



The Invention of the Americas

*Eclipse of "the Other"
and the Myth of Modernity*

Enrique Dussel

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"This book by Dr. Dussel is a serious contribution, one which will permit us to reflect and act, to confront the barrier of Modernity that has been in the fore since 1492. I think that to the measure in which we assume our differences as a fountain of enrichment of cultural diversity, we will contribute to the eradication of seeds of intolerance, and build conditions worthy of collaboration among nations and among human beings."

– Rigoberta Menchú, Nobel Peace Prize winner

"Dussel's work is an exciting breakthrough in the rethinking of Western eurocentrism, and in particular the eurocentrism of Western philosophy. He offers us new ways of decentering this philosophical tradition without abandoning it on the one hand or reifying it on the other as a fixed canon. Dussel, working in new post-imperialist traditions of world history, affords a perspective from which new action, new politics, can be conceived."

– Fredric Jameson, Duke University

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Nineteen ninety-five is the 500th anniversary of the first shipment of Native American slaves to Europe by Christopher Columbus. In Enrique Dussel's powerful analysis, even the glorifying of the indigenous people as "the noble savage" was a cunning tactic of repression and domination just as was – according to Edward Said – the romanticizing of the Middle Eastern Arab world under the rubric "Orientalism."

Both these motifs were expressions of the European Ego's effort to cover over the "Other" in the guise of assisting and improving the lot of these "fascinating" but fundamentally "under-developed" peoples. Features such as Eurocentric philosophical texts (especially those of Hegel), Christianization through

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colonization (even at the price of violence), as well as the imposition of slavery (blatant or disguised) – all were means of bringing about the "modernization" of these "Others."

After elaborating these themes, Enrique Dussel reverses his analyses and interprets world history from the view of the conquered. And in that perspective, not the Euro-flattering Reformation and Renaissance, but the conquest of Mexico constitutes the origin of Modernity with all its abuses and ambiguities.

This book is a brilliant interlacing of critical theory, liberation theology, and the decentering of authentic humanism among so-called first world nations with their legacy of sanctimonious hubris.

Enrique Dussel, author of more than twenty books on religion, sociology, history, and law, is Professor of Philosophy at the Universidad Autónoma of Mexico.

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ENRIQUE DUSSEL

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