

The concept of trust in Enrique Dussel's philosophical method "analéctica"

El concepto de confianza en el método filosófico "analéctica" de Enrique Dussel

Abstract

In this article, Enrique Dussel's philosophical method called "analéctica" in liberation theory is studied. This method has provoked controversy regarding its theoretical validity, and one of the central points of this controversy is how to interpret the concept of trust. This article focuses on the concept of trust and reconsiders some of the most well-known previous studies on analéctica. Among them, Michael Barber's interpretation and counterargument to the main critics are particularly emphasized. The conclusion is that previous studies' interpretations of the concept of trust do not conform with Dussel's text. Furthermore, a new interpretation together with the structural problems of Dussel's analéctica are proposed.


Keywords: Analéctica, concept of trust, Enrique Dussel, liberation theory, Michael Barber.

Resumen

En este artículo, se investiga el método filosófico de Enrique Dussel en su teoría de la liberación llamado "analéctica". Este método ha suscitado controversia en cuanto a su validez teórica, y uno de los puntos centrales de aquella es sobre cómo interpretar el concepto de confianza. Este artículo se centra en el concepto de confianza, y reconsidera algunos de los estudios previos más conocidos sobre la analéctica. Entre ellos, la interpretación de Michael Barber y su contraargumento frente a las principales críticas son destacados. Se concluye que las interpretaciones del concepto de confianza en los estudios previos no corresponden al texto de Dussel. Además, se proponen una nueva interpretación junto con los problemas estructurales de la analéctica de Dussel.

Palabras clave: Analéctica, el concepto de confianza, Enrique Dussel, teoría de la liberación, Michael Barber.

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Introducción

“ Philosophy of Liberation” is a movement that took place in Argentina in the late 1960s and spread throughout Latin America during the 1970s. This philosophical movement sought to theorize social oppression and liberation from it in Latin America from a philosophical perspective, and it was strongly influenced by the “Theology of Liberation”, which occurred at an earlier time. One of the most notable thinkers of this movement is the Argentinian-Mexican thinker Enrique Dussel (1934-2023).

In this article, Dussel’s philosophical method, called analéctica in liberation theory¹, is studied, with a particular emphasis on the rationality of the concept of trust, which has been one of the most controversial themes highlighted in previous studies. According to Dussel, analéctica² is a novel method in Latin American philosophy, but it is highly controversial in terms of its theoretical validity as philosophy. Among these controversies is the question of whether his analéctica is rational or not³. One of the focal points of contention in this debate is the various interpretations of the concept of trust. The theoretical validity of this method is reconsidered in this article by reexamining the existing interpretations of the concept of trust and clarifying the structure and some relational concepts in analéctica.

In the mid-1960s, Argentina was gripped by economic crisis and political turmoil. Hence, a search for thought to contribute to resolving these social problems was conducted among intellectuals. That means, it was required to construct a thought or theory grounded in the reality they confronted, instead of following Western philosophy. At this juncture, dependency theory garnered

¹ Dussel’s liberation theory treats various themes, such as ethical, pedagogical, sexual and political liberation, etc.

² Only Dussel’s analéctica is discussed in this article, but the term “analéctica” was not coined by Dussel, and many liberation philosophers use it. According to Cerutti, theologian Juan Carlos Scannone was the first to use this term, and Scannone himself claims to be the first user. See: Horacio Cerutti Guldberg, *Filosofía de la liberación latinoamericana*, 3rd ed. (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2006), 372; and Juan Carlos Scannone, “Itinerario Filosófico Hacia El Dios Vivo”, *Storamata* Vol. 03 (1972): 256.

³ For example, Ofelia Schutte, *Cultural Identity and Social Liberation in Latin American Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993); Horacio Cerutti Guldberg, *Filosofía de la liberación latinoamericana...*; Michael Barber, *Ethical Hermeneutics -Rationalism in Enrique Dussel’s Philosophy of Liberation* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998).

⁴ This discription is based on the explanations by Mills and Scannone. See: Frederick B Mills, *Enrique Dussel’s Ethics of Liberation. An introduction* (Switzerland: Palgrave macmillan, 2018), 4-16; and Juan Carlos Scannone, “La filosofía de la liberación en la Argentina. Surgimiento, características, historia, vigencia actual”, in *Del monólogo europeo al diálogo inter-filosófico. Ensayos sobre Enrique Dussel y la filosofía de la liberación*, coordinated by José Guadalupe Gandarilla Salgado and Mabel Moraña (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2018), 39-56.

attention and influenced the theology of liberation. Inspired by dependency theory and theology of liberation, philosophers in Argentina embarked on the task of grappling with the need to theorize philosophically against domination from Western countries and to construct an original philosophy in Latin America.

In 1971, the philosophy of liberation gained widespread recognition in Argentina through three significant events. Firstly, a gathering of young philosophers convened in Córdoba in 1971. In this gathering, a thought called "Philosophy of Liberation" was presented, rebuilding the ethical theory of Emmanuel Levinas from the perspective of Latin America, as an approach to the original philosophy in Latin America. Secondly, during the "America as Problem" symposium at the Second National Congress of Philosophy in Alta Gracia (*El Segundo Congreso Nacional de Filosofía en Alta Gracia*), held in Córdoba, the philosophy of liberation was introduced to philosophers with an interest in Latin American philosophy. Thirdly, at the Second Academic Conferences of the Jesuit Faculties of Philosophy and Theology of San Miguel in Buenos Aires (*Las Segundas Jornadas Académicas de las Facultades Jesuitas de Filosofía y Teología de San Miguel*), a dialogue centered on liberation in Latin America unfolded. This interdisciplinary dialogue encompassed social science, philosophy, and theology. Enrique Dussel, along with other notable liberation philosophers such as Rodolfo Kusch, Arturo Andrés Roig, Juan Carlos Scannone, and Horacio Cerutti-Guldberg, participated in all three events. There, they manifested a philosophy that emerges "from the poor and the oppressed, and from a praxis of their liberation"⁵.

Dussel's most representative books of liberation theory were published between 1973 and 1977. The movement of the philosophy of liberation spread all over Latin America during the Philosophical Meeting of Morelia (*Encuentro filosófico de Morelia*) in Mexico in 1975. In the same year, Dussel was exiled from Argentina to Mexico due to political persecution.

Research on Dussel's philosophy of liberation was conducted worldwide from the 1990s to early 2000s. However, starting from the late 2000s, studies began to shift their focus towards his political thought, particularly his theory of "transmodernity". By the late 2010s, there has been a resurgence of interest in the philosophy of liberation, with some researches returning to its origins and emphasizing its theoretical foundations⁶. Scannone mentions that one of the reasons for this renewed interest is the striking similarities between the social problems we face today and those present during the emergence of the philosophy of liberation in the 1970s: "Today, the situation in Latin America in many aspects is getting worse compared with the time when the philosophy of liberation was born in 1971"⁷, mainly in terms of the problem of "inequality"

⁵ Juan Carlos Scannone, "La filosofía de la liberación", *Del monólogo europeo*, 40.

⁶ For example, Héctor Federico Roda and Nadia Heredia, *Filosofía de la liberación: aportes para pensar a partir de la descolonialidad*, compiled by Héctor Federico Roda and Nadia Heredia (San Salvador de Jujuy: Universidad Nacional de Jujuy, 2017); José Guadalupe Gandarilla Salgado and Mabel Moraña, *Del monólogo europeo...* ⁷Juan Carlos Scannone, "La filosofía de la liberación", *Del monólogo europeo*, 46.

and “exclusion”. Therefore, it is thought that philosophy of liberation “not only it is still valid today but is more valid than in the 70s”⁸.

He also contends that in such present times, philosophy of liberation, especially its method of *analéctica*, can contribute to reflecting on the situation⁹. Therefore, analyzing the theoretical validity of *analéctica* remains essential to address today’s problems. Moreover, recently, in philosophy, several significant trends have reconsidered the framework of philosophy and searched for the possibility of philosophy outside of Western culture¹⁰. In this context, anatomizing an attempt at philosophy in Latin America from a current perspective and reevaluating it holds significant importance.

First, let us review some relevant previous works. American researcher Ofelia Schutte and Argentinian thinker Horacio Cerutti severely criticize Dussel’s *analéctica*. Schutte argues that *analéctica* is used “as in[s]truments in support of the political cause of national-popular liberation”¹¹, and dismisses it as a dogmatic discourse. According to Schutte, *analéctica* is a logic of exteriority, which means that someone perceived as an outsider from prevailing economic, social, and political systems -referred to as “the Other” in Dussel’s framework- is absolutized and endowed with an ethically privileged position. Consequently, she believes *analéctica* has confused logic, which muddled up political belief with absolutism ethics, and has an irrational structure that necessitates mindless trust in the Other¹². Cerutti similarly claims that *analéctica* has self-justified logic and is absolutized to be impervious to criticism¹³.

In response to the critics from Schutte and Cerruti, American researcher Michael Barber mentions that the crux of the issue lies in the rationality in *analéctica*, and that scrutinizing relational concepts helps a proper understanding of *analéctica*¹⁴. Barber defends Dussel by asserting that *analéctica* does not succumb to irrationalism. This article begins by reviewing Barber’s interpretation in order to elucidate the structure of *analéctica*¹⁵.

Basic concepts

As a preliminary step, let us summarize some of the fundamental concepts of Dussel’s liberation theory. He builds his theory by drawing upon several concepts from *Totality and Infinity*, authored by the French philosopher

¹¹ Ofelia Schutte, *Cultural Identity and Social Liberation*, 188.

¹² *Ibid.*, 188.

¹³ Horacio Cerutti Guldberg, *Filosofía de la liberación latinoamericana*, 382

¹⁴ Michael Barber, *Ethical Hermeneutics*, xi.

¹⁵ There are other famous studies on *analéctica* such as those by Sáenz. Still his study is mainly about Dussel’s interpretation of Marx and is outside the scope of the main point of this article, so it is not included here. See: Mario Sáenz, “Dussel on Marx: Living Labor and the Materiality of Life”, in *Thinking from the Underside of History*, edited by Linda Martín Alcoff and Eduardo Mendieta (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2000), 213-248.

Emmanuel Levinas. The foundation of Dussel's theory rests upon the antagonistic structure between "Totality" and "Other"¹⁶.

In Levinas's philosophy, Totality is a world wherein the "I"¹⁷, as a subject of thought, is surrounded by "beings", referring to mundane things. The concept of Totality is often substituted for "I" and "the same". From birth, every human being has their¹⁸ own Totality, and they can possess everything in Totality. This act of Possession is "suspending the very alterity of what is only at first other, and other relative to me"¹⁹. Within Totality, what initially appears as "other" to me, but this "otherness", named "alterity" in Levinas, is only relative, hence, I can grasp it and treat it as one's own property, thereby enabling domination. This is the way I behave in Totality. In contrast to existent in totality which has only relative "otherness", Levinas says there is an absolute "otherness" that I cannot possess nor dominate. "The absolutely other is the Other. [...] Over him I have no power. He escapes my grasp by an essential dimension, even if I have him at my disposal"²⁰. The Other has something that I cannot wholly grasp: alterity. Even if I try to treat the Other as one's tool, essentially the Other is never someone's belonging. Despite attempts to wholly understand the Other, it remains the most private part in their mind. Such fundamental otherness, "strangeness of the Other, his irreducibility to the I, to my thoughts and my possessions"²¹ is named alterity of the Other. This refusal to being grasped is symbolized by the faces of others. "The face resists possession, resists my powers. In its epiphany, in expression, the sensible, still graspable, turns into total resistance to the grasp"²². The ungraspable nature of the Other signifies their existence outside of Totality; They are exterior to it. From this external position, the Other resists possession and domination of the I by assuming the form of questioning: "A calling into question of the same -which cannot occur within the egoist spontaneity of the same- is brought about by the other. We name this calling into question of my spontaneity by the presence of the Other ethics"²³. While self-criticism initiated by oneself may lack radicality due to the possibility of self-justification, criticism from the Other is inherently extraneous to the self, thereby profoundly shaking its foundations. This act of calling into question by the Other is called ethics. This dynamic exchange between the Other and me is named "conversation"²⁴.

¹⁶ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity -An Essay on Exteriority* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 26-27, 35-40.

¹⁷ In the original texts of Levinas and Dussel, and in the previous studies on them, there are various notations of the "I". Among them, the most used one is "I" without "the" and without quotation marks. Therefore, in this article, "I" without "the" and without quotation marks is adopted. However, in the citations from other authors, the original notation in their texts is used. Note that the author of this article is never mentioned as I.

¹⁸ In this article, the third-person pronoun "they" is adopted according to the usage of nonbinary pronoun. However, in the citations from other authors, the notation as it was originally written in their texts is adopted.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 38

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 39

²¹ *Ibid.*, 43

²² *Ibid.*, 197

²³ *Ibid.*, 43

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 39

In Dussel, the concepts of Totality and the Other in the individual dimension are the same. I, the thinking subject, am in the center of my world, and I am surrounded by “beings (*ente*)”. Dussel acknowledges that even the Other typically remains buried “in our environment as just one more sense-thing”²⁵ within Totality. However, “the face of a person is revealed as Other when it appears in our system of instruments as exterior, as someone, as freedom that questions, that provokes, that appears as the one who resists instrumental totalization”²⁶. Through this act of questioning, provocation and appearance, that is, calling me into question, the Other previously relegated to the status of a mere being, unveils their alterity.

Although in the individual dimension, Dussel’s descriptions of Totality and the Other mirror those of Levinas, he extends these concepts to the social dimension. Totality not only designates my world but also carries a social connotation, representing prevailing system such as capitalism or neoliberalism. The Other is reconceptualized as a collective conception representing the unfortunate earthly people, particularly the impoverished and the oppressed, who are exploited by such prevailing system. According to Mills, such system “instrumentalize[s] human life”²⁷ for maintaining and expanding the system itself. Mills explains that in Dussel, the resistance of something to being instrumentalized by Totality is manifested as “alterity”, and this “alterity” means “human freedom”²⁸. He emphasizes that “We are always more than our functionality”²⁹, and the “extrasystemic dignity”³⁰ which is not reduced in functionality embodies human freedom. As alterity is extrasystemic, it exists as something “exterior” to Totality. Though every human has such alterity, the most sacrificed and oppressed in a prevailing system are represented by the freedom of the impoverished, that is, of the Other. In this way, Dussel employs the Other as a collective representation of the oppressed and exploited people, while Totality symbolizes an oppressive system, in the social dimension.

Furthermore, Dussel emphasizes the primacy of spatiality over temporality in his theory, a departure from Western philosophy, which, according to Dussel, has exclusively given preponderance to temporality while neglecting spatiality. Therefore, he emphasizes the spatiality of Totality and the Other in real society, prioritizing a geopolitical viewpoint over an abstract one. Totality and the Other are not attributes-free subjects but rather bear a political classification. Dussel asserts: “The where-I-was-born is the predetermination of all other determinations. To be born among pygmies in Africa or the fifth

²⁵ Enrique Dussel, *Filosofía de la liberación*, 5th ed. (Editorial Nueva América, Bogotá, 1996), 56. *All English translations of Dussel's books were done by the author of this article.

²⁶ *Ibíd.*, 56.

²⁷ Frederick B. Mills, *Enrique Dussel's Ethics of Liberation*, 21.

²⁸ *Ibíd.*, 22

²⁹ *Ibíd.*, 37

³⁰ *Ibíd.*,

avenue in New York is (...) to be born in another world"³¹. This underscores the critical role of in defining Totality and the Other in real society, where Totality encompasses not only the prevailing system but also people living in wealthy and favorable circumstances reaping the benefits from this exploitative system, which instrumentalizes the Other.

A characteristic of Dussel's approach is the seamless integration of conceptions from both the individual and social dimensions, overlaid without distinction. Based on this framework, Dussel establishes the method of analéctica. Dussel regards European thought as "a philosophy of identity and absolute knowledge"³², exemplified and typified by Hegel's dialectic, and contrasts with the Latin American perspective as: "a philosophy of finitude, and an always open knowledge, a philosophy of analéctica, which ought to be newly defined from the existential comprehension of being and the Other"³³. He calls dialectic the method regarding the essence of existence, as used by Aristotle, Hegel, and Heidegger³⁴. Moreover, he considers that the scope of this method is limited within Totality, where beings surround the subject. In contrast, analéctica is a method that addresses thoughts originating from outside Totality, namely, from the Other. In the following section, we will see the details of analéctica, beginning with Barber's interpretation.

Interpretation by Barber

Barber highly assesses that Dussel's analéctica, affirming its capacity to contemplate the ethical relationship between Totality and the Other at the practical level. As a result, analéctica surpasses Levinas' limitation solely abstract consideration. According to Barber, this overcoming becomes possible by slotting the concept of analogy (*analogia/ana-logía*) into analéctica³⁵. Let us first overview the concept of analogy in Dussel³⁶³⁷.

Dussel employs two notions of analogy in his theory. When Dussel elucidates the first concept of analogy, he starts from his own interpretation of Aristotle, drawing from the distinction between Being (*ser*) and beings (*ente*)³⁸.

³⁵ Michael Barber, *Ethical Hermeneutics*, 56-57.

³⁶ Enrique Dussel, *Para una ética II*, 164-167. Same explanation appears in Enrique Dussel, *América Latina*, 115-119; and in "Método analéctico" *Nuevo Mundo*: 124-127.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 132.

³⁷ In Barber's text, there is no distinction, but in Dussel, two types of analogy are written as "analogy (*analogia*)" and "ana-logy (*ana-logía*)", and they have different meanings.

Dussel insists that Aristotle made this distinction, but Aristotle himself does not mention the distinction between Being and beings. This is Dussel's intentional reading of Heidegger's ontological difference into Aristotle. Thus, the English terms used in the translation of "ser" and "ente" in Dussel are borrowed from Heidegger's text in English. See: Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1962).

³⁸ Dussel insists that Aristotle made this distinction, but Aristotle himself does not mention the distinction between Being and beings. This is Dussel's intentional reading of Heidegger's ontological difference into Aristotle. Thus, the English terms used in the translation of "ser" and "ente" in Dussel are borrowed from Heidegger's text in English. See: Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell

According to Dussel, Aristotle links the concept of analogy with the concept of Being, which is “predicated in many ways but all (of them) with regard to one origin”³⁹, and it transcends genus and species. Then, he asserts that Aristotle designates analogy to denote the resemblant relationship of things transcending genus and species, such as Being and beings⁴⁰. Dussel concludes that in European philosophy, this concept of analogy is predicated in many ways but ultimately tied to a single origin, that is, Totality, which represents Being itself.

In contrast to the first concept of analogy, Dussel introduces the second concept, “ana-logy”, which illustrates resemblance in a different manner⁴¹. Ana-logy denotes a resemblance between a Being and another type of Being, namely the Other, who exists beyond and above the Totality. According to Dussel, the prefix “ana-” means higher or above, and “logy” signifies “logos”, principally meaning “discourse” or “word”. Words bound an area of one’s understanding, which is the horizon of one’s world. Hence, logos consequently means the boundary of one’s world, that is, Totality⁴². Therefore, etymologically, the meaning of ana-logy is something located higher than or above Totality. Dussel also posits that the concept of ana-logy is a type of resemblance, thereby containing a concept of “distinction”, as the resemblance between things implies, they possess distinct points. Otherwise, these would be deemed “same” rather than “resemblant”. He employs the term “different” and “distinct” as disparate concepts, stating that in the case of “ana-logy”, it contains “distinction”. In Dussel’s explanation, the word “difference” is derived from the Latin and means that something stemmed from what was originally one thing. Therefore, “difference assumes a unity: the same”⁴³. According to Dussel, hence, “difference” is something that arises within Totality and is ultimately tied with it. In contrast, he defines “distinct” as something with “diversity and does not assume unity beforehand: it is the separated”⁴⁴. For Dussel, distinct represents something irreducible to and separated from Totality .

³⁹ Enrique Dussel, *Para una ética II*, 165.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 166.; This interpretation of Aristotle is also inaccurate. Aristotle himself does not use the term “analogy”, and interpreters in the Middle Ages, such as Tomas Aquinas, added this term. See Question 4, article 3 of the first part in Tomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 2nd ed., translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Retrieved from: <http://www.domcentral.org/summa/summa-lq4.html> (accessed on February 3, 2024).

⁴¹ In this article the usage of “ana-logy” is in accordance with Dussel’s, but Barber does not adopt this notation.

⁴² Enrique Dussel, *Para una ética II*, 166-168.

⁴³ Enrique Dussel, *Para una ética de la liberación latinoamericana Tomo I* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Siglo XXI, 1973), 102.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 102; This differentiation seems to be in accordance with Aristotle’s term *διαφορά* (*diferencia*) and *ἄλλος* (*distinto*), but Dussel does not mention it. See Book 5, 1018a in: Aristotle, “Metaphysics”, *Perseus Digital Library*, [https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus % 3Atext % 3A1999.01.0052% 3Abook % 3D5](https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0052%3Abook%3D5) (accessed on February 3, 2024).

In summary, ana-logy signifies a resemblance between two things that are irreducible to each other and are separated from the beginning, such as Totality and something situated above Totality⁴⁵.

Barber states that Dussel's introduction of the ana-logy concept is the "most original surpassing of Levinas"⁴⁶. However, Barber does not extensively elaborate on the rationale behind his appraisal, merely stating that the ana-logy concept "does not tolerate the equivocality of Levinas's totally Other"⁴⁷. We can guess the reason for his appraisal from the phrase ana-logy "does not tolerate the equivocality". Dussel explains that if the word of the Other is equivocal, it means that it "would be impossible to be interpreted and communication would also be impossible"⁴⁸. Based on it, equivocality means more than two things without resemblance or commonality. Certainly, in Levinas' philosophy, the Other is an absolute Other, devoid of any commonality between the Other and me⁴⁹. Therefore, I cannot comprehend the Other nor the word of them. If the Other and their word have no commonality with mine and accordingly it is not comprehensible nor interpretable, then the Other and me cannot make any relationship with each other. Then, how can I have a "conversation" with the Other? This also leads to the question of how I can make an ethical relationship with the concrete Other in the real world. Barber thinks that this is the problem of Levinas' theory.

Contrastingly, in Dussel, the Other and their words are ana-logical. The Other is someone over the logos, over Totality, but at the same time, they have a certain resemblance with me. The ana-logical word of the Other, which presupposes an abyss yet possessing discernible resemblance not assimilated into me, becomes interpretable, unlike Levinas' conception. Then, with Dussel's Other, ethical relationships in the real world become feasible through interpretation. In this way, Barber regards analéctica as a method that ethically connects Totality and the Other through the concept of ana-logy. Through this way of reading, he appraises that Dussel surpasses Levinas.

However, the above comparison between Levinas and Dussel represents only one aspect of Barber's interpretation of the ana-logy concept. According to Barber, Dussel's ana-logy concept manifests the depth and incomprehensibility of the Other's word because it has a distinct origin. Barber explains as follows:

⁴⁵ In Dussel's concept of ana-logy, a following criticism can be raised; In Dussel's text, both Totality and the Other are predicated on a "Being" as we can see in Enrique Dussel, *Para una ética I*, 127-128. Then, both concepts seem to belong to the same genus or species. If so, the concept of ana-logy could be reduced to a mere "similarity", a concept in a lower dimension than "analogy" of western philosophy. However, for Dussel, the crucial point is that the predication of "Being" in Totality and the Other is something that cannot be grouped under the same clause and is essentially disparate. Therefore, those concepts do not belong to the same genus or species. The resemblance between such two clauses is ana-logy, in Dussel's definition.

⁴⁶ Michael Barber, *Ethical Hermeneutics*, 56.

⁴⁷ *Ibíd.*, 56-57.

⁴⁸ Enrique Dussel, *Para una ética II*, 122.

⁴⁹ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 296.

When a young man tells a young woman “I love you”, the words carry with them pretensions to a truth as yet unverified (that the man really loves her) and an obligation and demand that the listener place faith in the speaker. [...] Dussel amplifies on this reference of the revealed word to the revealer since it touches on the essence of the human person, of historicity, and rationality. The word of the Other comes from beyond the mundane listener’s existential comprehension of the world, and to understand that word, the listener must at first accept it only because the Other speaks it⁵⁰.

I, as a listener of the Other, cannot truly understand the meaning of the Other’s word because each other inhabits different worlds. Therefore, the word of the Other remains essentially incomprehensible, and there is an abyss between the word of the Other and mine. Hence, the listener must have trust in the Other. In response to criticisms directed at the concept of analogy, Barber responds to that it does not necessarily lead to an uncritical assimilation of the Other’s meaning to one’s own. As evident from the previous citation, trust is important in Dussel, and in his concept, “it also underlies the confidence that the Other is rational and that one would act and think as the Other does if one were in the Other’s position”⁵¹. Barber further asserts that Dussel’s concept of trust bears resemblance to Jürgen Habermas’ theory of rational interpretation of other people’s comprehension⁵² and Donald Davidson’s principle of charity⁵³. As described in the Introduction of this article, Barber’s interpretation leads to a refutation of Cerutti’s and Schutte’s criticisms.

In Cerutti’s view, the protagonists of the philosophy of liberation project an ethicist’s self-image of moral superiority. Schutte would explain such an attitude by Dussel’s tendency to set himself as the errorless, guiltless, blameless Other over against an evil, oppressive system. Any philosopher identifying with the Others of that system becomes uncritically deified as “ethically correct”, capable of exercising a new authoritarianism legitimated in the name of “God”, “liberation”, and “exteriority”⁵⁴.

Both Cerutti and Schutte relate this philosophical irrationalism to Dussel’s and others’ underlying religious commitments⁵⁵.

⁵⁰ Michael Barber, *Ethical Hermeneutics*, 52-53.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁵² Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, translated by Thomas McCarthy (Boston, Beacon Press, 1984), 115-120.; In many aspects, Dussel admits the similarity between his own ethical theory and the Discourse Ethics from Habermas and Apel, and he has lots of dialogue with them. See: Enrique Dussel, *Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty y la filosofía de la liberación con respuestas de Karl Otto Apel y Paul Ricoeur* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1993); and Karl-Otto Apel and Enrique Dussel, *Ética del discurso y ética de la liberación* (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 2004).

⁵³ Donald Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: CLARENDON PRESS, 2001), 183-198.

⁵⁴ Michael Barber, *Ethical Hermeneutics*, 113.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 113.; In Barber’s text, this counterargument to Cerutti and Schutte develops not only into treating the Other as absolutized, but also into their criticism, with Dussel situating his philosophy of liberation as the first philosophy. Indeed, the relative importance of this quotation in the text is higher in the latter. However, this is not so much related to the main point of this article, so it is not mentioned here.

According to Barber, Cerutti and Schutte understand that Dussel's analéctica has a structure that forces one to subordinate mindlessly and uncritically to the Other. In fact, this type of criticism is frequently leveled not only at Dussel but also as a theoretical flaw in Levinas. As stated by Barber, the appropriate interpretation of the concept of trust in Dussel's theory can rebut this criticism. The foundation of Dussel's analéctica, which builds an ethical relationship with the Other through ana-logy, is the concept of trust. This trust is not the one that brings a mindless subordinate, as Cerutti and Schutte interpret, but rather a trust in the rationality of the other. Therefore, even if the Other approaches me with malice aforethought, trusting in their rationality, I can postpone judgments and refuse the Others' beliefs⁵⁶. Accordingly, the relationship between the Other and me would not be an uncritical subordination, and Barber asserts that Dussel's analéctica does not fall into irrationalism by absolutizing the Other or endowing the Other with absolute ethics.

The above is the interpretation and the rebuttal of Barber's criticism of Cerutti and Schutte. However, in this article, two issues need to be addressed regarding his interpretation. First, what does it mean to be able to interpret the Other's word using ana-logy? Barber says this concept is the most original point in analéctica, as mentioned already, but what steps should be taken for interpretation using ana-logy? Second, is his interpretation of analéctica appropriate, and can it entirely repel the criticism from Cerutti and Schutte? To solve these two questions, in the next section, returning to Dussel's text, the procedure for interpreting the Other is presented in detail, while focusing on the concept of trust in analéctica.

Procedure of the “interpretation”

In this section, the procedure for interpretation the word of the Other using ana-logy in Dussel's analéctica is reviewed. First, when the word of the Other is directed at me and I receive it, my understanding of this word cannot be an appropriate “interpretation” but an inappropriate understanding by “similarity [semejanza]”.

A revealing word from the Other [...] is one that is grasped (inadequate derivative comprehension) in the “similarity” but cannot be “interpreted” because of the abysmal and incomprehensible nature of its distinct origin⁵⁷.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 55; Regarding the postponement of judgments, Barber says that this viewpoint in Dussel coincides with the concept of the “third” in Levinas, as we can see in Michael Barber, *Ethical Hermeneutics*, 55. Nonetheless, this concept in Levinas is subject to problematic interpretations, and it is claimed that its property differs in Levinas' earlier and later works. As a result, this concept is not used in this article because it is difficult to agree with Barber's literal interpretation.

⁵⁷ Enrique Dussel, *Para una ética II*, 167.

“Similarity” for Dussel means something “neither identical nor different”⁵⁸. It means more than mere commonalities between two things, and yet those are not same. This word mentions a broad resemblance, unlike “analogy” which shows a limited resemblance, because “analogy” applies to a resemblance beyond a genus-species relationship. Dussel says here that I can only grasp a word from the Other in the similarity, thus it is mere inadequate derivative comprehension and not interpretable. He distinguishes inadequate derivative comprehension and interpretation. So here we understand that interpretation means adequately comprehending what the Other says, despite the abyss between my word and the Other’s one, and the incomprehensible nature because the origin of the Other is distinct from mine. Let us delve into a detailed description of the “interpretation” in Dussel.

The word of the Other that intrudes on Totality is not interpretable because something can be interpreted insofar as it has a foundational relation to the understanding of a mundane being. However, such a word burst from beyond the world (from the world of the Other). Nevertheless, it is “inadequately comprehensible” as described above. An understanding by “similarity” and confusion. From the past experience I have of what the Other says in his saying, one forms an approximate, still imprecise, and inverted idea of what it reveals⁵⁹.

When a word from the Other thrusts into my Totality, I understand the Other’s word not as it is but rather replace it with my own word based on my own experience. My word is rooted in my world, while the word of the Other is rooted in the world of the Other. Therefore, although both words are apparently the same, they carry distinct meanings based on distinct experiences. However, at the same time, this does not imply that these words are entirely incomprehensible. I regard the word tied with one’s own past experiences as similar to the word of the Other, and from this similarity, I can endeavor to comprehend the Other’s word. Through this process, I can get closer to an understanding of the Other’s word, although it remains inadequate.

Then, how does this insufficient comprehension become an adequate interpretation? According to Dussel, the first step is to have trust.

The veracity of “the Said” is assured and only trusted in the “Saying” itself, in the Other who says it. It demands to be taken as true: it is obliged to have faith, since logos or *dabar* uttered in revelation makes radical reference to what is higher and further than “the Said” and than my own ontological horizon of understanding as Totality⁶⁰.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 168

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 168

In Dussel, "'Saying' is an exposure to the Other in action"⁶¹ and "the Other, in its total historical carnality becomes a sign in its Saying"⁶². In "Saying", I encounter the selfhood of the Other, touching their self-exposure. Focusing on the side of the Other, they themselves can be described as an embodiment of "Saying", possessing their own history known as experience. In short, in Dussel, "Saying" indicates not only an action of exposure but also the Other themselves. On the other hand, "the Said" is an "expression of a being"⁶³ and "'the Said' comes to conceal in the distance the Other as other"⁶⁴. "The Said" is a word that has already left the Other's mouth. When it reaches me, this word turns into a being swallowed up in my Totality, hiding the selfhood of the Other. When a word is directed at me from the Other, it no longer reveals their selfhood and is grasped by my understanding based on my past experiences. This is the meaning of "Saying" and "the Said" in Dussel. Returning to the quote, Dussel says that a word, which is logos or *dabar*⁶⁵, refers to something beyond "the Said", something beyond the scope of my understanding. Its reference is "Saying", that is, the Other themselves. Whether "the Said" is true or not is assured by trusting "Saying" itself, meaning the Other who says "the Said". Then, why am I required to trust in the "Saying"?

Dussel explains "to trust" in the following expression: "The intelligence is perplexed and has to surrender its weapons and wait in hope; we have called this position to trust, to have faith"⁶⁶. Totality represents the extent of my understanding, therefore, something exterior or beyond it is not understandable. Hence, my intelligence is perplexed by what lies beyond Totality. The only recourse is to wait in hope; hope that I may understand it in the future. This attitude is what Dussel calls "to trust". At this juncture, it becomes evident that the significance of the word of the Other is ana-logical. A word of the Other comes from over (ana-) the horizon of understanding (logos) of Totality. This word of the Other is not rooted in my Totality, which is why I cannot yet understand it. There is nothing I can do but to have hope, in other words, to trust. In this sense, to trust is required.

Next, after trusting the Other's word, it is necessary for me to follow the Other's word and to take action to liberate them. Dussel names such action "liberating praxis". At this stage, it appears that the focus shifts from the individual dimension, which primarily portrays the nature of the Other and Totality, to the social dimension. "Liberating praxis" is expressed as "subversive praxis"⁶⁷, indicating its aim to subversively overthrow the prevailing system.

⁶¹ *Ibíd.*, 223.

⁶² *Ibíd.*, 118

⁶³ *Ibíd.*, 117

⁶⁴ *Ibíd.*, 119

⁶⁵ *Dabar* is the Hebrew word for logos. The implication of these two words is different in Dussel, but this difference is not expressed in the quotes and is therefore omitted. See Enrique Dussel, *Para una ética II*, 164.

⁶⁶ *Ibíd.*, 93.

⁶⁷ Enrique Dussel, *Filosofía de la liberación*, 98.

As seen in section I of this article, Totality, as the prevailing system, instrumentalizes people and deprives humans of their freedom. Those who suffer the most are the impoverished, the Other. Hence, liberating praxis involves concrete actions to overthrow the prevailing system for the sake of liberating the Other from their oppression. By doing so, “the previously confusedly understood word [...] reaches the possibility of becoming an adequate interpretation”⁶⁸. Why does liberating praxis make an adequate interpretation possible? On the same page, Dussel writes that the reason the word of the Other was only inadequately comprehensible before this praxis is “because the experience of being in this [the Other’s] world has not yet been lived”⁶⁹. It means that I did not have an experience of the Other’s world, hence my inability to understand their word. Turning this inadequate interpretation to the appropriate one through liberating praxis, suggests that I can experience the world of the Other. Then, from the experience gained through liberating praxis, I can reach the appropriate interpretation of the Other’s word.

This outlines the process of interpretation in *analéctica*. In summary, when I receive the Other’s word, firstly I must have trust. This trust allows me to inadequately comprehend the Other’s word through the similarity of the word. Building on this inadequate comprehension, by heeding the word of the Other, taking action to liberate them, and experiencing their world, I can access the appropriate interpretation of the Other’s word.

It is important to note here that the act of liberating praxis is the catalyst for interpretation. Without this praxis, founded on inadequate comprehension, I cannot gain access to adequate interpretation. Furthermore, it is unclear how to understand “to experience the Other’s world”. With these considerations in mind, the appropriateness of Barber’s interpretation of *analéctica* and his counterargument against Cerutti and Schutte is reconsidered, and then the theoretical validity of *analéctica* itself is examined.

Critics to the Barber’s interpretation and reexamination of Dussel’s *analéctica*

This section examines the interpretation by Barber and Dussel’s *analéctica*. As presented in the latter half of Section II, Barber finds a resemblance between Dussel’s theory and the theories of Habermas and Davidson in that the concept of trust signifies trust in the rationality of the Other as part of communication. According to Barber, because this is what Dussel means with the concept of trust, it is not of an irrational nature such as to absolutize mindlessly the Other and follow them. Even if I encounter an Other with evil intentions, based on the trust in the rationality of the Other, I can postpone the decision of whether or not to follow their belief, and then refuse it.

⁶⁸ Enrique Dussel, *Para una ética II*, 169.

⁶⁹ *Ibíd.*, 169.

Therefore, Barber claimed that Dussel's analéctica is not irrational, as Cerutti and Schutte claim. But, once again, is this interpretation appropriate? Is trust in the rationality of the Other, and does analéctica have a structure that allows for the postponement of judgment?

To clarify this point, we review the usage of the term "trust" in Dussel. In his text, there are three patterns of usage: "trust in the Other", "trust in the word of the Other", and "trust in the rationality of the Other". The first two patterns are directly expressed in his text. A nuance related to "trust in the Other", is found, for example, in the following: "Only by trusting the Other and firmly holding his word, can Totality be set in motion"⁷⁰ and "with trust (with faith) in the Other as other awaits the revelation of his word"⁷¹. Some expressions about "trust in the word of the Other" are found as follows: "We must have faith in his word; we must trust the word of the poor man so that in trust he reveals to us 'what' is to be thought"⁷². Moreover, "it is on the word of the Other not yet verified and the trust in the veracity of the Other that we advance in 'service' and liberating work"⁷³. The term "veracity" in the last citation should be read as the truth of the word of the Other, not as the truth of the Other themselves. Regarding the usage of "trust in the rationality of the Other", there is no direct expression in his text. However, some citations can be read in such a way, for example, "This referral or reference of the revealing word to the revealer leaves the hearer, that is in the Totality, of that word in a situation that needs to be described, because it touches on the very essence of human, historicity, and rationality"⁷⁴ and "To interpret an ana-logical word, then, is to trust the authority of the poor and to be obedient to it"⁷⁵. The former citation explains that the word reflects the user's experience and rationality, so it is possible to read it as rationality in the word is the object of trust. In the latter citation, trusting in authority can be read as trusting the right, autonomy, or rationality of the impoverished in their position.

Among the above three patterns, "trust in the Other" is a broader concept compared to "trust in the word of the Other", which is broader than "trust in the rationality of the Other". Barber's interpretation is possible only when the narrowest concept is adopted, "trust in the rationality of the Other", but it must be rethought here. To pursue this analysis, let us bring in the following citations: "One assents, has conviction, or understands inadequately 'what has been said' by having trust and faith in the Other: 'because he says so'"⁷⁶. In this citation, the difference between "Saying" and "the Said" is manifested. As we saw in Section III, "the Said" is what has already been swallowed up in Totality and the selfhood of the Other is concealed. Thus, the truth of a word cannot

⁷⁰ *Ibíd.*, 169.

⁷¹ *Ibíd.*, 39.

⁷² *Ibíd.*, 118.

⁷³ *Ibíd.*, 122.

⁷⁴ *Ibíd.*, 168.

⁷⁵ *Ibíd.*, 123.

⁷⁶ *Ibíd.*, 168.

be determined by exploring the word itself. Whether the word is true and is worthy of trust depends on "Saying", that is, the Other themselves. If the Other is trustworthy, what they say is true. The citation below shows more straightforwardly that the object of trust is a human.

Trust is "having faith in someone" and never in something, not even in truth (if it were merely something) itself. To "have faith" in someone's word is to have faith in his alterity, in his Being as Other, as a person⁷⁷.

"Alterity", as we have seen in Section I, denotes the fundamental otherness of the Other and "his irreducibility to the I, to my thoughts and my possessions". Thus, "to have faith in their alterity" means to trust what I can never wholly grasp, what I can never own. Here again, it shows that trust in the Other is required because there is something not graspable nor comprehensible in them. So here Dussel says, to trust a person comes first, and this leads to trusting their word. Thus, the object of trust is explicitly a human.

Barber's interpretations that the object of trust in Dussel is the rationality of the Other and "to trust in the word of the Other" are refuted by the preceding analysis. After all, the object of the trust should be read as the Other themselves.

Moreover, from the point of view of the interpretation procedure, as explained in Section III, Barber's interpretation lacks validity. Barber suggests that because trust lies in the rationality of the Other, I can postpone judgment and refute the belief of the Other even if I encounter the Other who has a malicious intention. However, in *analéctica*, encountering the Other necessitates not only trust but also engaging in liberating praxis for the Other, based on an incomplete understanding of their words. Given this structure, interpreting trust solely as faith in the rationality of the Other, rather than in the Other themselves, is untenable. If one is required to act upon the words of the Other with only a partial understanding, it is incompatible to defer judgment solely by trusting in their rationality.

For these reasons, the interpretation by Barber is refuted. It becomes impossible to reject the beliefs of the Other, especially when they harbor malicious intentions, if the object of trust is understood as the Other themselves. Furthermore, in Dussel's *analéctica*, action precedes interpretation. Therefore, in a situation like encountering the Other with evil intent presents more significant challenges compared to Levinas' theory, which faced similar criticism. In Levinas, too, the Other's word comes above Totality and I am required to trust it. Nevertheless, their word remains incomprehensible to me, and there is no concrete explanation about how to make an ethical relationship with the Other.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 116.

Hence, it is unclear how to interact with the concrete Other in the real world⁷⁸. However, the circumstances in Dussel's framework differ significantly. Not only does he require the trust in the Other, but he also asserts that their words are interpretable because they are ana-logical with mine. Moreover, the Other represents the oppressed and the impoverished in the real world. This implies that Dussel provides guidance on how to engage with the concrete Other. This premise allows for the following example: Suppose I meet an impoverished person, who fits Dussel's definition of the Other, who has the belief that one should kill a certain politician to liberate them from the oppression they receive. In analéctical method, I am compelled to trust them and follow their words, even if I do not adequately understand their reasoning or their beliefs. In this scenario, carrying out the assassination of the politician becomes deemed necessary. Only after the deed is done can I finally understand and interpret adequately what the Other intended. That is the structure of analéctica. If this is the case, as some critical interpreters claim, analéctica appears to be a fanatical, terrifying, and irrational thought.

The issue is how to interpret "trust in the Other" within Dussel's framework. One proposed interpretation suggests that Dussel essentially requires me to undergo a transformation in my relationship with the Other, almost akin to conversion. Despite Dussel's claims that the Other and I are separate concepts, with the Other occupying a position of absolute superiority, it appears that in the transitional phase of interpretation, it is not merely about me interpreting the Other as the I, but rather about me transforming into the Other. This interpretation might seem to suggest the illogical notion that "I am the Other". However, as if to support this interpretation, Dussel employs the phrase "convert to the Other" in parts of his text: "Conversion to the Other constitutes one as a free 'I', who stands up to the Totality, and challenges the 'those,' who are oppressed under the 'Will to Power,' to be an equally free 'Other'"⁷⁹, "In the Alterity, there is the conversion to the Other"⁸⁰.

The conceptual confusion between the Other and me is one of the most abhorrent ideas in Levinas' theory. In Levinas' view, to assimilating the Other into myself is tantamount to killing the Other⁸¹, because it means to deprive the alterity of the Other. From the Levinas' perspective, Dussel's analéctica might appear to regress theoretically.


However, is analéctica merely an illogical confusion of concepts or a theoretical regression? It is imperative to reconsider the notion of "converting to the Other" in Dussel. This question is also intertwined with the issue raised in the final paragraph of Section III about how to understand the meaning of experiencing the Other's world.

⁷⁸ In terms of the "ethics" in Levinas, Derrida indicates that Levinas does not intend to demonstrate ethics in practice: "let us not forget that Levinas does not seek to propose laws or moral rules, does not seek to determine a morality, but rather the essence of the ethical relation in general". See Jacques Derrida, *Writing and difference* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 111.

⁷⁹ Enrique Dussel, *Para una ética II*, 39.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁸¹ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 198.



It could be argued that what Dussel means by “convert to the Other” is not to assimilate the Other into myself but to relinquish the position of Totality and to empathetically place oneself in the position of the Other to comprehend and empathize with their worldview. As we saw in Section I, Totality, in the social dimension, represents the prevailing system that instrumentalizes human life and also means affluent people who reap the benefit from it. In contrast, the Other represents the impoverished and oppressed who are exploited by this very system. Therefore, “abandoning the position of Totality” signifies shedding the privileges conferred by the exploitative system—such as economic prosperity, property ownership, and social status. Similarly, “putting oneself in the situation of the Other” entails experiencing the hardships and suffering endured by the marginalized. Without this transformative shift, the I continue to perpetuate the oppression of the Other, remaining incapable of truly comprehending and empathizing with their worldview. This interpretation aligns with Dussel's intention behind the phrase “convert to the Other”.

In essence, Dussel seems to think that pretending to understand the Other without converting to the Other amounts “to killing” the Other. To feign understanding while participating in a system that exploits and marginalizes the Other, and while benefiting from favorable circumstances, is, for Dussel, a form of oppression that silences the Other's voice. Therefore, unlike Levinas, Dussel demands that I undergo a transformation and adopt the viewpoint of the Other, rather than remaining entrenched in the position of Totality.

Viewed through this lens, it is understandable that Dussel does not claim to follow the Other mindlessly or absolutely, as Cerutti and Schutte criticize. As mentioned just above, trusting the Other is required for understanding their worldview, and this lies at the core of his theory. Thus, it cannot be referred to as a mere irrational dogma. This interpretation highlights the shortcomings of Barber's perspective, which is fixated on rational communication and allows the Totality to maintain a facade of understanding the Other from a position of security, thus perpetuating their complicity in the exploitation of humanity. However, according to Dussel, one can never understand the pain and rigors of the Other unless one puts oneself in the Other's shoes, that is, without abandoning favorable circumstances and putting oneself in an oppressed, impoverished position.

Conclusions

This article delves into the concept of trust within Dussel's analéctica and surrounding debates. While a potential resolution to the argument regarding rationality in the concept of trust between the Other and myself has emerged through the proposed reading, it would be premature to claim that analéctica is a theoretically valid method. A new problem suggested in this article is the potential irrationality of the interpretation process in analéctica.

Despite this challenge, Dussel's theory remains thought-provoking as an attempt to theorize practical problems in today's world. Dussel emphasizes that philosophy can never be neutral and that the concept of the self-established within the western philosophy unconsciously leads to the oppression of others. By incorporating the problem of oppression into his theory of philosophy as a substantial matter, he critiques contemporary global society, where structures of inequality and exploitation continue to expand. Dussel theorizes not only politically but also philosophically the importance of standing on the side of the oppressed. Dussel's liberation theory established an era in the movement of philosophy of liberation and impacted key trends of thought like decoloniality. In the theoretical aspect, too, Dussel's analéctica and its concept of ana-logy inspired some new theories such as "analogical hermeneutics (*hermenéutica analógica*)" by Mauricio Beuchot⁸². As the source of such new trends, Dussel's liberation theory is still a vivid theory worth considering.

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