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From *cupiditas* to *amor*: To build the common through political love

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Abstract: *In 'From cupiditas to amor' I want to develop a trace given by Antonio Negri in the preface to Potentia of poverty. Marx reads Spinoza: "A further passage is necessary [...]: namely, to tie the experience of poverty to an ontology of 'cupiditas' [desire], that is, of 'amor' [love]." (Negri 2006, ix).*

According to Negri, in our struggle against poverty we should pass from cupiditas to amor. But what can it mean today to pass from 'cupiditas' to 'amor'?

For me it is the indication of a need, the urgency of the construction of a politics of love. Today I find its main feature, which I will call the methodology of the construction of the ontological common, outside the realm of philosophy, in the works of two women, the theologian Teresa Forcades and the writer Michela Murgia.

To let philosophy meet theology is a task whose breadth and depth can here only be outlined. We will focus just on one aspect: that aspect of 'queer theology' which defines it as routing every hierarchy, every power through a transversality, an openness to multiplicity as constitutive of the new subject we are today. A new subject which is such because constituted in and by the common. The task of any political love is thus to find the most just ways to let this common constitute itself in affirmative lives.

Keywords: *Potentia of poverty; Antonio Negri; Michela Murgia and Teresa Forcades; colpotic ratio; political causa sui*

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1. Introduction

I want to develop a trace given by Antonio Negri in the preface to *Potentia of poverty. Marx reads Spinoza*[1]: "A further passage is necessary [...]: namely, to tie the experience of poverty to an ontology of '*cupiditas*' [desire], that is, of '*amor*' [love]". According to Negri, in our struggle against poverty we should pass from *cupiditas* to *amor.* But what can it mean today to pass from '*cupiditas*' to '*amor*'? For me it is the indication of a need, the urgency of the construction of a politics of love. Today I find its main feature, which I will call the *methodology* of the construction of the ontological common, outside the realm of philosophy, in the works of two women, the theologian Teresa Forcades and the writer Michela Murgia.

To let philosophy meet theology in this particular instance is a task whose breadth and depth can here only be outlined. We will focus just on one aspect: that aspect of 'queer theology' which defines it as routing every hierarchy, every power through a transversality, an openness to multiplicity as constitutive of the new subject we are today[2]. A new subject which is such because constituted in and by the common. The task of any political love is thus to find the most adequate – just, constitutive – ways to let this common constitute itself in affirmative lives. Michela Murgia, writer and activist, in her *God save the Queer. Feminist Catechism*, gave some directions in the light of the queer theology proposed by Teresa Forcades. I want here to reflect on how the proposal of queerness contained in Forcades's theological anthropology, and discussed in Murgia's feminist catechism, meets, in an extremely fruitful way, those readings of the Spinozian substance that want it politically and ethically a production of modes, that is, of us, humanity. This can open new spaces of understanding the ethical space and time that we are called to live, it can open to a new conceptual production regarding the thought of God, of the feminine and the masculine, of sexuality, of the texture of the interweaving of essence and existence. With 'essence' I mean what Walter Benjamin called 'the soul of the living'[3], and Spinoza 'conatus' that invisible force of persevering in life, common to us all. With 'existence' I mean its actuated expression.

[1] Antonio Negri, Preface to Margherita Pascucci, *Potentia of poverty. Marx reads Spinoza* (Leiden: Brill, 2023), ix [originally in *Potenza della povertà. Marx legge Spinoza* (Verona: ombre corte, 2006)].

[2] On this new subject traversed and constituted by the multitude so much of contemporary philosophy has already worked. From the thousand plateaus Body without Organs in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's multitude to Donna Haraway, from the transindividual in Etienne Balibar to the new subject of Judith Butler. The purpose of this contribution goes in another direction, but I want just to hint to its contextualisation in contemporary philosophy.

[3] See Judith Butler, "One time traverses another, Benjamin's *Theological-Political Fragment*", https://egs.edu/biography/judith-butler/ [accessed 26 October 2023]

2. Murgia encounters Forcades

Michela Murgia visited Teresa Forcades in her monastery in Montserrat in 2013 bringing to Forcades her book *Ave Mary. And the church invented the woman*:

> If you want to delve deeper into the Trinitarian question in relation to queerness, a good first approach is to read 'The Trinity, today', that is, the doctoral thesis of Sister Teresa Forcades, a Catalan Benedictine nun, doctor and theologian, whom I had the pleasure of meeting person in Monserrat in 2013 and whose thoughts on the matter then evolved to give life to the volume entitled *We are all different! For a queer theology* […][4].

The Trinity is, for Forcades, relationality. She explains this in numerous publications and public interventions, underlining how the person is always identified by a social relationship (I = daughter of, mother of, wife of...), from Tertullian, who was the first to use the definition of God and his relationship in the theological field, to Saint Augustine for whom the subject is defined by personal irreducibility and constitutive relationality. In the footsteps of Augustine, what interests Forcades's reflection and her proposal of theological anthropology is the Trinity as an expression of 'constitutive relationality'. In her proposal there are three areas that define this new anthropology: space, time and sexuality.

"Space for the human", says Forcades, "allows us to experience what it means to be an image of God, in God there is no space but there is reciprocity, what space is for man is reciprocity in God, he is a trinitary God." While "the philosophical definition of God is his containing himself, his being sufficient, not depending, not being in a necessary relationship with anyone, a constitutive relationality, a reciprocity is new for me"[5]. It is here a first commonality between my reflection and Forcades's theology: this constitutive relationality that defines the trinitarian God, and which hosts inside itself movement, the dynamics of life, is for me the *causa sui* [cause of itself] (of the substance, of God) which, through the modes, becomes, continuously, life. That is, a *causa sui* whose main life-engine (to be and to be conceived by nothing but itself) is, in fact, a becoming, the production of the modes. '*Sui*' is[6] contemporaneously objective and subjective genitive, where

[4] Michela Murgia, *God save the queer. Catechismo femminista* (Torino: Einaudi, 2022), 133.
[5] This new paradigm is explained very clearly in the Lectio Magistralis by Teresa Forcades, "What is queer theology", meeting organised by Castelvecchi Editore and Filosofia in Movimento, in collaboration with Macro Asilo, [2 October 2019, ttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxfqIeYjO7U accessed 2 October 2023]. Translation is mine.
[6] We could call it a *dvandva*, "A class of compound word consisting of two elements having a coordinate relationship as if connected by 'and'" (Collins Dictionary online [access 6 October 2023]). I thank Claudio Mazzolani for this word and the idea that it contains.

formal and objective meet and express themselves one through the other. It is this contemporaneity and reciprocal expressionality that define a 'causa sui' which discovers itself to be made by the modes. I call it the 'political causa sui'. We will see that its texture is a modality of love, love as a praxis of building itself as common, of constituting itself in and as the common. But to follow the rhythm of Forcades's and Murgia's proposals, let us focus, first, on Forcades's definition of 'queer theology' and then on Murgia's multitudinous God, a "God-community", an "indivisible communion of people", which is a "modality of loving".

3. The three axes of constitutive relationality: space, time, sexuality

In the Lectio magistralis "What is queer theology", organised in 2019 by Castelvecchi editore and Filosofia in movimento, Forcades quotes from memory Abram Yoshuha Heschel's work, *The Sabbath. Its meaning for modern man*: "unlike Christianity in the context of Jewish spirituality value is given to time, which is more divine than space – in time we are all contemporaries – this moment belongs to me as it does to you."

I read this reference as such: human time is mutual presence, being contemporary profiles the space that defines life. Following Spinoza, we can understand this human time as *sub specie aeternitatis* and experience it as infinite modes, while God's time is beatitude, the *causa sui* fully expressed: the substance whose essence implies existence, that which does not need anything else to conceive itself. In my reading, for Spinoza God's time is implication, the continuous infinite implication of essence into existence. The product of this implication is us. God, then, as the implication of essence into existence is the free necessity of life, infinite expression of this union: the eternity of nature, of what lives, is realized – or rather: it actuates itself, gives life – in pulsating presence, into existence. This implication, I believe, is what Forcades calls 'constitutive relationality' and which defines what, in her anthropological theology, the figure of the Trinity wants to express. Forcades continues in her Lectio magistralis: "For me: space, time and sex are equally divine, they are opportunities to experience something that is fulfilled in God".

The three areas, or axes, that define this constitutive relationality, space, time and sexuality, are traversed by two characteristics of modernity: denial and absolutization. "To deny space (a characteristic of imperialism, colonialism) is to deny difference. To absolutize space is estrangement, illusion, projecting ourselves onto others, closure, solipsism. To deny time is to deny change: it leads to fundamentalism [...] To absolutize time is relativism." The affirmative position is

reciprocity (for space) and fidelity (for time). Forcades introduces here the concept of truth as "existential truth, that we can call fidelity". Reciprocity over time is fidelity.

We arrive at the characteristic of sexuality: sexuality is understanding oneself in the dimension of the constitutive relationship. If sex is constitutive relationality, the denial of this constitutive relationality "leads to stereotypical masculinity; its absolutization to stereotypical femininity, to a woman's self-perception with difficulty in accepting the personal irreducibility". The affirmative position is, if I follow her correctly, the maximum vitality of intimacy.

'Queer theology' gathers in itself all three affirmative aspects. Forcades says: queer theology asks for a recognition of personal evolution which cannot be of a generic form, and which exists in God. Personal, evolution, God: personal evolution in God. It is thus traced the proposal of her anthropological theology: in the case of space it is *reciprocity*, in the case of time it is *existential truth as fidelity*; in the case of sexuality it is fire as passion, *maximum vitality:*

> [W]hat Hildegard von Bingen, speaking of God, called '*viriditas*' [...] the *verdor* of God is the maximum vitality, what happens when you plant a seed, a *semilla*, you have an explosion of life... this dimension of explosive and vital multiplication of what we call *semilla*, the human experience holds the possibility of feeling alive thanks to sexuality [...] sexuality [...] a profound strength and vitality [...] this characteristic of the mystical tradition: God as an ability to transgress the norm, to mess up everything, an almost need to transgress, *ecstasis*, what comes out[7].

All three are God's aspects, which we, its body/mind, experience: reciprocity (common construction of the selves), fidelity (persevering in constitutive relationality), maximum vitality (the intimacy of sex)[8].

For philosophy, says Forcades, it is difficult to grasp this because the reality of God is not lacking anything, not depending on anything, and how can this be combined with a God who seeks the human being, who desires, and whose desire changes himself? I would say to a certain philosophy. Because there is another one which knows, since the seventeenth century of Spinoza, that the *causa sui* is such in as much as it is production of the new. God, the substance, is *conatus*, it is desire, it is that vitality which strives to be and to persevere in being. There cannot be *causa sui* if not in constitutive relations: moving from the relation one has with oneself.

[7] *Ibidem*. All these quotes are taken from Teresa Forcades's *Lectio magistralis*, "What is queer theology".
[8] It reminds me of the 'atemporal' of the messianic in Butler's reading of Benjamin's *Theological-Political Fragment*, one time [divine] traversing, entering the other [profane].

This God-reciprocity that Forcades proposes is very similar to the God of Yehudah Abravanel[9], who needed men to *become*. And whose visible expression of becoming was love. In a tradition, still Spinozian, we could say that the passage from *cupiditas* to *amor*[10] is precisely to develop the *causa sui* as the material expression of God, to open it to its own becoming, to flesh and bones, to time, human time, to understand that it is we, the modes, in our body-mind of infinite modes, that produce, every day, the substance, *for love*. The modes produce the substance in that they develop, or unfold, God, the essence, as substance, the existence.

> [T]his human sexuality for me is destined not to procreation which forms part of its possibilities [...] from the biblical point of view, it is at the centre of humanity, in the case of *Genesis* it is to overcome the solitude that does not allow this expression of the human, this strength, the ability to lose control, the limits that constitute 'oneself' [...] in sex: opportunity for humanization [...] the characteristic of this experience is not the masculine or the feminine [...] it is the complementarity"; "the theological question is *ecstasis*: coming out of myself to meet you [...] the possibility of getting lost [...] this risk is the vibration of going out of oneself to reach the other [...] this ecstatic experience characterizes the maximum human of the sexual experience[11].

The definition that Teresa Forcades gives us of queer theology is clear: "The need to go further, to recognize the fullness of the human by transcending every category and claiming a unique and original character is what I call 'queer theology' and this allows me to talk about 'minority' sexuality within the church"[12].

Added to this proposal of theological anthropology is a fascinating new critical reading of the 'seminal ratio' and what it entails ethically, socially and politically. The 'seminal ratio' is a translation and conceptual expansion of the Stoic *logos spermatikos* whereby the spermatic logos, when meeting the Christian tradition, first with Justin Martyr and then later taken up by Augustine, becomes the divine seed placed in everything from which becoming takes place. Forcades contrasts

[9] See Judah Leon Abravanel, *Dialogues of Love* [1535], ed. by Damian Bacich and Rossella Pescatori (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).
[10] See note 1.
[11] Teresa Forcades, "What is queer theology".
[12] *Ibidem*.

this tradition with another, which she is developing[13]: a "kolpotic ratio", a power of hospitality and embracing, an 'empowering', a virtual cavity from which becoming originates and comes to life:

> Justin Martyr: *logos spermatikos*, a seed for all the world, like a fine *llueva*, the rational seed that is inside every person, from the Stoic philosophy, in the second century he uses it to talk about Christ (…) This image has dominated history, theology (…) In the Gospel of St. John, there is another image: there is a colpotic rationality, *kolpos*: vagina, in the introductory hymn of the Gospel, Jesus is in the *kolpos* of the father: queer image of the father, a father with vaginal cavity, *kolpos*: virtual cavity [...] a possibility of hospitality, of embrace, which adapts to what it welcomes [...] image used for the sea [...] This idea of a kolpotic Jesus, of God kolpotic, of kolpotic humanity, means thinking of God in sexual terms, not reducible to the separable sexual sphere, but opening to a reading of the human that has a profound dimension[14].

4. Forcades's kolpotic ratio and my *causa sui*

Teresa Forcades analyzes in detail the reference to *kolpos* in the Bible and its uses, that could revolutionise our reading of the Father as *logos spermatikos* and open to a "*Father kolpoticos"* (in his relation to Jesus), a *Son kolpotikos* (in his relation to the disciples), a *logos kolpoticos* (as "any kind of intimate relationship", my reading: the Holy Spirit, as interiority and embodiment of the virtuality, as the concrete chance, of this intimate relationship[15]).

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[13] See Teresa Forcades, "Body, Desire and Identity: Reflections on the notion of κόλπος as applied to Father and the Son", in Karl-Heinz Ruhstorfer (ed.) *Zwischen Progression und Regression* (Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 2019), 245-265, mainly 252 fll.: "The apologist Justin Martyr identified in the 2nd century the figure of Jesus with the *Logos spermatikos* coming from Stoic philosophy. According to Stoicism, God, the source of all Reason, has spread God's seed in the world and has planted it particularly within the human beings, who are to be distinguished from the animals precisely by the fact of *being rational* (sharing in the divine Logos). Inspired by the opening of the gospel of John*: In the beginning was the Logos* (ὁ λόγος) *and the Logos* (ὁ λόγος) *was with God, and the Logos* (ὁ λόγος) *was God* (Jn 1:1), Justin Martyr claimed that all those who orient their lives to the pursue of philosophy (rational wisdom) are to be considered 'honorary Christians', even if they lived and died before the birth of Christ [...] I celebrate that in the 2nd century Christian theology dared to link Jesus with the stoic *Logos* of Greek philosophy; the apologists, Justin Martyr chief among them, set the stage for a fruitful dialogue between the rational quest for the meaning of life and the Christian kerygma. The gospel of John, however, being originally linked not to Stoic philosophy but to the Hebrew tradition of the female personification of Wisdom, allows us to develop another image of the Logos, the *Logos kolpotikos*, that I would like to contrast with the traditional *Logos spermatikos*. The *Logos spermatikos* is linguistically and analogically related to an aspect of masculine sexuality. The *Logos kolpotikos*, by contrast, is linguistically and analogically related to an aspect of feminine sexuality, and for that reason has the potential to unsettle the exclusivity of the intimate bodily association between masculinity and Christ." (*Ibidem*).

[14] Teresa Forcades, "What is queer theology".

[15] "The fourth and last appearance of the word κόλπος in the NT corresponds to the English word 'bay or gulf' and relates originally to the mythical intercourse taking place between the goddess of the sea and the goddess of the earth as

I think that this new concept that Forcades uncovers for us expresses her powerful notion of co-creation. It is mutuated from the Jewish Kabbalah[16], and I believe it could be worth to investigate it further in the sense of the Christian Kabbalah[17]: the *logos kolpoticos* is our pulsating participation "to the 'inner' life of God", which, as the sea and the gulf, advance one into the other: "The mystery of the Trinity takes on existential meaning for us, humans, in these Johannine images that so boldly invite us to take part in the 'inner' life of God."[18]. This 'participation', if I read well Forcades, is experienced as the dynamic reciprocity of the 'circuminsession'[19]: "'an insitting or indwelling (insessio) in rotation or reciprocally' (Oxford English Dictionary)."[20].

For our discourse it is extremely important the indwelling (affirmation and persevering of the being's conatus in Spinoza), the reciprocity (co-creation) and the crossing (one into the other, the other into one[21]) which happen in this ontological dance. God, the substance, is a dynamic relationship: a dynamis which produces further being, in reciprocity, advancing in us as we advance in her.[22] The rhythm of this affirmative reciprocity, together with opening creation to a constant novelty of itself, is also 'just': reciprocity and being, in a dynamic relation, proceed commonly, the very ratio of reciprocity cannot but be common. And if also this ratio of reciprocity is '*kolpotikos*', that is, a virtual cavity of embracing and fruitfulness, then, what I elsewhere have defined 'political causa sui', that is, a cause of itself which potentiates one's own being through *adequately* being constituted by and constituting others, finds its joyful line of actualization.

5. The economic aspect of a kolpotic ratio

To me the "kolpotic ratio" has also another crucial value of socio-economic importance. The *logos spermatikos* is in fact the seed of the seminal ratio which, in Augustine, defines the divine sparkle of all becoming, and later, in the Franciscan economists, mainly Peter Johannes Olivi, comes to

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they advance into each other. According to Thayer, the Italian 'golfo' or the English 'gulf' may be the only surviving representatives of the Greek word κόλπος in modern languages (other than Greek)" (Teresa Forcades, "Body, Desire and Identity", 257). In the previous page: "If we take κόλπος as a metaphor for our capacity to receive love and intimacy, Jesus in Luke is inviting his hearers to acknowledge that God is willing to give Him/Herself to us in order to become intimate with us to the exact measure that we are ready to care for others." (256).

[16] See here the last pages of the article.

[17] For example, of Franz von Baader's notion of "Christ in us" as the seed of creation. See later here.

[18] Teresa Forcades, "Body, Desire and Identity", 257

[19] *Ibidem.*

[20] *Ibidem.*

[21] Here again the mind goes to Butler's reading of the messianic time in Benjamin. See here note 3, 8.

[22] Forcades's discourse is powerful, refined and detailed. I refer to it in its entirety for the extremely important theological implications (see 259 fll.). Here I touch it only briefly and for the focus of this contribution.

define "capital" as "ratio seminalem lucrosi"[23]. I read elsewhere the parabola, which, from the birth of capital as 'seminal ratio', arrives today – as its development in Western metaphysics – to the virtual, a 'destructive, deforming virtual', which is the texture of contemporary Capital, to which I try to counter-pose a different reading, of an adequate virtuality, expression and constitution of a production of life which is the adequate production of ourselves and has nothing to do with the mechanism, and abuses, of Capital. My discourse is a philosophical one, and I call it the plane of *potentia* against power[24].

Forcades's queer theology proposes us a 'kolpotic ratio' which could constitute another 'ratio' with which to counter-pose the dynamics of the seminal ratio, the germinal seed, of Capital.

I find here another space where theology takes philosophy by hand: that philosophy which cannot conceive God if not as independent, as an absolute *causa sui*, opens, leaning over itself, to a third dimension: *causa* becomes *sui* only loving a third (the I-you involves not a third as such but a virtual third, the relation itself). Thus, the *logos spermatikos*, the seminal ratio, are not enough to constitute themselves as 'causa sui', they can be only trace of an encounter, eventually an I met by a you, or a you meeting an I. The 'kolpotic ratio' introduces the third dimension of the relation, it is the 'sui' which opens to its own texture, which opens its own texture to the dynamic which constitutes the self. The 'causa sui' recognizes - or knows for the first time - that it is made by 'alio', the 'sui' can be such only when it receives the other as constitutive and makes itself constitutive for others. Starting from oneself as other, as Marx called the main materialist act. Its texture entails the relation I-you, it is the implication of the essence into existence, the very dynamic of all creation, starting from the one of the self. *kolpos* as the bend where the sea rests.

6. Sexuality, queer

Let us go back to Forcades's theo-anthropological paradigm, sexuality. The profound dimension reached with sexuality is the drawing on a vital force specific to a *causa sui* which is understood in relationality (life space) and thus implies its essence in existence (life-time). 'Queer' is therefore a principle of personal uniqueness which, as I interpret it, makes us comprehend God and us as *sub specie aeterni* humanity: the opening of the *causa sui* which abandons its solitude by understanding

[23] See Margherita Pascucci, *Causa sui. Saggio sul capitale e il virtuale* (Verona: ombre corte 2010), 21-63; Ead., *Macchina Capitale. Genesi e struttura dello sfruttamento* (Verona: ombre corte, 2022), 71-191.

[24] I dealt with this elsewhere, trying to develop a theoretical line which scholars such as Emilia Giancotti Boscherini and Antonio Negri individuated many years ago. Allow me to refer to *Potentia of poverty. Marx reads Spinoza* (Leiden: Brill, 2023; [it. trans. Verona: ombre corte, 2006]); and the texts quoted in the previous footnote.

itself as a relationship of implication of its essence in existence. The Trinity is the opening of this new space of life (understanding oneself in relationality) and of this new time of life (implication of the essence in existence). How could I read this queer Trinity, that Forcades proposes us, as a secular philosopher? Maybe, as such: to understand ourselves as a relationship produces a new space of life (openness to multiple levels of the self, of the relation I-you: a fourth person of the singular) and to imply the essence into existence means producing time as constitutivity (a thread, warmth says the physicist[25], which constantly weaves an affirmative texture (being)).

What this 'constitutivity' means in ethical terms is explained further on. Forcades closes her Lectio: "in the *Letter to the Galatians*, 3, 28 in God there is no longer male or female ["There is neither Jew nor Greek here; there is neither slave nor free; there is neither male nor female; because you are all one in Christ Jesus"], our human being is a pilgrimage, a movement, it always goes forward, we cannot have it in a definitive way". It is this theological, profoundly ontological openness to what we do not know because we have yet to become, that which for Forcades defines *queerness*.

In my terms of secular philosopher *queerness* is the opening of the *causa sui*, of the motor of the substance, that which produces further being, to her own intimate movement: to bend over our desire, our conatus, and find, from within, the lines of actualisation of its virtual vital force.

7. Trinity as intimacy. Or the *potentia* of love

20 August 2023. Einaudi publishing house, her publisher, in the cultural section of one of the main Italian newspapers, dedicates an entire blank page to Michela Murgia: her name is in red, at the top of the page, there are her dates of birth and death, and below, in the centre: "To Michela, who wanted to build the future until the last day"[26]. Michela Murgia was an Italian writer and activist. Leftist, advocate of human rights and of a queer, free society, she was also a theologian[27].

The future that Murgia wanted to build is a full, passionate, joyful and intense act of an equal full, passionate, joyful and intense desire. I will focus only on one aspect from *God Save the Queer. Feminist Catechism,* that linked her to Teresa Forcades, from that meeting in Montserrat in 2013 to the quote found on pages 80-81 of Murgia's book. This is the concept of the Trinity as openness, an

[25] See Carlo Rovelli, *L'ordine del tempo* (Torino: Einaudi, 2017).
[26] La Lettura*, Il Corriere della Sera*, 20 August 2023.
[27] Her second novel, *Accabadora*, won two important Italian prizes. It is the story of a woman from Sardinia who carries out natural euthanasia for the people of the village who ask her to do so.

expression of the "God-community"[28], an "indivisible communion of people"[29], a God who, multitudinous, is a *way of loving*[30]. Murgia quotes from Forcades, who in turn reports Saint Victor:

> Love needs at least three people to be realized in its completeness, because the greatest joy of loving and being loved by another cannot be shared by the you and the I who love each other. The I loves the You and the You loves the I: the love of one and the other has opposite directions, there is a tension, a latent and inevitable frustration of communion in the love of the I for the You, when this love seeks completeness in itself, when it closes itself, when it excludes a third person. The loving experience of I and you is different, it cannot be shared. Only when they love a third person, the I and the You completely share the same experience of love and this brings them complete happiness and brings to completion the intrinsic dynamic of love[31].

It is here, writes Murgia, that "the question of Trinity is not only not abstract and sidereal but concerns us profoundly"[32].

Of the number three – fundamental for the history of every divinity, for the conception of infinity, etc. – the important thing is its thirdness which defeats the binary formula. It is the place of -n. The fact that this -n element, which defeats, or strengthens, the other two, is the Holy Spirit, as Murgia tells us further in the text, is relevant because it reminds us of that third arrow, that invisible, virtual force, which, in Walter Benjamin, is the arrow of the messianic. Colpotic, this virtual force. Which makes space within itself to welcome, which implies the essence into existence, thus becoming time, the vibrant body of that love which is a continuous expression of this implication, a well, or a vulcano, in activity. Force with subversive potential compared to the power that subjugates, empowering, enriching force of every affirmative process:

> The Holy Spirit seems to be the divine Person most qualified in radical changes: when he bursts into human history something big happens, but despite his explosive force the Spirit in the Scriptures remains an elusive and delicate essence, whose mysterious power is expressed more willingly in the whisper of a breeze than in the roar of thunder [...] [the Spirit, ed.] hides an *enormous subversive potential*, which shakes every claim of established

[28] Michela Murgia, *God save the queer. Catechismo femminista* (Torino, Einaudi, 2022), 95.
[29] Ibid., 80.
[30] Ibid., 81.
[31] *Ibidem*.
[32] *Ibidem*.

> order or dogmatism. The Christian concept of the Holy Spirit, authorizing full subjectivity and the expression of the charisma received in anyone, is *a 'natural' activator of empowerment processes*. It prevents power, both social and religious, from suffocating the possibility of being judged, fought and, if necessary, subverted. Empowerment is never a painless process[33].

The Holy Spirit as "natural activator of empowerment processes", hiding an "enormous subversive potential" is what, secularly, I call the 'political causa sui', motor and inner knowledge of the need of this activation.
God-community, a God "so strongly relational", "the awareness that the relationship within the Trinity was an open and inclusive circle" leads Murgia to reconsider transcendence and move towards an intimacy, a common body, which opposes to the power that comes from transcendence.

> There was something intimate in that Trinity, but the idea of intimacy with God was opposite to that of the sacredness belonging to every religion that venerates a personalized entity. Ultimately, it is much more understandable to want to imagine divinity as something radically distant from oneself, because it is not from those who are equal to you that you can expect salvation. The inaccessibility of the divine, the conception of mystery, the concept of the sacred as separate from the human are what pushes us to bend the knee before an altar, shrinking ourselves to better exalt the magnificence of the being adored[34].

Potentia and intimacy go together: *potentia* in the Spinozian sense of *virtus*, a propulsive and affirmative force of being. *Potentia* in the sense of virtual colpotic force, a *modality of loving*. Transcendence, then, which dissolves into immanence thanks to space – and to time, to sexuality – which occurs in the very concept of the Trinity, in the opening of God and Jesus to the Holy Spirit, the I and the you, who love each other, implement reciprocity in undressing their own self, in undressing the you with respect to me, the me in respect to you, thus becoming multitudes – the fourth person of the singular, as Gilles Deleuze called it, that free indirect discourse that produces further life and whose nature is an implication open to every becoming.
What does it mean a subject which becomes the fourth person of the singular, the free indirect discourse of itself, of her-his-its own subjectivity? It means to discover, to feel, to accept to be in movement, dynamic at the core, where the threshold line of self-definition is a dune in the desert,

[33] Ibid., 91, emph. added.
[34] Ibid., 97.

always changing, always incorporating the multitude and renouncing the solitude of the self. It means to be in direct contact with the profound teeming of the *causa sui,* subjectivity in its making. A subjectivity which is no longer appropriative, it is a subjectivity-sea, which enters and departs, a subjectivity-earth, which welcomes, fertilizes and feeds; a subjectivity-air, which breaths deep and strongly blows as the wind; a subjectivity-mountain which holds firmly in altitude; a subjectivity-fire, which burns of passion and loves; a subjectivity-water which flows fresh and wets all. How does this constitute the fourth person of the singular? Because to perceive this is no longer a fact of consciousness – me reflecting on myself, the old Cartesian cogito - no, it is a fact of the common, of the making of the common, the ethical formation of the self, it is the experience of that 'undressing' at the same time of constituting the 'God-community', the substance which is never a given but a 'to give'. And a 'take in', as well. The free indirect discourse of the subjectivity – so evoke in us these two women theologians - is that virtual third (for me: the relation itself in its dynamicity) that makes of me, of you, a space, time, intimacy of relationality that constitute bends of new being, of true wealth. No one is excluded, because the third is the open, the multitude incarnate and present. This God-community and the Holy Spirit "activator of empowerment" make philosophy wish to be able to desire God.

Why to talk here about the 'ontology of political love'? Because a new being arises – transindividual, multitudinous [ontology]; whose modality is to love [of love], which means: to implicate the essence in existence, that is, to constitute new being [essence in existence: constitutive being]; whose field of action is the collectivity, the [political] community, that reciprocity whose 'existential truth is fidelity', where fidelity means continuous weaving, continuous intertwining with presence, that presence in which one confides and to which one abandons oneself. The vital force of this new transindividual being is the sharing of that profound dimension of intimacy, the understanding of each other in an 'infinite way', we as expressions of "Di3-comunità" [God*-community][35].

The *causa sui* becomes political[36], ethical, here: we, the mode which is conceived through other[37], finds, in its conceiving itself through other, the cause of itself: s-he-it loves, is loved, and is already a multitude. The 'engine', the function of the 'ab alio', the being conceived through another is desire [*cupiditas*], a virtual force which finds its line of actualisation [*causa sui*] in love [*amor*]. It is

[35] Murgia uses the expression "*Di3-comunità*" thus giving to 3 the task of saying the transgender aspect of God, in Italian: Dio, masculin. I leave it here in Italian, simply expressing 3 as *.

[36] With 'political' I mean throughout the article that field, or task, of ensuring true wealth, i.e., the common good, *bene comune*, to all.

[37] The Spinozian 'to be conceived through other', proper of the mode, could be read also, with a slight, but not incorrect, shift in meaning as: 'to be conceived as something else (than itself)', which is the young Marx's definition of the materialist act: to conceive oneself as someone else.

here that Negri's necessary passage from *cupiditas* to *amor* and Forcades's desire of God could talk to each other: it is our comprehension of the political, ethical *causa sui*, of our capacity to act, to produce further being, further substance, our task of implicating essence into existence, for love[38].

8. What is meant here with 'political causa sui', and what is political, what is ethical, in it

'Causa sui' is a concept, a feature, attributed to God. No one has attributed it to humanity. This is something I am proposing. Heir of the self-causation of Plotinus' One, it came to define with Descartes and Spinoza the self-production of the substance. The first definition of Spinoza's *Ethics* goes: "By that which is self–caused I mean that whose essence involves existence; or that whose nature can be conceived only as existing" (*Ethics*, I, def. 1).

The *Ethics* starts with the definition of the *causa sui*, the self-caused substance as that "whose essence involves existence" and "whose nature can be conceived only as existing". Essence and existence, then, mutually involved, and a nature which can be conceived only as existing. If we think of this from the perspective of existence – because, what is essence by now if not a continuous "source that is indistinguishable from its origin and that gives itself to all rivers", that "life of an immense tree, which is widespread everywhere, but which does not lose its character as a principle, nor does it dissipate completely, remaining well founded at its root"[39], in Spinozian words, the implication of being, conceiving and existence?[40] – we understand 'causa sui', a self-caused substance, as what has the capacity of involving this everlasting springing source - being-conceiving-existing -, in time, in transforming self-moving matter [existence], that whose nature, in fact, can only exist. And, what if, instead of thinking of this capacity of self-causation as given by a transcendent power, were we to think of it as a *potentia* inner to all human beings and things? It would not be so far from Plotinus' One, except for the fact that we [I] no longer believe in a transcendent One, but in Spinoza's free, open, all encompassing substance. Eternally (open ended time) self-moving, eternally [essentially, springing] existing.

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[38] This combination could appear strange, anomalous. It is in a completely secular perspective that I am letting these two thoughts meet. As for the relation with Capital; I think that the passage from 'cupiditas' to 'amor', could be understood as becoming our own political *causa sui*: it is by taking in this task, by letting our subject be the multitude that already is, the implication of essence into existence, that Capital can be fought. Poverty is the outcry of the multitude that something is profoundly wrong, that that necessary implication of essence into existence is constantly betrayed.

[39] Plotinus, *Enneads*, III, 8, 10.

[40] Spinoza, *Ethics* II, def. 2: "I say that to the essence of any thing belongs that which, being given, the thing is necessarily posited and which, being taken away, the thing is necessarily taken away; or that without which the thing can neither be nor be conceived, and which can neither be nor be conceived without the thing". Implication which can be that of an everlasting sources to all rivers, or that of a tree to roots, crown and branches.

If Spinoza did not affirm it, he gave though the seed, and the horizon, to develop it as such. Antonio Negri introduced us to it. By 'political causa sui' I mean the capacity, the potentia, that each one of us has, to constitute her-his own life, to be the active producer of the conatus, the effort to persevere in life, a just life. This capacity is ontological, but should also be extended to the political field: for example, labour. Each one of us should have the possibility, and before this, the capacity, to be a 'living labourer', to have a 'living life', and not to be presupposed, in her-his time-being as labourer, by a bigger, extraneous, violent force, as Capital is.

When I say that this *causa sui* is also ethical, I mean that it is at the level of collectivity that this ontology should start over. Because only if it is based on a new subjectivity – a multitudinarious, becoming, composite, freely necessary and collective, essentially involving existence, being-, this political and ethical *causa sui* can affirm itself.

9. The experience of intimacy

The construction of the 'political causa sui', or, if we want, the passage that Negri asked us to do from 'cupiditas' to 'amor', seems similar to the dissolution of transcendence into immanence found in Murgia's idea of intimacy and faith: "Faith is pure virtuality"[41]. Pure virtuality is 'what can happen' - in its concrete perspective of being affected by the new.

It is the door of the self open. The direct grasp on the making of the subject, of its relations, of its time (and space, and sexuality). Virtuality as comprehension, the prospective vision of all the other possibilities of being. It is the sense of the dream, of the desire, and the virtuous perspective of its coming true. It is the engine of every becoming. Which cannot be subjected to any power, but can only be, left free. It is the implication of the differential, of the unknown becoming, which moves on those invisible, and virtual, implications of the order of encounters:

> Every distinction between real and virtual, when it comes to the interiority of people, is therefore first of all useless, because it prevents us from understanding the Ətther and does not generate any encounter, and in the second instance it is harmful, because it establishes a hierarchy of value between experiences, distinguishing them into true and false even regardless of what those, who have lived them, think[42].

[41] Michela Murgia, *God save the queer*, 105.
[42] Ibid., 106.

The experience of intimacy therefore, of this pure virtuality that is faith, entrusting ourselves to sharing the time that takes place inside our bodies, to the thought inside our minds, this bending inside ourselves, through all the encounters we have, which makes us feel the folds, the waves, of intensity, this is experiencing, I think to understand from Murgia, from Forcades, the God-community, a transindividual Jesus who "has always treated his flesh as a synthesis of that of everyone*": "Jesus is a queer Messiah in the true sense of the word, that is, eccentric, unusual, in the original German etymology also a Messiah '*di traverso*', diagonal to the lines drawn by the theocratic society in which he lives"[43].

10. The queer Messiah. Queerness as a chiasm, a crossing

Here at stake is more than the theological legitimation of queerness: it is the understanding that the Trinitarian faith – in Murgia's, and Forcades's words – means openness to becoming, to transformation, intimacy with the unknown to come. Which can be attracted into being. We could bring in also a secular, philosophical perspective, Judith Butler's "insurrection at the level of ontology"[44]: beyond faith, what a 'Jesus queer Messiah' embodies is the force of creation which each life has of transforming itself, of insurrecting in the very meshes of its texture (ontology).

Causa sui – feature of God, the substance who alone can cause itself – is here, in this 'insurrection' of ontology made feature of all of humanity. Queer theology means evolution in God, means a God who is completed, fulfilled by the path of each creature, and the queerness is the 'open', the to-come of the evolution.

In this sense an 'earthly salvation' cannot but be political: the openness, the becoming are earthly, this is the space and the time of the transformation of being which affects God as well[45].

A queer theology concerns Capital as well, if we want to read an eminent power theology à la Benjamin of "Capitalism as religion"[46]: the 'plus of being', property of a transcendent God, the self-production as motor of creation and God's only prerogative, core of value as profit[47], is, in a queer theology, undone. God is becoming as her creation is unfinished, even more: it is – creation –

[43] Ibid., 110-111.
[44] See the beautiful and important Adriana Zaharijevic, *Judith Butler and Politics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023).
[45] See Jehuda Abravanel, *Dialogues of Love*.
[46] Benjamin's "Capitalism as religion" is a glossa of Nietzsche and focuses on something different from the reflection made here: there, a God is absorbed into humanity's fate, and made guilty, indebted, like Capital which proceeds with interests, function of a relation of guilt/debt [*Schuld*].
[47] Value as profit which ontologically corresponds to a relation of guilt/debt is already stated in the Middle Ages with Franciscan economy. See the work of Giacomo Todeschini and Paolo Evangelisti. Allow me to refer to my *Causa sui*.

just the alpha, which desires the omega but does not know it yet. The omega is to come. And it comes only in life, throughout life.

The 'plus of being', excess of each creature, excess of each of our lives, cannot be property of God as One eminent being, transcendent, unknowable, willing to have a dualistic world, separate by its matter (can we in a queer theology finally talk of God's matter? Isn't it creation God's matter?). Eminence is just a construction of power, of each historical power. A queer theology embodies an immanent self-moving humanity, and nature. I do not know if Forcades could agree with this, we will never know if Murgia would have. Maybe Butler, yes.

11. "The Messiah as the *potentia* of constituent production, the actualisation of political love"[48]

Potentia is constituent production, actualization of political love, constitution of the other as well as of the I, an open I, which, I would say with Butler, is 'vulnerable', 'cohabiting', dispossessed, precarious, and yet, from this dispossession, from this precarity, insurges at ontological level.

In Benjamin the messianic is[49] time, time as crisis, time as rupture, time as ontology, production of further being. It is the grasp on time of the students, it is the time of decay in the allegory, it is the *Augenblick* of the *Jetztzeit* in the *dialektisches Bild*.

It is not by chance that Judith Butler, who shares with Benjamin the same cultural tradition, talks of the messianic as a revolutionary force, with which we are endowed.

It is the seed of the insurrection, of the new which pierces the surface of our reality when it comes to be apprehended, known, understood and, as such, criticised. It is the virtuality, the prospective virtue, of our reality.

I have always read the messianic in Benjamin as the knowledge *sub specie aeternitatis* of Baruch Spinoza.[50] And as a constant presence in Benjamin's theoretical trajectory, always there, since the first essays ("The life of the students", 1914-15) to the *Thesis* (1939-1940) through the *Theological-Political Fragment* (1920-1921): perception of the present as crisis, abbreviation of the entire history in our epoch, lightning fast disclosure and understanding of progress' rhythm, re-opening and possibility of salvation of what has been deemed as lost.

It is that acquired knowledge which comes to us in a sudden moment, as a revelation – and becomes a revolution -, as an instance of an encounter (from the "Life of the students" onward).

[48] This sentence, which I take as title of this paragraph, was found in an anonymous review. I am grateful to its author.
[49] This is my contention since my BA thesis, *L'idea messianica in Walter Benjamin. Lineamenti di una teologia materialista*, University of Florence, 1989.
[50] Allow me to refer to my "Messia e sub specie aeternitatis", *Fenomenologia e società*, 24, 2 (2001), 113-129.

Messianic is the moment of understandability, the moment in which a 'content' surges and is caught, understood, known, and there expresses the essence of the form: "*ein Moment, an dem das Vernehmen sich staut und dieses ist das Wesentliche seiner Form*" (for the German romanticism). It is the structure of the idea (the messianic time as the time divinely fulfilled), the transparency of a metaphysics (the 'metà' of the physics).

Messianic nature is caducity, it is humanity (what do the Messiah and Christ have in common, or in which do they diverge? Christ, historical figure, embodied in time and space; the Messiah, an idea, a future yet-to-come, the self-actualisation of a history always in fieri, an eternal open door into existence). Messianic is thus the rhythm of our existence on earth, it is our very transience (in 1920-1921).

And messianic is all that has remained unfulfilled, uncompleted, discontinuous, what lies at the bottom of history as 'before' (in 1935-1940).

When Benjamin writes that "*der echte Begriff der Universalgeschichte ist ein messianischer*" he means exactly the opposite of what is usually meant. He means all the folds left open, all the wounds not-repaired, all the lives uncounted, would Butler say. Messianic is the *Rettung*: "*Die Rettung, die dergestalt, und nur dergestalt, vollzogen wird, läßt sich immer nur als auf der Wahrnehmung von dem unrettbar sich verlierenden gewinnen*." *Rettung*, salvation, can be achieved only from the perception of the lost, of the irretrievable. The space-time between salvation and what seemed lost is the messianic.

In the *Theological-political fragment* (1920-1921), Benjamin writes:

> Only the Messiah himself completes all history, in the sense that he alone redeems, completes and creates its relation to the messianic. For this reason, nothing that is historical can relate itself, from its own ground, to anything messianic. Therefore, the Kingdom of God is not the telos of the historical dynamic; it cannot be established as a goal. From the standpoint of history, it is not the goal [*Ziel*] but the terminus [*Ende*]. Therefore, the secular order cannot be built on the idea of the Divine Kingdom, and theocracy has no political but only a religious meaning[51].

[51] Walter Benjamin, "Theological-Political Fragment", in *Selected Writings*, vol. 2, (1927-1934), ed. by Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999). Among the copious works on the Benjaminian messianic, I quote here only three: Judith Butler, "One time traverses another, Benjamin's *Theological-Political Fragment*" (here note 3); Tamara Tagliacozzo, "Messianic Time. Redemption and Memory in Walter Benjamin", *Trauma and Memory*, 10, 3 (2022), 174-181; Sami Khatib, "The Messianic without Messianism. On Walter Benjamin's Materialist Theology", *Anthropology & Materialism, A Journal of Social Research*, 1, (2013), 1-17. I always thought that the messianic in Benjamin expresses the Spinozian *sub specie aeternitatis*: it is the comprehension of human revolutionary time as *sub specie aeterni* (see Margherita Pascucci, *L'idea messianica in Walter Benjamin. Lineamenti di una teologia materialista*). I now think that it can also express the virtual force of relations: his description is very similar to the one of virtual forces in D'Alembert. "But just as a force, by virtue of the path it is moving along, can augment another force

Messianic intensity is an arrow whose direction goes in the opposite direction to that of the *dynamis* of the profane, but this arrow of the profane, in search of happiness, favors the coming of the Messiah, as one force favors another through its trajectory: "For nature is messianic by reason of its eternal and total passing away"[52]. It is in following the folds, the waves of transitory nature that the messianic emerges – it is the same space, time, profound dimension of sexuality that we found in Forcades, the intimacy that we saw in Murgia: the invisible, virtual arrow of a Messiah '*di traverso'*, queer, who is, in essence, crossing all thresholds, that womb of his-her-its, where life is a colpotic ratio, a welcoming cave, the bend of the threshold, from which a virtual force of continuous production is drawn through love, of further life. Whatever it is, provided that it be. Fulfilment, as the implication of nature's transience into eternity.

Messianic is also the relation between us and who has preceded us. Messianic is the very texture of time as creation of further being. It is that 'temporal index which refers it to redemption'.

The Messiah who comes also as 'winner of the Antichrist' is the "insurrection at the level of ontology", it is the opening of the past to its redemption, that it, to its new liveability, to a new time of being. The "messianic arrest of the happening" is a "revolutionary chance in the struggle for the oppressed past".

"The current time, which, as a model of messianic time, summarizes the history of all humanity in a grandiose abbreviation, coincides exactly with the part that the history of humanity occupies in the universe" (Benjamin, *Thesis* 18).

The historian "grasps the constellation into which his own epoch has entered with a completely determined previous epoch. And thus establishes a concept of the present as of the "current time", in which splinters of the messianic one are scattered", "But this does not mean that the future became a homogeneous and empty time for the Jews. Because every second, in it, was the small door through which the Messiah could enter" (ibid.).

Here Forcades's queer God, Murgia's Jesus as queer Messiah and Butler's liveable life meet: a small door wide open to every just insurrection of being.

on the opposite path, so the profane order of the profane promotes the coming of the Messianic Kingdom. The profane, therefore, though not itself a category of this Kingdom, is a decisive category of its quietest approach." (Benjamin, *Theological-Political Fragment* (*Selected Writings*, 3: 305f). I choose here Khatib's slight changed version. It is, to me, a new Jewish messianic version of Paul.

[52] For the messianic as caducity, see the beautiful reading of Butler.

12. Benjamin and the Christian Kabbalah

The messianic in Benjamin has always meant to me the time of the revolutionary chance that everyone has within themselves. It is, metaphysically, time summarized in the figure of Christ, or of the Messiah to come: it is time of creation, of the passage-bridge between creature and creator. In the passage it occurs a combustion, and the Messiah, or its already happened embodiment in Christ, are the figures of this combustion. In that fire of life that is time, time as a passage of heat, as a deposit in the life of things that are born, and then die, of what passes (the transitory nature is messianic), here, in this rhythm of human, the profane 'divine' expresses itself. Messiah is therefore the sign of the passage of time, of time as a constituent production, as actuated political love, that Antonio Negri was directing us to. Crossing is always a combustion[53]. The Messiah figures this crossing, the synthesis, the passing, of divine time [eternity] into the human [lifetime]. Christ embodies it. It is here that the figure of the allegory as combustion of representation, so central in Benjamin's *Origin of the Baroque Drama*, and in the *Premise*, come back, almost evoking Spinoza's: I read the figure of Christ as historical, but his resurrection as allegory. Isn't here the same figuration of a Christ-Messiah? The resurrection is an allegory, it stays for... Revolution. Revolution is always to come.

I analyzed this elsewhere[54] and I believe that this notion of the messianic is suggested to Benjamin also by his reading of authors of Christian Kabbalah such as Franz von Baader and Joseph Molitor, evidenced by his proximity to Karl Thieme. Here I want to remark only how, in Benjamin reading Franz von Baader, every time we find in Baader the "Christ which is in us", we find in Benjamin the Messiah.

This time of the present, a time that understands and knows the crisis, and understands it as a possibility of radical change, this time is what for Benjamin is the Messiah, which the students[55] could already see as the Messianic spark in the folds of their present. This time-synthesis, which leads to understanding God as the third arrow of the Messiah, as the "Christ in us", which opens to action, is a time of the interior, of interiority.

The Messiah is the *potentia* of the crisis[56]. The contracted present in us is the messianic force[57]. Here we could see a potential conceptual bridge to Forcades's kolpotic ratio, a virtual embracing

[53] Bill Viola's *The passing* (1991) is a beautiful image of it.
[54] I analyzed this in Margherita Pascucci, "Il presente della crisi", in Gabriele Perretta (ed.), *Il tempo dell'adesso. Walter Benjamin tra storia, natura e artificio* (Milano, Mimesis, 2002), 88 fll.
[55] In Walter Benjamin, "The Life of the Students", *Selected Writings*, vol. 1, 1913-1926, ed. by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA-London: Harvard University Press, 1996), 37-47.
[56] Ibid., 94. See also ibid., notes 31, 35, 36, 37, mainly 48, fll.
[57] See ibid., note 54.

and an interior force. The messianic is the nourishing fruit that is understood from its interior: the time of a revolutionary chance. It is here that the seminal ratio is invested as the past, opened/disclosed and overthrown as the chance of its other evolution: from within, from the 'womb' of this same history, from a Christ Messiah of all, of everyone. It becomes a colpotic ratio because it welcomes the open-ended possibility of revolutionising itself, of transforming itself internally, from within.

13. Crossing, the passage, of the ontology of political love

Remember that breathtaking work of Bill Viola, "The Passing"? We imagine the crossing in a similar way, this time on our flesh, on our thought. The Messianic weak force in Benjamin, who, for me, was deeply influenced by the Christian Kabbalah's reading of Paul, and which is at once the Spinozian knowledge *sub specie aeternitatis* and the virtual forces of nineteenth century physics, is the same crossing that Forcades and Murgia see so crystal clear. Let us go back to Murgia's text:

> he is the door, that is, the Person who makes it possible to practice the threshold as a vital space [...] Jesus [...] presents himself to the disciples [...] as a crossable border, the point of contact that allows the two spaces, vital and mortal, to communicate with each other and both carry out their task [...] The practice of the threshold, the *queerness* that rejects belonging to a single enclosure, is a Christological practice and Jesus claims it just as he is experiencing firsthand his dangerous "entering and go out" between Judea and Galilee. The entire story of Jesus, reviewed in a queer key, offers precious insights into both militancy and faith, without any substantial incompatibility appearing between the two paths. It is as a woman, as a feminist and as a Christian at the same time, that I can research, practice and protect the thresholds, the border places between the social cages in which we are all* expected to remain, in whatever form they present themselves, even the most uncomfortable. Accepting *queerness* as a Christian practice means recognizing that the border does not surround us, but crosses us, and that what we perceive as a contradiction is actually a fruitful space whose vital potential we have not yet understood[58].

Here we find the *queerness* of Forcades: queer is the crossing of the threshold, transindividuality, the third arrow, the diagonality of every life path.

[58] Michela Murgia, *God save the queer*, 114-115.

"To research, practice, protect the thresholds", whatever they are. Recognizing the border that crosses us, understanding the vital potential of this fruitful space of free intimacy, a *causa sui* conceived joyfully, affirmatively, through other. Practicing the threshold in fact introduces us to the profound sense of co-creation, another founding, constitutive element of *queerness* in Murgia's words:

> The process of creation, as Saint Paul had already intuited, did not end on the seventh day, but continues with our action in the world, and that of the incarnation did not end in Jesus, but advances every time his person finds new realities of human life in which the encounter can act, manifesting itself as fruitful and salvific[59].

To practice the threshold, the process of creation which endlessly continues indicate a 'concreteness of the praxis of political love' which is that endowment with a revolutionary force that each human being has in her, his life. It is here that Butler's vulnerable life, Murgia's "Jesus as queer Messiah", who allows for both militancy and faith to be that vital space of transformation, of struggle for transformation, embody the praxis of political love, concretise it. And the praxis of political love is textured by a new, differential ontology:

> The question of salvation is the real litmus test, if we want to search for points of convergence between faith and the fighting movements of the discriminated categories. The only questions that really make sense to ask ourselves from this perspective are two: how faith can add greater freedom to the path of liberation we are already on, and how this path can become more inclusive thanks to the encounter with that relational apotheosis which is the Trinitarian faith. Any response that does not go towards freedom is wrong: it is not difficult to recognize it, because it produces pain and exclusion. From that pain and that exclusion I started to think, and it is to those who experience them that the fruit of my work is dedicated[60].

"Any response that does not go towards freedom is wrong: it is not difficult to recognize it, because it produces pain and exclusion." Freedom is something concrete, we learn, it is the first condition of all necessary lives. What fighting movements and faith have in common is the

[59] Ibid., 119-120.
[60] *Ibidem*.

virtuality: a good, affirmative virtuality, not detached from the real but, instead, its liberated time, virtue of the unaccounted lives that become future-makers, workers of a time to come.
Many examples come to mind, but in this horrible, scandalous time just one for all: Palestinians and Israelis nonviolent resistance movements who are the only ones to work for a concrete peace. They are the third arrow that from exclusion and pain struggle to make a different future.
The question for salvation, and for an earthly one, the right to live a full happy life concern us all. It is to this question that we have to answer, each one from our corner of the world, walking, if possible together, towards freedom.

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