

## HISTORY

THROUGHOUT HIS CAREER, Enrique Dussel has been preoccupied with historical issues. While he was attempting to recover the pre-history of Latin America through his anthropological works, he was also studying the history of the Catholic church with Lortz. He completed a doctorate in history at the Sorbonne, with a thesis published in 1970 as *Les évêques hispano-américains: Défenseurs et évangélisateurs de l'Indien, 1504-1620*. A later abridged Spanish edition, following this French version, documents some of the anti-indigenous policies of Spain and the Church, itemizing the great but subsequently forgotten deeds of the first generation of bishops in Latin America, who distinguished themselves by their outspoken defense of indigenous people and suffered persecution, even martyrdom, at the hands of wealthy and powerful Spanish oppressors. These bishops exemplify one of Dussel's frequently used historical categories, namely, "Christianity" (*crístianismo*) in which Christians show themselves to be outside the state and critical of its oppressiveness, as they were in the case of early Christianity, as opposed to "Christendom" (*crístiandad*), in which the church aligns itself uncritically with the state and implements an internally oppressive hierarchical structure. Dussel conceived these earlier historical works as a type of cultural psychoanalysis, a precondition for assuming responsibility for one's history in Heideggerian style and consciously directing it toward a new future.<sup>1</sup>

Scattered throughout Dussel's writings are several examples of the erroneous interpretation of history. The king of Spain, for example, mistakenly interprets the conquest of the Americas as

God's blessing on Spain when he writes: "God has entrusted to us in His infinite mercy and goodness the rule over such a great part of the world. ...happily it has been given to us to lead the innumerable peoples and nations which inhabit America ('the West Indies') into the Catholic Church and to subject them to our rule."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the very idea of the "discovery of America" involves an historical interpretation that amounts to creation of an entity out of nothing since the Europeans endowed the entity "America" with meaning from their own resources, with no regard for the viewpoint of those already dwelling there. As we shall see, repeated misinterpretations of history surround the meeting of the Spanish and the indigenous peoples in what is now called America. Other distorted histories include Alfred Weber's *Kulturgeschichte als Kultursoziologie*, a purported history of the world, which contains only four lines on Latin America (and that on the conquest by Spain) and Lortz's *Geschichte der Kirche*, which never mentions Latin America. Dussel, as we have seen, also criticizes historians such as Étienne Gilson, G. Fraile, and Heinz Heimsoeth for jumping from the Greek philosophers and the New Testament to the Neoplatonists and Saint Augustine without exploring the role of the Apologists, who sought to integrate the Semitic ethical roots of Christianity into the ontological Hellenic worldview that Christianity faced. The stinging ethical demands of the Other—the origin of the notion of the person—were thereby clothed in equivocal cultural mediations through a process of acculturation to Hellenism. This domestication of the ethical demand of the Other reflected philosophically the ethical and religious compromises for which Christendom settled when Constantine removed the Church from its persecuted status and welcomed it into the establishment. These present-day historians who neglect the forgotten period of the apologists when Semitic-Christian ethical categories had not yet been co-opted by Hellenism, prove thereby how deeply submerged they are within the Christendom that has triumphed. All these inadequate historical hermeneutics reflect a centeredness of the interpreter in his or her own self and culture, a particularism impeding the authentic comprehension of the phenomena and calling for a demystification (*demitificación*) of history. Dussel pinpoints this hermeneutic deficiency in commenting on Cardinal Jean Daniélou's erroneous censuring of the

priests of the Movement for the Third World during the cardinal's visit to Argentina in 1972. "My professor in the Catholic Institute of Paris had not completed the first rule of the hermeneutics upon which he insisted so much with us in his classes: It is necessary to know how to situate oneself correctly in the world in which an occurrence takes place."<sup>3</sup>

Dussel's writing of history, like his critique of mistaken readings of history, rests on certain philosophical-methodological presuppositions that he himself elucidates. First of all, Dussel rejects any positivistic methodology. "We are far from imagining, as a very extended historicist positivism might propose, that the facts speak for themselves, and that history only demonstrates only what the documents manifest in a univocal manner."<sup>4</sup> Instead of a positivistic view of history that might claim that facts are obviously available to an ahistorical, nonsituated, disembodied Cartesian type of consciousness, Dussel follows Heidegger's fundamental ontology and begins with humanity's historical incarnatedness; this inevitably results in interpretations dependent on one's historical background and language. Edmundo O'Gorman's *La invención de América* neglects this historicity of interpretation by seeming to postulate the "*ser americano*" as already having its meaning when Columbus arrives, instead of seeing that this being lacks meaning (for Columbus) until it has been subsumed under his historically conditioned interpretive framework. Once one recognizes one's historicity, one must acknowledge the divergent perspectives from which interpreters embark and to which they will return reflectively after constructing their interpretations, as they bring the hermeneutic circle to completion. It is no wonder then, given these perspectives, that the intrusive Spanish will interpret their meeting with indigenous peoples in the Americas as "discovery/conquest," and the oppressed will understand it as "despair/intrusion/servitude." Dussel concludes that there is no pure objectivity in history and that since the human person is always finite and relative to his or her historical situation all history is situated.<sup>5</sup>

But perspectivism on Heideggerian bases need not result in relativism, since objects exist with their own reality, consistency, and resistance prior to being subsumed under historical categories, and, consequently, knowers are not enclosed within an absolute

idealism. Because of this possibility of objectivity, historians must strive to return to the originary events by softening ( *ablandar*) traditionalist interpretations as they struggle to unearth the forgotten sense ( *sentido olvidado*) of previous texts or authors. It is even possible that one employ a scientific historical method (for example, using only tested evidence and relying on historical-critical methods of reading texts) and yet uncritically proceed within ( *desde*) the framework of the prevailing social order, as those do who write "aristocratic" histories, oblivious to the "documents" of the poor or oppressed. In such a situation, the way to ensure a greater self-criticism and objectivity in one's historical method is to seek out the viewpoint of the poor one, who is exterior to whatever is valued within the Totality .

This, it seems, ought to be the essential criterion of our history. It would be a history that asks itself before whatever problem and before whatever description: What relation does this have with the poor? We, for example, studying the confrontation of Columbus with the Indian, ought to ask ourselves: What is the more significant, Columbus or the Indian? The Indian, as the poor one, is the one who ought to interest us more.<sup>6</sup>

While, ideally, the poor themselves would be able to write their own history to maximize objectivity, the historian committed to them can still surface previously ignored historical materials and must strive to avoid falling into any capricious periodification of history. It is not surprising, then, that Dussel can speak in one and the same breath of a history of the Church that proceeds scientifically/theologically and at the same time finds the meaning of an event given from its positive or negative relation to the poor or oppressed. Dussel's conclusions here that a greater historical objectivity can be achieved through exposure to exteriority coincide with the epistemology he articulates in "Historia y praxis" in *Praxis latinoamericana y filosofía de la liberación*.<sup>7</sup>

Dussel's most recent historical work, *1492: El encubrimiento del Otro—Hacia el origen del "Mito de la modernidad,"* a series of lectures delivered in Frankfurt in October of 1992, exemplify both his general ethical hermeneutical approach and his method for doing history .Dussel confesses from the outset that his philosophy of liberation begins with the affirmation of alterity, of the

Other who is oppressed, excluded, and denied access to communicative processes, instead of starting with communication theory as the Frankfurt School does. He acknowledges, though, that he is not opposed to the philosophy of liberation's developing later a theory or philosophy of dialogue as an ancillary component. This ethical starting point from exteriority governs his subsequent hermeneutics—a conscientious effort to sketch the historically conditioned worldviews and interpretations of both the Spanish and the indigenous peoples from the time when the Spanish landed on the island of Guanahani, later named San Salvador by the Spanish, on October 12, 1492, according to the Spanish calendar, until the conquest of Mexico. In careful descriptions of the two worldviews, each of which takes up about half the book, Dussel puts his Heidegger at the service of his Levinas.<sup>8</sup>

In Dussel's opinion, the European worldview already operated among the Spanish *conquistadores* before it ever found its philosophical expression in the *ego cogito* of Descartes and in horribly Eurocentric passages from Kant and Hegel, whom Dussel cites extensively. The *Yo-conquistador* forms the protohistory of the constitution of the *ego cogito*, the beginning of a solipsistic discourse without the recognition of any equal partner beyond European borders. "America" was discovered, not as something that resisted, as something distinct, as the Other, but as material on to which "the Same" projected itself in a process of covering over (*encubrimiento*) what was there. The relations between Europeans and indigenous peoples quickly became violent, with a militarily developed technology pitted against one militarily underdeveloped. Dussel recalls how Pedro Alvarado, during Cortés's absence in order to battle Panfilo Narváez, invited the warrior nobility of the Aztecs to a festival, without their weapons, only to surround the party with Spaniards who closed off all exits and commenced a slaughter, decapitating and dismembering all who were there. After the military conquest, the Spaniards not only seized Indian women for their often sadistic sexual pleasure, but proceeded to subject the indigenous men to brutal labor, such as the mine in Bolivia that Bishop Domingo de Santo Tomás described as a "mouth of hell through which enter every year a great quantity of people whom the greed of the Spaniards sacrifices to their god" (that is, silver). The Other was denied as Other and alien-

ated in order to be incorporated into a dominating Totality, as a thing, as an instrument, as someone oppressed, as property of an *encomienda* (plantation), as meagerly paid labor, or as an African slave, working sugar fields. Dussel cites abundant evidence of the degrading attitudes the Spaniards held toward the indigenous people, whom they characterized as "irrational and bestial because of their idolatries, sacrifices, and infernal ceremonies" (Fernandez de Oviedo); as "stupid" (*rudos*), "children" (*niños*), "immature," "savage in a barbarian manner" (José de Acosta); as "violators of nature, blasphemers, and idolaters," whom it is permissible "to compel [with force] so that, being submitted to the power [*imperio*] of the Christians, they might hear the apostles who announce the Gospel," (Gines de Sepulveda); as people whose houses and commerce prove only "that they are not bears or monkeys totally lacking in reason" (Gines de Sepúlveda). The "Requirement" (*Requerimiento*), a text read by the Spaniards to the indigenous people before battle, indicated that the disasters about to befall the indigenous people after battle were their own fault, something due them for resisting the emancipation and modernization the conquest was bringing them.<sup>9</sup>

Midway through the book, Dussel shifts his focus to the point of view of the indigenous cultures "discovered" in 1492. Eschewing the notion that the development of civilization moved westward from the East (Europe) to the West (America)—as a more Eurocentric position might contend—Dussel traces the more ancient passage of civilization eastward from the West (Mesopotamia and Egypt) to the East (India, China, Mayan-Aztec-Inca civilizations). He discusses the rationalization present in mythological-ritual cultures, with their enormously complex codified systems, as explained by Claude Lévi-Strauss, and investigates the nomadic, agricultural, and urban levels of cultural development in the Americas. He comments, in particular, on the communitarian rationality and economic reciprocity typical of the agriculturally oriented Tupi-Guaraní who lived in the Amazon forests extending to what is now Paraguay.

Dussel's tour de force in the essay *1492: El enculbrimiento del Otro* consists in his interpretation of Moctezuma, whose position as a member of Aztec wise men (*tlamatini*) and whose cosmogony and parousiac expectations Dussel thoroughly describes before con-

sidering Moctezuma's reactions to Cortés. Unfortunately, because they have failed to grasp his "rationality," historians have depicted Moctezuma as vacillating, contradictory, and scarcely comprehensible. As a learned *tlamatini*, Moctezuma, when faced with the Spanish, considered three possible interpretations: namely, that Cortés was either (a) a mere human being, or (b) a face of the supreme god (*Ometeotl*), who was about to put an end to the Aztec world and usher in the dreaded era of the Sixth Sun, or (c) the returning god Quetzalcoatl, who would have been appeased had Moctezuma alone simply resigned his throne. Moctezuma tested the third and least threatening option first by offering his throne to Cortés—an action considered highly irrational unless one avoids projecting upon him Eurocentric expectations. Tragically, the second option became reality—the Aztec world was destroyed—Moctezuma discovered too late that the first option was true: Cortés was only human, for he seemed to require reinforcements after subduing Narváez's rebellion and after Alvarado's murderous slaughter of the Aztec elites. Here Dussel's history appears preeminently an ethical hermeneutics, selecting as the starting point for its interpretation of history the viewpoint of the vanquished and discredited (even to this day) emperor of the oppressed indigenous peoples of Mexico. Dussel seems to have lost his earlier interest in understanding *his* own history as a Heideggerian hero in pursuit of authenticity through cultural psychoanalysis; here he undertakes instead a Levinasian retrieval of the history of the defeated and forgotten Other.<sup>10</sup>

But not only is Dussel's ethical-hermeneutical history interested in recovering the forgotten viewpoint of the oppressed Other; by redefining the origin of modernity it also aims at correcting a major false periodification of history. Habermas and others situate the beginning of modernity in the Renaissance and Reformation, but in Dussel's view this explanation is not only excessively German, consigning significant Spanish-Hispanic occurrences to the periphery of Europe, but also entirely intra-European, as if the origin of modernity had nothing to do with the rest of the world. To establish the true beginning of modernity, Dussel points out that Europe had never considered itself the center of history since it had been ringed around by Islam, which extended from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Only in 1492 did it first constitute

other nations on its periphery, only then did it first break out of the limits within which the world of Islam had confined it. The year 1492 constitutes the beginning of the experience of the European ego, expressed subsequently in the history of philosophy from the *ego cogito* to Nietzsche's will-to-power, by constituting other subjects and peoples as objects, instruments that it could utilize for its European, civilizing, modernizing purposes. On one hand, Dussel admits that modernity contains a rational nucleus, involving the rational emancipation of humanity from the state of cultural immaturity through a critical process, and hence Descartes's self-reflective turn to the *ego cogito* perhaps deserves greater admiration than Dussel often allows. On the other hand, modernity is accompanied by an irrational sacrificial myth, evident in the conquest, to the effect that the colonial and economic victimization of the peripheral Third World is justified as the price of modernization. That Europe considers modernity to begin with the culturally admirable and self-flattering intra-European events of the Renaissance and Reformation conceals the other face of modernity, its irrationality, violence, and exploitativeness. Dussel's locating the origin of modernity in the world event of the conquest of the Americas is itself a work of ethical hermeneutics, interpreting history so that Europe is held responsible for its past victims and made aware of the present and future danger that it might hide its exploitation of the poor and oppressed beneath its uncritical conviction that it is bringing modernization and rationalization (cultural or economic) to other peoples.<sup>11</sup>

The essay *1492: El encubrimiento del Otro* manifests the several ingredients of the methodology for historiography under the impetus of an ethical hermeneutics. No positivistic presupposition that the facts speak for themselves is to be found here, since Dussel's study illustrates how differently the facts were interpreted by the *conquistadores* and the indigenous peoples. Indeed, Dussel's entire whole way of proceeding, which, like his redefinition of the origin of modernity, is so different from previous histories, depends on his unique perspective: that of an historian whose view is shaped by the Latin American starting point and the philosophical premisses of his ethical hermeneutics. At the same time, however, Dussel does not lapse into any relativism here; he is con-



vinced both that the Spanish never fully grasped the viewpoint of the indigenous peoples, which was reducible to Spanish interpretations, and that his account of modernity's origin is superior to the prevailing one. In fact, one can discover true history only by casting off the shackles of traditional interpretations and straining back toward the things themselves, as Dussel does when he refounds modernity, illuminates the forgotten cultural achievements of the Mayan-Aztec-Inca worlds, and displays the "deep" rationality of Moctezuma's vacillation. Although Dussel's history is enhanced by his extensive familiarity with historical sources, Spanish, ecclesial, and Aztec, and the most recent anthropological findings, one can also clearly see that the writing of history can attain greater objectivity by searching out the viewpoint of the defeated, discredited, and forgotten and approaching the course of history through their eyes.

#### ECONOMICS (MARX)

Dussel has produced an ethical hermeneutics of capitalism through an in-depth study of Karl Marx's later pre-*Capital* manuscripts in the Marxist-Leninist Institute of Berlin. He began that study in the late 1970s and ended it with the publication of the final book in his trilogy on Marx, *El último Marx (1863-1882) y la liberación latinoamericana*, in 1990 (the earlier volumes were *La producción teórica de Marx: Un comentario a los Grundrisse* and *Hacia un Marx desconocido: Un comentario de los manuscritos de 61-63*).<sup>12</sup>

It is somewhat ironic that Dussel should have undertaken such a serious study of Marx, since his earlier works are peppered with facile dismissals of Marx for which his critics have assailed him. For instance, the earlier Dussel states that Marx forgets the Other; that Marxist humanism is not reconcilable with Christian humanism; that Marx's opposition to any notion of "creation" indicates that he has no room for alterity; that Marx's theory is an ontological totality without exteriority; that, although Marx is an atheist, he really is a "*panontista*," religiously affirming a totality; and that Marx is really not atheistic enough since his failure to affirm God leaves his system with no possibility of critique from without.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, after his extensive investigation, Dussel himself

admits that in the past he rejected the mechanistic mass-materialism (*masismo mecanista*) that Marxists, without knowing the real Marx, put forth as Marx's thought. Paraphrasing Marx's own dedication to Hegel when Hegel was a "dead dog" and commenting on his own conversion to Marx after the fall of Eurocommunism, Dussel notes: "Years ago everyone was a Marxist and I was opposed to Marx, and now they have declared Marx a dead dog and I present myself as a disciple of that great master." Dussel's retrieval of Marx, then, involves giving expression to the viewpoint of an Other excluded for a long time from his own personal philosophical totality and at present excluded from the totality of the philosophical enterprise itself. Dussel recovers a philosophical Other who in turn dedicated his entire life to the recovery of the Other of capitalism—the living laborer as the origin of the production of wealth.<sup>14</sup>

For an appreciation of what is novel in Dussel's interpretation of Marx, it is necessary to review briefly the contents of his trilogy on Marx. In *La producción teórica de Marx*, Dussel discusses the 1857 manuscripts of the *Grundrisse*. The method of Marx, who was always aware of the levels of his reflection, begins with the real concrete, abstracts (in the sense of separating and distinguishing) the simple components of capitalism, "ascends" to a (re)construction of the concrete totality, and, finally, descends to explain the concrete world, such as that of bourgeois society. Marx begins the *Grundrisse* manuscripts with a discussion of money, then proceeds immediately to money's presuppositions: the production process that begins when the propertied "capitalist confronts what is not capital, exteriority, the Other (as someone, as living subject): the worker as capacity and creative subjectivity of value" and contracts for this worker's labor. The capitalist purchases the worker's capacity to work for a full day by paying the worker a wage sufficient to sustain a person for a day. Whatever the amount of value the worker produces beyond what is necessary for his or her reimbursement belongs to the capitalist as surplus value. The capitalist tries to increase absolute surplus value by increasing the length of the worker's day, but when the worker reaches his physical limits, the capitalist augments productivity (for example, with machines) so that workers can produce more quickly the sum value needed for their sustenance and increase the capitalist's

surplus value relative to that sum value (relative surplus value). By increasing the productivity of the worker, the capitalist can increase the total amount of surplus value, but the percentage increase of surplus value in relation to the increasing productivity will decline. Likewise, as productivity increases, larger outlays will be needed for raw materials and machinery, and the rate of profit relative to total outlay decreases. Similarly, the declining amount of worker time invested in products relative to the larger number of products being produced diminishes the value of those products. Capitalism's increasing productivity paradoxically devalues its products, and frenetic efforts in search of a greater, compensatory productivity result finally in overproduction and consequent crises. In the *Grundrisse* manuscripts, Marx goes on to consider how surplus value, produced as it is by workers who erroneously believe that the wages received from the capitalist adequately compensate them for the value they produce, forms the basis from which profit and interest derive, depending on how competition and other circulation factors intersect with the primary sphere of production.<sup>15</sup>

Dussel's second study, *Hacia un Marx desconocido*, comments on the manuscripts of 1861-1863. Beginning with Marx's 1859 *Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy* regarding merchandise and money at the more superficial level of circulation, Dussel follows the pattern of the first book and immediately turns to the manuscript accounts of production, the capitalist/worker relationship, the distinction (explicit here for the first time in Marx) between variable (labor) and constant capital (machinery and raw materials), and absolute and relative surplus value. Once again, Dussel shows how Marx is intent on denying that the surplus value derives from the sale of a good above its value in the sphere of circulation; rather, Marx insists, surplus value originates from the laborer's creation of it in the sphere of production. Marx interprets machinery as conserving value, not producing it, thereby ensuring that only labor counts as the origin of new value. Maintaining the sequence of Marx's own manuscripts, Dussel shows how Marx critically confronts diverse categorial systems in such a way that he wins sufficient epistemic security to continue, later on, his own more systematic investigations. In opposition to mercantilists such as J. Stuart, Marx argues that merchandise is sold,

not *above* its value on the market, but *at* its value, including the surplus value created by workers never compensated for it. Against physiocrats, Marx insists that value springs, not from agricultural holdings, but rather from labor that works the land. Adam Smith, in Marx's view, mistakenly conceives surplus value as profit realized in the sale of goods. Marx reiterates that the source of value is found, not in circulation, but in production through labor. Supply and demand may drop the price of a good, but that reduction merely diminishes the amount of profit a capitalist will realize from the surplus value the object contains from the time it leaves the sphere of production and the workers' hands. As Marx notes in reference to Rodbertus, because of competition and the leveling of prices to an average price, merchandise sells above or below its value, and thus a transfer of surplus value is effected from one piece of merchandise to another. Supply and demand in the sphere of circulation thus distributes the surplus value already instituted in the sphere of production. In his confrontation with Ricardo, Marx sharpens his concepts beyond what he offers in the *Grundrisse* by distinguishing the value of the market from that which is derived from production and produced by living labor and that is the basis for every price derived from it. For instance, Marx notes that, on the "price side," one begins with the price of cost (*precio de costo*), that is, the cost (variable and-constant capital), of making the product as that product enters the market. Once on that market, the product will accrue a greater price, the price of production (*precio de producción*) since the average profit on the market for that good must be added to the price of cost. However, one needs to ground these prices in the "value side" of the merchandise. That value includes not only variable and constant capital (found in the price of the cost), but also the surplus value created by living labor in the production sphere. As a result, whatever the average profit may be, ingredient in the final price of production and determined by competition in differing contexts, that profit emanates from the surplus value. Ricardo equates the price of cost with the value of the merchandise and traces the origin of profit to selling merchandise above its price. All these distinctions, of course, are aimed at not letting us forget that profit in capitalism originates in the surplus value created by exploited labor.<sup>16</sup>

Dussel's final book on Marx, *El último Marx (1863-1882) y la liberación latinoamericana*, presents the third and fourth redactions of *Capital* (the *Grundrisse* and the 1861-1863 manuscripts composing the earlier redactions). In the third redaction, which includes manuscripts from the period from 1863 to 1865, Dussel restates Marx's opinion that although the price of cost (constant and variable capital) and surplus value constitute the value of merchandise (*mercancia*), it is possible to sell merchandise below its value in the market and still make a profit since the capitalist will lose some of, but not all, the surplus value. In these manuscripts, Marx also explains not only that competition does not create value but merely levels, distributes, and transfers surplus value, but also that interest and rent as well derive from surplus value and thus trace their origin to living labor. The fourth redaction of *Capital*, which includes Marx's edited and unedited writings from 1866 to 1882, begins, as is usual with Marx, with the appearance of money before he turns to production. In a lucid discussion, Dussel shows how the rate of surplus value more clearly manifests worker exploitation than the rate of profit. For instance, if a total advanced Capital of 500 obtains 90 in profit, the rate of profit is 18 percent, but the rate of surplus value (surplus value/variable Capital) could be 100 percent if the variable capital were 90 (and assuming that all surplus value became profit and that constant capital were 410). Dussel's third book in the trilogy concludes that after publishing *Capital* Marx, through an interchange with Russian revolutionaries, came to hope that Russia could bypass capitalism in its route to socialism. Marx thereby abandons his earlier unilateral and rigid philosophy of history (in texts of 1848) as a lineal succession of economics systems passing developmentally and mechanistically through capitalism to socialism.<sup>17</sup>

On the basis of his expositions of Marx's thought in these three volumes, Dussel proceeds to offer a highly original interpretation of Marx. He claims, first of all, that his careful work with Marx's manuscripts has enabled him to appreciate the archeology of Marx's categories as they developed and, more important, the philosophical dimensions of Marx's work in a way that the superficial, nonphilosophical character of the pared-down texts of *Capital* does not permit. Though he frequently acknowledges that Marx lacks an *explicit* philosophy, Dussel insists that one must not

rely, as Louis Althusser does, only on Marx's explicit formulations of what he was doing. In fact, a philosophical structure so pervades the entire discourse of Marx's work that Dussel asserts that those who interpret Marx only as an economist—and often a mechanistic one at that—never understand that Marx is blending ontology and economics and producing both an ontology of the economy and an ontological economics, neither pure philosophy nor pure economics. For Dussel, the anthropological, ethical, and metaphysical sense of Marx's texts has been overlooked by most Marxists, such as Althusser, who construes the later Marx as having abandoned his earlier philosophy, even though, as Dussel points out, Manuscript VII of 1878 shows Marx to be more Hegelian than ever.<sup>18</sup>

In the second chapter of Book I of *Capital*, in texts that lack his usual pathos, Marx describes the meeting of the propertied capitalist with propertyless labor, in which the capitalist purchases the "capacity of labor" or the "force of labor." In Dussel's view, this terminology obscures important distinctions between the capacity to work, which precedes the use or consumption of labor, the force that is employed in the process of labor, and "living labor," that is, the subjectivity (person and corporality of the laborer) which itself is without value which contains the "capacity" and the "force." Intent on delineating Marx's implicit discourse and retrieving a meaning that *Capital* itself blurs, Dussel returns to the most important philosophical text of the *Grundrisse*, which describes "living labor" and, according to Dussel, provides the key for deciphering Marx.

*The dissociation between property and labor* presents itself as the necessary law of this interchange between Capital and labor. Labor, posited as *non-capital* [*Nicht-Kapital*], insofar as it is, is: (1) *Labor non-objectified*, conceived *negatively* (even in the case of an objective being, the non-objective in objective form). As such, it is first non-matter [*Nicht-Rohstoff*], non-instrument of labor, non-product in raw form: labor dissociated from all the means of labor and objects of labor, from all its objectivity; *living* [*lebendige*] labor, existing as abstraction from those aspects of its real reality [*realen Wirklichkeit*] (equally non-value); this total dispossession, this nudity from every objectivity, this purely subjective existence of labor. Labor as *absolute poverty* [*absolute Armut*]: poverty not as lack, but as full exclusion

from objective wealth ... (2) *Labor non-objectified*, non-value, conceived *positively*, or negativity related to itself: it is the nonobjectified existence—that is, nonobjective or, rather, subjective—of labor itself. Labor not as object, but as activity, not as self-*value*, but as the *living* fount of value. ... There is not an absolute contradiction in affirming, then, that labor is, on one hand, *absolute poverty as an object*, and, on the other, the *universal possibility* of wealth as subject and activity.<sup>19</sup>

Dussel depicts living labor as "exteriority," in the nonspatial sense in which Levinas utilizes the term—that is, labor as one dispossessed of wealth in history and thus forced to sell one's capacity to work; as the nothing (*Nichts*) without value in relation to the entire capitalist system; as virtually a *pauper*; whom, when no longer needed, the capitalist can dispense with and cast into the industrial reserve army; as one perceived in the contract with the capitalist only as a thing capable of producing goods. Dussel shows how Marx, following Feuerbach, emphasizes the corporality of the subjectivity of the laborer, that is, the laborer possesses hands, feet, stomach, brain, eyes, and feels the sting of human need. Alienation occurs when this living labor is hired and incorporated into capital, now as a determination of capital, as "unexteriorized." Once incorporated into the capitalist system, labor exercises a positive, creative activity, by working on raw materials and bringing forth surplus value for the capitalist "from nothing." Just as Schelling attributes truly creative power to the Absolute Creator outside of the Hegelian system, so Marx assigns this power to the one who is originally nothing for the system of capitalism.<sup>20</sup>

Dussel argues that in identifying with oppressed labor Marx is thoroughly consistent with his earlier 1844 demand that one needs "new eyes" in order to know "the unemployed and the laboring person." Marx not only asserts that those works upholding the point of view of the proletariat recognize that labor is everything (*Die Arbeit ist alles*), but he struggles throughout his own works to defend the interests of impoverished labor by linking all value in capitalism back to its origin in living labor. If "totality" is the fundamental category for the analysis of capital as already given (*ya-dado*), only from the category of exteriority, from the reality of living labor beyond capital, can one expect to

understand the origin of capital and to criticize it. The point of view of living labor—for whom Marx felt himself ethically responsible—has become here the hermeneutic perspective from which to approach the totality of the capitalist system. Marx's economics is none other than an ethical hermeneutics of the economy itself. Dussel, furthermore, taking this concept of living labor as the hermeneutic key for understanding all of Marx, feels entitled to associate his reading of Marx and capitalism with his own ethics. Hence, Dussel comments, "To criticize ontology, being (capital), from a practical and utopian exteriority...is what we have denominated the 'analectic transcendentality.'" <sup>21</sup>

One needs to understand that Marx's theoretical maneuvers, described in Dussel's trilogy, reflect his response to the ethical demand of the Other, living labor. Marx's unflinching convictions that surplus value comes into existence as the result of the unpaid labor—what he repeatedly calls a "robbery"—of workers in the sphere of production, and that profit comes from there, not from selling a good beyond its value in the marketplace, depend on his ethical commitment to labor. Only against this ethical foundation is it possible to understand such features of Marx's theory as his efforts to prove that supply and demand do not create value, that prices are based on prior value from the sphere of production, that production takes priority over circulation, that rent and interest do not contradict the law of value, and that the rate of profit conceals the degree of worker exploitation evident only in the rate of surplus value. As Dussel puts it, "When the price of production is determined from the market and competition [and the value side neglected], the door is closed to anthropology and ethics." Although Marx may have rejected the hypocrisy of most superstructural moral codes, it is clear that he is conscientiously aware of the ethical demands present (and often denied in capitalism) at the infrastructural level at which the worker faces capital. <sup>22</sup>

Dussel's novel interpretation of Marx configures the Marx-Hegel relationship in new and different ways. According to Dussel, capital, imitating the pattern of Hegel's *Logic*, self-dirempts into productive or circulating capital. Capital is the subject that includes the totality of all its determinations and modes of manifestation, such as value, money, merchandise, and so on. Of all



Marx's works, Book II of *Capital* in treating of the movement, process, and circulation of value, comes most to resemble Hegel's *Logic*. But while Marx relies on Hegel to describe capital as given (*ya dado*), he also emphasizes that one must distinguish categories such as "productive force" (*fuerza productiva*), "productive process" (*proceso productivo*), "mode of production" (*modo de producción*), and "salaried labor" (*trabajo asalariado*)—all of which are "intratotalized" (*intratotalizadas*) categories—from "living labor" (*trabajo vivo*) and "capacity to work" (*capacidad de trabajo*), which indicate the perennial presence of exteriority outside of capital.

To confuse such terms, to unify them as the previous Marxist tradition did, is to lose the whole sense of exteriority, which Dussel contends is the category par excellence for Marx. "Living labor," which always stands beyond capital, as Non-Being and yet origin of capital, is Marx's starting point; Hegel begins with Being which initiates everything and determines itself as the Same. In Dussel's terminology, "The transfundamentality, the transontologicality [the 'metaphysical' or ethical par excellence, as we shall see], of 'living labor' would indicate the absolute rupture of Marx from Hegel. The opposition of Marx and Hegel is located here."

Marx's definition of *trabajo vivo* in terms of Schelling's creative fount of Being suggests that Marx might be better read through the prism, not of Hegel, but of Schelling, whose lectures on Hegel, Marx attended. At the same time as Marx denies Hegel, however, he includes him insofar as capital, once created, moves as the foundation of the alienation of "living labor" subsumed within it. Dussel preserves the tension between totality and exteriority in Marx's thought when he describes its basic components—applicable even to socialist systems in a way that the more specific *Capital* is not—in terms of the "rational nucleus" (*nucleo racional*) which contains all Marx's fundamental abstract philosophical concepts, including Hegelian distinctions between essence and appearance and non-being as the origin of being, and the "generative matrix" (*matriz generativa*) that treats "living labor" more concretely. Although the focus on exteriority distinguishes Marx from Hegel, Marx never abandons Hegel, whose notion of totality undergirds his portrayal of capitalism, against which exteriority stands in often mute protest. Those who wish to cling to the previous readings, which considered Hegel as the whole and Marx as

the part, Hegel as an idealist and Marx as a materialist, Hegel as a philosopher and Marx as an economist, will have to come to terms with Dussel's novel grasp of Marx and his relation to Hegel.<sup>23</sup>

Dussel's original interpretation of Marx from "exteriority" enables him to correct the hermeneutical errors of others. Since the capitalist has no notion of the essence of capital, surplus value exists only in the form of profit. The agents of capitalist production live in an enchanted world, and even their own relationships appear reified to them. The capitalist as interested practically only in the rate of profit (total profit in proportion to total outlay) "obscures" and "mystifies" from the beginning the origin of surplus value. The value of merchandise can be viewed from two different hermeneutical perspectives: that of labor (subjective, more fundamental, productive) or that of capital (empirical, phenomenal, superficial, circulative). Faithful to his ethical hermeneutical starting point, Dussel comments on bourgeois economists:

The incomprehension of the *absolute* position (the only real absolute in the totality of Marx's thinking and the ethical rule of all his judgments of value) of living labor, the actuality of the corporality of the laborer, or, in another way, the person and subjectivity itself of the laborer—this incomprehension will lead the bourgeois economy (and its philosophies as philosophies of "domination") to commit necessary hermeneutical errors.<sup>24</sup>

Adam Smith derives the value of merchandise from the sum of salary, profit, and rent, completely overlooking labor's role in producing surplus value. Both Smith and Hegel, who read Smith, accept capitalism as natural, with wealth and poverty flowing from nature itself, rather than as being caused historically through human responsibility and, therefore, always with the possibility of being changed. Physiocrats, such as Quesnay, hold that surplus value emerges from nature, not from coercive human relationships, not from the worker who produces value by working nature, which of itself has no value, and turning his product over to a landowner. The capitalists and their theoreticians are not the only ones who fall into hermeneutical errors, since even workers themselves are convinced that the value produced by living labor

is equal to the salary. "All labor appears [pure fetishist appearance] as paid labor" since the salary paid erases any trace of the distinction between necessary labor and surplus labor and conceals the fact that living labor, itself beyond value because it is the creator of all value, is the "substance" of salary.<sup>25</sup>

Dussel argues that the Marxist theoretical tradition itself has erred hermeneutically by interpreting Marx in terms of the totality of capitalism rather than on the basis of exteriority, insofar as it has not sufficiently distinguished *trabajo vivo* (creative and subsumable exteriority) from other categories, such as *fuerza de trabajo*, that is, living labor subsumed under capital—a mistake fostered at times by Marx's own carelessness. Dussel bluntly describes the options regarding the Marxist tradition when he observes that "either I am mistaken, and then Lukács, Kosik, and so many others are right, or they are wrong and therefore the whole *Marx* ought to be interpreted in a different way." In Dussel's opinion, Georg Lukács begins with totality as the key to the reading of Marx and therefore ends up downplaying the importance of surplus value. Karl Korsch, while recognizing the importance of philosophy for Marx, never clarifies Marx's philosophical approach. Herbert Marcuse reinterprets Hegel but, like Karl Kosik, remains confined in the notion of totality. Since Louis Althusser, following Engels, depicts Marx as being "scientific" and thereby denies the philosophical dimensions of Marx's work, he would have no use for either the Hegelian concept of totality or the Levinasian category of exteriority. Dussel rounds out his critique of neo-Marxist thinkers with an attack on Jürgen Habermas. Habermas, whose Marx-interpretation privileges Schelling's *Weltalter* over the *Philosophy of Mythology* and the *Philosophy of Revelation*, effectively reduces economics to politics, overlooks the importance of economics for liberation in advanced countries, and abandons the labor theory of value by envisioning science, technology, and machinery as other founts (*fuentes*) of value. For Dussel, Habermas shows his unfamiliarity with Marx's thought by reducing Marx's theory of action to merely instrumental, teleological (cognitive-instrumental) action instead of seeing the practical interpersonal aspects of Marx's thought (as Dussel does in his discussion of exterior living labor face to face with the capitalist) and by relying in his *Zur Rekonstruktion des historischen Material-*

*ismus* on such notions as the "superstructure" that Marx mentions in the *Contribution* of 1859, but never again in the thousands of pages of the four redactions that Dussel has poured over. In brief, Habermas reconstructs Marx but never on the basis of Marx's own interests, but always in terms of his own hope to enrich Marx with Habermasian additions.<sup>26</sup>

As Dussel realized in his nonpositivist approach to history, every critique in the domain of economics is always undertaken from a particular point of view and Marx's perspective of critique is that of living labor. Bourgeois economic theory, by shielding itself from that perspective, ends up delivering an *apologia* for capitalism, a covering over (*encubrimiento*) of its reality. Bourgeois economics consists, in Marx's view, in "false subterfuges that furnish the appearance of a scientific explanation." Bourgeois economists, confined within the bourgeois interpretive "horizon," engage in a "sublime spiritualization" of the capitalist economy by viewing the social relationships at the root of capitalism as natural, eternal, capitalistic production relationships. Bourgeois science is actually the equivalent of a "fetishism," in "not focusing on the fundamental form of capital, the production developed on the appropriation of another's labor" and in "mystifying" the origin of surplus value. Classical economy is a pseudo-science insofar it has not adequately developed its concepts and has fallen into contradictions. Marx's practical commitments in London and his struggles on behalf of the European proletariat, which led Dussel to consider him to be the ethical hermeneuticist of capital, constitute "the epistemic condition of the opening of a new practical-theoretical horizon" that depends on subjective liberty, that liberates the theoretic process itself, and, finally, leads to the discovery of truth. Engaging in science (*Wissenschaft*), as it is defined in the tradition of German idealism, Marx attempted to move beyond the "forms of manifestation" to penetrate to their "hidden fundament" (*transfondo oculto*). "Science," in that German tradition, implies criticizing appearances on the basis of an underlying essence, seeking out mutual connections, passing from the superficial and visible to the "hidden mystery," and thinking back to the essence from the phenomena. To be sure, the laws discovered by such a process refer to Hegel's return to the identity of the essence that directs the movements of existing things, instead of

some kind of naturalist, empiricist, or scientific proposition. Reflecting this notion of science, Marx remarks in his manuscripts that if "value in general were a source fundamentally different than that of *labor* ...every rational fundament of political economy would disappear." In Dussel's view, while certain concrete phenomenal claims can be falsified, the rationality of Marx's thought lies in his effort to provide the systemic underpinnings of those phenomena: "In truth, the 'rationality' of Marx's discourse does not consist in the fact that what it affirms cannot be subsequently falsified or its impossibility shown. What is important to 'science' is the intent to show coherently the totality of the development of the concept of capital by means of the constitution of the categories rationally, that is, with systemic fundamentality."<sup>27</sup>

The role of Marx's thought in relation to capitalism resembles the role that Dussel's ethical hermeneutics plays in relation to history. Dussel's ethical hermeneutics provides an overarching interpretive framework for the writing of history, a privileging of the perspective of history's forgotten Other, that ought not to contradict provable facts, that could engender new, overlooked verifiable claims, and that cannot be undermined by proved empirical claims since it provides, at another level, the interpretive context for those claims. Similarly, Marx's economics becomes in Dussel's hands an overarching interpretive framework for economics, privileging the perspective of capitalism's forgotten Other, here living labor, through a categorial system that revolves around the notion of surplus value. This systemic framework also ought not to contradict empirical facts, can generate new claims, and cannot be discredited by particular empirical facts since it establishes an interpretive context for them on a different plane.

Dussel's reading of Marx enables him to offer an explanation of the reality of Latin America. Though Dussel argues that Marx's philosophical rational nucleus and generative matrix apply even to socialist systems in a way that *Capital* does not, he also claims that *Capital* is applicable to Latin American Capitalism, "peripheral" as it is for "central" capitalism. The mere fact that Marx himself never explicated the problem of the competition between capitals at a world level does not show that it is not a perfectly Marxist question. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,

massive sums of silver and gold taken by Spain from Latin America and transferred to Holland and England supplied a superaccumulation (*sobreacumulación*) necessary for the rapid growth of central capitalism, while peripheral capitalism, based on the *encomienda*, mining, and slavery in sugar factories, generated a very weak accumulation (*minusacumulación*). From these highly discrepant origins, Dussel advances nine theses about the differences between central and peripheral capital:

- (1) that central capital benefited from a slow dissolution of pre-bourgeois modes of appropriation;
- (2) that proximity to this process permitted primitive accumulation;
- (3) that central capital profited from an expansive politics relying on navigational and military technology;
- (4) that internal capital, the importation of metals, and slave trade made a superaccumulation possible;
- (5) that central capital expanded to a world market rather than remaining regional;
- (6) that central capital self-determined its own production and circulation;
- (7) that central capital ingested the industrial revolution first;
- (8) that central capital has transferred its earning of surplus value from absolute to relative surplus value; and
- (9) that increasing salaries in central capital have created vast internal markets.

In a better developed capitalist system, in which workers simply cannot work any harder and thus the possibility of gaining more absolute surplus value has yielded to the pursuit of relative surplus value, a greater amount of constant capital (raw materials and machinery) is introduced. The result is that, even though the mass of surplus value or profit might rise, the proportion of that surplus value or profit to the capital outlay declines. In addition, the increase in the mass of products has the effect of lowering the value of products since the labor establishing value is distributed among more goods. In the less developed system, on the other hand, still in pursuit of absolute surplus value, lower salaries afford a greater possibility of extracting more surplus value and thus eventually more profit relative to the total outlay (until the less developed economy reaches the organic composition of the

developed economy). The result is that the products have less value in the more developed setting (and more value in the less developed one), since, as Marx summarizes the above analysis, *"the 'greater' the organic composition, the 'less' the value of the product."* When these goods are now brought to the international market to enter into competition—and Dussel refers to competition as the "theoretical place of dependence"—the products of the periphery that have more (average) value meet products of the center with less (average) value, as the price of all goods merges toward a common average price (the international price of production with its constant and variable capital and the average medium profit). The result is that the merchandise of less value (from the developed capital) obtains a price better than it would have achieved within its own national market; and the merchandise of greater value {from less developed capital} fetches a price lower than it would have within its local market. The less developed capital can still make a profit if the price of its production (constant and variable capital) is lower than the price of production (constant and variable capital and the average medium profit). Since this profit, taken out of the price of production, actually derives from the surplus value created by variable capital, the less-developed capital, drawing a smaller price in the international competition than it would have drawn in its regional market, effectively transfers surplus value to developed capital. Less-developed capital, in order to compensate for this transfer of surplus value, resorts to superexploitation of labor, paying lower salaries, demanding more work, etc. The developed capital, which already would be gaining profit through its surplus value, gains all the more because of the higher price it sells for in the international competition. Transnational corporations straddle this competition between regional capitals since they import massive organic capital into the peripheral economy and thus produce goods of less value than local peripheral competitors. Though they produce the same quantity of goods as their central competitors, their payment of lower salaries to peripheral labor enables them to realize greater surplus value than their competitors, who must pay wages appropriate to the center.<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, Dussel's interpretation of Marx prevents many of the tragedies inflicted on humanity in, the name of Marx. Dussel's

Marx is not a collectivist proposing the subsumption of the individual within some undifferentiated mass; rather, Marx affirms individuality, not the defensive, self-protective individuality of the existentialist, but the individuality of the Other, neglected by the system. Dussel's Marx, as can be seen in his writings on Russia after *Capital*, does not layout a universal philosophy of history in which socialism will emerge mechanistically out of capitalism, a developmental process in which Latin America would first have to become like Europe or the United States before it could arrive at socialism. Dussel's Marx, who focuses on the Other of the system, also would not allow that class would be rigidly maintained as the only interpretive category for liberation, as Trotsky and Stalin did, since there are other ways of being Other than admittedly atrocious forms of economic alienation. Dussel cites Che Guevara and the Sandinista revolution as examples of efforts not to pit "the people" against the proletariat, since liberation includes economic and cultural dimensions and cannot be reduced to economism or naïve populism. Even socialism, whether of the Stalinist or Althusserian brand, can never enclose itself in dogmatism, but must be submitted continually to exteriority's critique. Following Gramsci's opposition to *economismo*, Dussel argues that his interpretation of Marx would be open to diverse nationalist strains of socialism such as Sandanista Marxism or the type recommended by Mariátegui in Peru. Trotsky and Stalin insisted on international socialism without attending to the interests of the nations on the periphery of capitalism, and such internationalism easily became a totality immunized against critique from without, such as Otto Bauer's: namely that revolution be national and colonial also. Dussel affords us a more humane Marx and opens the way for a more humane socialism that might engage in ethical hermeneutics, by attempting to see the world through the eyes even of those it itself excludes.<sup>29</sup>

## RELIGION/THEOLOGY

Dussel presents numerous examples in which religious/theological traditions have offered ideological support for oppression. For instance, according to Dussel, while Vitoria justified warfare



against the indigenous of Latin America so that faith could be preached to them and Rubio offered theological justification of their subjugation, the Council of Trent never mentioned the massive elimination of indigenous populations in the Americas occurring long before and during its extended sessions. Similarly, in Cuzco in 1776 the indigenous leader Tupac Amaru led a rebellion against indigenous slave labor, only to be condemned by Bishop Moscos of Cuzco as a "rebel against God, religion, and the law." Moreover, on June 20, 1886, the Vatican's Holy Office officially denied that slavery was contrary to natural law, and Jesuit J. P. Gury wrote a compendium of moral theology justifying slavery. Numerous other illustrations are scattered throughout Dussel's works.<sup>30</sup>

For Dussel, Marx's criticism of capitalism constitutes a rejection of such false religion, since Marx undertakes a hermeneutics from the point of view of exteriority, an ethical hermeneutics in the tradition of the Hebrew prophets. For Marx, as Dussel explains him, capital, by appearing to create value by itself in its products, circulation, and the interest it yields, even as it exploits labor, the true creator of value, resembles idolatry, which attributes to fetishes mystic powers of their own, even as it remains oblivious to the true creator. Furthermore, in capitalism, the products of human labor, endowed with fictitious autonomous power, consume the blood of human victims, as Moloch did. Marx's living labor, confined to the exteriority in spite of its awesome power to create all the value inherent in the capitalist system, resembles the God of the prophets, the Creator, banished to exteriority by a system of idolatry that ironically presupposes that true God for its very existence. As Dussel expresses it in *El último Marx*, "the offspring subsumes labor itself; the 'effect' dominates its creative 'origin.'" Dussel, though, argues that Marx is not atheistic enough, in that his destruction of idols still lacks a positive affirmation of the God who is Other, in order that the postcapitalist system might not deprive itself of the exteriority requisite for self-critique.<sup>31</sup>

One of Dussel's own pieces that best exemplifies an ethical-hermeneutical theology is an article entitled "Sobre el 'Documento de Consulta' para Puebla," published in *Puebla '78: Temores y esperanzas*. In that article, Dussel criticizes a document drawn up in Bogotá in 1977 in preparation for the meeting of the Latin

American bishops in Puebla with Pope John Paul II in 1979. Dussel attacks this document, which claims to open "new directions"—other than those opened in the radical 1968 council at Medellín—for arguing that the poor, "although deprived of everything" (*aún cuando desprovistos de todo*) can still live with strength because of "faith, as a word which nourishes" (*la fe, como palabra que alimenta*). Beginning from the concrete sufferings of the poor, Dussel objects, "Since when is it affirmed, and on what basis, that the word of God can replace material nourishment, proteins, and calories?" Such affirmations, in Dussel's opinion, explain why Christianity has been criticized as leading to a castrating, passive, tragic, ahistorical resignation among Latin American peoples.<sup>32</sup>

Ideological elements appear as well in that the document's emphasis on evangelization of "the Latin American culture" amounts to a "culturalist" vision, the equivalent of political populism, that all too easily overlooks the vast differences between imperial-oligarchic culture and that of dominated masses. Instead of urging the founding of a new society, the document settles for the struggle to obtain for the poor a "worthy position" (*un puesto digno*) within civil society as it stands at present. For Dussel, though, "evangelization" is not so much to incarnate oneself within a culture as to incarnate oneself among the poor of the society, in order not to exalt or sacralize the dominant culture, but to place it in question. Since the document is eager to conciliate the irreconcilable, to evade every conflict, to cover over ruptures, it is no wonder that it recommends a third way (*tercerismo*) between right and the left that would have no real historical significance for Latin America. One cannot imagine a text more abstract, universal, and vacuous than the document's assertion that God intervenes "in humanity" (*en el hombre*), since "humanity" could include the Herods and Pilates of this world and thus really refers to no one at all.<sup>33</sup>

The commitment to constructing theology from the perspective of the poor Other leads Dussel to question the document's Christology, Mariology, and ecclesiology. To the document's comment that Jesus's "death was caused by the evil [*maldad*] of human beings," Dussel responds that responsibility cannot be attributed to the "evil of human beings in general, but rather of

those responsible, the powerful, the governing classes, and the rich; the poor, the humiliated, and the exploited who identified with Jesus were not culpable." The document's Christology is faulty. "This emptying of the conflict of Christology conceals the struggle of Jesus against the sin of the rich and the oppressor. It hides the fact that, by preaching eschatological hope and by mobilizing the people, the powerful become disquieted."<sup>34</sup>

Mary is presented as one who impelled people toward unity instead of being "the marvelous mother who knew how to educate her son not to tremble before conflict and to face death head-on, even if he would be confused with being a zealot." The document, which allots only fifteen lines to the widespread, popular "base communities" in Latin America, envisions the Church as the institution that overcomes antagonisms via hierarchic authority. No importance is given to the Church living with the poor, the marginal, the indigenous, or the blacks.<sup>35</sup>

The danger of false universalization comes to the fore most clearly in the document's definition of poverty. At first, poverty is defined as "being affected by real situations of lack and privation," but this definition is expanded to "lacking participation in the services of society" and, finally, to "being weak in some other dimension of existence, such as the sick or the one who is lonely." To these definitions, Dussel responds:

There can be poor people, according to the "social objective condition of privation" (which are, without doubt, those to whom Jesus refers when he says in Matthew "I was hungry ..."), who, since they do not possess the richness of the Christian attitude ("enriched by the persistent heritage of evangelization"), are proud, lost, or sinful. On the other hand, there can be rich people in a "social objective condition" who are religiously poor because of their attitude. In this manner, we have arrived at a total inversion: now there are poor who are rich and rich who are poor.<sup>36</sup>

Here, in its very effort to move to a more universal definition of "poverty," the document effectively conceals the suffering of the physically poor, making it equal to everyone else's pain. The document blunts the demand of the poor Other by constructing a theology that will continue to hide from sight this Other's distinctive suffering. Only an ethical hermeneutical approach to a reli-

gious tradition and its texts can prevent theology from becoming the ideology of the status quo.<sup>37</sup>

We have seen how Dussel gradually moved beyond his traditional education and his espousal of Heidegger to Levinas, and we have seen how that change transformed his own thinking into an ethical hermeneutics. In this chapter, we have shown how these philosophical presuppositions played themselves out in his approach to history, economics, and religion. It now remains for us to face the criticisms coming from different quarters to the effect that this admirable philosophical attempt on Dussel's part is ultimately nothing more than irrationalism.

#### NOTES

1. *El humanismo helénico*, pp. 51,91; *History and the Theology of Liberation: A Latin American Perspective*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1976), pp. 57-60; *El catolicismo popular en la Argentina*, p. 49; "Supuestos histórico-filosóficos de la teología desde América Latina," p. 177; "Liberación latinoamericana y filosofía," p. 10; *Les évêques hispano-américains: Défenseurs et évangélisateurs de l'Indien, 1504-1620* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1970); Enrique Dussel, *El episcopado latinoamericano y la liberación de los pobres, 1504-1620* (Mexico City: Centro de Reflexión Teológica, 1979), pp. 30, 46, 51, 53, 70-71, 139, 221, 280, 287, 292, 313-14, 318, 339, 350, 359-60 (Bishop Antonio de Valdivieso, for instance; was murdered in Nicaragua for defending indigenous peoples); Enrique Dussel, "Die Ausbreitung der Christenheit und ihre heutige Krise," *Consilium*, 164 (1981), 307-16; "Auf dem Weg zur Geschichte der ganzen Kirche—Neue Horizonte," *Theologische Zeitschrift*, 38 (1982), 398. Some other explicitly historical works by Dussel include: *A History of the Church in Latin America: Colonialism to Liberation (1492-1979)*; *History and the Theology of Liberation*; *Cultura latinoamericana e historia de la Iglesia*; *Hipótesis para una historia de la Iglesia en América Latina*; *Hipótesis para una historia de la teología en América Latina* (Chapinero, Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1986); *De Medellín a Puebla*; *Desintegración de la cristiandad colonial y liberación: Perspectiva latinoamericana* (Salamanca: Ediciones Sigueme, 1978); "Supuestos histórico-filosóficos de la teología desde América Latina"; "Hipótesis para una historia de la filosofía en América Latina," in *Perspectivas de la filosofía. III. Simposio de filosofía contemporánea* (Iztapalapa, Mexico: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 1990), pp. 229-69; "Del descubrimiento al desencubrimiento: Hacia un desagravio histórico," *Misiones Extranjeras*, 86 (1985), 113.

2. Book 1, title 1, law 1 of Bullarum, Port., cited in "Die Ausbreitung der Christenheit and ihre heutige Krise," 310.
3. *De Medellín a Puebla*, p. 120; "Del descubrimiento al desencubrimiento," 106; *Cultura latinoamericana e historia de la Iglesia*, pp. 80-81; *El dualismo en la antropología de la cristiandad*, pp. 147-48, 160; *América Latina: Dependencia y liberación*, p. 59.
4. "Criterios generales y periodificación de una historia de la Iglesia en América Latina," *Cristianismo y Sociedad* (Mexico), 82 (1984), 7.
5. "Del descubrimiento al desencubrimiento," 107, 109; "Reflexiones sobre la metodología para una historia de la Iglesia en América Latina," p. 99.
6. "Reflexiones sobre la metodología para una historia de la Iglesia en América Latina," p. 103.
7. "Del descubrimiento al desencubrimiento," 107; Dussel and Esandi, *El catolicismo popular en la Argentina*, p. 19; "Sobre el sentido de la traducción," pp. 133-34; *El dualismo en la antropología de la cristiandad*, pp. 259, 261; *Cultura latinoamericana e historia de la Iglesia*, pp. 92-95; "Reflexiones sobre la metodología para una historia de la Iglesia en América Latina," pp. 101, 103; "Criterios generales y periodificación de una historia de la Iglesia en América Latina," 17-18; "Auf dem Weg zur Geschichte der ganzen Kirche," 368-69; "Historia y praxis (Ortopraxis y objectividad)," pp. 307-29; see above, chap. 3, pp. 71-72; *América Latina: Dependencia y liberación*, p. 57.
8. *1492: El encubrimiento del Otro*, pp. 41-61.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-30, 41-47, 49-99.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-203.
11. *Ibid.*, 17-47, 125-129, 205-213.
12. Enrique Dussel, "Hermeneutica y liberación." Dialogue with Paul Ricoeur, April 1991, p. 27.
13. Horacio Cerutti Guldberg, *Filosofía de la liberación latinoamericana* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1983), pp. 215, 255, 262; Schutte, "Origins and Tendendies of the Philosophy of Liberation in Latin American Thought," 276, 283, 287, 289; Dussel, *History and the Theology of Liberation*, p. 118; *América Latina: Dependencia y liberación*, p. 156; *Para una ética de la liberación latinoamericana*, 2:47; *Método para una filosofía de la liberación*, 3rd ed., p. 144; *Teología de la liberación y ética*, p. 132; *Ethics and the Theology of Liberation*, p. 17; Dussel and Guillolot, *Liberación latinoamericana y Emmanuel Levinas*, p. 41.
14. *La producción teórica de Marx*, p. 272; "Sobre la actualidad de Carlos Marx," in *Dando razón de nuestra esperanza: Los cristianos latinoamericanos frente a la crisis del socialismo y la derrota sandinista* (Managua, Nicaragua: Ediciones Nicarao, 1992), p. 111.

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