The Method of Political Resistance and the Concept of the 'People' in Tosaka Jun and Enrique Dussel

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Abstract

It is rather common to couple Japanese Marxist Tosaka Jun (1900-1945) with critical theorists like Walter Benjamin or Theodor Adorno in the comparative philosophy literature, but little, if anything at all, has been said about the shared discursive strategies of political resistance theorized by Tosaka Jun and Latin American philosopher Enrique Dussel (1934-). Despite being continents and generations apart, Tosaka and Dussel nonetheless offer similar critiques of empire building within a system of capitalism as well as methods of resistance to disrupt to its ideological justification. Linked by the lineage of Marxism and their suspicion of the deterministic aspects of modernist thought, both Tosaka and Dussel present accounts of political power bound to the 'people' themselves, packaged as hegemonic strategies (à la Gramsci) that privilege those on the periphery, that which refuse to be subsumed into the capitalist system generating colonial expansion. Where they diverge, however, is in their view of the 'people' for constructing, positioning, and localizing collective struggles and democratic movements, with each account being stronger in an area where the other is more limited, thus pointing towards a space of synthesis. This article therefore argues for a teaming up of what Dussel calls 'el pueblo'—which is a theoretical category referring to the political power articulated by localized communities—with Tosaka's critical method of journalistic and philosophical reflection, with the aim of empowering the people, because it will provide us with a stronger view of political resistance at the periphery that will act as a force for democratic possibilities.

Introduction

While it is common to couple Japanese Marxist Tosaka Jun (1900-1945) with critical theorists like Walter Benjamin or Theodor Adorno in the comparative philosophy literature, little, if anything at all however, has been said about the shared discursive strategies of political resistance theorized by Tosaka Jun and Latin American philosopher Enrique Dussel (1934-). Due to being continents and generations apart, Tosaka and Dussel will give the initial impression of an unlikely match, but what is rather surprising is that both thinkers offer similar critiques of empire building engendered within capitalism as well as methods of resistance to disrupt its ideological justification. Linked by the lineage of Marxism and their shared suspicion of the cruder forms of modernist thought,[1] Tosaka and Dussel present accounts of political power bound to the people themselves, packaged as hegemonic strategies (à la Gramsci) that favors those on the periphery. Both subscribe to the power of the people as a force for democratic possibilities while making visible the ideological movements of the contemporary period that reinforce the production of capital and its relationship to systems of colonization. But where they diverge is in their account of the 'people' as a theoretical category for constructing, positioning, and localizing collective struggles and democratic movements, with each account being stronger in an area where the other is more limited, thus pointing towards a space of synthesis. Nonetheless, both accounts overlap in the sense that they challenge not just the philosophical views of liberal individualism but also the older (modernist) models of resistance formulated by the political Left.

Another reason as to why these two thinkers make a convincing pair is their shared connection to the historical context in which their thought arose. Unlike much of modern philosophy, which sought to construct totalizing accounts of reality, Tosaka and Dussel were more targeted in their investigations, preferring a critical approach to the philosophical projects developed within the historical conditions in which they faced. For example, in the Euroamerican scholarly literature, Tosaka is more often associated with being a social critic of the Kyoto School philosophy, but what is less

[1] Tosaka's suspicion of modernism in particular is centered mostly around his rejection of economic determinism—in Marxist and non-Marxist traditions. This is likely related to the fact that Tosaka's work, as with much of Japanese reception towards Marx, extends much deeper into the second and third volumes of Marx's *Das Kapital*.

known about Tosaka's philosophical investigations is how the historical contexts of Japan themselves and their concomitant ideologies were more of his central objects of critique. In other words, Tosaka's philosophy formed as a commitment to unmasking the sort of iterations of idealism that were established in Japan during the Meiji period (Prooi 2020, 313). But given his critical response to the Japanese wartime regime, Tosaka's philosophical career unfortunately ended abruptly after being arrested under the Peace Preservation Law, and he ultimately died in Nagano prison at the age of 44. Tosaka's style of cultural and literary criticism, nonetheless, represents an urgent and important investment in exposing the ideological systems operating behind the repressive technologies of state power and imperialist control.

Similar to what motivated Tosaka's philosophical commitments, the historical conditions of Latin America, which were frequently destabilized (and continue to be destabilized) by the imperialistically obsessed powers of the global north, were the source for Dussel's critical interventions into philosophical thought. Instead of building a philosophical account of objective reality common to modern philosophy, Dussel's philosophy began with an interest in Dependency Theory and the writings of Emmanuel Levinas in order to unmask the political relationships connecting colonialization, Eurocentrism, and capitalism, relationships thought to be responsible for creating the historical situation of Latin America that lingers on today. In the 1970s however, Dussel was the target of violence in Argentina, which included death threats and the bombing of his house, eventually forcing him into exile where he continues his work at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana in Mexico City. Dussel remains to be one of the most important figures in Latin American philosophy, particularly due to posing a direct challenge to the discourses of Euroamerican philosophy by actively carrying out the ethical responsibilities of the philosophy of liberation in the historical project of social, political, and economic empowerment of the people located at the periphery. Given Tosaka's and Dussel's shared critiques of ideology and colonialism generated by the capitalist system, as well as their slightly diverging accounts of the 'people' as forms of political power, this article will initiate a conversation between Tosaka and Dussel in order to put forth a new vision of political resistance from the standpoint of the subaltern, a vision that can be useful for conversations taking place in political theory and decolonial studies. This article therefore argues for a teaming up of what Dussel calls 'el pueblo'—which is a theoretical category referring

to the political power articulated by localized communities—with Tosaka's critical method of journalistic and philosophical reflection, with the aim of empowering the people, because it will provide us with a stronger view of political resistance at the periphery that will act as a force for democratic possibilities.

Tosaka's Critique of Ideology

It is often said that the Kyoto School began with Tosaka Jun (see Endo 2017, 346-386). Neither Nishida Kitarō nor Tanabe Hajime had thought that the philosophies they were developing formed an intellectual lineage as such,[2] but for Tosaka, there were noteworthy social and political characteristics and functions to Nishida's (and Tanabe's) intellectual thought that deserved real critical consideration. As Tosaka (Tosaka Jun Zenshū [TJZ] 3, 175; 2016, 67) says:

> Although I am not qualified to offer a conclusive assessment of Nishida Philosophy at this time, I can tentatively characterize it as follows. In so doing, one would inevitably have to understand the social and political meaning of the ideational form Nishida Philosophy has. But this is not all, Nishida Philosophy is not just the Nishida School but may actually be said to have developed into a Kyoto School. It is now a perfectly formed, socially existing entity.

Given Tosaka's account here, we might think of the Kyoto School philosophy itself as being born out of an act of resistance, not unlike Nishida's own philosophy of nothing which was developed as an act of resistance against the logic of being dominant in Western epistemology. In fact, the entire philosophical line that succeeded Nishida and Tanabe, luminaries like Miki Kiyoshi, Nishitani Keiji, and Kōsaka Masaaki, was also given a specific name, function, and intellectual place within Tosaka's own philosophical scheme. In other words, there is a genealogy to Nishida's and Tanabe's thought that echoed the idealism that set foot in Japan many years earlier; and despite their claims otherwise, Tosaka maintained that Nishida completed the trajectory that began with Fichte all the way through Schelling and Hegel, while Tanabe would return to a kind of Hegelian Idealism that was adamantly opposed to materialism (Harootunian 2013, xxxii-xxxiv). As an 'external' critic, Tosaka

[2] Interestingly enough, Nishida himself even resisted such a label.

would nonetheless fault the Kyoto School philosophy for its acquiescence to the nationalist fervor of wartime Japan.

Tosaka is in fact quite explicit about his disdain for what he described as the snobbery (zokubutsu 俗物) of contemporary philosophy departments, insisting instead that philosophical engagement should always take up the concerns of the 'proletarian masses' (TJZ 4, 136). Positioned from this spirited critique of ivory-tower academics, Kyoto School philosophy, with its focus on self-realization and reclamation of Japan's own intellectual heritage, is thought to be another instance of a bourgeois ideology that implicitly participates in 'Japanism' (nihonshugi 日本主義) (TJZ 2, 233-234). As Tosaka sees it, Nishida's philosophy, which is the 'consummation of romanticism' (TJZ 2, 348), amounts to the most advanced phenomenology (TJZ 3, 173) and therefore provides only the logical significance to existence itself rather than a critical frame about the (physical) existence of everyday life (and thus not a true dialectic) (TJZ 2, 347).[3] In this regard, Nishida's philosophy more or less represents an ideological form peculiar to capitalist culture—to which Tosaka writes (TJZ 2, 348):

> Nishida's philosophy, for the bourgeois, must be a spiritual offering for which they are totally grateful for […] The modern capitalist culture of the contemporary elite finds within Nishida's philosophy its own cultural consciousness of freedom. Because of that, it becomes the representative of the philosophy of cultural liberalism (as opposed to economic and political liberalism). Herein lies the popularity of Nishida's philosophy.[4]

According to Tosaka, the material conditions produced by capitalism engender an ideology that conceals its own engine. That is to say, although Nishida's philosophy may offer a standpoint that combats the substantialization of thought necessary for the social development of individual personalities,

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[3] Although the Kyoto School openly denounces idealism, Tosaka maintains that its thought secretly affirms it. In fact, idealism disguises itself throughout history and that Japanese idealism in particular can be identified on the basis of its metaphysical structure and hermeneutical method. See TJZ 2, 328-340.

[4] Tosaka argues that cultural freedom is derived from sociopolitical ideas and that such freedom is often transmuted into religious contemplative forms. For instance, Nishida's philosophy, which articulates religious experiences into contemporary philosophical ideas, represents more of a liberal consciousness than a real religious consciousness (TJZ 2, 228-229).

it does not go far enough to uncover the Marxist concept of reification expressed as the material practices of daily life. In this sense, rather than making visible the historical specificity of the physical existence ignited by capitalism, Nishida's early notion of pure experience and later notion of the logic of absolutely nothing did nothing other than re-affirm an ideology of present existence (qua wholly empty) that in the end reproduces the status quo and the de facto institutions of power and capital. By characterizing the bourgeois ideology of Nishida's (and Tanabe's) thought as forms of 'cultural liberalism' (文化自由主義), Tosaka positions the Kyoto School alongside other forms of liberalism that are content with divorcing their own attitudes from economic and political realities (see TJZ 2, 396-398). But what makes this viewpoint particularly dangerous as it grows momentum, as Tosaka warns, is its powerlessness to critique and overcome Japanism.[5] This is because without a materialist critique of history, the political trend toward fascism and militarism within wartime Japan would only be reinforced by ideologies that reduce the political and economic terrains to ethical ideals and the moral obligations of the state. The gravest consequence of this is when, as Tosaka writes, 'the entire nation will be reduced to soldiers (all citizens as soldiers) and thus "soldiers" such as generals and colonels will represent the "nation"' (TJZ 2, 399).

This is where Tosaka charges the Kyoto School for its complicity with Japanese colonialism. As early as the 1870s, with the re-assertion of national control over the Nanpō, Ryukyu, and Kurile Islands, we see the first initial steps towards what we describe as Japanese colonial expansion; and then from 1895 until 1945, we would see places like Taiwan, Korea, South Sakhalin, and Manchuria all fall under Japanese imperial control—including a military occupation of the Philippines between 1942 and 1945. Unabashedly opposed to Japanese colonial invasion until the end of his life in 1945, Tosaka recognized the relationship between the imperial desires produced by capitalism and the role of ideology (which is irreducible to economic discourse) in naturalizing the configuration of this colonial chain (Harootunian 2008, 103). The search for cosmopolitanism among the Kyoto School thinkers, crystallized as the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere

[5] Tosaka argues that Japanism and liberalism go hand in hand precisely because they are both forms of hermeneutical philosophy and that 'in the guise of philosophy, hermeneutical philosophy avoids dealing with practical problems' (TJZ 2, 333).

(daitōakyōeiken 大東共栄圏) and Japan's cultural mission within world history (à la Nishida), would become the official resources for legitimizing the Japanese empire. Based on the Kyoto School's formulation, there was a moral destiny to world history, and the uniqueness of Japanese culture is the mark of leadership that is needed to foster this new world order. Of course, whatever we think of Tosaka's assessment of the Kyoto School and its theoretical link to colonialization, it is difficult to deny the influence his critique has had on its post-war legacy. But what did Tosaka himself propose as a method of resistance to the system of capitalism and Japanese ideology? And is Tosaka's method of resistance sufficient to address the struggles against power and capital? We will address these questions later on, but first let us look at Dussel's critique of European colonization and its relationship to the production of modern ideology.

Dussel's Critique of the Myth of European Modernity

Latin American philosopher Enrique Dussel develops a similar critique of imperialism by attacking its ideological rationalization masquerading as real philosophy—except that contra Tosaka, the object of critique is to include the entire history of Western intellectual thought beginning with European modernity. Drawing on Marx, Levinas, and liberation theology, Dussel launches his critique 'from the exterior'—from the side of the victims of modernity—in the service of making visible the (Eurocentric) mythologies that conceal not just the violence and the struggles of the Other but the material dependency occurring between the global north and south. Vis-à-vis Kant, who referred to modernity as an emancipation, as a 'way out' (Ausgang) from our immaturity by means of reason, Dussel (1994) argues that modernity is better understood as a series of ideological discourses that began with the Spanish colonization of the Americas (19-20). Dussel holds that since modernity itself cannot be thought of as a formation that is self-generated by the creative spirit of the West, it cannot be represented as a culminating point of human civilization; rather, modernity is a self-proclaimed (European) invention, generated by its colonial dependency upon the external Other (upon the colonialized that has been masked in history). What Dussel (1994) calls the 'myth of modernity' (mito de la modernidad) is therefore the philosophical discourses comprising the European justification of violence in the pursuit of civilizing those deemed primitive and barbaric (7-8, 11-22).

In support of this claim, Dussel elucidates in 1492. El encubrimiento del otro how Kant's and Hegel's culturalist views served to justify the colonial expansion of Europe. Dussel argues that the philosophical basis for European colonization was the rendering of the Other as being culpable for the policy of civilizing backward behavior. While Kant conceptualized Asia as a region confined to childhood and immaturity (Kindheit) as he sought to completely write Africa and Latin America out of world history, Hegel would develop a dialectical structure that gave the global north a clear moral pre-text for becoming the missionaries of the world by locating the world spirit within European white men (Dussel 1994, 11-19). Such a dialectical relationship between modernity and its colonies would even go unnoticed by critics of Hegel and Kant—for instance Karl Marx, who inherits their developmental view of world history. But all of these thinkers were connected by a prior ontological foundation that would become the building blocks for justifying political and colonial domination: namely, Descartes's zero-point philosophy (i.e., the solipsistic consciousness of the *cogito*), which would provide the theoretical preconditions for situating Europe at the center of the world and to justify its imperial being. Descartes's 'I think, therefore I am' concealed how its political function was that of 'I conquer, therefore I am' because the *cogito* granted Europe an epistemic privilege in the interest of ruling the world. And yet the conditions of possibility for Descartes's 'I-Conquer' are linked to the Spanish invasion of 1492, which was the most significant event in terms of launching Descartes's quest to resolve the paradigmatic crisis of the 'first modern philosophy' initiated by Francisco Suárez, Ginés de Sepúlveda, and Bartolomé de las Casas in their pursuits to make sense of Southern Europe's relationship to the Indigenous peoples of the Americas (see Dussel 2008).[6]

Such a view of modernity has not really vanished from the contemporary imagination. As Dussel reminds us, one of the leading philosophers today, Jürgen Habermas, still thinks of modernity as a unique European invention.[7]

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[6] Descartes's zero-point philosophy served to mask the geopolitical relationship operating behind the production of Enlightenment thought and its dependency on the material resources of the colonized because the *cogito* replaced God with an Archimedean 'I' to exist as the foundation of knowledge, an 'I' that arises from nowhere—from a standpoint of zero.

[7] Dussel argues that Habermas adopts Hegel's Eurocentric myth by placing the origins of modernity in Northern Europe (as derived from the Reformation,

Nonetheless, Dussel tells us that there are characteristics to the mito de la modernidad that not only serve to rationalize the irrationality of violence but to erase the history of colonialism from the Euroamerican imagination, which can be sketched as follows:

1. The modernity that has been implemented in Europe and its counterparts in North America presents itself as a developed, superior civilization, which provides the moral justification (and therefore obligation) for correcting and enlightening the barbaric and the primitive.
2. Whenever the barbaric and the primitive oppose the civilizing mission, the moral duty of the modern praxis will involve the exercise of violence and collateral damage to ensure this process continues.
3. The barbaric and the primitive are blamed for their opposition to the civilizing process, which then casts modern consciousness as always innocent and absolvable from the blame in their harm of the sacrificial victims.
4. The violent costs of the civilizing project (of the sacrificial victims) are projected as inevitable and morally desirable.[8]

As Dussel maintains, the myth of modernity, and its coterminous development with capitalism, have been at play in the reproduction of the colonial order since the Columbian invasion. But grasping the link between modernity and capitalism demands a re-reading of Marx, which for Dussel, and not unlike Tosaka's own reading of Marx,[9] means starting with Part 2 of Volume 1 in Das Kapital. Instead of departing from the analysis of the commodity, as normally construed in the Marxist tradition,

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Enlightenment, and French Revolution). Here Dussel claims that both Hegel and Habermas fail to recognize how the role of discovery and conquest are essential to the production of the modern ego that represents a subjectivity that is the 'center' and 'end' of history (1993, 74). For Dussel, the first modern 'will-to-power' was enacted with Descartes's *cogito* in providing the justification for the 'I-Conquer' over the Indigenous populations of the Americas.

[8] For a fuller picture of this summary, see Dussel 1993, 75.

[9] Tosaka's and Dussel's shared reading of Marx opens up an avenue for future exploration because Dussel's own departure from the typical entryway into Marx via commodity fetishism is not a departure from what Tosaka was doing all along either.

Dussel proposes starting with an analysis of living labor and its relationship with capital (Dussel 1988, 293-297). According to Dussel, living labor is in fact the creative source that makes the valorization of capital possible (Dussel 1988, 67). Since capital alone cannot be the source of surplus-value, which otherwise would be an attribution of capital as an autocatalytic self-development, Dussel holds that the production of surplus-value that gives rise to profits depends on capital subsuming the living labor coming from the outside (Dussel 1988, 68-69). As Dussel (1998, 72-73 [original Spanish version]; 2001a, 15 [translated version]) explains:

> The subsumed, alienated, intra-totalized labour is now one determination of capital. The 'unity' of the working and valorization process consists in fact that now, when he is working, the labourer posits value in the product for capital: he creates surplus value, new value for capital. His material working process is a moment of the process of creating surplus value from the nothingness of capital. The 'consumption process (Consumptionsprocess)' [p. 103] of 'living labour' (alienated or intra-totalized exteriority that however keeps on being transcendental, 'exterior') is the creator of the metamorphosis of the purchased commodity (C1) into the sold one (C2).

Therefore, the critique of capitalism would have to start with this view that the exploitation of living labor is what constitutes the source of value and the bottomless growth of capital.[10] And while bringing together Marx and Levinas may appear rather strange, especially given Levinas's opposition to any totalizing ontological system of thought (such as Marx's thought), for Dussel, this particular move is rather easy; Marx's critique is essentially 'ethical' precisely because it disrupts the dominant moral systems of capitalism (Dussel 1988, 306-311).

The ethical praxis underlying Dussel's project is intended to be an 'epistemic rupture' that critiques, challenges, and overcomes some of the most basic assumptions of Western philosophy with the practical aim of liberation. But who is Dussel seeking to liberate? As he claims, the emancipatory project should always be placed 'at the service of the Other, the poor, the widow, the stranger' (Dussel 2006b, 87). Dussel here is

[10] This view contrasts with Althusser's reading of the later Marx as one of an 'epistemological break' from his earlier work.

refusing to confine his ethical analysis to the 'systems approach' of Marxism, instead opting for the inherent significance of those who have been erased by violence (in the likes of Levinas). As Dussel explains: 'epiphany […] is the revelation of the oppressed, the poor, the Other, which is never pure appearance or mere phenomenon, but always keeps a metaphysical exteriority […] Epiphany is the beginning of real liberation' (2011, 44). While many would associate Dussel's work with those using critical theory, in Dussel's mind, a liberation of the voiceless and victims of structural violence demands critical standpoints that come from outside of Europe as opposed to existing internally to it.[11] In this regard, Dussel's philosophy of liberation seeks to include Latin America, or any other underclass for that matter, within the process of knowledge production. Dussel does acknowledge that Latin America philosophy starts with European categories, but he also argues that such categories would have to be destroyed in the end in order to avoid any re-assertion of European hegemony. The liberation Dussel is therefore envisioning is more of a resistance on the periphery, grounded in local praxes and struggles, all in the direction of contributing to social, political, and economic transformation related to the democratic process, rather than an enactment of a utopian blueprint for the development of an ideal reality. But what exactly is Dussel's method of resistance that will generate democratic possibilities? And how will this method of resistance contribute to a kind of economic, cultural, and socio-political transformation in a way that subverts European hegemony?

El Pueblo and its Defiance of Fetishized Power

As a method of resistance responding to the violence of capitalist modernity, Dussel (2006a) in 20 tesis de política develops a concept of the people (el pueblo) as a political category that is made up of a variety of sectors, groups, and classes within the local struggle for self-empowerment. The term itself maintains a kind of ambiguity, which is intentional because of its deep complex structure, but it nonetheless seeks to characterize an intersubjective

[11] In fact, Dussel criticizes the critical theory deployed by the Frankfurt School for its critique of reason. According to Dussel, the concept of universal rationality needs to be saved from a critique of the Enlightenment and that it is only its sacrificial myth of modernity that needs to be negated. Towards this end, Dussel argues for an affirmation of reason of the Other within the project of liberation (Dussel 1993, 75).

community existing within a political field (campo político) 'within which the actions, systems, and institutions appropriate to each of these activities are conducted' (Dussel 2006a, 15). To clarify who are included within the concept of el pueblo, Dussel (1986, 27-28) states that it cannot be left as a reference to those reducible to the oppressed classes and that it must include other social elements such as:

> Ethnic groups within their own language, race and religion; tribes; marginal groups which are not even a 'class,' simply because they have not achieved a salaried position within a weak capitalism. Therefore, strictly speaking, 'pueblo' is a social block of the oppressed of a nation.[12] From this, firstly, we cannot identify 'pueblo' with a 'nation' or 'people.' When someone says 'the people of India,' we must distinguish between its populist meaning (all of the nation) and its popular meaning (the social block of the oppressed).

Therefore, Dussel's notion of el pueblo is an attempt to maintain a sense of plurality without becoming a reified category that can be used towards the consolidation of power like in the case of political actors affirming the apparatuses of the state. In fact, Dussel would call this tendency towards political consolidation a 'fetishism of power' (fetichismo de poder) because it corrupts or destroys the origins of power at their source (Dussel 2006a, 13-14). The concept of el pueblo is not a Machiavellian or Hobbesian political category, but an articulation of political power at the periphery that has both positive and negative features, where its positive features become the fuel for economic, cultural, and socio-political movements in the pursuit of democratic transformation (Dussel 2006a, 23).

This positive aspect of power, according to Dussel, is expressed as the content or capacity of the 'will-to-live' (voluntad-de-vida) within human life. Or, to put it another way, the 'will-to-live' is what drives us to avoid death and to maintain life by moving, promoting, or restraining ourselves in the task of material survival. Therefore, the ability 'to push through and to use such goods in order to fulfill the means for survival is already power' (Dussel 2006a, 24). And so, the political power characterizing the concept of el pueblo then refers to what already belongs or emanates from the members of the community in their determination to organize and promote

[12] The term 'social bloc' here was borrowed from Antonio Gramsci's account of hegemony and the consensus established within political formations.

the production and reproduction of life. While it is true that the Spanish word 'el pueblo' evolved from the Latin word 'populus' as a reference to a human community, Dussel's interpretation of this category seeks to include more than what European intellectual traditions have considered, namely, to integrate what is exterior to it—like the language and lifestyle of a social community. In the cases of Indigenous communities—such as the Aztec concept of altepetl and the Mayan concept of Amaq—there is a deeper and more inclusive sense of 'we' qua el pueblo that is important and thus more central in their struggle to live and survive (Dussel 2006a, 91).

Since there is no isolated subjectivity within el pueblo, the will of each member of the community can be joined together to either acquire or oppose private interests. But in the case of an organic community combining strength within the common will to live and struggle for survival, we begin to see what Dussel calls the power-as-potential (potencia) as a shorthand reference to the capacity or faculty inherent in el pueblo as final instances of sovereignty, authority, and governability (2006a, 24-27). Implied within the concept of el pueblo is the claim that within each common will to live is the practical discursive function of reason where the will of each member of the community converges toward a common good—which is the essence of 'political power' for Dussel. This is all to say that such power as potencia (qua power-in-itself) constitutes the foundation of everything that is political because real political power only really arises through means of consensus and communication among all the participants; therefore, power is not something that can be taken because it is always held by the people. Even those who have been weakened, intimidated, and threatened hold power—the idea here is that it has yet to be expressed. On the other hand, those who exercise pure force in the instance of fetishized power can be thought of as more in the domain of destroying the political itself (Dussel 2006a, 26-28).

Dussel maintains that power cannot be defined as an object that can be taken, but more as a faculty or capacity that one either has or does not have. Of course, the instruments or institutions that mediate the exercise of power can be taken or assaulted, but the collective subject of power is always exercised by the political community (el pueblo) because of its own irreducible sovereignty and authority. Nonetheless, what Dussel calls power as potestas, which is the power outside-itself (but not in-itself), functions as the starting point for el pueblo because it represents the ultimate foundation of all power by virtue of potencia needing to unfold in the form of power outside of itself; but given that potestas signifies strength and future

possibility, it has no objective, empirical coordinates (2006a, 29). Or to put it more concretely, the process of organized power becoming constituted in society begins with the political community affirming its potencia through institutional action, gestated in the moment in which power is exercised in the form of organized power (qua potestas) that seeks to accomplish diverse ends (Dussel 2006a, 30-31). But within the unfolding of potencia into potestas is the opening of the field of future possibilities that range from the fetishization and corruption of power to a politics that will serve the needs and desires of the community (Dussel 2006a, 37-39). For Dussel, proper political action is not coercive or violent in nature because that would remove the foundation fueling political power; rather, the strategy of political action must be legitimized consensually and can only remain as a temporary historical bloc (and can be dissolved from a loss of consensus) (Dussel 2006a, 49-54).

There are some important distinctions Dussel makes here in order to avoid confusion. In Hacia una filosofía política crítica, Dussel (2001b) introduces the terms 'popular' (popular) and 'populista' (populist) with the former referring to the social bloc of the oppressed and the latter referring more to the 'instrumentalization that is carried out by the interpellations of the people in order to conquer the majority [of those] that has failed to achieve any interruption of the history of domination' (Castro Orellana 2019, 131). At a time where populism holds the keys to the kingdom of power,[13] Dussel's distinction interjects an important point: that the anti-hegemonic struggle of the 'popular group' must be grounded in a democratic framework as it continues to interpellate all of those facing the problems of capitalist modernity (2001b, 219). In this regard, the concept of el pueblo cannot be positioned alongside populist movements because the political actors within such movements often become transformed into the dominant classes and sectors where they begin to suppress the voices of the people. In such contexts, it is common that the rhetoric of the voiceless transmutes into the rhetoric for the dominant classes. But neither can el pueblo be thought of solely in terms of an economic class of people where subjectivity is reduced to Marxist categories and thus stripped of its cultural, political, and historical

[13] For example, in the US (under Trump) and Brazil (under Bolsonaro), we see a populism on the political right whereas in Mexico we see a populism of the political left (under Obrador) and then a populism at the political center in France (under Macron).

characteristics (Dussel 2007, 7). Such a frame would reproduce the modernist view of history and thereby re-assert Western hegemony. Of course, the dissent of the people grows out of the plight of material existence, but since social, cultural, and economic movements themselves are always engaged in the political field, they cannot be fully understood within the discourse of orthodox Marxism. What is more important for Dussel is that political action aspires toward the advancement of el pueblo by meeting their needs in the ecological, economic, and cultural arenas of life without violating the democratic principle of forging a legitimate consensus. But how does Dussel here relate to Tosaka's political philosophy in a way that improves a theory of political resistance, particularly, anti-colonial resistance? That is, if el pueblo refers to positive forms of power seeking to address the violence of capitalist modernity, how does Tosaka's concept of the people (minshū 民衆), which similarly refers to the political power of the peripheral masses struggling against capitalism and colonial invasion, elucidate the strengths and limitations of Dussel's concept of el pueblo?

Tosaka's Concept of the People

In 1937, the same year when Tosaka received an order to stop writing, Japan as Part of the World (sekai no ikkan toshite no nihon『世界の一環としての日本』) would be written as another attempt to criticize both Japanism and liberalism. In the preface of this book, Tosaka would begin advancing a method of resistance grounded in a view of the 'people' (minshū 民衆). Tosaka (TJZ 5, 3) writes:

> I have consistently believed that we must look at Japan from the angle of the world. This attitude is based on the belief that we must look at Japan from the standpoint of the people. What I mean by the 'people' is not the same 'people' that rulers use, but rather the democratic mass that autonomously attempts to defend its daily life.

In a move similar to Dussel, Tosaka's 'angle of the world' from the 'standpoint of the people' is based on theorizing people as a form of political power. According to Tosaka, such political power makes its appearance known in the instances of social-political movements throughout history, where people stand together with others in the struggle against the ideologies of domination by means of critical resistance. Note, however, that Tosaka is not putting forth a substantive international solidarity movement that transcends

cultural differences in the spirit of the Marxist and anarchist struggles during the early part of the 20th century; in fact, as Tosaka contends, cultures, like Japan itself, must retain their singularity as well as remain translatable to the rest of the world (Nakajima 2011, 125). But unlike Western theoretical accounts that take 'culture' as something distinct and unique, that which set a particular society apart from another, Tosaka maintains that culture and social customs have an important function or role in political resistance, namely, by functioning as a mirror for critical reflection on moral judgment in the construction of scientific and philosophical theories.[14] Since 'culture' is an ever-changing hybrid practice of self-reflection rather than a priori or fixed set of beliefs that essentialize a group of people, Tosaka's view of the 'people' in this sense can never fully become under ideological control. There is always an aspect of the 'people' of a society that is free or resistant to ideological power. The central focus or aim for the 'people' in political resistance then is to continue to 'rescue the true ideas of the people from such [popular] discussions of the people' through critical reflection where such ideas 'must be the task for the future ideological world' (TJZ 5, 61).[15]

In order to further understand how this particular method of resistance is grounded in everyday life, we have to investigate Tosaka's view on the temporality of action. In The Principle of Everydayness and Historical Time (nichijō-sei no genri to rekishi-teki jikan「日常性の原理と歴史的時間」) we find the reified notion of time specific to capitalism problematized, where its linear structure is replaced with that of an emphasis on the everyday present. Influenced by Heidegger's notion of Dasein, Tosaka argues that space and time are the everyday space-time of practice and history because they are the very matrices in which people live their lives (TJZ 3, 100). To demonstrate this schema, Tosaka argues against both the phenomenological and the scientific conception of time, both of which feed the production of ideology. Contra Bergson's notion of durée, which for Tosaka represents an empty formality of quantitative succession, and contra the scientific conception of time, which for Tosaka represents a reification of its units of divisions by placing them outside of the periods of history, Tosaka argues that everyday temporality is historically determined, that which becomes

[14] Tosaka's discussion of morality was generally directed towards intellectuals who believed they held truth.

[15] What Tosaka refers to by 'popular ideas' here are those ideas circulating the public sphere (e.g., popular literature, abstract philosophy, or state propaganda) that seek to cathect a particular identity for reasons of consent and control.

divided or periodized based on characteristics derived from the forces of production and material relations, but then experientially felt, shaped, and understood in the present (TJZ 3, 96-101). While consciousness is thrown into the 'eternal now,' human bodies are not, because the material practice governing the everyday life imparts a perspective of space-time that organizes human experience into a sense of continuous flow from one day to the next (TJZ 3, 101). There is a sense of limited duration to the experience of the present time-period unlike the exaggerated divisions of units deployed as the standards of measurements of time or rather in any framing of time configured as homogenous such as those prioritizing the timeless repetitions of an absolute present (for example, as in the case of Nishida or Bergson).

The basis of this viewpoint begins from Tosaka's Marxist epistemological approach to the subject-object relationship, which stresses a kind of objective view of reality that would support a materialist narrative of consciousness-formation (Murthy 2009, 101). But then Tosaka would diverge from this viewpoint as well in two profound ways: a) on theorizing how time is recognized in subjectivity and b) how subjectivity itself is inherently equipped with a journalistic mindset necessary for critical reflection. In the case of the former, Tosaka argues that temporality can appear infinite in consciousness, especially among the leisurely class who can enjoy the fiction of not having to face the demands of the everyday present. But such only demonstrates a misrecognition of the reality of everydayness because this class of people may just not know they live in the everyday present if they have a life that does not force them to see their lives governed by the qualities of yesterday, today, and tomorrow (TJZ 3, 101-102). Such misrecognition here is important because it marks the space of everydayness as the site of political contestation and negotiation. In other words, the method of resistance among the people can only be enacted within the everyday present, even as they prepare for the future. Although the objective characteristics of the mode of production give the appearance of an ideal horizon, human action, due to being governed by the principle of everydayness, is in the end limited as a praxis of utopian possibility—hence a classless society not being part of Tosaka's broader project. The question is now: if such future possibilities are confined by human actions given their thrownness in the everyday present, how does the method of resistance in the form of political power even begin to emerge within the 'people'?

As a cultural critic and journalist for the anti-fascist movement, Tosaka weaves theory and the practice of everyday life into a method of

resistance by situating the power of intellectual thought within the 'people' themselves. Critical thought is not an exclusive, elite phenomenon born out of universities and academic life because there is a potential for everyone to become critically minded journalists and philosophers in their everyday lives given the unity of thinking and doing inherent to human activity. In other words, similar to Noam Chomsky's stance on human nature and his approach to politics via journalistic criticism,[16] Tosaka suggests that the human being itself, with all of its linguistic and intellectual capabilities, is the very creative fountain that supports the everydayness of journalistic existence because 'journalism […] is generally based on the principle of actuality—the nature of events, which is a consciousness that originated in the activity of everyday social life' (TJZ 3, 131). But such journalism, 'as opposed to specialized academics, must be non-departmentalized, namely, the triggering of synthetic consciousness' (TJZ 3, 156) when grounded in the everyday. The central mission of philosophy and journalism is therefore to be critical of everyday practices in order to empower the people themselves because the temporality of the present, where human life is ineluctably thrown, forces an urgency upon us to look at current affairs and our common sense (jōshiki 常識) with philosophical scrutiny (Schäfer 2013, 154-155). If the essence of philosophical and journalistic thought is criticism, then it is incumbent upon the 'people,' as inherent intellectuals, to politicize the historical world and thus shape the political strategies necessary for not only destabilizing fascism, liberalism, and other ideologies naturalizing the repetitions and routines of everyday life under capitalism, but to forge new political paths that will lead to the creation of new socio-political conventions. Tosaka's point is not to popularize journalism, science, and philosophy for the sake of merely enlightening the ordinary citizen, but to empower the 'people' by converting their common sense into critical thinking tools aimed toward the problematization of abstract philosophical ideas and scientific results.[17] Only then can the 'people' become a form of political power in the resistance against ideological control.

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[16] We have to be careful with such an analogy as well because, unlike Tosaka's non-utopian method of negative dialectics, Chomsky champions an anarcho-syndicalist approach to political action.

[17] According to Tosaka, science itself will also have to become aware of its own social function in order for it to have any genuine intervention into the everyday life of the people.

Reading Dussel's *El Pueblo* from Tosaka's Journalistic Reflection and Critique of Ideology

Both Tosaka and Dussel provide us with insightful accounts of how the 'people' of a society can form political power against domination—particularly, colonial domination. That is to say, in their shared commitment to empower subjectivity, Tosaka's and Dussel's reflections on the category of the 'people' introduce a method of resistance against the ideological justifications for imperial control generated by capitalist society. The ultimate vision for Tosaka and Dussel is not that of a Marxist utopia; rather, their visions seek to pursue democratic possibilities through local, everyday action from the standpoint of the subaltern. But there is an important difference that needs to be made visible here: while Tosaka maintains a stance against sketching any broader picture of an ideal future or possibility, with the goal limited to only disrupting ideologically motivated social conventions through journalistic critical reflection, Dussel on the other hand, gives us some sense of what we need to grope for—that is, to move towards what he calls a 'transmodern pluriversalism' (pluri-versalismo transmoderno) where knowledge production is decentralized and pluralistic in a way that continuously negates Eurocentric universals.[18] As one can sense here, while negativity functions both within Tosaka's and Dussel's philosophy as a kind of starting point for a project of liberation, unlike Tosaka however, Dussel develops a positive account of political ethics, expressed as this transmodern pluriversalism, that addresses the insufficiencies of negativity. In other words, within Dussel's pursuit of a transmodern pluriversalism in particular, the practice of negativity within the everyday is thought to be insufficient, although necessary at the same time, in order to empower the subaltern. This is because such could still resuscitate Western colonialism by reconstituting the old Eurocentric universals through the language of postmodern relativism

[18] The philosophical vision of a 'transmodern pluriversalism' seeks to disrupt the core-peripheral problem generated by capitalist modernity through an intercultural dialogue that assumes an 'epistemological struggle' in the fight for empowering the voices on the political margins. The challenges and resistances to modernity have to be located outside of the global north and drawn from their own cultural perspectives. The idea is that such a dialogue can be truly pluralistic if it can move 'beyond' (the modernity of) European and North American culture and the 'learned experts' of the academic world and thereby grounded in local cultures and struggles (see Dussel 2012).

and negativity while obscuring how to (re)ground universal claims among the particulars on the periphery. Instead of abandoning the universal, like post-modernism, which actually ends up re-asserting Eurocentric universal categories through its dialectical inversion, Dussel revises the particular-universal relationship, but more within the context of an epistemological struggle that seeks to build philosophy from the exterior. But what can we make of Dussel's concept of el pueblo? And what does Tosaka's political philosophy offer us in terms of improving Dussel's view of political power and method of political-ethical resistance?

One criticism that has been launched against Dussel's concept of el pueblo is that it has the potential to fall into a metaphysical entity where it can move from an empirical reference to a normative or rhetorical ideal. If such were to occur, then it is possible to lose sight of those differences in which the various political actors are embedded, for whom the concept of liberation and oppression may even differ (Stehn 2011, 113, 116). The worse-case scenario of rhetorizing el pueblo in this context is if there is a move away from ensuring people are genuine revolutionary subjects and to move toward thinking of people as quasi-subjects with the potential to be manipulated by the populist dreams of the political Left.[19] Of course, Dussel pushes back against such claims, holding the line between populist and authentic democratic movements by charging the former with the fetishization of 'vertical power.'[20] But in the age of post-modern relativism and disinformation, it is not always easy to discern the authentic from the inauthentic, the real from the hyperreal, or to recognize if and when truth claims turn into hyperbole. In other words, we need to ask: what are the warning signs of those instances when a genuine political movement begins to slip into an Orwellian animal farm?[21] In those efforts to find intelligibility

[19] We might think of President López Obrador of Mexico as doing precisely this.

[20] What is referred to by 'vertical power' here is the hierarchical structure constituted within any political movement. The charge in this context is that populist movements tend to consolidate power in the hands of the vanguard or in the leaders of a particular political party that does more to serve their own interests than the interests on the ground or on local levels.

[21] What we mean by an 'Orwellian animal farm' is the manifestation of corrupt social practices generated by those who originally had good intentions and ideas. This idea comes from George Orwell's famous novel Animal Farm,

in the chaos of details, there is always a danger of the Orwellian nightmare in the advancement of any positive account of political power. Perhaps this is where Tosaka's account of the 'people' can be useful, because it offers a view of negativity that is grounded more in the process of critical and philosophical reflection itself.

What Tosaka offers as an account of political power is a strategy of intellectual criticism articulated from the peripheral masses that seeks to uncover the non-democratic forms and movements emerging from within a society. Similar to Chomsky's anarcho-syndicalism and suspicion of left-wing intellectuals, Tosaka's view of the 'people' as holding a journalistic existence and critical reflection introduces a view of political power that has the capacity to negate ideologues and demagoguery from both within the political Left and Right. By tying critical reflection to the very ground of human activity, Tosaka's view of political power from the standpoint of the people can be read as a critique of not only Japanism and idealism, but even the Leninist view of political resistance that assumes the need for a vanguard or set of party leaders to enlighten and guide the way in order to bring forth a particular socio-political future. Instead, since Tosaka's 'people' are empowered through critical reflection, with a moral responsibility directed towards the periphery, any movement seeking to turn the masses into instruments of an idealized political vision will be viewed with doubt. Like Mikhail Bakunin's prediction that the ideological struggle of Marxism would lead to a one-party dictatorship (what Bakunin calls a 'red bureaucracy') over the proletariat, Tosaka's view of the 'people' qua journalistic intellectuals can exist in a dual space of political resistance at the same time: to interrupt the ideologies of fascism and liberalism constituting capitalism and its drive for colonial expansion, while interrupting the snobbish tendencies of the intellectual class to reify scientific and philosophical theories that essentialize the people of the world (and thus rob the masses from empowering themselves).

While Dussel provides an account of 'negative ethics' as a point of departure for critiquing the prevailing systems from the perspective of the voice of the people in Part 2 of 20 tesis de política, and thereby locates the capacity for ethical critique in the everyday experience of the victims, such does not go beyond Tosaka's negativity that places the basis of journalistic

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which sought to critique Stalinism by pointing out how the vanguard of the oppressed class would enact a new form of oppression and domination.

and philosophical reflection within the critical mind of subjectivity. This is because Dussel seems more concerned with developing a theory of political power and the process of institutionalization at the periphery rather than theorizing how resistance can transpire from the empowerment of subjectivity through the very act of journalistic and philosophical critical reflection. This is all to say that what is underdeveloped within Dussel's view of el pueblo is Tosaka's particular view of negativity which places the heart of philosophical inquiry in the everydayness that is formed in the critical consciousness of the people themselves. Tosaka's account of negativity and political power can only strengthen Dussel's positive account of power and strategy to negate European universals, in the attempt to theorize a method of resistance at the periphery by emphasizing how the (journalistic) acts of critical reflection of the people themselves can be a source of political power. Such would be in a way that allows them to detect or sense when their own concepts (for example, el pueblo) and strategies are suddenly converted into metaphysical categories and deployed for idealized purposes or ends.

Reading Tosaka's Concept of the People from Dussel's *El Pueblo* and Vision of a Transmodern Pluriversalism

Now such does not mean that Tosaka has a more robust view of the 'people' as a form of political power. In fact, Viren Murthy tells us that since any meaningful act of political resistance would have to be a project that is international in outlook and structure in today's globalizing world, Tosaka's philosophy alone would be insufficient in advancing an alternative to the present situation (see 2009, 107-108, 117-119). To remedy this weakness in Tosaka's work, Murthy argues that Japanese literary critic Takeuchi Yoshimi provides us with some ideas for how to strengthen Tosaka's political project; formulating a new universality in conjunction with Tosaka's concept of the historical period would allow for a revelation of eschatological possibilities that can move us towards an overcoming of capitalist modernity. Takeuchi claims that the system of capital as such is not what drove European imperialism, but rather the logical structure of European modernity itself, that which behaves much like Marx's capital in that it must expand in order to remain itself; and that any liberation movement around the world falling under the logical structure of modernity as a result will end up reproducing aspects of European hegemony because they would fail to find a way out of

its discursive framework (Murthy 2009, 108-111). The point here, according to Murthy, is that Takeuchi provides us with the much-needed link to read Tosaka's political project at a 'higher level'—one that is more abstract and global while pushing us to think through the logical traps of modernity—and thus more relevant to the cultural logic of late capitalism. That is, in order to move from the particular to the universal, from the realm of the everyday present towards confronting the capitalist modernity structuring the global world today, the people would have to negate the capitalistic structure of present society until the death of history gives birth to a new world (since the death of history is interlaced with the death of capitalist modernity).

But we do not even need to go this far. Dussel himself provides us with this necessary link between modernity and capitalism, between the global and the particular, and with a unique view of how to empower the subaltern (and not just those who suffer from class-based ideologies) through democratic engagement to boot. Dussel's transmodern pluriversalism is not a particular utopia nor a theory of a future society as such, but a new universal standpoint that is cultivated by an intercultural dialogue that takes up epistemological struggles at the periphery. Perhaps then, a pairing up of Dussel's el pueblo as an account of political power articulated by local communities with Tosaka's critical method of journalistic and philosophical reflection, with the aim of empowering the people, will provide us with a stronger view of political resistance at the periphery that will act as a force for democratic possibilities. This is because, as this article suggests, political power cannot exercise any meaningful resistance that will lead to an overcoming of capitalist modernity without people being empowered by the method of critical reflection necessary to negate the various guises of ideological forms justifying colonial domination. In other words, in order to ensure el pueblo remains democratic and versatile at its core, the method of critical reflection formulated by Tosaka will have to be embedded within Dussel's concept of el pueblo, in order to strengthen a theory of resistance necessary for destroying the capitalist modernity today and for the arrival of a post-European modernity (i.e., the transmodern pluriversalism) of tomorrow.

Conclusion

What can we learn from Tosaka's and Dussel's view of the 'people' in terms of political theory and political resistance? What Dussel's and Tosaka's views of the 'people' propose is a theory of political resistance that fosters democratic possibilities because they reconceptualize political power as one that is located at the periphery, that which refuses to be subsumed into the capitalist system generating colonial expansion. More broadly, then, their views bring to light the limits to liberal individualism, human rights, and parliamentary systems that serve as methods of democratic governance. This is not unlike Badiou's, Negri's, Hardt's, and Žižek's political critiques, which maintain that such liberal orders function to conceal and affirm the dominant structures producing systems of inequality because they depoliticize the social power of institutions, and thereby rely on parliamentary consensus to carry out socio-political change instead.[22] Rather, Dussel and Tosaka, along with these aforementioned thinkers, emphasize the importance of collective struggles and democratic movements outside of the central systems of power in the fight for social, political, and economic participation. But what Dussel and Tosaka offer, that which is under-theorized by those same thinkers, is an assertion of political movements that can exist without a vanguard, and one that does not shy away from taking seriously the strategy of cultural practices as an intervention into the regimes of power. While Tosaka and Dussel slightly diverge on their accounts of the 'people,' this article argues their accounts nonetheless can be read together in a way that gestures toward synthesizing a new theoretical method of political resistance. Such accounts, as implied in this article, contrast with older accounts of political resistance, particularly modernist accounts of resistance, that hark back to the 'Jacobin-Lenin' paradigm, which seek to subvert reactionary politics by means of collective movements and struggles regulated by a centralized dictatorial power. It is within this particular resistance to the old political Left that is where we will find Dussel's and Tosaka's longest-lasting theoretical contribution, because their views are determined to generate new democratic forms of socio-political conventions based on the autonomy of the local political space as they undermine the causal links between modernity, capitalism, and colonialism.

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[22] But Dussel, in particular, does not fully abandon liberalism either. Dussel's el pueblo qua political community goes beyond liberal individualism but also stops short of substantive collectivism fundamental to Marxist socialism.

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