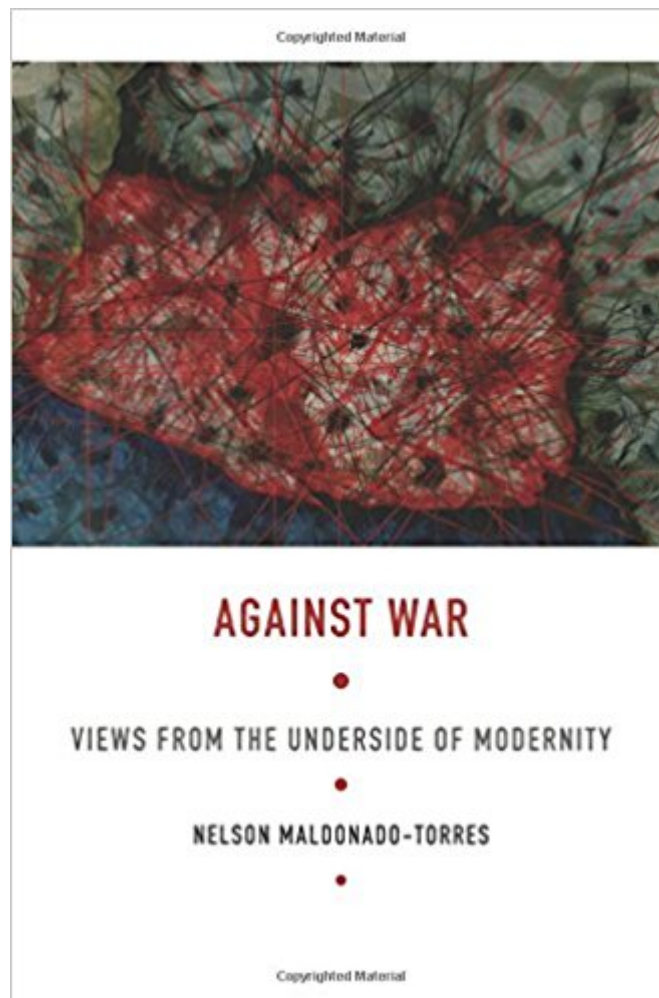




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Against War: Views From The Underside Of Modernity (Latin America Otherwise)



Synopsis

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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"[T]his is an innovative, passionate and provocative work that carefully synthesizes excellent close readings of several important thinkers. *Against War* is a significant contribution to the liberationist tradition and should attract attention across philosophy, theology, and ethnic studies." - Mark Kjellman, *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory*

"*Against War* is a tour-de-force study in ethics and the philosophy of liberation that brings together the European Jewish, Afro-Caribbean, and Latin American undersides of modern thought. Nelson Maldonado-Torres does this not for the sake of articulating an intellectual historicism or textual mastery but for the sake of illuminating his own theory of critical epistemic normativity. This long-awaited work, written by the best critical theorist of his generation in Caribbean and Latin American thought, is groundbreaking; it properly takes the decolonial turn to another level as it inaugurates what the author aptly coins decolonial ethics. I expect this work to receive much well deserved study for generations to come. It is a triumph."

• Lewis R. Gordon, Laura H. Carnell Professor of Philosophy, Religion, and Judaic Studies, Temple University

"*Against War* is a treatise on a new type of ethics: decolonial ethics. As we associate discourse ethics with Jürgen Habermas, the scholarly community will soon associate decolonial ethics with Nelson Maldonado-Torres."

• Paget Henry, author of *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy*

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In this book the author provides a critique of modernity and the intricately linked philosophy of war. This is an advanced theoretical work that deals with extremely complex histories, theories, religious and philosophical works. The main thesis is that there is a warrior philosophy that is closely intertwined into the colonial thinking that is overlooked but is readily visible to those that are on the receiving end of the bayonet. It is not a history, but a theoretical analysis of Modernity and Western thought. This is not an easy read but a very good one, if you are not familiar with the philosophers that he draws from then I would recommend picking three (Fanon is a must) and read them before you read this book. It is worth the preparation for this is an excellent book.

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