

## **INTRODUCING DUSSEL: THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIBERATION AND A REALLY SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY.**

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### **Abstract.**

The work of Argentinian-Mexican philosopher Enrique Dussel is presented in outline, focusing on his intellectual history as a thinker from the global periphery. We explore his reconstruction of the history of modernity and critique of Eurocentrism, his reconstruction of the later Marx, his concepts of analectics and trans-modernity, and his ethical framework. Finally we consider his relevance for psychology in the context of the debate over modernism, indicating some features of a Dusselian, transmodern psychology.

### **INTRODUCTION.**

Enrique Dussel (b 1934) has made contributions to a number of fields, including the philosophy of liberation, ethics, political economy, theology and history. His more recent work offers the prospect of transcending the postmodernist/modernist debate from the ethical and historical standpoint of oppressed and excluded populations, primarily those of the global South. Dussel thereby provides a corrective to the Eurocentrism of Western philosophy, seeking a solution to the problem of universal standards for ethical claims while responding to the particularities of distinct cultural legacies and traditions in the overall context of a novel reading of the production of the Other through the process of globalisation, understood in terms of a capitalist hyper-expansion, itself building on previous phases of modernism and imperialism.

In this article we introduce Dussel and explore the relevance of his work to psychology in general and especially the history and philosophy of psychology. In this context it can be noted that Dussel along with other writers within the specifically Latin American traditions of liberatory praxis (Flores, 2009: 21), has been an influence on the Latin American Social Psychology of Liberation (Burton & Kagan, 2005; Montero & Sonn,

2009). However, the sheer extent and detail of Dussel's work, in contrast to the relatively schematic theoretical development in the Psychology of Liberation (González-Rey, 2009), makes it worth considering as a complementary perspective. But we also suggest that his relevance is potentially more far reaching and more fundamental than this, since the whole discipline of psychology itself is co-constituted with the Eurocentric modernist project for which Dussel's work offers a new perspective and corrective, especially through his proposals of trans-modernism and analectics.

Dussel (Gómez & Dussel, 2001: 21) notes that "... biography, among people like us coming from a postcolonial world, is constitutive of intellectual discourse". We will therefore introduce his thought by outlining his intellectual and personal biography.

Dussel grew up in Mendoza, Argentina, the son of a country doctor and he describes his earliest contact with poor rural families, voluntary work with disabled children and political activism as a teenager. From 1953 to 1957, he studied philosophy at the National University of Cuyo, Mendoza, Argentina, where students were expected to read and analyse key philosophical works in the original language. In 1957, Dussel travelled by boat to Europe to continue his studies. It was that experience of travel to Europe via Brazilian and African ports that made him understand that he was Latin American, someone from the periphery. As he recalls (Dussel, 1998a: 16), "I touched a Latin American and a Third World that *had been totally unknown* to me. I had passionately wanted to go to Europe, and going towards it had already discovered, for always, the peripheral world that had previously been beyond my horizon"<sup>1</sup>.

He spent two years (1959-1961) in Israel, learning Hebrew and Arabic and working in a variety of manual jobs in a cooperative led by the French Jesuit Paul Gauthier. It was here that he relates a further formative experience. "Now it wasn't just Latin America; now it was the 'poor' (obsession of Gauthier), the oppressed, the impoverished of my distant continent. Recounting Latin American history to him, one of those fresh nights, in our poor shack of the building cooperative, built by Arab workers who built their own houses in Nazareth, I was getting enthusiastic about one Pizarro who conquered the Inca empire with but few men. Gauthier looked me in the eye and asked: 'Who on that occasion were the poor, Pizarro or the Indians?' That night with only a candle for lighting, I wrote to my friend Esteban Escobar: 'One day we will have to write the history of Latin America from the other side, from that of the oppressed, the poor!' " (Dussel, 1998a: 17).

Returning to Argentina in 1969 he became influenced by the new Latin American social science and in particular the Theory of Dependency. It was at this time also, that he discovered the writings of Emmanuel Levinas which were to be a major influence. Starting from the fact of the Nazi holocaust, Levinas emphasized responsibility for the Other, the oppressed, the poor, the discriminated against. It is the call of the Other, not necessarily self-conscious, that poses the basis for ethical action, and hence for Ethics as "First Philosophy" (Maldonado-Torres, 2008: Ch 5). Building on these bases and others (including Ricoeur, Fanon, Marcuse) Dussel constructed his Philosophy of Liberation (Dussel, 1977; 1985, and others see

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<sup>1</sup> Quotations from texts in Spanish are our translations.

<http://www.enriquedussel.org/obras.html> for a full bibliography and access to many of his works in Spanish and English). This foundation has since been built upon and reworked in concert with personal, intellectual and contextual developments.

Following a campaign against him in the worsening situation in Argentina leading up to the military dictatorship (bombing of his house, death threats, sacking from the university), Dussel found refuge in Mexico in 1976 where he became established at the Mexican National Autonomous University (UNAM) and the Metropolitan Autonomous University (UAM-Iztapalapa), where he has continued his production in philosophy, theology and history. His commitment to the struggles of the oppressed throughout Latin America has informed his thinking throughout.

We explore his work in terms of four linked themes. Firstly we situate Dussel himself within the problematic of periphery, showing how this is a key theme in his work, informing his scholarship. Then we will look at how his re-reading of Marx reflects and is informed by this emphasis on otherness. Through a consideration of his Ethics of Liberation we show how he puts together a philosophy that incorporates but moves beyond the main traditions, and we explore how he builds on dialectics with his concept of “analectics”. Finally we explore what relevance his work might have for understanding and reconstructing psychology as a discipline.

Given the scope and scale of Dussel’s works, this is necessarily a selective and partial review. In particular we will not cover his theological contributions and nor will we emphasise his earlier philosophical works. Only some of his work, which extends to some 40 books, is so far available in English. Coming as he does from the periphery of the world system, and writing in Spanish rather than the usual languages of philosophy (German, French, English) we contend that his work has not received the attention it warrants.

### **HISTORY, MODERNISM, THE PERIPHERY AND THE OTHER.**

Dussel has written a radical reconstruction of the invention of modernity (Dussel, 1995, 2000b, 2008b). His argument can be introduced by contrasting two dominant critiques of modernism, albeit at some risk of simplifying a complex and still developing debate. Disenchantment with the results of the enlightenment project in the late twentieth century has provoked two main critical responses. On the one hand the postmodernists (e.g. Lyotard, 1984; Derrida, 2001; Foucault, 2002) reject the project of modernity as such, arguing against universal ethical standards, grand narratives, and rationality itself. On the other, critical modernists seek to retrieve what is good from modernism while rejecting the accretions from the dominant social and economic system with which it has been associated. In the latter camp Habermas (1987/1991), for example argues that there can be ethical universals and in his later philosophy sought to establish a basis for them in human communication.

Dussel suggests that both camps suffer from a narrow Eurocentric account of modernity, wrongly dating it from the enlightenment period. In Dussel’s view, modernity began not in 1600s in Northern Europe but in 1492 with the colonisation of the Americas. This moment redefined Iberia, and later Europe, in relation to the other, the newly dominated peoples. There were precursors: the hardening of treatment of the other (Moors and later Jews) during the Spanish reconquest and the intellectual

developments from Italy: but that turn to the West and the subsequent domination and pillage of America is the pivotal change to which Dussel attributes the expansionist dynamic of Europe and the anti-ethic of relentless exploitation and domination along economic, geographical and racial dimensions. This modernity expanded and developed from Spain via the Netherlands, to England and the rest of Western Europe and ultimately to North America. In **The invention of the Americas. Eclipse of "the Other" and the myth of modernity** Dussel (1995) explores this thesis. He identifies two aspects to the "myth of modernity". Firstly "... modernity signifies rational emancipation. The emancipation involves leaving behind immaturity under the force of reason as a critical process that opens up new possibilities for human development" (Dussel, 1995: 136). But secondly "... modernity justifies an irrational praxis of violence. ... Modern civilization understands itself as most developed and superior, since it lacks awareness of its own ideological Eurocentrism" (Dussel, 1995: 136). This allows the imposition of a model of development with violence justified as part of the 'civilising process'. He continues by saying, that "Finally, modernity, thinking itself as the civilizing power, regards the sufferings and sacrifices of backward and immature peoples, enslavable races, and the weaker sex as the inevitable costs of modernization." (Dussel, 1995: 137).

Dussel concludes that, "To overcome modernity, one must deny its myth. I seek to overcome modernity not through a postmodern attack on reason based on the irrational incommensurability of language-games. Rather, I propose a transmodern opposition to modernity's irrational violence based on the reason of the Other." (Dussel, 1995: 137).

For Dussel this definition of modernity in relation to the non-European has various dimensions. As a Latin American he situates himself personally in the periphery that also includes Asia and Africa but he also sees modernity and its associated oppression as having an ethnic dimension, a gender dimension and a cultural-spiritual dimension. Finally there is an economic and political dimension: capital-labour, national elite-popular masses, global versus peripheral capitals.

Dussel therefore rejects both the nihilism of postmodernity and the recuperative but still Eurocentric rationality of critical modernism. Instead he seeks a combination of the best of European thought with the different reason of the Other, those from the oppressed underside of modernity. The paradigm for this has its roots in the intellectual and personal experiences discussed above, the "call of the Other" in Levinas (Levinas, 1969), the combination of intellectual and popular knowledges and praxes in Latin American radical thought (e.g. Freire, 1972a, 1972b; Gutiérrez, 1973; Fals Borda, 1988; Martín-Baró, 1996; Scannone, 1998; Marcos, 2002).

This perspective, "trans-modernity", moves beyond the alternatives of critical modernity and postmodernity, promising to overcome the shortcomings of each, constructing a more adequate and super-ordinate orientation invigorated by the critical perspective of the oppressed other. The resulting ethically based praxis re-founds the project of human emancipation that had been conceived within the totality of the dominant world system as one of liberation from exploitation that can only be finally achieved by reaching, on equal terms, to those beyond that system (Dussel, 1995: 138).

As he reflects in interview with Fernando Gómez, (Gómez & Dussel, 2001: 63) "... I find myself suddenly with a new ethics articulated around principles that make universal claims. I read postcolonial theory, I read the work of subaltern studies, I read Laclau, and everyone is talking the talk of antifoundationalism and postmodern antiuniversalism. I ask myself, 'Well, what's going on with you, Enrique?' What's wrong with me? What is really happening is that what I am talking about is 'post' all this. Mine is an antidogmatic universalism. It is a claim to universality that cannot be the 'old' Eurocentric universalism."

Dussel is not alone in rejecting orthodox modernism, critical modernism and postmodernism. Alain Badiou (Badiou, 2005), Slavoj Žižek (Žižek, 2008; Andrade, 2009), Samir Amin, and Boaventura de Sousa Santos (e.g. de Sousa Santos, 2009), for example, all offer approaches that establish a basis for ethical claims while offering a critique of the dominant Western ideologies and/or political and economic systems. As another writer from the periphery (Egyptian, based in Dakar, Senegal) Amin (2010) makes a critique, similar to that of Dussel, of both orthodox Marxism and postmodernism as well as the obscurantist approaches of religious fundamentalism and political Islam which he sees as mirror images of the relativism in postmodernist ideology. His account of the emergence of Europe, with its peripheral status vis-à-vis the then world system giving it an advantage, also has parallels with Dussel's reconstruction. However, Dussel's unique contribution is the critical engagement with the excluded "Other" (in this he differs from Badiou) as the key to transcending modernism with "transmodernity".

### **MARX RECONSTRUCTED.**

In the late 1970s, having completed the first major statements of his philosophy of liberation, Dussel set about a detailed rereading of Marx. This he describes as the radical reconstruction of Marx's thought and to do this, rather than studying the European commentators, the task was framed in terms of a rereading of Marx's work as a whole, from the standpoint of Latin American "dependency". This meant a close study of the preparatory work for **Capital** covering the period 1857 to 1882, including Marx's unpublished notebooks in Berlin and Moscow. This rereading led to the insight that it was necessary to "invert the hypothesis of the traditional readings": "The most anthropological, ethical and anti-materialist Marx wasn't that of his youth (1835-1848) but the definitive Marx, that of the 'four drafts of Capital' (1857-1882). A great *philosopher*-economist was appearing before our eyes." (Dussel, 1998a: 25).

Dussel and his students found affinity between the philosophy of liberation and Marx's thought, both of which emphasise the exteriority of the poor as the point of departure for the philosophical discourse. The result of this work was three books (Dussel, 1988b, 1990, 1991), only one of which has so far appeared in English (Dussel, 2001b; see also Moseley, 2001; and Dussel, 2001a). He emphasises two insights from this work, both of which are pertinent to his evolving philosophy of liberation.

### **Living labour as point of departure.**

Dussel focuses on what might seem an arcane technical distinction within Marxist theory. "The fundamental distinction in all of Marx's thought is not between abstract labor and concrete labor, nor is it the difference between use value and exchange

value. It is, rather—and without Marx himself realizing it—the difference between ‘living labor’ and ‘objectified labor.’” (Dussel, 2001a: 21).

Dussel demonstrates that it is on this distinction between living labour and objectified (or dead) labour that the rest of Marx’s analytic categories and hence his political economy are built. In emphasizing the transformation of living labour into the rationalized elements of a system of exploitation, Dussel retrieves the ethical core of Marx’s work. He sees the same process by which the English peasantry was evicted from the land and subjected via factory discipline to alienated wage slavery, in the processes of dispossession and incorporation in the global South today. Furthermore, the vitality of living labour comes from “beyond” the rationalised world of capital, its origin is in capital’s “Nothing”.

### **The critique of political economy as transcendental ethics.**

Dussel argues that this starting point of living labour is the basis for Marx’s ethical critique of capitalism. Living labour is inserted into capital’s system of exploitation; surplus value is stolen from the worker. As Marx’s analysis shows, value (and the endless growth of capital) is based not on land, rent, interest, and so on, but on the exploitation of living labour.

Elsewhere, Dussel makes connections between Marx’s concept of living labour, the phenomenological concept of life-world (especially as used by Habermas in contrast to *Economy and State* (1987/1991)) and Levinas’s concept of exteriority (Dussel, 1996:53). As a philosopher of liberation it is in this world of living labour, beyond the system, that he identifies a vital resource for the critique of the present reality of globalised capitalism, going beyond the incorporated proletariat of classical Marxist analysis to include the indigenous peasants, the marginalised urban masses, women, and so on.

Dussel (1998b: 324) quotes the following from Chapter 25 of **Capital**, commenting: “If this is not ethics, then that word would have lost all meaning”.

And, “Accumulation of capital is, therefore, increase of the proletariat. .... This law [of capital accumulation] rivets the labourer to capital more firmly than the wedges of Vulcan did Prometheus to the rock. It establishes an accumulation of misery, corresponding with accumulation of capital. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, i.e., on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital.” (Marx, 1873/1975)

### **DIALECTICS AND ANALECTICS.**

In accord with the conception of exteriority adopted by Dussel, in the search for an ethics of liberation he proposes an alternative model to that of the dialectic, or rather an extension of it, the “ana-lectic” or ana-dia-lectic”. “... a criticism and a surmounting of the merely negative dialectical method. It does not deny it, just as dialectic does not deny science but simply assumes it, completes it, and gives it its just and real value. The negative dialectical method of Marcuse, Adorno, or even Bloch is naive with respect to the positive criticism of the utopia of the political exteriority offered by the

peripheral peoples, the working-class woman, the oppressed youth, and the dependent societies.” (Dussel, 1985:159-160).

For Dussel (1998b), the sphere of exteriority owes its reality to the existence of human freedom. “The merely natural substantivity of a person ... acquires here all its uniqueness, its proper indetermination, its essence of bearing a history, a culture; it is a being that freely and responsibly determines itself; it is person, face, mystery. The analectical refers to the real human fact by which every person, every group or people , is always situated ‘beyond’ (*ano-*) the horizon of totality.” (Dussel, 1985: 158)

As in his treatment of living labour, Dussel appears to be using the notion of exteriority in two complementary senses, firstly to refer to the un-rationalised aspect of humanity, that resource un-colonised (in the Habermasian sense) by formal systems (the totality), and secondly to the humanity (life circumstances, culture, consciousness) of those excluded coercively from the totality of the modern world system. In a hierarchy of discourse from ordinary experience, via scientific method and then dialectics, Dussel poses analectics as beyond dialectics. At the edge of totality, Dussel considers that the (negative) dialectical method reaches the limit of its validity, annulling the alterity of the Other. Beyond the dialectic of Hegel and Heidegger, there is a distinct, incomprehensible, anthropological moment where a new field opens up for philosophy under conditions that make possible an anthropological ethics. The Venezuelan critical psychologist Maritza Montero (2001) explains his formulation by noting that “Dussel (1974) defines the analectic as the extension of the dialectic ... as a ‘moment of the dialectical method’ that incorporates a new possibility in the construction of knowledge: the excluded Otherness or alterity of those who not only are different (as complementary antitheses of that which is opposed), but foreign, strange (*extraños*), different, unexpected, external. It supposes accepting as knowing subject someone not imagined, someone not equal.” (Montero, 2001: 6).

While the antecedents of the analectic can be found in post-Hegelian thought, particularly in that of Levinas, for Dussel (1975) the true critics of dominant Eurocentric dialectic thinking are the liberation movements of the Third World, which have the opportunity of hearing the oppressed non-European Other. That perspective cannot be explained through dialectical method within the totality of the dominant system: it does not have sufficient reach: “Liberation ethics, on the other hand, takes its point of departure in an affirmation of the real, existent, historical *other*. I have designated this ‘transontological’ (metaphysical) *positive moment* of departure, this active point of the initiation of the negation of the negation, the ‘*analectical*’.” (Dussel, 1988a: 243).

Dussel is thereby proposing a resolution of the fundamental problem posed by the postmodernism debate, how to stand outside the reality within which we live in order to critically understand it, its categories and concepts included.

The analectic depends on praxis as the fundamental means for understanding the Other, exercising an overt critical consciousness: with this method it is possible to hear the critical voice of the Other, awakening an ethical consciousness and accepting the voice of the Other. The analectic involves commitment for and with the Other, even to the extent of risking life in the struggle for justice and liberation of the Other. The analectic, then is a practice (be it economic, sexual, pedagogical and political) that

moves in relationship with the human alterity (social class, family, ethnicity, generation, gender, etc) of the Other. As Díaz (2001: 309) puts it, “Since practice is a relationship between people, the point of departure” of the analectical “method is the interpellation of the other, the negation of oppression and the affirmation of exteriority. Its logical-operative principle, being practical, is then the analogy that includes difference and innovation, with the quality of liberation. If practical methods are ignorant of exteriority, they are consequently transformed into damaging, inhuman ideologies because they mean the eclipse of the other.”

The analectic, with its base in praxis with the Other, has as its constitutive essence the *ethical*, the politico-ethical position that allows it to descend from the academic and cultural “oligarchy” and place itself on the side of those the system excludes. To affirm exteriority is to realise that which is impossible for the system, to realise: that is, the new, that which emerges from the unconditional freedom of the other - the positive utopia of the exteriority of the peripheral peoples.

### **ETHICS OF LIBERATION.**

In his *magnum opus*, the **Ethics of liberation in the age of globalisation and exclusion** (*Ética de la Liberación en la Edad de la Globalización y de la Exclusión*) Dussel (1998b) places the Philosophy of Liberation on a wider philosophical and indeed historical platform. In addition to the influences described above, Dussel now responds to his encounters with other tendencies and influences. He builds on his debates with the discourse ethics of Apel and Habermas, responds to the pragmatists Taylor and MacIntyre and to the postmodernists. He utilises his reading of Marx (and thinkers like Gramsci), as well as the experience of political movements (especially indigenous ones in Latin America – he specifically cites the Zapatistas and Rigoberta Menchú). Unfortunately the book has not yet appeared in English, but there are good summaries by Marsh (2000) and Dussel (1997; Gómez & Dussel, 2001: 58-64).

Framing the book with a restatement of his theory of the origins of modernity and the modern world system, Dussel then sets out the closely argued framework of his ethics. For him the fundamental first principle of ethics is the *material*. Material here is understood in terms of human life - its maintenance and reproduction, not in a merely biological sense but “on the contrary, it concerns the human being reproducing its physical, spiritual, and cultural, life in its material content” (Dussel, 1998b: 131) where *material* (and not *materiel*) explicitly does not merely refer to the physical. As he explains, “One who acts humanely always and necessarily has as the content of their act some mediation of the responsible production, reproduction and development of the life of each human subject, in a community of life, as material fulfilment of the needs of their cultural corporeality ... having as the final reference all of humanity.” (Dussel, 1998b: 132).

Dussel then incorporates discourse ethics in his second (formal or intersubjective) principle that requires communication among equals to decide how to implement the material principle (cf. Dussel, 1998b: 206). He is critical of discourse ethics as a free standing ethical framework though. He sees the material principle and the formal principle as co-determining: without debate the material principle can only be applied egotistically, and without material needs being met, there can be no conversation. Nevertheless, Dussel is clearly indebted to the interaction with Apel in particular,

describing his 1998 text as a response to Apel’s criticisms of his previous work (Dussel, 2000a).

A third principle, drawing on the North American pragmatists, is that of feasibility (*factibilidad*) that requires proposals for norms, acts, institutions, or for that matter systems of ethics, to be actually possible logically, empirically, technically, and ethically (hence his critique of Anarchism, Dussel, 1998b, 2008a).

The second half of the book, having established the material, formal and feasibility principles, revisits each, critically. The central idea is the critique of the conditions caused by the dominant system from the perspective of the “oppressed other”, the victims of the system. By revisiting each principle in turn, he analectically articulates a practical approach to ethics in a world where the majority are excluded from the possibility of producing, reproducing and developing their lives (from the narrow material sense to the wider social, cultural sense that has to do with living with dignity). The book concludes with an affirmation of the principle of liberation - the positive critical moment of feasibility - as a duty for us to work for liberation whether through feasible reform of aspects of the system or feasible transformation of the whole system. Dussel's overall scheme is shown diagrammatically in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: The overall scheme of *Ethics of Liberation* (Dussel, 1998b)**

	Ethical Foundations	Critical Aspect	
		<i>negative</i>	<i>positive</i>
<b>Content</b> <i>Material ethics</i>	Defining the good: Life, its production, reproduction and development.	Critique of imposed impossibility of living / developing.	Recognition of the dignity of the other, as other and taking of responsibility to stand up for the victims (as victims or as committed others).
<b>Intersubjectivity</b> <i>Discourse ethics</i>	Procedures for reaching agreement.	Self-recognition as excluded / distinct.	Agreement among the victims / solidarity
<b>Practicality</b> <i>Ethics of feasibility</i>	Consideration of what it is actually possible to achieve.	Critique of dominant power.	Transformation of the existing reality

While the concrete examples in the text largely concern Latin America, the approach does aspire to wider relevance. Dussel contextualises the work thus: “A critical-ethical philosophy can ... arise in the poor peripheral world (Latin America, Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe). This is the horizon, in the process of the globalisation of Modernity, in which this Ethics of Liberation emerges, and which with difficulty but not impossibility, aspires to also be understood in the current North American and European ‘centre’.” (Dussel, 1998b: 325).

This ethics, then presents a comprehensive framework for judgements and action incorporating material, discursive and pragmatic principles as a result of sustained engagement with the leading proponents of these approaches. The architecture of the Ethics reappears in his subsequent work, including the current project on the philosophy of politics (Dussel, 2008a; Dussel, 2010).

### **RELEVANCE OF DUSSEL.**

Dussel's work has a value beyond the original focus of Latin America. He integrates diverse, even antagonistic philosophies. He adds to the critique of the often unconscious eurocentrism of the dominant intellectual traditions. His analectic concept of trans-modernity offers a way of moving beyond the debate between modernism, critical theory and postmodernism and his substantive contribution to ethics offers a challenging alternative to the conventionalist approaches on offer in the textbooks. Here we will consider what relevance his contribution has for psychology.

Hayes (2004: cf 176) comments on the docility of much critical psychology, suggesting that this could be a result of the lack of an overall social theory that enables an understanding of the 'ensemble of social relations' (the phrase is Marx's) of which human experience, psychological life, is part. As Dafermos and Marvakis (2006: 16) suggest, "A higher form of critique of Psychology is ... the promotion of the theoretical analysis of Psychology as a science beyond the limits of bourgeois society". Yet the "postmodern panic" has made even many of those with a critical orientation suspicious of such external points of reference. Where Dussel can help is in pointing us in the direction of a theory of the social that takes account of the provincial pretensions of the Eurocentric version, instead incorporating the construction of the human subject within a global, historical dynamic, a theory that contains the facts of oppression, exploitation, exclusion, incorporation, "othering", conquest, domination, that is at once economic, political, psychological, geographical and moral in its dimensions.

### **The critique from the underside of modernity.**

Dussel's critique of Eurocentrism goes beyond a critique based on location to a critique of Eurocentric assumptions at the heart of Western philosophy, the humanities and the social sciences. At the heart of this is the violence done to the Other, not just in the literal sense of physical violence but also through the prevention of the Other's full reproduction of their life and through the denial of equal status to the Other. It is perhaps in this last manoeuvre that we can recognize dominant traits of Western psychology. Rather as Ginés de Sepulveda in the sixteenth century Spanish debates over treatment of the Amerindians argued that violence was justified to bring them into civilization, so generations of psychologists have defined the lives of those "others" as needing description, administration, treatment, therapy, correction, not as an autonomous scientific enterprise, but as part of the overall administrative state that polices the deviant Other, protecting the accumulation regimes that the state guarantees for Capital. Dominant psychology, individualistic and alienated from its objects (or subjects?), receives its conception of the individual from the dominant system, starting from the point where (to follow Dussel's Marx) living labour is incorporated into the system for extraction of surplus value through the "contract" with the free autonomous worker. Thus the untamed human element (in capital's "Nothing") is domesticated and rationalized, either as the disciplined worker in the (paradigmatic

case of the) factory, or through prediction and control of those who fall outside this relation, the reserve army of labour, the disabled, the populations (still) beyond the boundaries of the system of incorporated labour. Even the more social and seemingly emancipatory approaches have their concepts and practices rooted in the administration of populations that dwell outside the rationality of the dominant system.

### **Beyond the post-modern / critical modern debate.**

But if alternative psychologies are to be built, ones that are not inherently and unconsciously oppressive, there are first some questions to ask about the nature of the knowledge and theory they can aspire to. While Dussel's critique is potentially devastating for psychology as we know it, is it necessarily fatal for some kind of psychological enterprise? An answer can be sketched by comparing and contrasting the four potential metatheoretical orientations (inevitably as rather caricatured "ideal types"). We suggest that Dussel's notion of the transmodern analectic points in the direction of a defensible psychological science – not just to a psychology as critique, but to a set of practices that collaboratively create new and dependable knowledge.

*Modernism* (as understood here) is the dominant paradigm, which pretends to universality but actually generalises from a particular situation at the heart of the state-capital-colonial nexus, hence experimental psychology, psychometrics, therapy and management of the individual as the dominant approaches.

*Critical modernism* recognises some of the problems inherent in the modernist paradigm but retains a commitment to the emancipatory elements of rational (enlightenment) methods. According to Dussel it lacks adequate self awareness of its shared heritage and assumptions with the modernist-colonial model. The psychological exemplars would include some variants of applied social psychology, critical educational and developmental approaches with an emancipatory orientation, much community psychology. One of the most systematically developed versions can be found in the work of Sève (1975, 1978) and its elaboration by Leonard (1984), and this line of enquiry is worth considering in the light of Dussel's insights from Marx. Sève builds a metatheoretical foundation for psychology based explicitly on Marx. Like Dussel he affirms the scientific humanism and scientific anthropology of the later Marx (Sève, 1978: cf 118). However he bases his formulation on the distinction between concrete and abstract labour – that is, labour within the labour process, and largely excludes the psychology of childhood and the family (as in the core problematic of psychoanalytic analysis) from his overview. Leonard remedies some of this by adding in social relations arising from the family and State contexts (see <http://tinyurl.com/32xy9sd> for an outline). He retains Sève's abstract/concrete distinction as this is a way into the conflict between the demands of employment and other demands / preferences for a person, in effect "bolting on" domestic labour and family relations. Had he had access to Dussel's reconstruction of Marx with the primacy of living labour in and beyond the totality of capitalist social relations he might have been able to produce a more integrated account without the disjunction between his three spheres of analysis. Nevertheless his contribution remains one of the most coherently argued within the critical modernist canon. We also regard Vygotsky's work as belonging to this critical modernist orientation.

*Post-modernism*, on the other hand, throws out the baby with the bathwater. Rejecting the erroneous universalism of the modernist-colonial model it also rejects the advances in reason produced through the development of that system. It therefore valorises the particular and ends up saying a great deal about not very much at all. Psychological applications are to be found in the more radical phenomenological variants of social constructionism and discourse analysis and in some of the embrace of psychoanalysis as an alternative. We will not explore here the positive contributions from that approach (for example the micro-analysis of power relations) for we consider it overall to be something of a dead end that had as much to do with the crisis of socialism of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (and the supposed eclipse of “grand narratives”) as with the needs of the discipline itself (González Rey, 2009). Parker (2009) makes a parallel point, analysing the correspondence between a number of the innovations of academic “critical psychology” and the requirements of capitalism in the neoliberal order, one consequence of which is the valorisation of “undecidability” or “descriptive indecision” (Parker, 2009: 77).

### **Analectical psychology.**

So what might a *trans-modern* psychological alternative actually look like, in the light of Dussel’s elucidation of modernity and its alternative? Dussel suggests that the positive moment of modernism can be retrieved but only analectically, with the interlocutor (as Martín-Baró, 1996, put it) that is, all those Others within and without the totality of the capitalist system and its subsystems of domination, exclusion and exploitation. He thus arrives at “ ... a historical utopia of life, a planetary, global ‘transmodernity’, a ‘new civilisation’ as ‘realiser of the values’ of ‘the barbarians’ of those from ‘outside’, that includes a redefinition of the relation between *person and natural world as an ecological re-creation*, and the relation *between persons as cultural, politico-economic justice...*” (Dussel, 2002: 63).

The four perspectives are summarised with indications of their corresponding psychologies in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Four responses to modernity**

	<b>Modernist</b>	<b>Critical Modernist</b>	<b>Postmodernist</b>	<b>Transmodernist</b>
Non-eurocentric?	No	No	Sometimes	Yes
Universals?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Realist?	Yes, naïve	Yes, critical	Generally no	Yes, critical
Critical – emancipatory?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Scientific?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Dialectical?	No	Yes	Some variants	Yes
Analectical?	No	No	No	Yes
Psychologies?	Mainstream psychology	Marxist critical psychology Vygotsky Sève Leonard Holzkamp	Social constructionism Phenomenological psychology Foucauldian critical psychology	Liberation psychologies Really social psychology Fanon Freire Martín-Baró Montero

Considering the neglected ethical and political dimensions of psychology, Montero shows how this orientation implies integration at the ontological, epistemological, ethical and political levels: “With the analectic, Dussel ... aims to give greater scope to the dialectic ... inasmuch as it incorporates those not connected with the world of the life of the I, from whom knowledge arises. And through this it introduces an epistemological conception, at the same time configuring a method and as we will then see, it also generates an ontological conception that has an ethical foundation and political consequences.” (Montero, 2001: 8).

In a recent chapter on the implications of Psychology of Liberation beyond Latin America (Burton & Kagan, 2009), there are perhaps some clues about the nature of a trans-modern psychology. The Psychology of Liberation, stemming from the work of Martín-Baró, and located largely in Latin America (Burton & Kagan, 2005), could be seen in some ways as parallel to the first philosophy of liberation, developed in Argentina, by Dussel, Scannone, Cerutti, Gera, Kusch and others (Beorlegui, 2004), in some ways catalysed by the challenge of Augusto Salazar-Bondy who asked whether it was possible to do philosophy in Latin America. The answer was that it was, but that it had to be orientated by the option for the oppressed majorities. Dussel, although still very much concerned with questions of the Latin American social and economic reality, has throughout had a broader conception of alterity (Dussel, 2000a, 2008c). As he explains, “... in my Ethics of 1973, I showed that the Other is diverse: it is the woman in the sexist system, the boy or girl in pedagogy, the poor in the economy, the fetishised totality before any ‘Other’, etc. I showed explicitly that each of these fields of distinction maintains an exteriority, even epistemological ...” (Dussel, 2000a: 277).

Dussel’s later work, although still rooted firmly in the Latin American context, with its explicitly more universal application, could then have potential as a generative resource for a *Second Psychology of Liberation*, one that is no longer specific to the “popular majorities” of Latin America, but is relevant to the dynamics by which persons are societally constructed through a set of processes characterised by reification, oppression, incorporation and socialisation, *and* exclusion as well as resistance. In their attempt to apply the style of thinking of Liberation Psychology outside Latin America, Burton and Kagan (2009) attempt to set out the characteristics of a “really social psychology”. In considering Liberation Psychology’s “preferential option for the oppressed majorities” they suggested: “There is a need to test psychology against the experiences of those whose lives are distorted by the accumulation process and its correlates – the excluded, the marginalised and the oppressed included (Dussel, 1997, 1998b). But it is also important to recognise that those groups are diverse and fragmented. Disabled people in an urban suburb, migrant workers in a country town, ‘surplus’ people in a poor neighbourhood, victims of domestic violence, Indonesian textile workers producing cheap clothing for a high street chain in the CCCs [core capitalist countries] (and middle income countries), Iraqis and Palestinians bombed by weapons from the CCCs, or traditional farmers (for example in Mexico and India) impoverished and displaced by cheap grain imports from the US: all these are part of the oppressed majority that are the proper focus of engagement for a globally literate [Liberation Psychology] ...” (Burton & Kagan, 2009: 58).

Here the analectical method is manifest in the testing of psychology against the experiences of those whose lives are distorted by the accumulation process and its

correlates. Burton and Kagan (2009) set out the key postulates of a “really social psychology” (a social-realist psychology that proceeds from the social to the psychological):- “1) A value base of liberation, wellness, equality and empowerment. 2) An epistemology ... whereby knowledge is socially negotiated and contextually understood – co-constructed and from the perspective of the affected. 3) An ontology ... that assumes a material world, that although socially made and saturated with ideology is real, and in which people hurt, feel, and struggle. 4) An ambition that is about the transformation of this world and the lives of the people in it, but also about supporting and being with the affected as they work on transformation. Social transformation is a co-operative project that cannot be given to people, although the psychologist can be helpful in that project. 5) A structural-historical understanding of the society in which people live and of how people are formed, reproducing and transforming that society as they live their lives under asymmetrical conditions of power and wealth. 6) A method that is eclectic in the sense of *bricolage* or DIY – using whatever tool is available to do the best job. It is sceptical about a lot of psychological ‘expertise’ but it doesn’t throw it away, instead raiding it as a resource (along with others from outside psychology).” (Burton & Kagan, 2009: 58).

It would be surprising if some of this were not already part of the best practice of socially committed psychologists (see Teo, 1999). We will illustrate this through examples from Colombia and Spain. While these examples are from the sharp end of globalization, the same approach has been taken by psychologists active in diverse fields where the constructive engagement with the other is critical to the production of knowledge.

Estrada and colleagues in Colombia (Molina, 2005; Molina and Estrada, 2006; Estrada et al., 2007), while couching their work in terms of social constructionism, exemplify this analectical approach to the construction of the psychological understanding of experience in the context of the “limit situation” (Aron and Corne, 1996) of armed conflict as it impacts on communities and families.

In Molina and Estrada’s words, “One of the characteristics of this line of research is the concern for the flow of relations between the intra-familial violence and the armed conflict in Colombia. From this analysis one can recognize topics that allude directly to the examination of control of subjectivity in the political context of the country, mediated by violence. ... Critical Psychology that approaches participation for coexistence aims to build specific social relations effective enough to change reality” (Molina and Estrada, 2006: 345-346). They go on, to argue that “From an ethical-political viewpoint, investigation in Social Critical Psychology in Colombia is called [on] to contribute in a determinative way to: cultural critic [sic – critique], construction of possible worlds, and the transformation of the practices in the social world – including new alternatives for subjectivization and self-narration as national citizens”. (Molina and Estrada, 2006: 350).

To cite another example, Paloma, et al (2010) explore the construction of self and citizenship through collective action by Moroccan immigrants in Andalusia. They note, that “we encourage researchers not to concentrate their efforts on obtaining findings or designing frameworks in the name of others; but they should force themselves to collaborate with the others in the development of those resources necessary to pursue

the goals of the community. ... collaboration between different and ethnically diverse stakeholders—including researchers—can be associated with the building up of a sense of community and a culture of learning among partners. This implies that individual members gain understanding, voice and influence over decisions that affect their lives.” Paloma et al, 2010: 111).

In both these cases an analectical approach is taken, where the oppressed other constructs, with the specialist, a liberatory praxis comprising both *understanding* - the construction of psychological understanding and *action* - to transform lived reality. The work of Kagan and collaborators on “living poverty” and the experience of community activists are further examples of an analectical approach in psychology (Edge, Stewart and Kagan, 2004; Raschini, Stewart and Kagan, 2005).

Scannone (1998) notes that initially the philosophy of liberation drew upon the economic and political sciences in considering the concrete problem of domination and exteriority. Subsequently, it also used the resources of the more hermeneutic human sciences, encountering the culture, the history and the wisdom and knowledge of the people. Scannone sees these sciences as occupying an intermediate position between philosophy and the more analytic disciplines of economics and sociology. But what about (really social, liberatory, analectical, transmodern) psychology? It seems to sit all the way along that dimension from the purely philosophical via the cultural-historical to the socio-analytic. If so can it reach a better accommodation between its two wings, the idiographic and the nomothetic, the emic and the etic, the subjective and the objective? And can the analectic imperative of trans-modernity provide a coherence that unites these approaches in a common cause of liberation? This might in effect be the ana-dialectical solution to psychology’s paradigm wars – transcending them with this positive dialectic extended from the underside (the analectic), and underpinning the method of psychology not just epistemologically and ontologically but in the first place ethically. In so doing it does not deny all of the modernist, critical modernist and post-modern psychologies, but stands placed to critically assimilate them with an integrated set of methodologies scientific, dialectical and analectical. That is, to give the last word to Dussel, “... to know how to discern the positive in the critique of the postmodernists, the positive in modernity, and the valuable affirmation of the exteriority of the life world of the South, to imagine a project of liberation, alternative, ethical and necessary for the majority of humanity ...” (Dussel, 2002: 63).

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