuration of a *sui generis* metaphysics accompanied by a (de) essentialization of the thought that allows “to speak about God as someone uncontaminated by the Being against the theology that tends to approach God belonging to the sphere of knowing or of perceiving” (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 87).

Another essential consideration is the understanding of the very Levinasian expression of “the wisdom of the love” (Levinas, 2011, p. 175). This refers to the *wisdom* that springs from the ethical immediacy of the relationship with the word/commandment of the other, as authentic love towards the other. From a linguistic point of view, this *wisdom* consists of giving primacy to the “wonder of language, that is, to the language of ethics previous to the whole language as the metaphor, i.e. the transposition or changing effect” (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 55), in short, to “the telling about every form of Dicitum that is fixed in the language” (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 167). Underlying to the *metaphor as the Intertelling or Saying* of the other, the inheritance of the tradition from the Hebraism or from what could be called the Rabbinic-Talmudic Judaism impregnates the philosophy of the otherness. This Jewish perspective leads the philosopher to establish a counterpoint with *the love to the wisdom of the Greek Sofia* and the syn (tax) of this philosophy. The latter aims to think about human beings, the world and God behind the “twilight of the gods” or the thought of archaic Greece, as if these terms would give rise to a synthesis, articulated according to “the logic of the One and the rationality of the Theoretical Reason” (LEVINAS, 2009, p.76).

On the other hand, inspired by the thought of the Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig, paved by the *unicity in plurality* and woven around the image of the *Canticle of the Canticles* – it supposes a *We* (our-ness) in which everyone, according to “one’s uniqueness, be preserved from the abstract totality of the whole” (ROSENZWEIG, 2003, p. 357) – it witnesses the *disenchantment* that “the philosophy of otherness in Levinas aims to carry out in the milieu of *Greek wisdom*”. It is not just a matter of fulfilling it within the scope of anthropology (man) and of philosophy of the nature (cosmos), but of making it reverberate in the very reformulation of the problem of God, and that, more precisely, impacts the re-foundation of the Christian theology, around the intrigue of the Telling/Dictum (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 168). The philosopher asserts that from the heart of *the wisdom of love to the service of love* (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 176), the Dictum, that is, “philosophy must assume an eminently *grammatical* connotation, not only in order to voice out the *diachrony* of the unspeakable Telling, but also to establish with it a particular *synchrony* imminent from the Dictums speeding up to the former” (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 167).

On the one hand, this fascination of the Sayings/Dictum ensures, in the *Canticle*, the primacy of the ethical significance of the Face over the other significances. On the other hand, without due consideration to the Sayings, there would be a risk of compromising the eminently philosophical character of ethics and, therefore, the expression of ethical-philosophical theology itself. Consequently, there would be a possibility for the *wisdom of the love* bringing forth an antinomy. If, perhaps, the meaning of *Canticle of the Canticles* with the ethics-Sayings came to despise the other meaningfulness and the other *Song of the Songs*, then the love would become *unjust*. It would be unable to justify itself “in the face of the advent of the third, of another visible face of the neighbourly neighbour” (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 171). At the end, “the third one introduces a contradiction in the Saying whose meaning before the other, was, until then, in a singular way, in order to demand the Dictum, that is, the intelligibility of the system”. Therefore, “the significance of love necessarily means itself as *justice*” (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 171-172).

Attention should be drawn to the fact that, in the Latin American context, this *wisdom of love to the service of love*, and the disenchantment of the theology it supposes, has already found significant echoes in *liberation theology*. Just like *liberation philosophy* which was coined by the Argentine philosopher Enrique Dussel, *liberation theology* advocates a home-coming to the “ethics as the primary place to that of saying”, meaning that the word *God* needs to be justified based on the ethics of Sayings, or better, from the point of the Sayings, so that it lively sustains the collusion with the Dictum of the liberation to which it uses theology as the discourse (DUSSEL, 2005, p. 76).

Once the *semantic constellation* of Levinasian philosophy is explained, which highlights the reflection that follows, some fundamental attempts will be made clear to achieve the desired objective here. Firstly, it is a matter of presenting the basic questions regarding the tangential approach between Christianity and Judaism, and the urgency of incorporating the [other] rabbinic-Talmudic tradition in order to exercise a *Desacralization* of the theology that thinks God from the perspective of the primacy driven from the matrix of Greco-Roman thought. In the second and the third phase, it will be successively reawakened both the primordial impact and the extension to which the Levinasian thought finds reception by the Christian theology in the Brazilian soil, as well as the positivity of the remarkable *ethical transcendentalism* of the author that justifies the coveted *Disenchantment* of theology from the epistemological point of view. In the fourth and the fifth phase there is the nucleus of our proposition. It envisions a new status for the theology emerging from the titillation between *the Ethics as spiritual perspective beyond the Being* and the Trinitarian Revelation of the Christianity. As a consequence, it will be illustrated how this articulation unveil the character of *Otherness that Being* of the Revelation and the (*de*) *ontologization* of the Theology from an *Otherness Dictum*. And this, in turn, is configured (the intrigue) precisely in the midst of a Brazilian-Caribbean-Latin American Liberation Theology. Finally, it is intended to point out the urgency of a new accentuation of Liberation Theology from the *onto-hermeneutic-(theo)poetical* opening to the (*theo*)*prophetic* sharpening that not only inseminates Latin American theology, but also enlarges to all types of theology that are practiced in the heart of Christianity by the most diverse cultures within their respective contexts.

1 From written Revelation to the Commandment of Love

In the context of the first half of the previous century, the great Swiss theologian Von Balthasar insisted to promote, on the part of Christianity, a decisive (re)approximation with the Judaism. According to him, Judaism is an interlocutor that Christianity cannot neglect if it intends to survive in the West as the witness bearer of an *event*, as ongoing revelation, rather than of a religion as a fixed institution. In this sense, Christianity “owes to the interpellation that comes from Judaism” (VON BALTHASAR, 2004, p. 85), especially to its Rabbinic-Talmudic repertoire, from which proceeds the Judaic theological repositioning. This is because the Talmudic tradition maintains a strong proximity with the philosophical matters of ethics and of metaphysics that are of very great interest to today’s Christianity.

The urgency of this interface is notable, among other reasons, for a couple of structural features. First, it is for the sake of the emphasis on *the orality*

over *the textuality* of the Revelation. This is due to the fact that in the Talmudic Judaism “Revelation identifies itself mostly with *a Revealed Law* and less with *a Revealed Religion*” (LEVINAS, 1976, p. 381. Italicizing is our addition). Now, the emphasis of Judaism on the living Word allows us to ceaselessly interrupt *the temptation* of the (theological) thinking of self-surrendering to the merely hermeneutic character of the Revelation. From this perspective, it is worth remembering that, in the context of Judaism, the very *essence* of God is given by the essence of *the manifestation* of the Word-God, namely, by the *phenomenality* of an Only God in His ensured *unicity* by His Word as the all-time word, separation/approximation, and that, therefore, creates, reveals and redeems the world and the humanity (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 47). In these circumstances, it is only possible to “speak of God from a something-of-God as a Nothing-Nihil in its infinite ‘and’ in its self-limitation, in its reduction and in its finitude” (ROSENZWEIG, 2003, p. 45). From this logic of the eternity, as the self-disclosure of the Word, the discourse of God is characteristically put as being the discourse of-with-to God, in such a way that it absolutely declines itself from the totality to enhance the real, concrete unicity/singularity, of the God who reveals himself as a *pathetic(proximity)*, loving, incalculable relation of an (ex)yield (giving out exceedingly) to the Greek Logos. It is, therefore, in the renewed advancing of this *Jewish grammar* embedded in the relationship with the One-God, ineffable and Holy, whose vestige passes and covers the Face of the orphans, the widows, the strangers, that the Christianity can rehabilitate its *essence*, according to which God and Humans are coinciding in the very Face/Word of Christ emerging from the gospels, the visible image of the invisible God. In addition to this *Otherness Essentialization* of the Mystery is the fact that for “Judaism, Revelation, although inseparable from the Scriptures, never separates itself from the pre-eminence of the Revelation as Word” (LEVINAS, 1976, p. 395).

Secondly because Judaism never dissociates the Word and the Language, the spirit and the flesh, that unity with the body, which is, ethics and spirit, of which Christianity should be the master on account of the incarnation of the Word. Bearing this in mind that, from a philosophical point of view, this Christian experience of the flesh has received a dramatic emphasis in the writings of the great French thinker Merleau-Ponty (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 30). Nevertheless, given the situation that as and when it enrolled itself in the History of the (Western) Spirit, that is, when it became self-incarnated in the History and became the Politics according to the cultural milieu, Christianity began to claim for itself the viewpoint of being the spokesperson for the *Greek wisdom* (LEVINAS, 1982, p. 43). And this is identified with the Sophia originated from Greece or with the Logos against the Mythos. It follows that, by the Hellenistic influence, the Discourse and the Logos about God, man and the world *seduced* Christianity to the point that its thought (theology) lives only

to justify the primacy of the Spirit over the carnal body. Not less frequently, it is Christianity which at times oscillates between reason and incarnation, at times mostly around the speculative-rationalist thought, and at times deeply around the mysticism which competes with an incarnated thought. And thus it is procreating an inversion in its own identity. Oftentimes Christianity is concerned with safeguarding its novelty beyond its corporal body, its own cultural civilization, that is, beyond its insertion in the physical world, not in the name of one among us from the (inter) we-Saying of God as emphasized by Judaism, but in name of the authoritative supremacy of its own Sayings (Discourses). This leads Christianity to deny contacts with the world of sensibleness, considered as “the sensitivity of a maternal carnality and a carnal maternity [of God] in ethics” (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 101). This concern has made Christianity prisoner to the *temptation of temptations*. To know this consists of living on a Thinking belief to which the Being is equal to the believed thought. In this awake, the Spirit seeks at all costs to give meaning to the body as a way of denying the meaning of the material body that comes from “the very carnality in the immediateness/uneasiness of the closeness in the expiation” (LEVINAS, 1993, p. 227).

2 The reception of Levinasian thought by theology in Brazil

In the above mentioned hyperbolic inquiries that are pointing towards an *interpellation coming from somebody else*, contact with the Judaism, especially with post-Christian Judaism – according to which Judaism is a *Jewish fact* of Revelation and established in the Talmudic tradition – presents itself as a partner or an equal interlocutor to contemporary Christianity. In the same trajectory of the covetous *disenchantment* of Christianity, revisiting the philosophy of alterity (otherness) from Levinas can be reawakened. After all, his thought is deeply rooted in the Hebrew tradition under the influence of the rabbinic oral ancestry marked by the midrashic research and the ardent exegesis of the Letters of the Book in search of argumentation “of the understanding and of the interpretation about the revealed Law, and inspired by the downtrodden Talmudic ethics of the other, from the oral tradition of the Jewish *Torah*” (LEVINAS, 1976, p. 400).

While taking into account the newness and the fruitfulness of the interlocution between Christianity and Judaism, it is equally important to draw attention to the impact that has been created now in the Brazilian soil by the prominent thought promoted by a couple of renowned theologian-philosophers, namely Luiz Carlos Susin and Ulpiano Vázquez Moro. From a genetic-historical point of view owing to these two thinkers, it is crucial to remember that introducing Levinasian Judaism in the heart of

the dialogue with the Christianity in order to respond to the appeal of Von Balthasar is possible. In his book, *“the Messianic Man”* (*O Homem messiânico*, 1984), Susin emphasizes his innovative approach of a philosophical anthropology marked by the centrality of the messianic other-man. It is instituted, thanks to the given human (in)condition, by the responsibility for one another. This has presupposed, on the part of the author, a clear option for a new anthropological perspective that it was marked by the concept of “a freedom or an ethical choice (in)vested by the other” (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 83).

In this connection, Susin attempts to highlight “the lagging length of time or the diachrony of responsibility” (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 176) about the synchrony of freedom in order to avoid a careless discourse about the human and, by *antonomasia*, a univocal discourse of God. Until recently, if Christian theology still revolved around the question of the One-God (*Deo uno*) at the expense of the anthropological question of the God-man, henceforth, when thinking of the humanity in the immediate proximity of the relationship with the others, then the question of God shifts from the problem “of the Trinity God (*Deo trino*), thanks to the *pathos* and the *ethos* that are derived from the trinitarian perichoresis” (SUSIN, 1984, p. 58). It is, therefore, from the vision of “one” God of the covenant relationship in an intimate bond of love/justice with “one” man that the theology can liberate itself from the involvement with the *essence* – substantializing – of God and man, thanks to the revitalization of “the essence of *action* put beyond the boundaries of being” (VON BALTHASAR, 1990, p. 569).

This anthropological cum philosophical turnabout and its effects foreseen by the Brazilian thinker are judged directly on the seriousness of the *disenchantment* of theology, either in its classical onto-theological perspective or in its rise of the contemporary ontological-hermeneutical perspective. Both until recently are in practice within the Christian theological milieu. With regard to the latter, Susin contradicts with the perspective of a Jewish-Talmudic theology/philosophy as Levinas advocates it. It follows that thinking about God is thinking about Him as the *otherness*, “a *Kenotic* God who condescendingly corresponds to the significance of the humanity in the one-to-other of the anthropology of responsibility, of substitution, of motherhood” (LEVINAS, 2002, p. 141), as it evokes “the perception of Messianic Man from where God can be fully heard” (SUSIN, 1984, p. 143).

In short, if the contemporary theology has judged that it had found a new statute to speak of God with meaning, attributing the merit to the ontological lead of thinking promoted by Heidegger, then the fact is that the Levinasian post-ontological thought leaning to *disenchant* it from the seducing *magic* of being neutral. As Susin recalls it well, “the question of God in Levinas is not resolved with the decreeing end to the metaphy-

sics advocated by Heidegger” (SUSIN, 1984, p. 253). Susin takes up the statement from Levinas that “the problem underlying onto-theology does not mean inept thinking about the being, as Heidegger postulated, but inept thinking about God” (LEVINAS, 1993, p. 144). As a result, it was a matter of rehabilitating an anthropology of the Word/listening from others, without which the Word of God would remain imperceptible, “not because God does not speak, but because there is no humanity capable of listening to the signs of its transition [of God] through the other face”, in short, because “thinking about God outside the Being means taking responsibility for the others” (SUSIN, 1984, p. 78).

In his turn, Ulpiano Vázquez, from *the Discourse on God in the work of Emmanuel Levinas* (1982), insists on the proposition that the Lithuanian philosopher has demonstrated throughout his thinking a kind of Fundamental Theology of the Judaism. This is very much evident and thanks to the intrigue between his Theological Writings on the Judaism and his Personal Philosophical Writings. This form of *chiasm* enabled Levinas to launch his own distinctive *other* manner of philosophical speaking about God and *other* manner of theological speaking about man (ethical religion). In this perspective, according to the author, it is possible to perceive the underlying thinking of Levinas, something indispensable for an authentic and “double *disenchantment* of anthropological theology as well as of theological anthropology” (VÁZQUEZ, 1982, p. 45).

Until now, every fundamental theology attempts to speak of God in the mode of a double phenomenology: at the one hand, it aims at putting up the “suspension of judgment” or bracketing – *epoché* – the *doxa* of the religion in order to possibly emerge an authentic theology capable of making beyond the established faith, so that it can pave way for newly *thinking of other* from the revealed faith. At the other hand, this theological *thought of otherness* presupposes the faith as action or as act of faith through which it guides the suspension of judgment from its own philosophy so as to lead it to “its own re-significance from the point of contact with a new immanent theology to the faith as *action*” (VÁZQUEZ, 1982, p. 45).

In other words, according to Ulpiano Vázquez, it is a matter of practicing the difficult Christian theology that “deprives one from both Fideism and Rationalism in the name of the nameless God of Jesus Christ” (VÁZQUEZ, 1982, p. 43). It is, therefore, a thought of God’s *otherness*, marked by a *thought that always thinks more than its thinking*, which will permit theology to abandon a certain idolatrous *self-centeredness* from its Discourse about God as merely an object. In addition, this *otherness discourse* that revolves around the Saying can deprive Theology from the genre of self-sufficiency that has accustomed it counteracting the Philosophy “as if the certainties about God would be sufficient for the former without the dialogue with the latter”. In short, this thought of God’s *otherness* suggests that philosophy

is the house-maid of theology. This system of servitude can “conceal the self-deception coming from the careless discourses about God proceeding from self-righteous theology” (VÁZQUEZ, 1982, p. 59).

In this perspective, a theological thought on *otherness*, that is, a theology of the Infinite always supposes the *deviation* by ethics (of the other) as the first philosophy and, by *antonomasia*, a mandatory pathway through anthropology. And the dialogical reasonableness that it presumes, thanks to the grammar of *pathos* or the tangential contact with others in which it is woven and without which it would easily surrender to the grammar of the Logos, also presupposes equally a certain atheism in order to be able to speak of God with meaningfulness. Therefore, the *anthropo-ethical awakening of theology* must take seriously the ethical venue that nurses it by the fact the ethical language intertwines itself in the *intimate* relationship with the hyperbolic condition of the humanness of the humans given by the *substitution* and the *motherhood* of the other humans (VÁZQUEZ, 1982, p. 127). In this sense, the ethical language establishes a critical instance to the discourse of God. By virtue, it enhances it to remain “vigilant before the theology itself so that the discourse of God will never be dissociated from the significance of the reminding vestige of the Face to whom we are indebted to paying attention”, and by *antonomasia*, that this “theological discourse is configured according to the *indirect* way of referring to God as the prehistoric Time of Immemorial Antiquity” (VÁZQUEZ, 1982, p. 129).

In summary, Ulpiano Vázquez asserts that Christian Theology – making an inseparable contact with Levinas’ Judaism – will have to “remain vigilant before an Enigma and before classifying it as an *interrupted* Discourse” (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 183) in case it is genuinely interested in disentangling itself from the seducing *magic* of theology which is in a head over heels awakening of the strength of the Greek Logos. Following the logic of *Greek wisdom*, which bothers only in safeguarding a consistent thought about God, it does not fail to employ a sheer *seduction* on theology. This also aims at possessing an arguable and a reasonable discourse about God, although it tends to disconnect “from the substituting place of the Discourse God-in-ethics” (VAZQUEZ, 1982, p. 147). In contrast, the *interrupted* Discourse, a term which gave rise to the favourite title for one of the memorable theological writings of Ulpiano Vázquez, presents itself with the requirement of having “to liberate Christianity from the *temptation of the temptations* of all immediate, ostensive, direct discourse about God”, especially when it recognizes the dark times by which the world is still undergoing, and especially the Latin American and the Caribbean nations of yesterdays and today’s” (VAZQUEZ, 1998, p. 30).

It is worth highlighting that, from an ecclesial point of view, this discourse of God’s *otherness* to which Susin and Vázquez refer has found a suitable opening space for its development in Latin American theology.

While mentioning the contextual time, it can be immediately associated with the effort to carry out the *disenchantment* of theology, especially if it is aiming at confronting liberal theology. In a sense, this movement is due to the revitalization of the contact with the aforementioned *wisdom of the love to the service of love* present in the Judaism from the Revelation/the Word and advocated by Levinas. In this case, Brazilian theologians try to supplement that the thought of discordant alterity does not aim at denying the meaningfulness of the *Greek wisdom* towards integral theology, but to subordinate it to the sifting winnow of what Levinas (1976, p. 383) calls “the difficult wisdom” due to the significance of the traits of the Infinity on the Face.

The traces of this modifying transformation were already perceived during the Latin American Bishops Conferences held in Medellin and Puebla, and in the document of Puebla. The emblematic evocation of the Latin American Faces appears there explicitly as a theological place (*locus theologicus*) of the revelation/the word of God. This supposes the act of listening to the voices coming from people of indigenous origin, Afro-descendants, youths, the poor, the impoverished, etc. In this way, there exists, little by little, traces of a liberation theology hand-in-hand (*pari passu*) with the emergence of the liberation philosophy in Latin American and Caribbean soil.

In the context of the *Philosophy of Liberation*, if Ethics emerge as a “sensitivity of the sensibleness” (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 40) of the political, cultural, economic, religious, etc. on account of the interpellations arising from the vulnerability of the Faces, in the scope of the *Theology of Liberation*, then that ethics is established as the necessary meaningful sensitivity by the proper Revelation of God. It was presumed that Christianity could no longer abstract the realism that underlies the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25, in which the concrete identification of the Face of Christ with the Face of the poor is evoked. It was not long ago that Juan Luis Segundo and Jon Sobrino advocated a Latin American theology in connection with the God of the poor and the practice of bringing down Latin American victims right from the suffering cross, the product of an unjust system generated by the neoliberal capitalism and by the globalization of poverty, since Jesus made himself a victim by identifying himself with the victims to be freed from the death.

3 Ethical Transcendentalism and Philosophy/Theology of Liberation

By virtue of the confluence of these variables, it might be worth evoking the novelty of Levinasian *ethical transcendentalism* and the hyperbolic language that proceeds from him, in order to situate the two necessary

steps regarding what will be dealt later, namely, the *disenchantment of the Sacredness* from the ontology (HEIDEGGER, 1967, p. 81) and, consequently, the critique towards the ontological-hermeneutical status of theology (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 49). To a large extent, the contemporary thought from Latin America is indebted to Levinasian philosophy, which, in a sense, was strongly recapitulated in the formulation of the liberation philosophy and the liberation theology with their post-ontological traits.

With regard to the ethical transcendentalism, it should be noted that, according to Levinas, the starting point of philosophy is no longer, as in modernity, the Kantian subject, but the ethical situation of the inter-relations and/or the close proximity to the other. This other is who radically challenges the subject to the point that it is possible to say that “the-myself is an-other” (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 98). It is an-other not because it is another me, but “an-I and not-an-I (*μοί* – I, me, mine, myself), an I-self despite myself” inasmuch as viscerally “altered, obsessed, hostage to the other, responsible for the other” (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 106) and whose “freedom is invested by that pre-original voice of the other, identified in the relationship by an Ethical Election/choice” (LEVINAS, 1976, p. 34). It follows that ethics, in Levinasian language, is the order of *pathos* (*πάθος*) i.e. a very passion, thanks to the “immediacy/restlessness of the tangential proximity” (LEVINAS, 1993, p. 27) of an-other who decentralizes the I-self in a my-self without denying the subjectivity of that paradoxical (in)condition of “a man without an identity” (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 106).

It is, therefore, in this perspective that one can perceive the proximity of the philosophy of the otherness from Husserl’s phenomenology. According to Levinas, it was a question of being faithful to what “is revealed in the very *phenomenality* of the phenomenon before whom it is appearing” (LEVINAS, 2002, p. 127), that is, the seriousness of having to accord with the *essence* of the *manifestation*, which is, according to Levinas, no longer referred to the transcendental I-self, but to the ethics as *pathos* (*πάθος*). In it, the self and the others are singularly unique in their approaching, either as a susceptible flesh I-self or as others in their nakedness of their absolute vulnerability (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 14.100).

Now, the proximity of the neighbour is maintained by a *tangentiality* of luck that, in the “presence of the other, the significance remains of the order of an irreversible disorderliness”. The *indirect language* is in view of the asymmetry and the diachrony of the evidence, never brought back to the reciprocity of sign and signification (LEVINAS, 2005, p. 61). Because of this refusal to abandon the-my-order-I-self-unique-in-front-of-the-other-order, Levinas will decisively distance himself from Heidegger’s ontology. In it, the subject changed as Being-self despite itself, does not count as such, since for Heidegger the subject would come to overshadow “the essence of Being” (HEIDEGGER, 1967, p. 82). Well, ontology places hu-

man existence – *Dasein* – in the conditional structures of being, of being-in-the-world, and enrooting it or contextualizing it in the history or “in the temporalization of the temporality of being in order to remove the in-depth thoughtfulness from the entanglements of the classical metaphysics” (LEVINAS, 2002, p. 39).

Contrary to the heedlessness of the i-other-self by the ontology, the relationship with the other or the ethics also aims at taking distance from the genesis of the modern subject, that is, from the abstract I-Self (*Moi*) understood as an individual of a gender, to drawing near to “a” concrete my-self (*moi*). That I-unique-something-entity, being listened to by another human, by a Face, goes from the condition of a shepherd of the Being to the (in)condition of a “caregiver of the other, attentive to his voice, his call, his shouts, his laments” (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 179), and finally, to the ethical interpellation that comes from the paradoxical relishing glory of a naked Face under your own skin. This “epiphany” (LEVINAS, 1988a, p. 64) interrupts the glaring phosphorescence, the Ex-stasy (ecstasy) which is coming from the seductive environment of the voices raising from the Being of the ontology. This intends to give meaning even to the death, when in fact, “the vulnerability of a face always denounces it as being the precursor of its own death” (LEVINAS, 1993, p. 53).

4 The magic and sorcery of post-philosophical thinking

What remains to be highlighted is that, according to Levinas, the ontology has finally ended up *seducing* and causing an *enchantment*, not only in the realm of philosophy but also in the heart of Christianity itself. It has exercised a strong appeal over its *theology* to the point of leading it to assert itself or to address itself, no longer assigning to the adulthood of the Reason, as in modernity, but as an authentic, passionate, hermeneutical theology with its demythologizing vitality. Once it was thought by this, to be able to distance itself from the criticism of the idealism from which it had approached in modernity and, consequently, to remain exempt from being accused of a theology corresponding to the totality.

The undeniable fact to be underlined is that Christianity has got drunk from the seducing *magic cup* of *ontology* to the point of immediately associating the Revelation with its hermeneutic structure, and directly submitting the unspeakable Word to the interpretations and the canons of the revealed scriptures (LEVINAS, 1988b, p. 42). Since then, its attention has turned decisively to the “exhaustive exegetical-hermeneutical study of the scriptures by means of historical-critical methods” (LEVINAS, 1988b, p. 45) which, on the one hand, have significantly collaborated to bring the revealed texts out of the limbo of misleading literality. Then, on the

other hand, by placing the text in its proper context and by justifying that such option is in view of the *demythologization* or *desacralization* of the sacred Scriptures, it ends up forgetting the *unparalleled* Word that makes it escape from the history of the text in order to associate itself with “the meaning of the branding vestige from an Immemorial Past that is uncountable in interpretation as well as in understanding” (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 62). Ultimately, the scriptures are first of all “*Holy* and not *Sacred* Scriptures” (LEVINAS, 1982, p. 8-9), because they contain the duration of the moment of inspiration of the Revelation as the Word/love of God while listening (from the others).

In contrast to the post-metaphysical onto-hermeneutic perspective, there is *the wisdom of love* planted within the “*ethical transcendentalism*” and the *ethical essence* of manifestation (LEVINAS, 2002, p. 128). By this, the philosophy of alterity rises as a critical instance to that ontologizing character of comprehension/interpretation of the Book, Scriptures. It plays a critical role insofar as it points to the new form of *temptation of the temptations* from the hermeneutical theology. Namely, the temptation of attempting to comprehend the whole is no longer according to the Reason of Illustration, but in reference to the Being-Neutral. Therefore, it is the being which is upraised as the horizon, from which everything receives meaning. This same being whose emphasis falls on its vocalizing *verbality* or on the *resonance* of the verb to be, being, is articulated in a genuine way in the Literature or in the Poetic language. This promotes the emergence of the others and the new worlds (of the text) made possible by reading, which, in turn, leads the reader beyond this immediate, habituated predisposition by the concept. The Poetics would replace the Logos in whatever matter it “contains instrumental, technical, scientific reason, since the significance of being exceeds that of Reason” (HEIDEGGER, 1967, p. 89).

The fact is that under the act of listening to the other, the Revelation refers to an *ethical Song of the songs* – Canticles of horizon which is poetic, prescriptive, dogmatic, moral, cultural, etc. – because the Word-Revelation based on that voice which comes from beyond the Being, in other words, comes from the *Good beyond the being*, is associated with the word of other as well as with the word/voice of that one Self chosen by the other, in order to “speak in the name of the others by existing at the hospitable listening to their voice” (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 167). This Word of pluridimensional ethics signifies “one to speak with the other and to the other in the *co-hortative* form of a We-our, our own, ourselves” (ROSENZWEIG, 2003, p. 353) which, in turn, “leads the word to a bidding [withdraw] goodbye” (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 164). These unisons of voices are removed from the [Spirit] history by the [ethical] history outside of the History, from which God must and can be heard. In this perspective, not even a *theo-poetic* would be able to present itself as an alternative to the violence and “to the seducing *magic-sorcery* of rational or liberal theology

that violates God with its forthright and ostensible discourses about god” (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 194).

Contrary, therefore, to the *seducing* lure of this search for the ontological *essence* focused on the “silent *language* of the invitation” to be a being (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 96), it was a matter of going to the [ethical] *essence* of the *voice inspired* by the listening/obeying of a being-unique-of-a-total-body-wholly-heard-obeyed to the word, to the commandment of love coming from the others, as an expression of a *wisdom of the love*. This was more antique and more original than the Poetics inspired by the Greek wisdom which is condensed, approximately recent, in the ontology as the finished expression of *love of the wisdom*. In this perspective of magnifying the voice of the others, the philosophy is configured around the immense love that is ultimately carried to the infinite of being-for-the-other of the immediate proximity. However, the *wisdom of the love* underlying the philosophy of the alterity requires the additional task of always being “at the service of the love” (LEVINAS 2011, p. 175). The disproportionately *immeasurable love* needs to be articulated according to the Discourse with regard to the ethics, not to be treated with suspicion, since it is without the capacity to justify or to become appropriate in the eyes of those who must be instructed by the *wisdom of the love*.

In this context, the *wisdom of the love* that springs from the vivifying Word or from (Inter)Telling — telling a word among us — from the others, presents itself in the outlook of contemporary thinking with the pretension of *demythologizing* the *sacralization* propagated by the ontology as well as the hermeneutics derived from such act. This is because both of them have ended up being captives to the *mythologization* of the Being. The Being as Neutral is hovering over our heads as if it were a god inspiring a new theology camouflaged by *(theo)poetic* and which, however, only postpones the telling of god in an ethical-prophetic manner. That is, as if it were a discourse of God according to a *(theo) prophecy* as an *adieu* (farewell) to ontology as well as to a going (away from) god- (*a-dieus*) other than being.

It is, therefore, at this level that *the wisdom of the love to the service of the love* (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 176) contributes decisively so that the *liberation theology* can also liberate itself from the magical *seductions* of what remains of ontology. In fact, in this respect it is worth remembering what Von Balthazar mind-blowingly says in his *theo-dramatic of the action*:

The human regenerated in Christ analogically participates in the freedom of Christ: freed for a responsibility in order to realize it before Him and in the world [...] from here it is necessary to take a look at the so-called *Theology of liberation* and to observe its *urgency* and the complexity of its nature. It is an intrinsic importance to the very faith and to the very action that the Christian faith always presupposes. However, its greatest *risk* consists in trying to *cir-*

cumscribe within a controllable system, the relationship between the two Adams, and between earthly action and that of the Kingdom of God, in order to fall into a new species of theological rationalism. In this sense, the axiom very much repeated by Claudel is in force: what is to be expected from the Christian people is only the *resistance* and the *persistence*, and not the triumphant victory. Even their master is none other than just a defeated winner in the world (VON BALTHASAR, 1995, p. 448-457).

It should be added that in order to promote the libertarian character of the philosophy, the fact is that in the Levinasian perspective, it is neither sufficient to focus on the texts and in the contexts in which violence is recurrent against the Face of the others, nor on returning to the Face as someone who would protect himself from the violence based on his culture and writings as if these were the safe house of the others. First and foremost, there is an urgent need to redirect the hermeneutics towards the ethics. Without this channelling displacement, there is a high risk of losing contact with the living word or giving up what Levinas calls the Ethical Telling. This Telling can never be replaced by any Dictum, not even by the Poetic Dictum, because the “Canticle of Canticles” (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 41) will always be presided over by the Inter-Telling “of the other’s voice and not by the delusion of the magic sacredness nor by the inspirational rationalistic thinking about the Being” (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 167).

From the point of view of the *contemporary theology of liberation*, this means that if the theology of Christianity does not intend to surrender to the *enchantment* of liberation schooled as another form of bewitching magic, it will have to be less of the hermeneutical-poetic and more of the post-ontological-prophetic. And, this must be in the sense of distancing itself from what the ontology confers to the poetic term, when it forces the *deviation* of the subject of speaking to the texts, in order to situate there the production of meaningfulness in and around the Discourse with reference to the “world of the text”, which is always the *being-in-the world*. After all, keeping in this ontological sphere of language, there is always a danger of discharging the *prophetic significance* of the word from the other, whose approach brings about a radical uprooting from the world, thanks to the act of compelling ethical *interventions* or appealing (peeling the skin) from others. This, in turn, originates from exposing the skin to the others. It reveals itself to responsibility as the language of exposing oneself, that is, in the language of responsibility, as “*here I am*” in the accusative form of ethical telling, as Levinas asserts:

To this difficult, intense *commandment*, without mitigation, it can only respond “*here I am*”, where the pronoun “*I*” is in the accusative form, declined before any declination, possessed by the other, suffering [from love], indistinguishably identical. Here I am – it is a telling from the inspiration which is neither a gift of beautiful words nor a gift of musical lyrics, but accustomed to bountiful giving, with hands overflowing and, therefore, with the embodying corporeality (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 157)

In addition to this inquiry, there is another reason for distancing oneself from the ontological-hermeneutical imaginary of Heidegger's post-metaphysics. It is due to the fact that in some horizon, what ultimately matters when reading the texts is the rehabilitation of the *Sacredness* within which reverberates the silence [of the voice] of the being and to which the language is at the service. Now, according to his hermeneutics of the texts, the ontology will be in the service of bringing the Revelation to the *sacredness*, when in fact, the other is in the order of a (dis)order of the Word, of the transgression, of the Revelation. Therefore, the Revelation is in the order of both drawing closer to and moving away from the Pro-noun God, that is, from the logic of Holiness that inspires and guides through an exodus that is destined for the Sainthood, for a God who never will be identifiable with a Neutral Being. As a result, Levinas explains the original meaning in and through the theological discourse:

The interrogatory mark (?) in the Dictum — alternating between an enigma of a God who speaks clearly through a person and a person who does not count on any god — converse to the theologians' univocal *logos*, is the pivotal center of the Revelation, of the intermittent radiance (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 168).

Theology that is produced supported by the *sacred* around the emphasis on the *essence* of being is interwoven against the *sanctity*, more of the ethical *essence* [of interdicting] of the other than the Being. There is always a danger, in the name of this *(teo)poetics* and even of a theology of liberation, that is very focused on the local or the cultural context of discourse. It is the risk of neutralizing the Sainthood, the sacred, the alterity of the others and, by *antonomasia*, the very mischaracterization of the subjectivity outside of itself, whose *recurrence* to the Self occurs through the [ethical] deviation of itself from the others through the radical responsibility in which resonates the voice of a God of Abraham, Isaac, Sara, Rebeca, of Jesus, of Magdalena, etc. In the counter current, there is another logic of theological discourse as a *(theo)prophecy* that seems to be justified because, according to Levinas:

Our main purpose is to *narrate the anarchy* and the non-finality of the subject where the Infinite takes place under the figure of responsibility in the proximity of the confident neighbour [...] It consists of questioning whether the subjectivity will not be enunciated through an abuse of language [...] that justifies the very proximity in which the Infinite is taking place. That the ontological form of the Dictum cannot change the significance of the beyond of the being that is shown in this Dictum is something that stems from the very confrontation from this significance [...] The transcendence of the Infinite — the exteriority which is more exterior, further than whatever exteriority of the being — escapes only through the subject who confesses or confronts it (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 170-171. The italics are the author's addition).

Therefore, if the ontological form of the Dictum cannot change the significance of the beyond of being that is shown in that Dictum as a narrativity

of an (*an*)*archy* (beyond governing), then there is something that arises from the very *confrontation* of this meaning that does not allow itself to conform to the poetic discourse of God. In other words, every other theology must be holding firm a sort of *confrontation*, of *resistance* to the supremacy of the *Greek wisdom* over the *wisdom of love*. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that it is a question of being vigilant to the magic seduction of its beautiful words or its poetical rhetoric regarding God. This is because the Dictum or the theological discourse is nourished by the *inspiration* that comes from the *diachrony* inaugurated by *diakonia* (service) to the Other. They are responsible for the origin of “a clear, flawless, straightforward speech about the Infinite as it is fulfilled in the prophetic word of the speaker who pronounces it” (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 171).

5 *The theology otherwise spoken and the end of idolatries*

Precisely after explaining the philosophical path presided over by the *ethical transcendentalism* and the corresponding language of the Inter (Telling) of (between) many others, as an eminently ethical language that springs from the Law of the other, Levinas seeks to reorient the problem of theology back to the field of the *Otherness Dictum*. Obviously, it is impossible to deny that the theology is situated within the range of discourse and, therefore, in the field of the *Dictum* as well as of a certain ontology. Otherwise, it would be impracticable to specifically refer to or to reasonably justify the fact that the Discourse of God does not match with this form or that form of seducing *magic*. However, thanks to the ethical trajectory of his thinking, we are permanently vigilant to the fact that the philosopher does not associate the Dictum of the theological discourse primarily with the Ontology or with the Poetics of the being which ontologically results from the former. For Levinas, every Dictum has to be referred to the pre-original narrative Telling as a form of a “canticle of contestation” (LEVINAS, 2011, p. 170). It is evident that this canticle [of ethics] of the canticles of the political, the social, the cultural, the religious life, etc., supposes the imaginary wisdom of the Sacred Scriptures. In them, the prophetic language finds its musicality in the voice of a Face (of the other) and not in the silence of the being. Therefore, safeguarding the (*ana*)*archy* beyond-governance of the diachrony of the con-temporary Immemorial Past of the Telling, one cannot fail to emphasize the possibility of thinking about the concordant consonance between a (*teo*)*prophetic* “and” a (*teo*)*poetic* in the form of an straying *tangential* grammaticality, thanks to the linguistic structure of Dictum/Telling. Now, the enticing intrigue of Dictum/Telling is in a terminable opposition to the *temptation* of the *antinomies* because that (intrigue) reveals itself upside down to any form of (exclusive) totalization, old or new, in relation to the discourses of God.

Once this concordant *consonance* is assured against the seducing *magic* of the univocal discourse of God, the theology (of Christianity) can never give up its (*in*)*condition* of fulfilling itself as a *wisdom of love to the service of love*. The theology knows itself not-capable-to-know-for-itself, that is, being ought to be inexorably listening to the Mystery of the Word-God, hapax of the vocabulary. That makes it *think more than it used to think*, that is, that makes it think according to boundless infinity in accordance with the significance of the trace of a Face. However, as the Dictum (discourse of God) can neither be abstracted nor be denied, the *wisdom of the love* as an ethical-theological Telling will have to be articulated with unusual strangeness around a Poetic Dictum “and” a Political Dictum “and” any other kinds of Dictum, since these Dictums are configured to *the service of the love of the other, which is otherwise said in the justice*. Nonetheless, as the underlying of the Telling is self-restrained, the visceral restlessness and the non-indifference towards others are very typical of an ethical contact that emerges from here. Furthermore, the precedence which arises from a Contestant Dictum or a Dictum of prophetic nature is to be proclaimed to the civilization of the Reason which pretends to neutralize the voice of the other. For this reason, without denying the Poetic Dictum, the Saying claims the *supremacy* of a Dictum which is more of a political, social, community and ecclesial edging, according to the priority of having to listen to the cry of the face and of God in the current conditions in which they go through the imminent danger of being silenced, because they are surrendered to being-in-the-world.

In another aspect, this precedence of the excruciating distress of the other has an immediate repercussion on the *theology of liberation* that is still to be processed within the Christianity of Latin America insofar as it invites the theology to be critical of the very critique of its hermeneutic-critical status. Not because it should yield herself to the environment of violence and exploitation against the other that it is silenced in the face of injustice, of oppression, of the Evil to the being. The other emerges as someone who is “from the order of the Good being besides from the Being who always evokes the choice making election” (LEVINAS, 1976, p. 365) as the goodness in the reciprocal responsibility. In this case, the fight against evil neither comes at the expense of bittering *resentment* in the face of the evil suffered nor is based on the theoretical discourse that points to the causes of moral evil. According to Levinas, the subject outside itself, an alteration without alienation, witnesses the love of expiation for the other before it embarks on talking about the injustice committed against the others.

This is not from a masochism of a persecuted person seeking refuge in the source of his suffering, but from a movement capable of offering a meaningfulness to the being, to the life, and to maintain in the persecuted person his human *essence*. That essence consists in perpetuating himself in the measure

of having the true love for one another, that is, in such a way that neither in his harmful revolt nor in his calming humility does he become an avenging persecutor. Rather, he boldly distrusts every form of punishing resentments (LEVINAS, 1976, p. 392).

This Messianic patience does not mean consenting to the horror of evil. Rather, it is freeing oneself from the present time that is disorienting the tomorrow advent and the future. This misunderstanding leads to utter despair, before which there is only the *temptation* to do a theology “of the *conatus essendi* or of the human instinctual egoism without responsibility for the other”, the effort to preserve one’s being (LEVINAS, 2009, p.106) that, in the dark times, “projects upon God the curse of his impassive silence”(LEVINAS, 2009, p. 87).

Differing from the theology of the silence of God, it is a matter of practicing a theology that is thought to be inspired by another or that is formulated by entirely devoting to the others, that is, a *(theo)prophetic* of the future advent. It is based on the eschatology of the kingdom in which a new “Canticle of the Canticles” (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 41) is heard, thanks to the inspiration that “comes from the voice of the victims of history, through which one can hear the cry of God” (ROSENZWEIG, 2003, p. 347). It follows that the *theology of liberation* is justified less by a theology hermeneutically situated in this or that context, in this or that history, with this or that other Spirit, that makes it evoke very much the specific features of this or that encountering Face to be contemplated by the theology, according to Enrique Dussel. Rather, the innovation and the strength of this theology comes from its eminently prophetic character that is marked mostly by listening to the Word, to the voices of the other and to which, according to the oral tradition are added, unison to the singing of a public theology [of the Us] that it conveys them, rather than from an intricate hermeneutics of the texts that is marked by the emphasis on the creative *imagination* around the heroes of the personalities of the texts in the process of giving rise to the new ways for ethical acts.

In the counter current to this form of hermeneutic theology, by placing emphasis on “the Christianity as *orthopraxis*” (VON BALTHASAR, 1990, p. 36), the *theodramatic* of Balthasar is nonetheless inspiring in this regard. Namely, for the Swiss theologian, there is an *essence* of action beyond the being which must refer “the theology to its foundational *locus* in the *listening to the other* in Christ” (VON BALTHASAR, 1990, p. 569). In this case, the *essence* of theology finds its fecundity in listening attentively to the World, in the dramatic hospitality of the other in which the drama of God is duly praised doxologically. Further, this way of doing theology must be expressed in the *orthopraxis* according to a “three-dimensional language, since the *Pneuma* (Spirit) prevents any kind of heteronomy” between God the Father, the Son and the Humanity (VON BALTHASAR, 1990, p. 630).

The *(theo)prophetic* Latin American-Caribbean, in turn, should safeguard the voice of the Saints who have inspired it and made its followers living it on the way to their *martyrdom* – a genuine sense of sacrifice “comes from the Hebrew word *korban*, which means the nearness of the nearest, till the end” (LEVINAS, 1987, p. 25) and from an ethically remodelling impersonate from the *habit* of the other in order to save the other from death – or, they should practice it according to the *kenosis* in the emptying condition of the suffering servant. Regarding this theological (in)condition, the prophets, and those who occupied in daily commitment with the dramatic appeal from others, teach everyone and live it with inspirations derived from the sages, from the *wisdom*, from the sapiential books and from the Psalms. It is about doing a theology whose knowledge is in the realm of singing a new ethical song together with the others (our-We) and in tune with the other songs. However, without omitting that voice of the other, it has to inspire wisely all of the hymns, the poems and the prescriptions to follow the voices of the collective song. Ultimately, the Sayings of theology must express the *otherness* way of living and responding in accordance with the politics, the society, the culture, the religion, the economics, etc. For this reason, the theology will also be an expression of lawful Righteousness and Justice as a way of responding to the voice, the cry of God that intervenes between us and an inter (Telling) of the third face, all the way from a public life.

For all these reasons, it is possible to find in the heart of the *theology of liberation*, invested with an Immemorial Past that causes action, that is, a theology as an attentive work to the *sanctity* of the voice of [the others] persons. From this point of view, it is understood that the *otherness Dictum* of a *(theo)prophetic* intends to undertake the removal of the texts, the stories, the unique and the secular narratives from the forgetfulness. This is, evidently, not only to interpret them and place them alongside the others with their cultures, in the name of “an equivalence and the coexistence claimed by the equals” (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 40), but also with a view of describing “the rudimentary vestige of the Word-Voice from the singularly-other which reverberates in these texts” (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 63). And, as the Sayings are always referred to the Ethical Telling, the *theology of liberation* must keep an eye on the other Faces that were not included in the abstract or generic category of “poor”. It is about taking new initiatives towards the theologies of the blacks, the feminists, the gays, and the ecology, all of them revitalized from the *inspiration* enkindled by the other, as they are taking place in the Latin American and in the Caribbean soil.

In the presence of facing the new challenges, that are posed to face the *Theology of Liberation*, it is worth remembering that the great Levinasian effort to return to the texts of the oral tradition of the Talmud neither aims at focussing on an ethnological, sociological, anthropological or structural reading of the texts, nor does it reduce such a reading to merely an

ontological-hermeneutic understanding, in order to discover in them the specific sacredness of Judaism, that would equate it to the whole of religion. In the manner of Rabbinic-Talmudic thinking, the philosopher sought to find in these texts the *traces* of the *significance* of an “Absence, of a Third Party, of a Pronoun” (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 63) and the “meaning of a Face” (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 50) which, in principle, “seemed more meaningless of an institution and its respective rituals, as in the specific case of the *Nazirite*” (LEVINAS, 2001, p. 79).

Therefore, in an attempt to listen to the voice of the alterity of the other, which resonates beyond “the ethnographic language and the linguistic structure”, Levinas insists on the need to reposition the issue of subjectivity, that is, of the “I, myself” as an (ethical) self, capable of responding to the appeal of the other’s voice coming from beyond. Finally, “without the ‘I-myself’ there is no way to blame and to support the word of others of the Revelation” (LEVINAS, 2001, p. 81). In this context, it seems inspiring that the philosopher has evoked the figure of the biblical person, namely Samson. He does not stand out famously for the heroic imagery of a superman represented by impressive power and physical strength, but audaciously for “his courage to make a path of *evasion of the being* before the Word-Revelation that is being fulfilled by the passivity in the midst of the pathway to the Infinite” (LEVINAS, 2001, p. 80). This evasion, according to Levinas, translates into “ethical liturgy” (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 46), far beyond cultural and religious rituals, as in the example of “tonsuring the head” and “depriving oneself from drinking wine”. That is, it is an ethical way of withdrawing from handsome appearances, representations or drunkenness that anesthetize the awakening conscience from the weight of the responsibility of ‘I-myself’ for all the others [humans].

These practices, however, are associated with the austerity and the self-emptying *kenosis* of a person, in order to refer to them the immediacy of approaching the others who are instituted by means of an ethical relationship. The cultivating of personal appearances and the life of dissoluteness are, therefore, referred to the personifying representations or false images of person, and this is no less comparable to the kind of idolatry. Therefore, if there exists a space for the *theology of liberation* as an interrupting suspension of the inducing *seduction* that pursues it, then this *lofty* is due to the *styles* or to the “ethical language of contact with the others that *disenchants* the discourse of God that does not pass through the discerning sieve of responsibility for the other” (LEVINAS, 2001, p. 78). In this sense, the philosopher asserts, “the person who is consecrated to God does not seek the meaning of God in some theological *system*” (LEVINAS, 2001, p.78), but in vulnerability, in poverty and in the self-emptying, so that, despite himself, he is able to help the other person, whose respiration/breath-sigh of death is consubstantiating with the proclamation of the word-God with an absolute meaningfulness.

Concluding considerations

In conclusion, it is worth emphasizing that if the *(teo)prophetic of the liberation* was the proto form of theology that found echoes or sympathy in and through the *wisdom of the love to the service of love*. Thanks to the rediscovery of the character of the Revelation, the Living Word and the Inter (Telling) due to the primacy of the ethical sense over the very theological [significance] drift, then there is much to be disenchanted in this theological practice. Despite this observation, it seems that this theology has not yet managed to free itself from the existing collusion between the ethical phenomenality and the temporal phenomenality of the being in a discernible way. However, the time of ethical phenomenality does not coincide at all with the manifestation and the language of the being. The former is guided by the separation/reconciliation of the other and by the Other-in-the-Oneself, Goodness beyond the being; while the latter is guided by the Manifestation of the Being. It is, therefore, the goodness of the other that moves creation, revelation and redemption, and not the character of the flexible factuality and the perception of the body, the mere exteriority of the *-being-in-the-world*. Before discovering the Exteriority of the body and the world, of the carnality of the gratifying corporal Sensuousness, humanity [of the being humane] consists of the sensibility to the derma, to the height of emotion while contacting with the others, because it is given in an ethical corpus to become the-gift-sign-endowment-of-oneself-in-the-flesh-gratuitously-granting-to-the-others. That is why the *(theo)prophetic* of liberation has a long way to go in order to rehabilitate the ethical sensitivity in the Latin American and the Caribbean cultural contexts.

Finally, from the perspective of Levinasian philosophy, the *Theology of Liberation*, as well as every form of theology anchored in the Christian Facts, must be attentive and willing to (re)discover in the very soul of the Christianity, in addition to the character of religion/institution, those “altars dedicated to the others” (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 57) that, perhaps, over the centuries, have been hidden under the debris of respective cultural traditions and, consequently, have given reversal feeding to the theological practices. Thus, with a certain reason, in their eagerness to value and promote their ancestral cultures in contrast to the dominantly monopolizing and colonizing culture, they have not yet realized the verticality of the alterity of the other in the midst of their own native autochthonous cultures that they (theologies) aim to promote. For this reason, perhaps, in many cases they have not incorporated this *holiness* of the other into the center of their investigation until the present moment. This, however, seems to be the founding ethical condition that must accompany them, if the theologies intend to, in fact, constitute themselves as supplementary to the ethical-theological language of the voice of the others, instead of

corroborating “the installation of new idolatries” that tend to ignore this call/vehement silence of the poor/holy/God. In fact, this seducing *magic* that surrounds the theologies would like to make “sciences”, and that would focus on the so-called Christian religion in contemporaneity. By dispensing with “the odour of sanctity that comes from the face” (LEVINAS, 2001, p. 118) there is a serious risk of extolling a pleonastic, redundant sacredness, namely the “god introduced into the circuit of economy” (LEVINAS, 2009, p. 42) that is detrimental to the *ethical canticle of all the canticles* in which the voice of God resonates with meaningfulness in the heart of the Christ-Event beyond every religion.

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Article submitted on January 28, 2020 and accepted on April 20, 2020.

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