



**Philosophy  
of  
Liberation**

**ENRIQUE DUSSEL**



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Argentinean philosopher, theologian, and historian Enrique Dussel understands the present international order as divided into the "culture of the center," by which he means the ruling elites of Europe, North America, and the U.S.S.R., and "the peoples of the periphery," by which he means the populations of Latin America, Africa, and part of Asia, and the oppressed classes (including women and children) throughout the world. In *Philosophy of Liberation*, he presents a profound analysis of the alienation of peripheral peoples resulting from the imperialism of the center for more than five centuries.

Dussel's aim is to demonstrate that the center's historic cultural, military, and economic domination of poor countries is *philosophically* founded on North Atlantic ontology. By expressing supposedly universal knowledge, European philosophies, argues Dussel, have served to equate the cultural standards, modes of behavior, and rationalistic orientation of the West with human nature and to condemn the unique characteristics of peripheral peoples as "nonbeing, nothing, chaos, irrationality." Hence, Western philosophies have historically legitimated and hidden the domination that oppressed cultures have suffered at the hands of the center. Dussel probes the various ways in which peripheral peoples are exploited with impunity by the multinational corporations, the communications media, and the armies of the center with their counterparts among the Third World elite.

The creation of a just world order in the future, according to Dussel, hinges on the liberation of the periphery, based on a philosophy that is able to "think the world" from the perspective of the poor and to reclaim the Third World's distinct cultural inheritance, which is imbedded in the popular cultures of the poor. Apart from the liberation of the periphery, there will be no future: "the center will feed itself on the sameness it has ingrained within itself. The death of the child, of the poor, will be its own death." This is a disquieting but stimulating book for scholars and advanced students of philosophy, ethics, liberation theology, and global politics.

"A disturbing book: thought-provoking, action-inducing."

**Raimundo Panikkar**

*ENRIQUE DUSSEL earned his doctorate in philosophy in Madrid and in history at the Sorbonne. He studied church history under Lortz in Mainz and lived for two years with Paul Gauthier in Israel. A committee member for the theological review Concilium, he is now a political refugee from his native Argentina and teaches in Mexico. He is also the President of the Comisión de Estudios de Historia de la Iglesia en América Latina and is working on its ten-volume series on Latin American church history. His numerous other works include Ethics and the Theology of Liberation and A History of the Church in Latin America.*

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*Enrique Dussel*

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*“There is no peace;  
they even tear up the flowers.”  
—my daughter Susana,  
age 9*