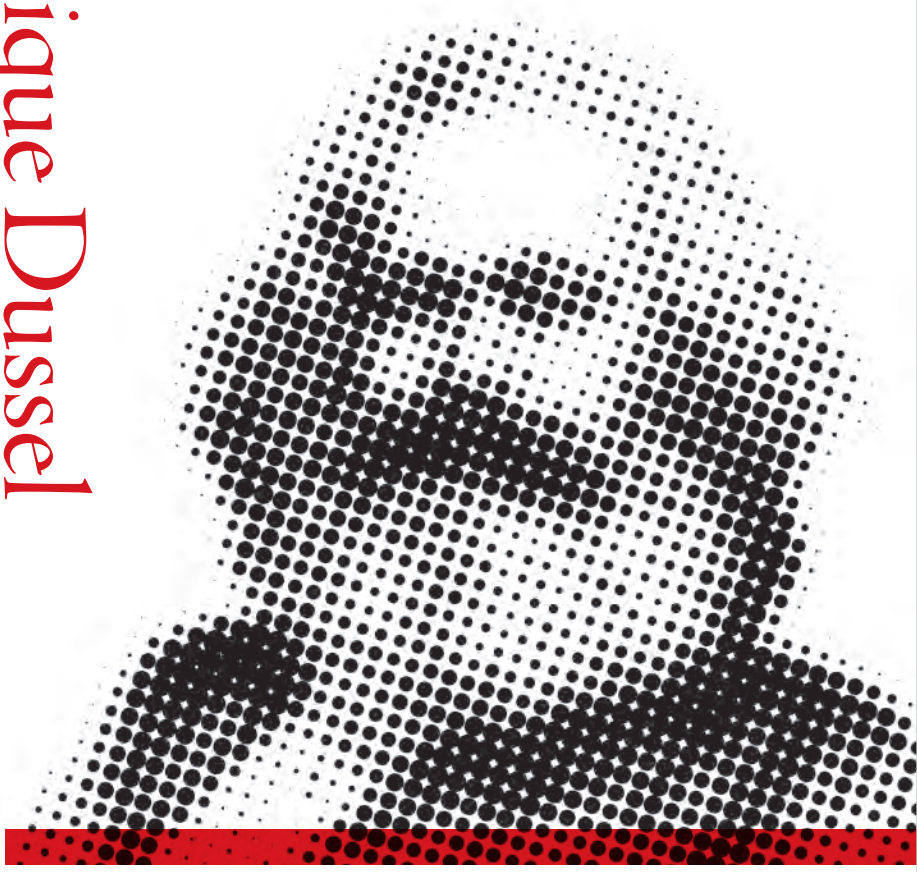
Enrique Dussel

translated by Camilo Pérez-Bustillo
with a foreword by Eduardo Mendieta



the THEOLOGICAL METAPHORS *of* MARX

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

One of my greatest honors as a human rights scholar and advocate has been to translate this book and several other notable texts by Enrique Dussel. His death in November 2023, as this book was entering production, was a great loss for all who were inspired by his work and example (globally and especially in Latin America) and has deep additional personal resonance for those of us who had the privilege of his persistently generous mentorship and support. This book is dedicated to his memory.

There are two different, intertwined dimensions to translation processes of this kind. The challenges in terms of linguistics, style, and terminology are the most obvious and often daunting ones, and will be briefly discussed below. Others are of a more conceptual character, which relate to the transdisciplinary nature of Dussel's work. These are especially striking in this book, because they embody what is in essence a highly unusual process of disciplinary "translation" in itself that lays a foundational, epistemological bridge between Marxist scholarship and that of liberation theology.

This highlights what is most polemical about this book as it exposes and explores the theological threads embedded in Karl Marx's thinking, which disrupt the deep, generalized misunderstanding of his work as supposedly antireligious or explicitly atheist, as Stalinist or Maoist dogma came to dictate. Meanwhile it is worth noting, in a deadly dialectical twist, how those associated with liberation theology in Latin America and

beyond have been systematically silenced, persecuted (both by right-wing military dictatorships sustained by the United States, and by the Vatican) and killed for their supposed complicity with, or echoing of, Marxist discourses.

This book and Dussel's monumental work and life as a whole have been dedicated to the in-depth exploration of the emergent architecture of the principle of liberation throughout human history, which includes but transcends Marxism and the secularist and faith-based revolutionary and national liberation movements that it has inspired, as well as modernity and its origins in coloniality, racism, patriarchy, and ecocide. These are the echoes that we can hear in the Zapatista Indigenous autonomous communities of Chiapas, Mexico, or in the streets of Puno, Cuzco, and Lima, and throughout Peru, today. Dussel's heterodoxy in this sense is an approach that ends up being the most faithful to the origins of both Christianity and Marxism and to their most transformative contemporary expressions, which are echoed in other faiths from Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam to Indigenous spiritualities throughout the world.

Dussel has also been a crucial mentor and inspiration for me—not only as one of the most significant forerunners of what has become known as decolonial thought and the commensurate rethinking of human rights history, theory, and praxis from below but as my colleague (and rector) during the period when I was based as a research professor at the Maestría en Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos (Master's Program in Defense and Promotion of Human Rights) at the Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México (Autonomous University of Mexico City). This has included Dussel's reiterated support for key human rights initiatives—including the International Tribunal of Conscience—that seek to hold Mexican and US officials accountable for serious, generalized violations of the rights of migrants in transit on Mexican territory and at the border (who, like Dussel, have sought protection from persecution) and the negation of the right to a dignified life in their countries of origin.

The most important goal of the linguistic dimensions of this translation has been to adequately render and reflect the essence of Dussel's meaning, voice, and style in English, for a contemporary "transmodern" and intercultural audience, on a global scale, thirty years or more after most of the book was first published in Spanish. This has implied many difficult choices along the way, including the need to navigate the

book's labyrinth of reliance on texts by Marx, the Bible, and historical, theological, and philosophical scholarship in multiple languages, from classical Greek, Hebrew, and Latin to German, French, and Spanish, among others. It also includes the need to balance the book's specialized character and corresponding language with its intended accessibility to a broader audience.

Dussel's Spanish is recognizably both Argentine and Mexican in origin, but also has a deeply continental, hemispheric dimension as a quintessential expression of contemporary Latin American identity and consciousness, which is deliberately intended to also have global, cosmopolitical, and scientific significance and recognition. The methodology of this translation was thus also framed as part of the positioning of Dussel's work not only as Latin American or from the perspective of the Global South but as an oeuvre of truly global sweep and stature. This was underlined by my physical location in Taiwan, at the other edge of the world, during most of the translation and revision process, as I sought to read and understand Dussel more deeply from the perspective of Sinophone, Buddhist, and Taoist spirituality and civilization, as well as that of my own multiracial Colombian immigrant roots and longtime residency in Mexico.

In disciplinary terms, this book and its method of translation deeply reflect Dussel's convergent formation and vocations as a historian, theologian, and philosopher. The text also includes the beginning of an autobiographical reflection that has become increasingly evident in his work amid the regional and global reflections and commemorations that it so powerfully evokes and should inspire. This book and its multiple potential resonances should be at the heart of these observances.

Camilo Pérez-Bustillo
San Francisco, California / Taipei, Taiwan

FOREWORD

On Karl Marx's Negative Meta-Theology

Enrique Dussel is unquestionably the most important living Latin American philosopher of the last half century, and arguably of the last century. Dussel was born in Mendoza, Argentina, in 1934, and as a young man he traveled to Spain, Germany, and France, to pursue his education, eventually receiving degrees in history, theology, and philosophy. Dussel spent 1959–61 working with Paul Gauthier in Nazareth, Israel, in a Palestinian cooperative, building houses for the local community. He then returned to Argentina to teach philosophy and begin his prolific intellectual corpus. His website lists more than thirty "selected works" and hundreds of essays under the rubrics of *philosophy*, *history*, and *theology*. Dussel's contributions have been prodigious, innovative, and encyclopedic, and they have had global impact.[1] He was one of the founding members of the Latin American philosophy of liberation movement, and he is surely the most prominent of its representatives now. He has also made major contributions to the history of Latin American philosophy, theology, the church, Marxology, political theory, and, above all, ethics. In 1975, after years of persecution and the assassination of some of his students and a bomb attempt at his home, Dussel left Argentina for Mexico, where he has been teaching ever since at the Iztapalapa campus of the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (Metropolitan Autonomous University of Mexico) and where he is now a professor emeritus.[2]

From such a vast intellectual corpus it is difficult to select those works or areas that have been most impactful, innovative, and with an afterlife that will secure their historical progeny. Yet two very specific areas and clusters of publications can be singled out. First and foremost, as a philosopher with many interests and areas of specialization, Dussel has devoted most of his efforts to thinking about ethics. Already in the late 1960s he began the project of the deconstruction of the history of ethics with the intent of developing an ethics of liberation in Latin America. This project became a trilogy titled *Para una ética de la liberación latinoamericana* (Toward an ethics of Latin American liberation; 1973–77). In 1986 he published *Ética comunitaria* (translated as *Ethics and Community*, 1998). Then, in the late 1990s, after his decade-long study of Karl Marx's four drafts of *Das Kapital* (*Capital*) and a long exchange and debate with Karl-Otto Apel, Dussel wrote *Ética de la liberación en la edad de la globalización y de la exclusión* (translated as *Ethics of Liberation: In the Age of Globalization and Exclusion*, 1998). This last book, a magnum opus, is both historical and systematic. The first fifty pages offer a sketch of a world history of what Dussel called ethical systems. The remaining four hundred pages offer his architectonics of the foundations of ethics and a critical ethics, all with the intent of building an ethics of liberation that would serve not simply Latin America but all of the peoples and nations on the planet. This is not an ethics with a universal, but a planetary, intent. Thus, over several decades, the project of a deconstruction of the history of ethics became the project of *ethical critique*, which is today articulated as the *decolonization of ethics*, as a means to develop an *ethics of the community of life*. While Dussel's early works on ethics were influenced by phenomenology and hermeneutics, his latest works have been deeply impacted by Marx and the Apelian-Habermasian discourse of ethics.[3]

The second area—and group of publications—that makes Dussel one of the world's foremost thinkers and Marxologists is related to his book *Las metáforas teológicas de Marx*, which was published in 1993—coincidentally, the same year that Jacques Derrida published his *Spectres de Marx* (translated as *Specters of Marx* in 1994).[4] Dussel's contributions to the in-depth study of Marx began with his *Filosofía de la producción* (The philosophy of production) in 1977 (and expanded in 1984), which included a translation of Marx's notebooks on technology with an extended commentary. Then followed three voluminous books, based on deep archival work, that offered thus far unsuspecting discoveries,

exegeses, and reconstructions of Marx's four drafts of *Capital*: *La producción teórica de Marx: Un comentario a los "Grundrisse"* (Marx's theoretical production: A commentary on the "Grundrisse") in 1985; *Hacia un Marx desconocido: Un comentario de los manuscritos de 61–63* (Toward an unknown Marx: A commentary on the manuscripts of 61–63) in 1988; and *El último Marx (1863–1882) y la liberactión latinoamericana* (The last Marx [1863–1882] and Latin American liberation) in 1990.

Dussel's detailed reconstruction—based on archival work with manuscripts that up until the 1980s were not yet available in print in German—of the researching, writing, rewriting, and careful editing of *Capital* is the discovery of the centrality of the concept of *lebendige Arbeit* (living labor) for Marx's critique of capital. In Dussel's reading, Marx emerges not as a thinker of the Hegelian totality and the dialectics of the self-positing and self-grounding of being, qua spirit of mind, but rather as the thinker of the exteriority of capital: the exteriority of living labor to both the market and the expropriation and accumulation of surplus value. Instead of a dialectical and Hegelian Marx, Dussel slowly develops for us an analogical (analectic—i.e., with reference to what is the *other* and not the *same* of capital) and Schellingian Marx (i.e., a Marx that thinks from the exteriority of being and what is outside the logic and self-positing of the spirit). This reconstruction and rereading of Marx allows Dussel to give concreteness to the Levinasian other; this is no longer simply a metaphysical other (pure alterity) but a concrete, material, embodied, and historical other, which in Dussel's language is the poor person, the orphan, the widow, the ex-slave, and the immigrant: the wretched of Earth, of history, and of global capitalism. As Dussel traces carefully the evolution of Marx's economic and political thinking, he emphatically foregrounds the specifically *ethical* dimension of Marx's critique of capitalism. This is what is at the core of the examination of Marx's critique of capital's fetishization of all human relations. Dussel's key argument in his three volumes at the center of Marx's critique of bourgeois political economy is that the category of *lebendige Arbeit* reveals a Marx who is not simply interested in the "logic" of capital but also, and perhaps most centrally, in the unethical, fetishizing, idolatrous, and immoral character of a system that expropriates the "life" of workers, turning them into fungible commodities. For Dussel, then, Marx becomes one of the great ethical thinkers of the West. If we are attentive to the third volume of Dussel's trilogy on the genesis of *Capital*, with its focus on living labor as the ethical critique of capitalism, and read it in tandem

with *The Theological Metaphors of Marx*, we can think of these works as the elaboration of a Marxist *ethics*. Thus, Dussel's ethics of liberation is a *Marxist ethics*. We can't uncouple his ethics of liberation in the age of global immiseration and ecological crisis from his rediscovery of an ethical, and theological, Marx.

The Theological Metaphors of Marx is thus the fifth book in more than a decade of assiduous and detailed readings of Marx's theoretical laboratory, manuscripts, drafts, editions, revisions, editions of translations (as in his substantive revisions to the French translation of *Capital*), and prefaces to later editions. This book, however, is not a summary of the prior ones. It advances some original, and unsuspected, ideas about Marx's philosophical method and his deep ethical, religious, literary, and theological motivations. For the moment, let me anticipate that what makes this a major work of Marxology, theology, and ethical theory is the argument that the critique of the bourgeois political economy, as a critique of commodity fetishization, is also a theological critique of the idolatry of the commodity in bourgeois political economy. The hinge that links both is the critique of commodity fetishization as a critique of religious idolatry and as the critique of mystification of money. Capitalism is, in fact, a form of idolatry. What Dussel argues, and shows persuasively, is that implicit in Marx's critique of capital's fetishization of the commodity is a metaphorical theology that uses theological (i.e., primordially religious) metaphors to advance arguments about the critique of capitalist exploitation. What Dussel shows is that if there is a *political theology* of the modern capitalist sovereignty regime, undergirding it, as its base, is a *theological economics* or an *economic-theological* ideology that commands the expropriation of living labor.[5] If there is a political economy of capitalism, there is also a theological economy of capitalism. Nonetheless, some preliminary remarks are required before we highlight Dussel's unique and revealing arguments and findings.

We must begin with the fact that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were incredibly prolific and consummate writers. The English edition of the *Marx-Engels Collected Works* (MECW) comprises fifty volumes, of which ten volumes are devoted to the works related to and including the three volumes of *Capital*.[6] The *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA; Complete works of Marx and Engels), which aims to give us a complete and rigorously annotated version of all of Marx's and Engels's writings, is projected to comprise 114 volumes, of which sixty-two have been already published. The MEGA is divided into four sections. The first section

contains books, articles, and drafts; the second is devoted to *Capital* and all related manuscripts and drafts; the third contains letters; and the fourth contains excerpts, notes, and marginalia. The section devoted to *Capital*, already published, comprises twenty-three volumes.[7] Part of the reason why there are ten volumes in the MECW and twenty-three in the MEGA devoted to *Capital* is that Marx wrote several drafts, which is what Dussel calls the four drafts of *Capital*. David McLellan's *The Thought of Karl Marx* provides us with a detailed chronology of Marx's writing schedule, which gives us a sense of the incredible amount of work that went into many of his published and unpublished works.[8] McLellan's work has been updated, while underscoring what we can take away from this careful work, by Sven-Eric Liedman's *A World to Win*.[9]

We must also begin with the realization that both Marx and Engels, and especially Marx, were great writers who developed over time a distinct, powerful, polemical, rhetorical, but also precise and scientific "literary" style. This style included references to literature, poetry, theater, the Bible (to which there are hundreds of references), and so on.[10] The references, allusions, and paraphrases from Western literature are simply staggering. Marx, in particular, seems to have read everything, and anything. S. S. Prawer's 1976 book *Karl Marx and World Literature*, still the best entry point into Marx's references to world literature, details the breadth and depth of Marx's uses of all kinds of literature, from Homer, to Dante, to Shakespeare and the Bible. Prawer devotes a chapter to a close analysis of Marx's models and metaphors, and a chapter to the close literary analysis of books 2 and 3 of *Capital*, since they antedated book 1; in those two volumes Marx's use of similes, allegories, analogies, and metaphors is in full development, leading to the literary power of book 1, which underwent the most editing by Marx. From Prawer's still unsurpassed work there are two passages that are worth quoting, as they provide a great framework for what Dussel has accomplished with this book. In the first, commenting on the style and tone of Marx's *Grundrisse*, Prawer writes, "It is not difficult to discern in Marx's later work—with its demand for righteousness, its stern judgment of existing society, its vision of a battle between Good and Evil, its hope of an absolute end to historical processes as we now know them—a return to the tradition of the Hebrew prophets." In the second, commenting on Marx's use of Adalbert von Chamisso's novella *Peter Schlemihl*, Prawer writes, "Marx has thus found a powerful way of conveying his sense of alienation, perversion, and inhumanity through what one might be tempted to call a

'meta-literature'; through varying and inverting the characters and incidents invented by earlier writers and using them—effectively—in ways their creators could never have foreseen."[11] The first quote is important because it anticipates a key argument in Dussel's work—namely, that Marx activates and transforms the messianic tradition of the Hebrew prophets, which very clearly influence his thinking and writing. The second is noteworthy because it points to the incredibly important role that literature, in all of its forms, played in Marx's writing in general. Marx very deliberately called his work on political economy a "critique." A critique is always a metaphilosophy, as has been the case with all philosophical critiques since Plato criticized the sophists, and Aristotle criticized Plato and the Ionian philosophers. The "critique of political economy" is a form of metaphilosophy that stands both Immanuel Kant and G. W. F. Hegel on their heads, but it is one that is also undergirded by a metatheology, as Dussel argues.

An additional important prefatory remark has to do with what Ludovico Silva has called Marx's literary style. It is incredible that his important 1971 book *El estilo literario de Marx* (The literary style of Marx) has not been translated. The book is, to my knowledge, the best and most comprehensive analysis of Marx's writing styles and techniques. It has four chapters: first, on the literary origins of Marx's thinking (the impact of all kinds of literature on his writing); second, the fundamental characteristics of Marx's style, which in turn has four distinct sections: science's architectonics, dialectical expression and the dialectics of expression, Marx's great metaphors, and other characteristics; third, an assessment of the style of Marx's work; and finally, an epilogue on irony and alienation. Already in the introduction, Silva makes it clear what his goal is: "Marx was a writer: he left an imposing work. This work constitutes a scientific corpus, a theoretical weave. But this corpus, in addition to its conceptual skeleton, possesses an expressive musculature; concrete literary threads have warped this theoretical weave. The scientific system is supported by an expressive system." Indeed, Marx's writing has an expressive, stylistic, rhetorical, metaphorical, and expressive musculature that makes him both a great thinker and a great stylist, unlike any of the great thinkers in the Western tradition. In chapter 3 Silva offers a summary of his analysis of Marx's literary style: "Expression of an architectonic idea of society; verbal reflection of a dialectical thinking; complete design of vast metaphorical analogies; virtuous writing filled with a concrete spirit, critical-polemical and playful spirit; such are the

most salient characteristics of a writer such as Marx, in whose origin figures poetic mediation and the conception of prose as a work of art, and whose apex is constituted a scientific *corpus* literally endowed of a prodigious expressive force."[12] Silva has captured succinctly the interdependence between the scientific and literary, or verbal, dimensions of Marx's work: both dimensions illuminate and potentiate each other. He also highlights the energetic, polemical, rhetorical style that combines a wry and sly humor with a moral urgency to confront, denounce, and unmask exploitation and dehumanization.

These preliminary remarks were required in order to properly contextualize what Dussel has accomplished in the present work. Like very few scholars, Dussel spent a decade working through the Marx-Engels Archives, as new manuscripts were deciphered and prepared for publication. Dussel's work on Marx are some of the closest, most forensic, and reconstructive of Marx's writing process. *The Theological Metaphors of Marx* demonstrates this amply, for here Dussel shows the central thread that runs through Marx's thinking and writing since the time of his youth—namely, the concept and metaphor of *fetish*. But more than tracking the rhetorical and metaphorical function of fetish, Dussel demonstrates how it also performs an epistemic, or theoretical, function. To *fetishize* requires that one *verfremdem* (alienate): turn something—and, above all, social labor—into something alien, something that seemingly acquires its own life and power. Capitalist fetishization of money and the "commodity" form is predicated on the alienation of social labor, which is the ontological condition of the possibility of all social relations, including production and market exchange.

Just as important, Dussel also shows how Marx's work, especially the three volumes of *Capital* and the related manuscripts, are saturated by the use of religious and theological metaphors. Dussel describes Marx's evolving metaphorical theology as one that registers a shift, from the political critique of the state to an *economic* critique of the fetish.[13] As I have noted, this shift can also be described as the coupling of the political-economic critique of bourgeois political economy with an economic-theological critique of the capitalist fetish. The fetish is Mammon; it is the devil; it is the vampire, the anti-God, a necrological idol. For this reason, Dussel argues that inchoate in Marx's economic writings we can discern and read a *demonology* and *infernology* (to echo William Clare Roberts's great book, *Marx's Inferno*) and an *antitheodicy* in Marx's metaphorical theology and theological *metaphorology*. Dussel

does not use this word, but it aptly describes what he has unearthed in Marx's archives and theoretical laboratory; I use this word advisedly in the sense developed by Hans Blumenberg, who describes what it seeks to accomplish: "Metaphorology seeks to burrow down to the substructure of thought, the underground, the nutrient solution of systematic crystallization, but it also aims to show with what 'courage' the mind preempts itself in its images and how its history is projected in the courage of its conjectures."[14] Indeed, this is what Dussel has amply demonstrated—namely, how theological metaphors are burrowed in the substructure of Marx's critiques of the capitalist system, with its sacrificial logics. Marx's relentless critique of the capitalist fetish is nourished by his theological metaphors. To "capitalism as a religion," to use that most felicitous Benjaminian formulation, Marx brought a theological critique performed by means of economic-theological critique of political economy.[15] Thus, along with Marx's "meta-literature," to use Prawer's term, we can discern a metatheology, a reflection on what theology aims to theorize and give voice to. This is what Dussel has forcefully and irretrievably established in this book.

Finally, in order to have a richer sense of the importance of the present work, it should be underscored that Dussel has been a major contributor to the Latin American theology of liberation. In more than one way, this book is part of that contribution. It should be noted that in 1988 he wrote a lengthy essay titled "Teología de la Liberación y Marxismo" (Theology of liberation and Marxism), which is one of the best overviews of the fruitful but also tense relationship between these two movements. In the essay Dussel guides his presentation by asking, "Which Marxism are we talking about? Why are Marxist tools used? And—the most important from a descriptive point of view—why do liberation theologians use Marxism?"[16] It is very clear that *The Theological Metaphors of Marx* is a contribution to answering those questions. In this book we discover a Marx that is profoundly and avowedly humanist, and certainly not an Althusserian, structuralist Marx. We also discover that Marx is not an antagonist of either religion or theology, as is generally thought, but that his own thinking is suffused by the spirit and commitment that theologians of liberation also embody. Finally, this book shows how Marx provides political and economic tools, but also economic-theological tools to criticize and confront the idolatrous religion that is capitalism. Beyond this, the book is also a contribution to what Dussel calls in the appendix, added to this English translation, the "epistemological decolonization of

theology," which was one of the primary tasks of both the theology and philosophy of liberation. In this way this is a book that speaks from the heart of the Latin American experience and, at the same time, beyond it to the worlds that are also aiming to decolonize themselves. This book, then, also argues that to decolonize theology by means of a Marxian negative metatheology requires that we decolonize Marx by means of a decolonized theology and ethics of liberation, and vice versa.

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PRELIMINARY WORDS

This book, which was written before the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, did not have to be significantly modified in the wake of this event. Marx's relevance will in fact intensify in the future, given his role as the leading critic of capital, particularly as it seeks to position itself as the triumphant locus of global power at the inception of the twenty-first century. Capital's unparalleled fetishistic character is projected even more monstrously as the direct cause of the misery of the largest portion of humanity in the Global South (the so-called Third World). This has been accentuated further, since January 15, 1991, by the war in the Persian Gulf motivated by the battle for control of the world's oil. My hope is that this book can contribute to a distinct rereading of a great nineteenth-century thinker, philosopher, and economist. Contrary to the assertion of the Polish theologian Josef Tischner, Karl Marx not only has not died but will generate new impulses that can infuse the kind of critical thinking that we need today in philosophy, economics, and theology.

Little or nothing has been done elsewhere to address the themes I seek to explore in this book. Although it may seem paradoxical, the questions I focus on here have been persistently bypassed and never explicitly unraveled. Few could imagine that Marx, the great critic of religion, could be repositioned as a thinker who opens a new horizon—for theology.

The case of G. W. F. Hegel, by contrast, has spawned an extensive bibliography. Hegel, like Friedrich Hölderlin and Friedrich Wilhelm

Joseph von Schelling, studied theology; all of them planned to become Lutheran pastors. Later their paths led in other directions, but the imprint of their initial studies was indelible.[1] It is also known that Hegel, when he was a student in Tübingen, because of the kind of theological formation that characterized the evangelical Tübinger Stift,[2] felt the impact of the Pietist theological current that prevailed in the region of Württemberg. In that duchy of Germany, orthodox Lutheranism had been hegemonic. The Pietist movement emerged in opposition, as the product of a profound spiritual and religious renewal, seeking the renovation of Lutheranism from within the church, alongside more sectarian separatist movements that sought to create new religious communities outside of Lutheranism.

From 1733 onward Karl Alexander, a Catholic duke, reigned in Württemberg. His role as an authoritarian member of the military spurred the Pietists to begin to develop a theology opposed to power, to the state, which even led some to characterize him as an Antichrist. This was a theology grounded in the Pietist "People of God"—the poor—whose emphasis was on bringing the "Kingdom of God" to Earth through Pietist praxis. Its point of reference was the ancient traditions of Württemberg, which had been corrupted, according to the Pietist interpretation, both by the orthodox Lutherans and by the Catholic duke. This was a movement that sought to negate the "distant," abstract God of the Lutherans and the doctrine of *simul justus et peccator* (at the same time just and sinful), which immersed believers in a trap of immobility, as predicated on a sterile spiritual life marked by resignation and fatalism, which also served to justify the domination of Lutheran princes over their impoverished people. The Pietists, by contrast, demanded good works—action and praxis—from their congregations, along with a sense of service, and of political and economic responsibility, which to some degree they had seen put into practice in Geneva by the Calvinists.

This positive dimension of Pietism would lead Hegel, against his initial inspiration, to soon justify the cultural dimensions of capitalism. This would be criticized harshly by Marx. But it must be noted here that Marx explicitly criticized the Puritanism of Dutch or English Protestantism but not the Pietism of Württemberg, to which he was connected to a certain degree.

This is why the German Aufklärung (Enlightenment), with its optimistic vision of history (which in the case of Hegel consisted of the

development of the absolute itself: the *Heilsgeschichte*, or history of salvation) and its affirmation of the goodness of human nature (contrary to the exaggerations of Augustinianism or of orthodox Lutheranism), as in the case of the "free will" of the philosophy of law, appeared to be solely a rationalist movement, that in reality in Germany (but not in France) was a process deeply influenced by the semi-Pelagian position (in the sense that human action dialectically merits the grace of God) of the Pietism of Württemberg.[3]

Pietism thus has a deep influence on the millennialism of Joachim of Fiore (with its utopia consisting of three realms: the realm of the Father of the Old Testament, the realm of the Son of the New Testament, and the realm of the Holy Spirit,[4] which is built through good works, defined by Pietists in terms of *praxis pietatis*).

This also included a historical vision as to the moments when the Antichrist had reigned (from the time of ancient Babel or Rome, which was also criticized by the Apologists, the Alexandrian Fathers, or Saint Augustine but was nonetheless accepted by Eusebius, up until the Catholic Church of Joachim during the twelfth century, or that of the Catholic duchy of Württemberg in the seventeenth century). This amounted in effect to a kind of universal history of key figures of Hell and of the Antichrist. The "people of God," or community of practicing believers, though they were poor and persecuted, had to struggle against this Antichrist.

It was Philipp Jakob Spener, the founder of German Pietism, who expressed this with the greatest clarity: "the reality of religion consists not of words but of actions."[5] And J. A. Bengel, the great theologian of Tübingen, asserted that "Lehre ohne Leben" (doctrine without life) is not Christian.[6] In essence this meant a demand of praxis (it is worth noting in this context that the Book of the Acts of the Apostles was titled Praxis in Greek: Praxis Apostolon)—of works, and not just of faith—that was tragically passive before the omnipotence of a God of grace. Suffering was understood in relationship to evil, which gave rise to it, and a good Christian should struggle against the suffering of the people in order to vanquish evil.

Let us take an example from Kant, from his work that most influenced the young Hegel and which Marx also encountered in his youth: *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* (*Religion within the Bounds of Pure Reason*).[7] Kant says explicitly,

> In the face of biblical theology there is a philosophical theology within the field of sciences. . . . This [philosophical] theology, as long as it remains within the bounds of pure reason, and relies for the confirmation and clarification of its theses on history, languages, and the books of all peoples, including the Bible, but only in themselves and not in order to introduce these theses in biblical theology . . . should have the full freedom necessary in order to extend itself as far as science permits.[8]

Nonetheless, this Kantian "philosophical theology" has many positive elements of Christianity mixed within it in its Pietist version. For example, against the pessimism that is characteristic of a certain variant of Lutheran Augustinianism, Kant writes,

> The foundation of evil cannot reside in any object that determines free will through an inclination, nor any natural impulse [*Naturtriebe*].[9]

Kant here reaffirms the Pietist (and Catholic) principle that it is not "nature that carries the mark of guilt or merit, but it is instead man himself who is the author of this." This leads him to affirm the "original disposition toward good in human nature."[10] In the third part of this work, Kant expounds on the "triumph of the principle of good over that of evil and the foundation of the Kingdom of God over the Earth."[11] This is the basic Pietist principle during the eighteenth century (and that of the Latin American theology of liberation in the twentieth century, setting aside possible differences).[12] Kant demonstrates that a "civil state of law" is not sufficient in itself,[13] and that instead an "ethical [*ethisch*] civil state" is necessary, which is not limited to the "political community" but to one of an ethical character [*ethischen Gemeinen*]. And this conceptualization of an ethical community is in essence that of a *Volkes Gottes* (people of God) governed by ethical laws.[14] These are, word by word, the aims of the project of the Pietist movement, which are formulated as follows:

> An ethical community governed by a divine moral legislation is a church that, to the extent that it is not an object of possible experience, can be described as an invisible church.[15] . . . That which is visible consists of the effective union of men in an all-embracing unity that is in concordance with that ideal.[16]

It is important to underline that Marx will begin his successive stages of writing *Das Kapital* (*Capital*) with an attentive reading of

Hegel's *Wissenschaft der Logik* (*Science of Logic*). Hegel had written to a friend that the "only science is theodicy."[17] In his *Logik* this becomes the generative thesis of the book as a whole. Thus, at the beginning of this work, which is central in all of Hegelian thought, Hegel writes that "this content is the presentation of God in his eternal essence before the creation of nature, and of a finite spirit."[18]

Karl Löwith himself wrote that "Hegel's logic is an ontology, at the same time as a theology—an ontotheology."[19] What was for Hegel in his *Logik* the "development" of God as such, not surprisingly, applying the same logic to capital, produces the "development" in Marx's work of the Antichrist, of Moloch, of the fetish.

As I have noted previously, the variant of Protestantism that prevailed in the Rhineland and thus in the region of Trier, where Marx was born, also reflected the influence of Pietism.[20] Marx would experience this in his high school classes, as well as later in the Hegelian environments of Berlin through the prevailing currents that were then dominant in philosophical circles. Schelling, Hölderlin, and many others of the same generation were also marked by Pietism. German idealism and the *Aufklärung* should be situated within this tradition.

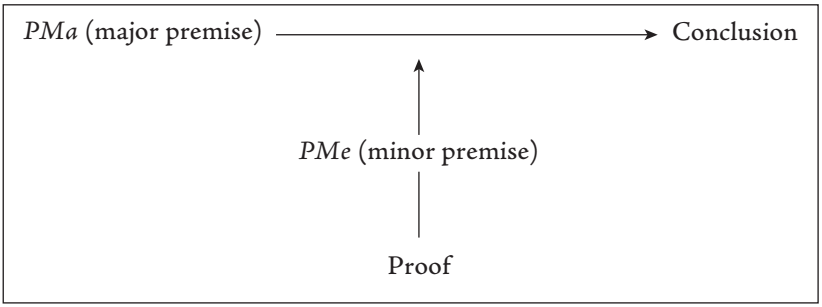
Despite the importance of this context, Marx's philosophical, ethical, anthropological, and historical positions have not been "read" in relation to the theological problems posed during this era. If this were to be done, it would then be clearly revealed that Marx provides his own solution to these theological problems, as I will explore in detail in part II of this book. This will in turn render it less surprising that I have found theological positions embedded in Marx's thought.

In any case, I am convinced that Marx derived his framing of the issue of the Antichrist from German Pietism, as well as its prioritization of praxis. And just as the Pietists were opposed to a Catholic king, and Hegel to a (Prussian German) king without a constitution, Marx would first oppose the Lutheran state (during his period of political critique as a journalist in Germany), and later launch his philosophical-economic critique directed at capital itself, beginning in 1843 in Paris, then in Brussels, and definitively in London, in theoretical and systemic terms, after 1857.

In Marx's work there is an implicit strategic structure of argumentation that must be made explicit. In diagram P.1, I will frame this as suggested by Stephen Toulmin.[21]

Marx's framework of argument is as follows:

DIAGRAM P.1. Toulmin's overview of Marx's structure of argumentation.



1. Major premise (*PMa*): If a Christian is a capitalist
2. Minor premise (*PMe*): And if capital is the Beast of the Apocalypse in the Book of Revelation—the "visible demon"[22]
3. Conclusion: This Christian finds themself in a state of practical contradiction.

All of this will demand proof, which I will seek to provide throughout this book. But in order for this argument to be understood, certain definitions must be stated from the beginning.

The "Christianity" of the Christian who is alluded to in *PMa* is that which is really existent in daily life, and which has a Lutheran or Puritan character in Europe during Marx's era—or today in the European, North American, and Latin American capitalist world. This "capitalism" is also that which is understood by all in their daily lives, with its free-market character during Marx's period, and that which prevails at the end of the twentieth century, which in terms of the essential relationship between labor and capital is abstractly or essentially the same. The *PMe* will demand additional considerations, which will be explored in parts I and II of this book.

If it is accepted (for now, without demonstration) that capital is "Moloch," the "fetish," the "visible demon," as a further elaboration of the doctrine of the "Antichrist" in Joachimite Pietism,[23] then a Christian would find themself in a clearly contradictory position, because their daily praxis within the capitalist system would ethically involve a satanic, demonical action.

If this were so, this Christian could elude this contradiction in one of the following four ways: (1) by affirming their Christianity and renouncing their capitalist praxis (which is what Marx strived for); (2) by

affirming capitalism and renouncing Christianity (which happened and happens rarely); (3) by inventing a fetishistic religion, labeled Christian, but modified in such a way that it was no longer in contradiction with capitalism, as reflected in examples such as Dutch or English Puritanism, generating the kind of religious attitude that capitalism needs so that it can be reproduced in "good conscience";[24] or, finally, (4) by interpreting capitalism in such a way that it no longer appears contradictory to the most authentic and prophetic forms of Christianity, which is the function of the version of capitalist political economy developed by Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Thomas Robert Malthus, and others and serves to conceal the unethical essence of capitalism.

The first and second options have no need of any critique, because they resolve the contradiction objectively. The third option, in contrast, where it exists, would in Marx's terms demand a critique of fetishistic religion. Marx did not develop this fully but instead left us many suggestive components. It was this option that many within the Marxist tradition, and among his critics, understood to be simply a critique of religion as such.[25] I should underline here that this critique of fetishistic religion is perfectly acceptable to an authentic, prophetic Christian consciousness oriented toward liberation. Chapter 6 of this book, "Marx's Atheism and That of the Prophets of Israel," explores this in terms of the nonfetishistic dimensions of Marx's critique of the religion of domination.

Appendix 2, "Religion as a Justification of Domination and Liberation," also offers material relevant to these issues. Marx could have affirmed, with Saint Justin Martyr, who wrote in the second century against the groups that were hegemonic in the Roman Empire,

> This is why some refer to us as atheists [*átheoi*]. If it is those [Roman] gods they speak of, we must confess that we are indeed atheists [*átheoi éinai*].[26]

Regarding the fourth option, Marx explores it in detail throughout his work, but principally in *Capital*, with an emphasis on the structural factors that impede a Christian escape from the contradiction highlighted above. His emphasis is on demonstrating how capital is created through the accumulation of surplus value, and that surplus value is the objectification of unpaid labor, which makes it impossible for capital's unethical character to be concealed within a critical systemic vision.

But on the other hand, in developing this argument, Marx demonstrates that capital seeks to conceal this unethical status through the

pretension of "creating profit from itself," "from nothing." This pretension is interpreted by Marx now as fetishistic. The fetishistic character of capital is the other side of the coin of the ideological political-economic interpretation of the unethical essence of capital: the affirmation of capital as an *absolute*. The critique of the fetishistic character of capital is, epistemologically, in fact, a philosophical-economic task (which is the theme in part I of this book).

Now let's turn our attention to the central theme of this book. The argument, like all arguments, unfolds on the basis of the minor premise (PME), "if capital is the Antichrist, the visible demon." This statement could sound in bad taste, as if it involves twisting Marx's discourse in a discordant and even ridiculous way that is ultimately very distant from Marx. Nonetheless, my aim here is to demonstrate that this approach is in fact deeply grounded in his thinking (which will be the theme of part II of this book). In effect, the Christian is not in conflict with themself, neither solely nor principally because of the fetishistic character of capital, from a philosophical or economic perspective (which I will develop in part I).

I must clarify here that this matter has not yet been explicitly enunciated in a way that is understandable from the perspective of "language games" or of proper Christian terminology. Despite this Marx develops this argument continuously, but in a metaphorical manner—the theme of chapters 4 and 5—by referring to capital with predicates or determinations related to "fetishism," the "demon,"[27] the "beast" of the Apocalypse, or other related expressions (Moloch, Mammon, Baal, etc.). These "metaphorical" references—if they are taken seriously, in a systematic way—produce, as a result, a discourse that is parallel to Marx's central philosophical-economic discourse.

I will denominate this as a parallel metaphorical discourse: Marx's "metaphorical" theology. This theme has never been taken seriously, and at least for this reason, I think it is worthwhile to take the risk implied in launching this hypothesis. It must be taken into account here that a metaphor, or a symbol, does not produce new philosophical-economic knowledge but "opens" a new world—as Paul Ricoeur would say, and more concretely in this context what it "opens" is a new theological horizon.[28]

If what were involved were simply loose metaphors that were chaotic or purely fragmentary, we could only say that Marx's work includes theological metaphors. But if these metaphors reflect a distinct logic, then we can speak of a prototheology or of a theology that is implicit. Marx did not have the intention of producing a theology that was formally

explicit—this must be clear up front. He was not, in the strict sense of the term, a theologian. What he did do is open the horizon for a new theology, which is something quite different.

Let us take as an example the following, which may serve to cause the reader to suspect that the hermeneutics of these metaphors is frequently characterized by many problems of interpretation. In the *Grundrisse*, speaking of money, Marx notes,

> [Money,] in its configuration as a serf [*Knechtsgestalt*], when it presents itself as a simple medium of circulation, suddenly becomes the sovereign and God of the world of commodities.[29]

Marx is referring here to the text by Saint Paul (Phil. 2:6–7). But the Marxist tradition will not take this into account, in its ignorance, and those in the anti-Marxist school will also ignore it because of their bias toward the idea that Marx was antireligious:

> He, despite his divine figure [*Gestalt Gottes*], was not wedded to his classification as a God; to the contrary, he alienated himself and took on the appearance of a slave [*Knechtsgestalt*].[30]

We can see here how Marx draws on the text of the New Testament in a very subtle and knowledgeable way. He describes money in effect as the "inversion" of Christ, as an Antichrist. Just as Christ represented a "divine figure" that alienated himself by assuming the "figure of a slave," money (in the opposite direction) transformed itself from its "figure of a slave" into a "god" (the fetish). Christ humiliated himself downward, while money rises and becomes divine in what is clearly an inversion.

Marx's metaphorical manner of employing biblical and theological themes compels an attentive, oblique reading, which demands dual dimensions of competence—philosophical-economic and theological—that never coexisted, either among Marxists or those anti-Marxists who were prejudiced a priori against Marx. Only a careful, open reading that has the capacity to reveal the logic alongside Marx's philosophical-economic discourse could conjure this interpretative hypothesis.

It is for this reason that it must be understood clearly that it is not the same to approach the fetishistic character of capital from the perspective of a philosophical and economic-political discourse (part I of this book), as it is to do so through the development of a "metaphorical," symbolic discourse with an implicitly theological meaning (part II). This is a theology, which is implicit, negative, "metaphorical," and fragmentary.

At the beginning of a new (second) century following the death of Marx in 1883, and following the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and of the deep crisis of "really existing socialism," studies regarding Marx must take on a new physiognomy directed at a frontal critique of a capitalism that looks triumphant. And yet 75 percent of global capitalism, in the Global South, cries out with pain amid a process of increasing irremediable impoverishment within the framework of a free-market economy with uncontrolled prices of impoverishment that cannot be resolved within an economy based on free-market prices. All of this, in reality, conceals a necrophilia which is at its core. Marx is the greatest of the theoretical critics of capitalism, including his theological "metaphors," and this opens a new dimension in the understanding of his work, which I believe will have profound relevance in the near future.

This book also concludes my overall rereading of Marx's work, which has taken many years,[31] and which has prepared me to "deploy" his thinking critically against the evanescent fashions of fetishism—philosophical, economic, political, or religious (including religion of Catholic origin)—which are characteristic of the closing decade of the twentieth century. Against those who prophesy the "end of history" through the triumph of capitalism,[32] Marx rises up against Friedrich Nietzsche when he writes,

> Nihilism, as a symptom of this, indicates that the disinherited no longer have any consolation, that they destroy in order to be destroyed: that, stripped of any morality, they no longer have any reason to surrender, that they are rooted in the terrain of the opposite principle and want Power for themselves, thereby obliging the powerful to be their executioners.[33]

This is why Marx never said "God is Dead." Instead he affirmed that capital is an emphatically living "god" that demands human victims. Given the gigantic debt borne by the Global South (with the "interest" paid to the Global North), Marx's anti-Nietzschean text emphasizes how "god" (the fetish) lives off the life of the world's poor:

> The total thingification, inversion, and absurdity [is] that of capital as capital . . . , which renders compound interest, and takes on the appearance of a kind of Moloch that demands the world as a whole as its victim, offered in sacrifice [*Opfer*] on its altars.[34]

In this text we have a "full-bodied" Marx who gives expression to a "metaphorical" religious discourse, or to a theological "metaphor"—however we might prefer to characterize it. And this is not the young Marx, but one captured at the latter stage of his work, during his writing of *Capital*, as I will explain in greater detail in section 3.2 of chapter 3 in this book.

If this book were written by a psychoanalyst, it could have been titled *Marx's Religious Unconscious*, which is to say that this unconscious has an important religious component, which was censored by his *superego*. As a result, it could only be filtered through metaphors. In any case, these metaphors are present in Marx's explicit discourse and can be analyzed.

Enrique Dussel

PROLOGUE TO THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE EDITION

The Criticism of Theology as the Criticism of Economics

Karl Marx has written that "the criticism of Heaven turns into the criticism of Earth, the *criticism of religion* into the *criticism of law*, and the *criticism of theology* into the *criticism of politics*."[1] It would be completely consistent to extend this more broadly to argue that the criticism of theology also becomes the criticism of philosophy, economics, or politics.

I want to build on Marx's reflection as a basis for my updated introduction to *The Theological Metaphors of Marx*, a work originally written over thirty years ago. My inspiration is grounded in Marx himself. From his perspective, history, philosophy, and theology were all related within the overall framework of critical thinking. As he wrote about these three epistemological dimensions in one of his most well-known texts, "The task of history, therefore, once the world beyond the truth has disappeared, is to establish the truth of this world. The immediate task of philosophy, which is at the service of history, once the holy form of human self-estrangement has been unmasked, is to unmask self-estrangement in its unholy forms."[2]

So let us therefore explore the relation between these three epistemes: history, philosophy, and theology. My approach is likely to scandalize both orthodox Marxist-Leninists and anti-Marxist Christians, as well as traditional Muslims, Confucians, Taoists, Buddhists, and others.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels have written that Thomas Münzer "relied on the Bible to confront the feudal Christianity of his day with

the simple Christian beliefs of its earliest practitioners." Engels notes that "the peasants had made extensive use of this weapon against the princes, the nobility, and the clergy." This "weapon" involved a return to the "first few centuries" of Christianity, prior to its institutionalization as an *ekklesia* (church).[3]

I believe that this is what I have tried to do throughout my life. What Marx and Engels were referring to, long before its emergence, is something very similar to what we today refer to as the theology of liberation, in its most radical version, along the lines of what Walter Benjamin described as messianic materialism, for example.[4]

In this book I want to reflect about this, not by situating myself subjectively as a believer who belongs to a religious community—nor by denying this—but instead by situating this question within the framework of the objectivity of a contemporary sociopolitical, cultural, and economic reality: a postsecularist age at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Jürgen Habermas suggests something along these lines in some of his later work, although still from a Eurocentric perspective. Marx and Engels have also written something that is especially provocative today for certain Marxists: "This is why [Thomas Münzer] thought that Heaven is not something that belongs to another world, but something that must be sought for in this life. The task of believers is to establish here, on the Earth, that Heaven that is the Kingdom of God."[5]

It is this purpose, and not simply a subjective wish, that provides a guiding thread throughout my work. My intention is to make it possible for even the most unbelieving leftist critic, whom my work is directed toward, to become aware of a theological historical discourse that can destroy the theological religious justifications deployed by the Global Right of the world's prevailing systems of domination. This includes both capitalism itself and the liberal individualist brand of modern politics that usually passes muster as "Christian."

It is in this sense, for me, that the "criticism of theology [becomes] the criticism of politics" as well as the criticism of other fields of praxis of human existence such as critiques of the economy, of gender or patriarchy, of racism and Eurocentrism, and so on. My goal is to defetishize and decolonize this theological justification of domination. Many other reasons could be provided to justify this critical project to other disciplines, but in this book, I will focus principally on the *economic* dimensions of criticism.

Once again, we can turn to Marx's own writing, in a more obscure text that has been marginalized within both the dominant Marxist and Christian traditions, which I will explore in greater detail in the body of this book:

> It is because of this that criticism is well founded when it compels the [Prussian Christian] State which invokes the Bible, to recognize the twisted nature of its consciousness . . . from the very moment when the vileness of its secular ends, which it seeks to conceal with [the mantle] of religion, comes into flagrant contradiction with the purity of its religious consciousness.[6]

It might seem strange that Marx writes here about the "purity of religious consciousness" expressed in a text that is sacred for Christians. This text must be interpreted, at minimum, as a positive recognition of "primitive Christianity," which he refers to earlier in the same text. What exactly is the contradiction that Marx is alluding to here? Why does Marx want to make this contradiction evident? Is clarity about such themes of any interest today in our present political and economic context?

Let's begin with an outline summarizing four possible contradictions or relationships between Christianity (as a religion, ethics, or theology) and politics, economics, sociology, or other fields of praxis.

1. The first dimension relates to the context in which a believer accepts the practical expressions of political, economic, social, or cultural domination, because they have ignored, forgotten, or theoretically concealed aspects of their own religion (primitive Christianity) when it is characterized by a commitment to the liberation of the poor and the oppressed. From this perspective there is no contradiction between the dominant, inverted form of Christianity, which has prevailed at least since the fourth century of the common era,[7] and bourgeois political economy, together with other forms of domination related to racism, gender, cultural differences, and the like. This inverted version of Christianity does not conflict with or oppose capitalism.
2. A second dimension relates to the moment when a believer accepts the practical domination of capitalism, since the science of economics that emerged together with the consolidation of this system—for example, in the work of a Presbyterian Calvinist philosopher like Adam Smith—assumes a consistency between

inverted Christianity and capitalism. It does this by concealing the capitalist economy's components of injustice, domination, or exploitation and by failing to consider how surplus value incorporates a portion of unpaid wage labor. The fetishized version of economic science is not opposed to Christianity.

3. The third dimension relates to a situation in which there is an economist who is opposed to the economic domination of capitalism, because of a critique of political economy (such as that undertaken by Marx), which demonstrates the injustice or perversity of capitalism's exploitation of workers. This includes the accumulation of profit through the appropriation of the worker's unpaid wage in the form of surplus value. This would lead a believer to oppose capitalism, because of these injustices, based on rational arguments. A critical form of political economy makes evident a contradiction between capitalism and the authentic Christianity of its initial centuries.
4. In the fourth possible dimension, the same believer, who rediscovers the critical meaning of the message of messianic Christianity, and who is opposed to the injustices imposed on the poor and the weak—a task undertaken by the earliest members of foundational religious communities, be they Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, and so on—becomes aware of the contradiction between critical forms of religion (which invert the inversion) and capitalism. This is what Marx refers to as the critique of theology. This is a critique that involves a messianic return to the origins of these beliefs, which in Latin America has been undertaken by the theology of liberation. A critical Christianity of this kind, which inverts its inversion, is in contradiction with capitalism.

Marx takes on the task of suggesting how a critique of theology makes it possible for Christians who have become critical as to their own structures of belief (as reflected in the fourth dimension, above) to situate themselves in contradiction with capitalism. Marx did this through his continuous use of theological metaphors. These provide a theoretical path for the believer to navigate and discover the contradiction between capitalism and the earliest forms of Christianity, ascertain whether these earliest forms are authentic, and invert the inversion of later forms that are prevalent today. This in turn makes it possible to combine a critical reinterpretation of theology—which critical

believers who are theologians must undertake—with the defetishization of economics.

Marx indicates the kind of methodology needed for this reinterpretation, which begins with putting theology "right side up" again, as it has been "standing on its head" since the fourth century. Christianity became inverted—together with Islam during the caliphate, among similar examples—because most of its believers accepted its complicity with the domination of prevailing systems (feudalism during Christianity's period of scholastic theology, or the mercantilism that coincided with that of Muslim Aristotelianism).

This was because the dominant form of Christianity during this period abandoned the critical (or, as Walter Benjamin put it, messianic) core of its sacred texts (the Bible in the European context or the Koran in the context of Islam), which correlated with the failure of economics to demonstrate capitalism's injustice. As Christianity became medieval, it undertook an inversion of the messianism at its origins, while the Muslim caliphate had in its own way inverted the message of the prophet of Mecca. Similar processes took place within Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and other religions. In this way the "true believer" and the planetary "dominator"—for example, today's Christian capitalist in the United States, or the Muslim enriched by oil wealth—do not experience any contradiction between their beliefs and capitalism because both have been inverted, even epistemologically, in terms of the ideological construction of their respective discourses.

In the scientific domain, this involves the exclusion from economics of the contradiction between capital and labor that is reflected in the hidden origins of surplus value in unpaid labor. What was hidden was that the foundational revelation of all these religions was directed first of all to the poor and those suffering from domination, which framed an ultimate contradiction with capitalism. On the other hand, believers—Christians, in the case I am alluding to here, but with dimensions that are equally applicable to Confucians, Buddhists, Taoists, Hindus, or Muslims—can return to the most ancient sources of their beliefs and take sacred texts as their point of departure, as Thomas Münzer did, among Germanic Christians. These texts can then be used as a basis to oppose many forms of domination, concretely including capitalism, liberalism, racism, sexism, and Eurocentrism, among others, that are consistent with religions that have been inverted and have themselves become fetishized.

This is the position that Marx seeks to clearly articulate for an audience of Christian European believers through a "criticism of theology." This is also the framework that should be applied to illuminate the intention behind my own work and its historical and theological character. All of this also includes the criticism of what Marx describes as the fetishization or attribution of a divine character to "profane forms [*unheiligen*]." This means that contrary to what is thought traditionally, on both the left and the right, it must be understood that those who secularized science and the institutions of the secular age of the Enlightenment also eliminated the "earthly gods" whose principal expression, according to Marx, is capitalism itself.

What has been negated or secularized in the profane theology of "In God we trust" (which should be written instead as "In gold we trust") is a god or fetish immersed in everyday life and not the God of the Christian Sunday, the Jewish Sabbath, or the Muslim Friday prayers. The true divinity here is gold, for capital is an everyday god who constitutes the ontological-economic foundation of modern existence. For the founder of Christianity (or "primitive Christians") or the founder of Islam, as well as for Marx, it was money that was the god "made by human hands" known as the fetish of Mammon. But in the secularism of European modernity Mammon has also been secularized and appears simply as an economic moment.[8]

For Marx, on the other hand, as for the primitive believers and today's critical equivalents, money was a true god, but one of a profane character, an Antichrist, as I seek to explain at length in this book—which was written long ago, but which is more relevant now than when I first published it.

For example (and I will return to this theme later), Marx refers to a text by Paul of Tarsus when he writes in the *Grundrisse*, "[Money] evolves from its role as a slave [*Knechtsgestalt*] when it is manifested as a simple medium of circulation, unexpectedly becomes a sovereign god [*Gott*] in the world of commodities."[9]

Money has varied functions in the context of circulation, but this does not include its accumulation. It is an instrument of exchange. But within the framework of capital, it becomes a veritable god because of its infinite powers of accumulation. What passed without notice here was that Marx was referring to Saint Paul's Letter to the Philippians, in which he wrote, "He [Christ] despite his divine character [*Gestalt Gottes*], did not cling to his holy form, and to the contrary alienated himself and took on the form of a slave [*Knechtsgestalt*]."[10]

Thus, money, which had been a slave, was transformed into a god; and Christ, who had been God, became a slave. The inevitable conclusion of this kind of criticism of theology is that money is the Antichrist for Marx, as a metaphor for his criticism of profane theology or the concealment of fetishism, as well as of a profane criticism of theological economics, such as that of Adam Smith.[11] It may seem even more odd, for both the Left and the Right, that it was Engels who wrote, with reference to an economic crisis in England, "This crisis is the final combat between God and the Antichrist, as others have described it. The decisive aspects are Chapters 13 and 17 in the book of Revelation."[12]

None of this demonstrates that Marx or Engels were believers, but it does not negate, either, that believers can adopt Marx's critical stance toward capitalism. In my own case I gradually came to slowly understand and discover these theoretical positions as part of my journey during the last fifty years. There was no instantaneous moment of rupture nor any intellectual inheritance from my family or my teachers. What I experienced was a slow process of opening myself up to the most critical dimensions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century thought, such as that of Marx, without negating the potential horizons of a religious world. I did this from within a concrete historical and cultural community that constitutes a totality of meaning that provides a breath of hope woven into the daily life for our peoples—the peoples of Latin America.

This has also meant engagement with a critical reinterpretation of the world from the perspective of the renewed discourse of a community of believers who seek to recover the message of the "earliest beginnings of Christianity." This was an extremely crucial moment when messianism—which is to say, Christianity, given that in Greek *khristianoi* meant "messianics"—was experienced in a particularly exemplary and militant way in the face of the prevailing domination of the system of slavery embedded in the Roman Empire, which is strikingly similar to what we currently bear the consequences of in the twenty-first century.

For Karl Marx, then, religion provided the foundation for, and negated, a certain kind of praxis. For example, Calvinism reformulated Christianity in order to make it compatible with economics and with the capitalism that was born within its core. It is crucial to remember that Scotland was where the Presbyterian Calvinism of John Knox was practiced, which was the context and homeland for Adam Smith.

Marx first criticized the theological and practical inversion of Christianity, which had ceased to be messianic and critical, as it has been

initially and as was understood by Friedrich Engels and Karl Kautsky. In order to undertake a theological criticism, it is necessary to "enter" into the logic of theological discourse. Marx understood this very well, but this is precisely what contemporary Marxism has completely ignored until now. This is necessary in order to demonstrate that if Christian theology is critical, it must oppose liberalism in politics and capitalism in economics. This is also Walter Benjamin's position, which is an interpretation that is being actively debated.

We must then focus on the theme of fetishism within the context of "profane forms." First, it was the theology of early modernity in Spain, during the sixteenth century, that criticized medieval theology. This was around the same time that Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda provided a theological foundation for both colonialism and emergent capitalism. Later it was Calvinism, among other faiths, that criticized the theology of early, preindustrial modernity; this laid the foundation for a complete identification between Christianity and capitalism, which beginning in the eighteenth century took on an industrial character through the creation and accumulation of surplus value. It was this Scottish and Calvinist Christianity that was Marx's first target.

Today it is religious fundamentalisms that justify and seek to make absolute a politics, economics, culture, race, and gender that dominates, using weapons instead of reasonable arguments. Together they constitute the return of a god (or of a polytheism, as Max Weber described it) that has become modern. It is the US variety of fundamentalism that deploys military force most singularly in the world instead of reasonable argumentation that might be understandable to others. This seeks to impose "democracy" with wars instead of arguments from within the tradition of the other—for example, based on the Koran for the believers of Islam.[13] Fundamentalism cannot be defeated through force of arms. And we cannot forget that it was the US Central Intelligence Agency that first unleashed the force of Islamic fundamentalism in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union—an origin that is widely ignored—thereby planting the seed for the consequences we continue to experience.

What we need are arguments based on reason that are accompanied by a praxis of honesty, as Bartolomé de Las Casas taught us regarding the Spanish Conquest, beginning in 1514. But this recognition does not fit within the horizon of interests of today's empire. The supposed irrationality of Islamist violence is used to justify wars and the exploitation

of other people. This is precisely why honest sectors on the left today must discover the importance of a criticism of theology as a moment within the broader critique of liberal politics and capitalist economics, which Marx exemplified.

But none of this was discovered in Latin America, nor in the passages of my own life, in an immediate or clear way. Instead we had to follow winding paths where it gradually became possible to glimpse that, in addition to everything else we had explored, colonial domination had to be included as part of a broader epistemological decolonization: "Caminante no hay camino, se hace camino al andar" (Traveler, there is no path, we make the path by walking).[14] To discover and understand "coloniality" and the complexities of existence in a colonial world (adding to Martin Heidegger, I'd say "being-in-the-colonial-world"), and to think of coloniality through the prisms of personal, family, community, cultural, and historical experience takes time. And it takes even longer to achieve a clarity of critical consciousness regarding Eurocentrism and modernity, together with everything implied by the "epistemological decolonization" of philosophy, and now of history and theology. The epistemological decolonization of theology is then the final stage, which I address not in the body of this book but in the appendix. But from the beginning of this process, the theological dimension was an essential travel companion as I undertook the decolonization of philosophy and of history.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century it is possible for us to discern those stages that had been stored discreetly, without great publicity and during a period when a militant secularization was hegemonic on the left, as an ambiguous fruit of the Eurocentric Enlightenment. A postsecularist moment is opening on the horizon that is foreshadowed intriguingly by the themes I explore here.

In my old age, the current biographical stage of my life, it has become possible again to embody the experiences of my youth, which had mystical tonalities at certain moments and today have a new resonance. All of this has its origins in the experiences I have lived and in my reading of authors who filled the revolutionary militance of my youth with beauty and joy, within horizons opened by voices like those of Walter Benjamin, Jacobo Taubes, or Giorgio Agamben (the latter two, inevitably Eurocentric), who were preceded by Martin Buber or by Emmanuel Levinas. But the most radical premonitions came long ago, during the dialogues

I had with Paul Gauthier in Nazareth, Israel, where we worked together as manual laborers in a Palestinian cooperative to build houses for the community between 1959 and 1961.

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NOTES

FOREWORD

1. Enrique Dussel, "Enrique Dussel: Life and Work," website, https://enriquedussel.com/en/home/. For a sampling of his wide-ranging work, see Enrique Dussel, *Beyond Philosophy: Ethics, History, Marxism, and Liberation Theology*, edited by Eduardo Mendieta (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003).

2. For a brief autobiographical sketch, see Enrique Dussel, "Epilogue," in *Decolonizing Ethics: The Critical Theory of Enrique Dussel*, ed. Amy Allen and Eduardo Mendieta (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2021), 182–202. See also Linda Martín Alcoff and Eduardo Mendieta, "Introduction," in *Thinking from the Underside of History: Enrique Dussel's Philosophy of Liberation*, ed. Linda Martín Alcoff and Eduardo Mendieta (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 1–26.

3. For an overview of Dussel's work on ethics, see Amy Allen and Eduardo Mendieta, "Introduction," in Allen and Mendieta, *Decolonizing Ethics*, 1–21. See also Frederick B. Mills, *Enrique Dussel's Ethics of Liberation: An Introduction* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

4. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York and London: Routledge, 1994).

5. Here Dussel has been influenced by and is thinking with Franz J. Hinkelammert, *Teología del mercado total: Ensayos económico-teológicos* (La Paz, Bolivia: Hisbol, 1989).

6. For an overview, see "Marx/Engels Collected Works," https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/cw/index.htm.

7. For an overview, see "Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (The Complete Works of Marx and Engels)," https://www.bbaw.de/en/research/marx-engels-gesamtausgabe-the-complete-works-of-marx-and-engels.

8. David McLellan, *The Thought of Karl Marx: An Introduction* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1971).

9. Sven-Eric Liedman, *A World to Win: The Life and Works of Karl Marx* (London: Verso, 2018).

10. See Reinhard Buchbinder, *Bibelzitate, Bibelanspielungen, Bibelparodien, theologische Vergleiche und Analogien bei Marx und Engels* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1976). It should be noted that this book was published before most of Marx and Engels's writing was available even in German; while it is a nearly exhaustive work, it is now slightly outdated. See also José Miranda, *Marx and the Bible: Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression*, trans. John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1974); and Karl Marx, *Marx on Religion*, ed. John Raines (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).

11. S. S. Prawer, *Karl Marx and World Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 287, 304.

12. Ludovico Silva, *El estilo literario de Marx*, 2nd ed. (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1975), 3, 101.

13. An important work that advances similar arguments is William Clare Roberts, *Marx's Inferno: The Political Theory of Capital* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).

14. Hans Blumenberg, *History, Metaphors, Fables: A Hans Blumenberg Reader*, ed. and trans. Hannes Bajohr, Florian Fuchs, and Joe Paul Kroll (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press / Cornell University Library, 2020), 176.

15. Walter Benjamin, "Capitalism as Religion," trans. Chad Kautzer, in *The Frankfurt School on Religion: Key Writings by the Major Writers*, ed. Eduardo Mendieta (New York: Routledge, 2005), 259–62.

16. Enrique Dussel, "Theology of Liberation and Marxism," in *Mysterium liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology*, ed. Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books), 85. For the original article in Spanish, see Enrique Dussel, "Teología de la liberación y marxismo," *Cuadernos Americanos* 6, no. 12 (1988): 138–59.

PRELIMINARY WORDS

1. It should not be forgotten that Marx prepared to become an adjunct professor as an assistant to Bruno Bauer at the University of Bonn. Bauer was explicitly and exclusively a professor of theology. If Marx had been able to continue his university career, he would have become a professor of theology; this is what he was preparing for and planned to do. Thus, theology was by no means outside of Marx's existential horizon.

2. The Tübinger Stift was the Lutheran theological seminary where Hegel, Hölderlin, and Schelling studied; see Laurence Dickey, *Hegel, Religion, Economics and the Politics of Spirit 1770–1807* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

3. Pelagianism, which Augustine of Hipona harshly criticized regarding its doctrine as to original sin in old age, affirmed the possibility of the collaboration of the human person in the process of its transformation into a divine state. "Grace" initiated a process that a person could complete through their works. The most extreme version of Augustinianism, which was reflected in certain Lutheran interpretations, instead accorded such importance to "grace" and "faith alone" that human freedom and praxis were annihilated. Pietism thus has certain characteristics that are reminiscent of Catholicism. This is a frequent echo in Marx's writings as well.

4. This is the structure followed in G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion II*, vol. 17 in *Werke* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1969–71): from the "absolute religion" to the "Kingdom of the Father" (218ff.), "The Kingdom of the Son" (241ff.), and the "Kingdom of the Spirit" (299ff.). It is in this third "kingdom" that Hegel explores the "concept of community" (306ff.) and the "realization of community" (320). See, for example, https://hegel.net/en/ep3131.htm; and https://hegel.net/en/ep3132.htm.

5. Compare Dickey, *Hegel, Religion, Economics*, 70. Don't Spener's words already resonate as if they were one of Marx's theses on Ludwig Feuerbach?

6. Dickey, *Hegel, Religion, Economics*, 85.

7. This short text from 1793 is perhaps the one that best reflects the deep Pietist sense—in both implicit and explicit theological terms—of Kantian philosophy, as we shall see.

8. Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Reason Alone*, https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/ethics/kant/religion/religion-within-reason.htm; and the version in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason and Other Writings*, 2nd ed., ed. Allen Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

9. The inevitable reference here is to the Augustinian concept of concupiscence or libido (which was understood by Augustine as the fruit of original sin) within the framework of Augustinian anti-Pelagianism, which fell into the trap of Manichaeism.

10. Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Bare Limits of Pure Reason*, with commentary by Jonathan Bennett, https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/kant1793. Nonetheless, it was possible to conceive of the "malignancy of human nature" when someone embraces "evil as such, knowingly," which reflects a "diabolical intention."

11. Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Bare Limits* (Bennett).

12. Kant, *Religion within the Bare Limits* (Bennett), writes that there could be "no greater aspiration than to free oneself [*Befreiung*] from the dominion [*Herrschaft*] of the evil prince." To become free one must be "liberated of slavery in thrall to the law of sin, in order to live in justice" (Saint Paul).

13. Kant, *Religion within the Bare Limits* (Bennett). Here he writes about "communal [*gemeinschaftlich*] living pursuant to public law."

14. Kant, *Religion within the Bare Limits* (Bennett).

15. The realization of the "invisible church" is the young Hegel's theme (see Hegel, Brief 8; vol. 1, 18). Marx and Engels, to the contrary—getting ahead of ourselves a bit here—write of the "devil incarnate"; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Holy Family*, in *Marx-Engels-Werke* (hereafter MEW), 2:21; https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/holy-family/index.htm; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Holy Family: Critique of Critical Critique* (Franklin Classics Trade Press, 2018). Marx also writes about the "visible divinity";

see Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (1844)*, in *Early Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (London: Penguin Classics, 1992), 279–400; MEW, 1:565; and https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/preface.htm.

16. Kant, id. Consider the "ideal community" of communication in contrast with its "real" equivalent in Karl-Otto Apel's transcendental thinking in reference to these Kantian reflections, or Marx's "Realm of Freedom," when Kant writes, "This representation of a historical narrative of the world to come . . . which we are not able to grasp with our vision restricted to empirical consummation . . . is only attainable through the continued progress and approximation to the supreme good which is possible on Earth. . . . The apparition of the Antichrist . . . can assume a positive symbolic meaning in the face of reason. . . . [But] 'the Realm of God does not come in visible form' (Luke 17:21–22)"; Kant, id. B 205, A 195, 137–38; 802–3). We will see later how, for Marx, the "visibility" of the devil (within a fetishized circulation) is always at the same time the Antichrist. In the Jewish tradition, God is always invisible and unnamable: "the Name (*hashem*)."

17. G. W. F. Hegel, *Briefe von und an Hegel*, ed. Georg Lasson and Johannes Hoffmeister, 28:137.

18. G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ed. Georg Lasson and Johannes Hoffmeister, 3:31.

19. Karl Löwith, "Hegels Aufhebung der christlichen Religion," *Hegel-Studien* 1 (1964): 194. Ernst Bloch, *Subjekt-Objekt. Erlaeuterung zu Hegel* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1962), 161, expresses it this way: "There is a notable similarity between this phrase and Goethe's regarding Bach's music: it makes it possible for us to hear what transpires within God's being immediately before the creation of the world. . . . The Christian Logos and its Neo-Platonic variation resonate convergently within Hegel's Logic."

20. See Albert Rosenkranz, *Abriss einer Geschichte der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland* (Duesseldorf: Presseverband der Evangelischen Kirchen im Rheinland, 1960), 84–97, 111; Friedrich-Wilhelm Krummacher, *Gottfried Daniel Krummacher und die nieder- rheinische Erweckungsbewegung zu Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1935), 29ff. Schelling Benz, *Werden und Wirken seines Denkens* (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1955), 29–55, focuses on Pietism and indicates

the relationship between Marx and Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, a Pietist, and argues that the "Oetingerian vision of the perfect society, in its golden age, is the ideal of a communist society." Benz demonstrates Oetinger's influence on Marx regarding his conceptualization of the "withering away [*Aufhebung*] of the state," which "ends up coinciding even in its terminology [*wörtlich*] with Oetinger's" (53).

21. Stephen Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964). This diagram can also be found on p. 23 of the Siglo XXI (2017) edition of *Las metaforas teologicas de Marx*.

22. This might sound dissonant, or an expression of bad taste or one that reflects a limited imagination. Or it might seem now, given the crisis of "really existing socialism," that everything is possible. For a long time, I've thought that this idea was one that was worthwhile and that should be taken seriously. For example, it was more than fifty years ago, in 1970, that I wrote what is now incorporated in this book as chapter 6, "Marx's Atheism and That of the Prophets of Israel."

23. See Dickey, *Hegel, Religion, Economics*, 52–78.

24. It was not in Marx's era but in the early 1980s that we had a good explicit Catholic example of this in Michael Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*. (New York: American Enterprise Institute, 1982), which tries to demonstrate a consistency between capitalism and Christianity, regarding questions such as "sin" (82ff.) or the "market" (104ff.).

25. All of the later (Catholic and Protestant) tradition of critique directs itself against Marx's critique of religion. What was ignored—perhaps because of the explicit or implicit legitimation which Christianity granted to capitalism?—was the most essential thing, which is that Marx's critique targeted a "fetishistic," antiprophetic variety of religion that was ultimately anti-Christian in the strongest sense of the term. The most classic example of this was Jean-Yves Calvez, *La pensée de Karl Marx* (Paris: Seuil, 1956), which launched the overall polemic as to the "humanism" of the young Marx. Even Alistair Kee, *Marx and the Failure of Liberation Theology* (London: SCM, 1990), 3–128, falls partially into this incomplete understanding. On the other hand, it's important for me to underline from the beginning that my position differs from that of my colleague, José Porfirio Miranda, who in his celebrated, internationally renowned book *Marx and the Bible: A Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1974) and later in *El cristianismo de Marx* (Mexico City,

1978), leans in the direction of the argument that Marx was subjectively Christian. My strategy of argumentation here is different. What I will demonstrate is that Marx, especially in his most mature work, beginning with the *Grundrisse*, and taking into account the philosophical-economic "logic" of capital, was characterized by and objectively sustained a theological discourse that was implicit, negative, and "metaphorical," and no less relevant because of these characteristics and their combination.

26. Saint Justin Martyr, *Apologia*, 1.6.

27. As Arnold Künzli, *Karl Marx: Eine Psychographie* (Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1966), 587, tells us, "This is no longer economics, but demonology [*Dämonologie*]." Or as Friedrich Delekat, "Vom Wesen des Geldes. Theologische analyse eines Grundbegriffes in Karl Marx: Das 'Kapital,'" *Marxismusstudien* 1 (1954): 71, notes, the "demonization [*Dämonisierung*] of capital." See also Friedrich Delekat, *Ver Christ und das Geld. Eine theologisch-ökonomische Studie* (Munich, 1957); Peter Demetz, *Marx, Engels und die Dichter* (Frankfurt: Ullstein, 1969), 156, and especially 417, expresses his opinion regarding this demonology.

28. The symbol (S), although with less analytical precision, has a metaphorical extension and meaning which is greater than that of the concept (C), which is univocal (S > C). It is in this plus (x) of the symbol (S = C + x) that its capacity of suggestion or open interpretation resides, with a double meaning, intended to produce a semantic "reference" that is connotative but richer, although less precise.

29. *Grundrisse*, Spanish edition, 156; German edition, 133.

30. Philippians 2:6–7, in the New Testament (Aschaffenburg, Germany: Paul Pattloch Verlag), 1, 261. In Luther's translation, the German word *Gestalt* is used to translate the Greek word *morfé* (form). See, for example, Philippians 2, in the New Testament (Pattloch ed.), 260–61, where the same German words continue to be used. In other words, Marx is using the "same words," which means that he is directly referencing the Pauline text. Luther translated *ekenose* as "entaüssen sich" (alienated himself); this led the theologians of Tübingen to teach Hegel the doctrine of "alienation," which would inspire Marx to develop his own conceptualization of the word, which ultimately has a Christological origin.

31. I am referring here to three of my previous works. The first book, *La produccion teórica de Marx* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1985), not yet available in English, is about the *Grundrisse*. The second book, *Hacia*

un Marx desconocido: *Un comentario de los Manuscritos del 61–63* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1988), translated as *Towards an Unknown Marx: A Commentary on the Manuscripts of 1861–63*, ed. Fred Moseley, trans. Yolanda Angulo (London: Routledge, 2001; https://old.enriquedussel.com/txt/Textos_Libros/43.Towards_an_Unknown_Marx.pdf), is about the manuscripts of 1861–63. The third book, *El último Marx (1863–1882) y la liberación de Latinoamericana* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1990), not yet available in English, is about Marx's remaining economic manuscripts. These books include many interpretations of Marx that are unusual. In the present volume, I will argue for one that is perhaps the most contrary to contemporary understandings of his thought. See also Fred Moseley, "Introduction to Dussel: The Four Drafts of *Capital*; Towards a New Interpretation of the Dialectical Thought of Marx," https://web.archive.org/web/20211024054118/https://www.mtholyoke.edu/~fmoseley/intro_dussel.pdf; and Fred Moseley, "Introduction to Dussel: The Four Drafts of *Capital*; Towards a New Interpretation of the Dialectical Thought of Marx," https://web.archive.org/web/20211024051745/https://www.mtholyoke.edu/~fmoseley/Dussel.pdf.

32. See Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History," *National Interest*, Summer 1989, 3–18.

33. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, sec. 55 (June 10, 1887), https://archive.org/stream/TheWillToPower-Nietzsche/will_to_power-nietzsche_djvu.txt; and the translation by R. Kevin Hill and Michael A. Scarpitti (New York: Penguin Classics, 2017), sec. 55. Thus, from Nietzsche's perspective, the poor had to resign themselves to disappearing and to death. There is no hope that can encourage them, and any such hope is ultimately "against nature." Given these premises, we shouldn't be surprised by how fashionable Nietzsche became, both in Europe and the United States, and how popular he remains in Latin America.

34. Karl Marx, *Manuscripts of 1863–65*, notebook 15, fol. 893; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels*, vol. 33 (New York: International Publishers, 1993); Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 34; https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1863/theories-surplus-value/preface.htm. See also https://old.enriquedussel.com/txt/Textos_Articulos/207.1990_ingl.pdf. It is worth noting that Marx's insistence on the dimension of "the whole world" is today even more relevant than it was in the nine-

teenth century, when capitalism had not yet reached the very horizon of the "world" as a totality.

PROLOGUE TO THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE EDITION

1. Karl Marx, introduction, in "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm, emphasis in the original. See also Karl Marx, "Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction," in *Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 72. An alternative version of the English translation is Karl Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction," in *Early Writings*, 244–45.

2. Marx, introduction, in "A Contribution," emphasis in the original. What is said here as to politics can be equally applied to economics, gender, race, aesthetics, and other fields.

3. Friedrich Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany*, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1850/peasant-war-germany/; *Lucha campesina en Francia*, in MEW, 7:350–51; Karl Marx, *Sobre la religión*, ed. Hugo Assmann (Madrid: Sígueme, 1974), 211.

4. It is important here to recall Walter Benjamin, *On the Concept of History*, https://www.sfu.ca/~andrewf/books/Concept_History_Benjamin.pdf, and its reference to the strategic role that theology can play within the context of his metaphor regarding the puppet chess player, dressed up in Turkish attire, who won all his matches by relying on a hidden ally hidden below the gameboard:

> The story is told of an automaton constructed in such a way that it could play a winning game of chess, answering each move of an opponent with a countermove. A puppet in Turkish attire and with a hookah in its mouth sat before a chessboard placed on a large table. A system of mirrors created the illusion that this table was transparent from all sides. Actually, a little hunchback who was an expert chess player sat inside and guided the puppet's hand by means of strings. One can imagine a philosophical counterpart to this device. The puppet called "historical materialism" is to win all the time. It can easily be a match for anyone *if it enlists the services of theology*, which today, as we know, is *wizened and has to keep out of sight* (emphasis added).

See also Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zorn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969).

Theodor Adorno failed to grasp this, just as Stefan Gandler failed to do in Latin America. He assumed instead that Bolivar Echeverría thought (contrary to Michael Lowy's interpretation) that this theological reference in Benjamin's text was of secondary importance and could be discarded. This is the basis for Gandler's disqualification of my contributions as a theologian, grounded in his failure to understand what Benjamin was trying to say.

5. *Lucha campesina en Francia*, in MEW, 7:353; Marx, *Sobre la religión*, 213. In this case it is not worthwhile to focus, as Porfirio Miranda does, on whether or not Marx was himself a "believer" in Christianity. My emphasis instead is on Marx's ability to deploy Christian beliefs as the basis for a critique of fetishized forms of secular theology.

6. Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/jewish-question/; Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," pt. 1, in MEW, 1:359–60; *Selected Writings*, 46–70 (which includes a listing of alternative translations).

7. See the appendix to this book, "The Epistemological Decolonization of Theology."

8. In a "postsecularist" age the *divinities* that have been hidden or rendered invisible by secularism will be revealed.

9. Karl Marx, "Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)," https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/grundrisse/; Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1974), 133; Karl Marx, *Grundisse: 1857–1858*, pt. 1, trans. Wenceslao Roces, vol. 6 of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Obras Fundamentales* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1985), 156; Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, ed. and trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Penguin Classics, 1993), 156.

10. Philippians 2:6–7, https://bible.usccb.org/bible/philippians/0. It is this reference to how Christ "alienated himself [*entaüssen sich*]" that was transformed into Marx's conceptualization of the category of alienation through the prism of Hegel. Who would have imagined that this approach ultimately had its origin in Paul and a theological context? *Knechtsgestalt* is Marx's unmistakable expression in German,

drawn from Martin Luther's translation. Marx's use of the concept of *Gestalt* (figure), applied to the slave and to the god (or God), were words taken from Martin Luther's translation of the New Testament into German.

11. There is extensive scholarship regarding the theological character and context of the work of Adam Smith. See, for example, Jordon Ballor, "Adam Smith in Theological Perspective," Adam Smith Works, August 5, 2020, https://www.adamsmithworks.org/documents/adam-smith-in-theological-perspective; Paul Oslington, ed., *Adam Smith as Theologian* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Lisa Hill, "The Hidden Theology of Adam Smith," *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 8, no. 1 (2008): 1–29, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/713765225?journalCode=rejh20; and A. M. C. Waterman, "Economics as Theology: Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations," *Southern Economic Journal* 68, no. 4 (2002): 907–21, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1061499.

12. Friedrich Engels, "On the History of Early Christianity," https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1894/early-christianity/; *MEW*, 21:11. As Engels put it, "Christianity [in its original 'primitive' form, which is that of liberation theology, not that of the inverted Christianity which is prevalent today] has notable points of resemblance with the modern working-class movement. Like the latter, Christianity was originally a movement of oppressed people: it first appeared as the religion of slaves and emancipated slaves, of poor people deprived of all rights, of peoples subjugated or dispersed by Rome"; *MEW*, 21:10.

13. We would be much better off instead if we dedicated millions of dollars to establish schools to produce intellectuals capable of promoting understanding from the perspective of the tradition of the "other," of that which is typically imposed as if it represents a better, alien option. This is the first rule of rhetoric. What happens, in reality, is that fundamentalisms on all sides are deployed by global capital to nourish its accumulation. The rest is hypocrisy.

14. Antonio Machado, "Proverbios y Cantares," in *Campos de Castilla* (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1912), n.p. For alternative translations, see Antonio Machado, "Traveler, There Is No Path," trans. Asa Cusack, Aspen Institute, https://www.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Machado_Traveler-There-Is-No-Path.pdf; Antonio Machado, "Traveler, Your Footprints," in *There Is No Road*, trans. Mary G. Berg and Dennis Maloney (Buffalo, NY: White

Pine Press, 2003), 55, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/58815/traveler-your-footprints; Antonio Machado, "Songs and Sayings," trans. Paul Archer, http://www.paularcher.net/translations/antonio_machado/proverbios_y_cantares.html; and Antonio Machado, "Proverbios y cantares (Proverbs and Song-Verse)," in *Selected Poems*, ed. and trans. Alan Trueblood (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), n.p.

PART I

At times I will cite *Capital*, and other works of Marx, in Spanish, English, and German editions. The epigraph can be found in Karl Marx, *Capital* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1979), 1:106; Karl Marx, *Capital* (London: Vintage, 1977), 1:90; and Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, in *Marx-Engels-Werke* (hereafter MEW; Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1837–1883; http://www.mlwerke.de/me/default.htm), 23:101. Marx's text uses the Latin of the Catholic vulgate. He had already included it in the *Grundrisse*, together with William Shakespeare's text about "glittering precious gold." See Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1980), 1:173; Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 237; and Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (Berlin: Dietz, 1974), 148. Marx also connected this to "money as global currency." It is worth emphasizing also that Engels, years later, when he referred to this subject in his text on the book of Revelation (1883), wrote, "This crisis is the great final fight between God and the 'Antichrist,' as others have named him. The decisive chapters are thirteen and seventeen"; https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/subject/religion/book-revelations.htm; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Sobre la religión*, ed. Hugo Assmann (Salamanca, Spain: Sígueme, 1974), 326; MEW, 21:11. Engels also includes Marx's previously cited text from *Capital* and adds the following as an introduction: "Christianity, like every great revolutionary movement, was made by the masses"; *Sobre la religión*, 324, 10.

Part I of this book is the fruit of a seminar I taught in Kerala, India, titled "Rereading Marx from the Perspective of Political Militancy in Latin America," August 20–25, 1984, thanks to an invitation by M. Joseph (of Social Action Groups) and E. Deenadayalan (of the Delhi Forum), where there were thirty-eight participants, including Joseph Kottukapally of Pune, India, and Yohan Devananda of Sri Lanka. I dedicate part I of this book to all of them, in commemoration of the beautiful days of Mar Thoma, the land of spices of the ancient realms of Kerala, India, where the Syriac Christians landed during the earli-