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Introduction: Enrique Dussel's Multiple Decolonial Contributions

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Introduction:

Enrique Dussel's Multiple Decolonial Contributions

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Abstract: This is a brief introduction by the co-editors of the vol. XI, no. 1 (Fall 2013) issue of *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, titled "Towards a Decolonial Transmodern World: A Conversation with Enrique Dussel."

Recent years have witnessed a growing interest in Enrique Dussel's work, to which this volume seeks to contribute. With the appearance in English of his accessible handbook *Twenty Theses on Politics* in 2008 and the monumental *Ethics of Liberation* earlier this year, both from Duke University Press, it is safe to say that this long-prolific and influential Latin American philosopher of liberation is breaking new ground and gaining adherents in the English-speaking world. And yet his production in Spanish continues to dramatically outpace available translations: at the height of the global upsurge of 2011, Dussel published *Carta a los indignados*, and he has recently finished a companion piece to the *Twenty Theses*, which dedicates sixteen theses to the subject of political economy. He continues to work on the expected third volume of his massive

Política de la Liberación, the first of which recently appeared in English, and the second of which garnered Dussel the prestigious Liberator Prize for Critical Thought in 2010.

Central to Dussel's massive and continually expanding body of work is a profound political decolonial engagement which nevertheless refuses to shun thought: his is a *philosophy* in the fullest sense of the word, but *liberation* is its express objective. Or, as he put it in his 1971 *Philosophy of Liberation*: "Politics introduces ethics, which in turn introduces philosophy" (173). That these aspects should not be considered in isolation from one another, that philosophy should not be locked in the ivory tower as political practice and not be isolated from theory, is also attested to in Dussel's recent decision to accept—at the demand of organized student movements—the interim

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rectorship of the Autonomous University of Mexico City (UACM). Stepping into the contentious political fray in such a way was not something any philosopher could take lightly, but nor was it something that a philosopher of *liberation* could easily refuse.

It is in this spirit of engagement that we offer the essays collected here, which range from theoretical reflections on aspects of Dusselian thought to attempts to concretely apply his concepts to different aspects of reality. While reflecting the importance, coherence, and power of Dussel's work, these essays also reflect the range of this philosopher-historian-theologian-political theorist.

Eduardo Mendieta and Oscar Guardiola engage Dussel's recent intervention into rekindled debates on the importance of Saint Paul of Tarsus for radical thought, on which Dussel published yet another book in 2012. Linda Martín Alcoff and Lewis Gordon reflect on Dussel's polemical engagement in his "Anti-Cartesian Meditations" with the ostensible founder of European philosophy. Ramón Grosfoguel engages a broad range of Dussel's work, drawing epistemology and geopolitics into conversation to press forward the task of a decolonial epistemology by linking the four genocides/epistemicides of the long 16th century with modern/colonial racist/sexist structures of knowledge. Finally, Dustin Craun turns Dussel's work toward pressing contemporary efforts to rethink Islam's contribution toward pluriversal transition to transmodernity. In the spirit of the conversations begun here, we also reprint Dussel's own "Agenda for a South-South Philosophical Dialogue" that seeks to transcend the false universalism of European philosophy in the hopes of ushering in a truly universal "pluriversal, trans-modern age." For decolonial thinkers around the world, there is a before and after Enrique Dussel's Liberation Philosophy.

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