



# Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity (Latin America Otherwise)

*Nelson Maldonado-Torres*

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**Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity (Latin America Otherwise)** Nelson Maldonado-Torres

Nelson Maldonado-Torres argues that European modernity has become inextricable from the experience of the warrior and conqueror. In *Against War*, he develops a powerful critique of modernity, and he offers a critical response combining ethics, political theory, and ideas rooted in Christian and Jewish thought.

Maldonado-Torres focuses on the perspectives of those who inhabit the underside of western modernity, particularly Jewish, black, and Latin American theorists. He analyzes the works of the Jewish Lithuanian-French philosopher and religious thinker Emmanuel Levinas, the Martiniquean psychiatrist and political thinker Frantz Fanon, and the Catholic Argentinean-Mexican philosopher, historian, and theologian Enrique Dussel.

Considering Levinas's critique of French liberalism and Nazi racial politics, and the links between them, Maldonado-Torres identifies a "master morality" of dominion and control at the heart of western modernity. This master morality constitutes the center of a warring paradigm that inspires and legitimizes racial policies, imperial projects, and wars of invasion. Maldonado-Torres refines the description of modernity's war paradigm and the Levinasian critique through Fanon's phenomenology of the colonized and racial self and the politics of decolonization, which he reinterprets in light of the Levinasian conception of ethics. Drawing on Dussel's genealogy of the modern imperial and warring self, Maldonado-Torres theorizes race as the naturalization of war's death ethic. He offers decolonial ethics and politics as an antidote to modernity's master morality and the paradigm of war. *Against War* advances the de-colonial turn, showing how theory and ethics cannot be conceived without politics, and how they all need to be oriented by the imperative of decolonization in the modern/colonial and postmodern world.

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