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(GRADUATE PROGRAMME)

THE IDEA OF TRANSMODERN ETHIOPIA: A PERSPECTIVE
FROM PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS OF LIBERATION

BY
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Abstract

Transmodernity is a new philosophical paradigm that transcends the modern foundational ethos and different from the postmodern critique. It is basically a call towards a just social order that gives priority to human life. It is inherently ethical and fundamentally liberational. This work looks into the insufficiency of Modern Ethiopian establishment in attaining an inclusive and pluralist arrangement. It assumes this establishment as a hegemonic totality that marginalizes its others. It argues that the Modern Ethiopian establishment as an ontologic totality. Based on Dussel's Philosophy and Ethics of Liberation, Transmodern Ethiopia is suggested that could transcend the Modern and come up with a different arrangement. Therefore, this work is a metaphysical critique of the "Ontologic Being" of Modern Ethiopia. This is achieved through a metaphysical ethics that appropriates the ontologic totalized system reflected in the Modern Ethiopian construction which is manifested in both state formation and nation building. Since internal critique will not break the system, the critique is forwarded from exteriority, from the marginalized ones. It goes beyond the ontologic paradigm, it is therefore transontologic and hence transmodern. Transmodern Ethiopia is suggested as a foundationally ethical establishment. The metaphysical ethics is materialized through the three ethical claims that are supposed to result in a concrete social good: they are material, formal and feasibility claims. This ethical suggestion considers the other as other; and implies a pluriversal multiculturalism. It calls for a shift from univocal universality into a multicultural pluriversality which hasn't been tried so far. It recommends a Transmodern Ethiopia which is multicultural, indigenous, versatile, hybrid, spiritual, just, and democratic one.

Key words: Transmodernity, Liberation philosophy, Analectic, Ethics of Liberation, Modern Ethiopia, Transmodern Ethiopia, Pluriversal polylogue.

Introduction

The philosopher must be able to think of all themes. Nevertheless, in the course of one life time the philosopher will be able to think about only a certain number of themes precisely, deeply, and originally. Because themes are infinite and time is short, it is necessary to know how to use time wisely to choose the fundamental themes of the epoch we live in. (Dussel)

Philosophy is a serious engagement that preoccupies those who study it overwhelmingly. The preoccupation involves one's thought so that an old outlook is challenged, a new perspective is generated, paradigms are shifted and so forth. Since philosophy is not practiced in vacuum, we interact philosophically with the world around. This view is also shared by Olusegun Oladipo. Philosophy, as he puts it, is a "social phenomenon which derives its being from the experience generated through the continuous interaction between human beings and their environment and between themselves" (2000:25). That is why we influence our context with our thinking and our thinking gets influenced by our context. This happens when we reflect, deliberate and analyze issues of concern using different philosophical tools. Furthermore, philosophers need to go beyond the grip of reality and transcend time to come up with new ideas and enlightened alternatives. Using Dussel's words:

"Philosophy is not only thinking demonstratively or scientifically. It is also thinking critically and dialectically, for it can think about its own principles. On the one hand, philosophy is not only to know (*Kennen*) objects or to have ontic knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) of the understanding (*Verstand*), but it is also an ontological or metaphysical knowledge (*Wissen*)" (Dussel 1985:181).

It is from this vantage point that the social relevance of philosophy is implied. When we engage philosophically with our context, we ought to engage critically analyzing the concepts and ways of thinking that we have and values that we possess. This ends up in searching for a change for the ones which couldn't qualify to remain to be ours. This is carried out not only on individual basis. We may criticize, analyze and evaluate social perspectives and values. By performing critical examination of the current social and political conditions we can enlighten ourselves and others as to the shortcomings of the current order. By viewing social practices from the perspective of a better and more just

future, we can foster necessary social change. Thus it is correct to claim that “philosophy has had a creative and dramatic impact in society” (Murphy 2008:2). Many social and political changes that took place justify this. This is because social practices and norms are expressions of conceptual thinking. Therefore, it is wise and important to start the change from the thinking level rather than exert on the manifestations. However, this doesn’t mean that solving a thought problem necessarily solves its practical manifestation nor does it mean that all changes in the real world require a change in thought (Thomson 2009). Nevertheless, a well-defined and clear concept, thought, or philosophy is a more productive and effective tool that could lead to a successful practical change. Using philosophy as a means, we could change our environment. The philosophical breakthrough is the first and the critical step towards making practical changes. It should also be noted that from the existing practical realms theoretical horizons are developed. For example, so oppression is a practical problem that liberation philosophy is suggested as a way out. It is that imperative that we should say philosophy “should move beyond the usual concern for philosophical problems or puzzles, and begin to deal seriously with pressing social issues” (Murphy 2008:3). It shouldn’t imply only “an isolated process of theoretical production, but instead one that involves a commitment to the world surrounding us” (Dussel 2013b:11).

The current problems of Ethiopia are not only economic, structural and infrastructural. These manifestations have their root causes which are related with our philosophy for life, history and politics. Though I never claim that all of the problems are related to thinking and therefore are philosophical, many of them could be solved if we could engage in philosophical realms that pertain to them. Therefore philosophy could contribute much in addressing our problems. It is high time that philosophical reflections go beyond theoretical debates upon issues that have less relevance to our contextual problems. This is never to imply that we should quit engaging philosophy for its own sake. It doesn’t mean that we should abandon exploring the world of ideas motivated by curiosity and love of wisdom. However, we should look around and try to find out a philosophical way-out for the perplexing problems that shackle our society from going forward. It is then that our society could value philosophy and realize its significance.

My decision to work with this topic presupposes two things. First, I don't think that enough has been done to look to the conceptual and paradigmatic aspects of the national problems of Ethiopia and its people. Ethiopian nationhood and its implications have been studied extensively from the perspective other social science disciplines apart from philosophy. For example, studies that have been done in political science, history, and sociology are plenty. However, much hasn't been done in philosophy. We could dare say that we missed that perspective. This should be understood in perspective with what Aigbodioh claimed: "Even though elements of philosophy may exist in other disciplines, while an issue in another discipline may also be the subject of philosophical enquiry" (1997:9).

Second, the academia in philosophy hasn't contributed much to the debates related to Ethiopian state and nationhood. The philosophical implications of state formation and nation building process were not well addressed by our philosophy scholars¹. We often deal with other philosophical issues academically, which may have no direct relationship with our immediate challenges. That being the case, I expect this work may put in a preliminary contribution in the philosophical aspect of Modern Ethiopia. Furthermore, it may initiate the academia to make their contribution in issues directly dealing with the national problems. In other words, it could be taken as an attempt to remedy some aspect of the neglect in the field of study.

This work could be considered as a critique of the hegemonic characteristic of Modern Ethiopian state formation and nation building. It is argued that an egoistic incorporating tendency of the other is reflected in both processes. It is this totalization of the Modern Ethiopian establishment that resulted in asymmetrical relations and unbalanced national discourse. I also propose to demonstrate in this paper that the national construction of Ethiopia is formed upon the European model of nation-state. Hence, it is argued that it is an extension of the European modernity project. It has excluded others, being hegemonic just like the Eurocentric modernity that excluded many others. There are those who, to use Dussel's words, "the structure of their values has been excluded—*disdained, negated*

¹ A work by Mesay Kebede (1999) that discusses the developmental aspect of Ethiopia through a philosophical discourse is notable.

and ignored” (Dussel 2012:42). This predicament needs to be challenged philosophically and an alternative should be sought. An ethical step that accepts the “other as other” should be in place for an acceptable Ethiopia that is shared by all. I shall argue that neither continuing the modernity project nor exercising the postmodern deconstruction, which is an extension of the first, are fitting. Rather a transmodern alternative is suggested.

Transmodern represents a philosophical discourse “characterized by radical transformations in the very cultural foundations of the modern ethos” signaling that humanity is “at the threshold of a new age of history given the exhaustion of the premises upon which modernity is founded” (Dussel 2013b:17). Therefore, the work also implies a transmodern critique upon modernity. To achieve this, I engage with Philosophy of Liberation and Ethics of Liberation as a foundation for the transmodern proposal.

The concept of transmodernity is raised by different authors (Magda 1989, 2001, 2004; Ghisi 1999, 2006, 2008, 2010), yet it is well elaborated and explained by the Latin American philosopher Enrique Dussel (1995, 1996, 2002, 2006, 2008b, 2010, 2012). This concept is drawn from his Philosophy of Liberation. Transmodernity can be seen as the application of liberation ethics to history, and to the ethical recognition of the other as a subject of knowledge and culture (Maldonado-Torres 2011). It is neither modern nor postmodern but it is both of them and beyond, hence *trans*. It is “a whole new interpretation of modernity in order to include moments that were never incorporated into the European version[It] affirms the essential components of excluded cultures in order to develop a new civilization for the twenty-first century” (Dussel 2002:223-24). As described by Sardar, it is not a linear projection which takes us from (pre)modernity via postmodernity to transmodernity; rather, it transcends modernity in that it takes us *trans*, i.e. through, modernity into another state of being, “from the edge of chaos into a new order of society” (Sardar 2004:2). Transmodernity involves a critical approach towards modernity and a welcoming of hybridization in society, as it is mainly used as a term in politics, economy, and religion (Ghisi 2010). “It is a liberation theory and practice that underscores the necessity to negate the modern system of marginalization

and subjugation by developing a solidaristic-critical study into the underlying socio-historical realities of the present world through a new approach” (Binyam 2011:2).

The essence of proposing Transmodern Ethiopia lies in demarcating a need for a paradigmatic shift in dealing with Ethiopia and its people. My thesis calls for a change in approach in understanding state formation, nation and their consequences. Its significance is that it will suggest a philosophy that could transform the traditional methods and transcend the ways suggested so far in relation to Ethiopia, more specifically Modern Ethiopia. My argument is against the totalizing nature of the dominant hegemonic approach followed in state formation and nation building. A transmodern discourse that “rejects all forms of totalizing synthesis” is exercised in this work (Dallymar 2004:10). It underscores a metaphysical ethics that assumes responsibility for the free and liberated other to suggest Transmodern Ethiopia. This suggestion presupposes liberation. The liberation of Ethiopia itself from its modern construction and the liberation of subjugated others from the hegemonic dominant system.

The thesis is divided into four chapters. In chapter one the two main tenets of the paper, transmodernity and Philosophy of Liberation, are defined and explained. How Dussel interprets and criticizes the project of Modernity is briefly looked at. The logocentric paradigm which considers the *Other* as the *Same* is analyzed as it is presented in the works of Dussel’s Philosophy of Liberation.

The second chapter lays the foundations for Ethics of Liberation in Dussel’s philosophy in relation to the transmodern concepts that he propounds. The ethical dimensions for recognition of and responsibility for the *Other* is analyzed in relation to the ontologic egoist *I* of the system. This chapter speaks of liberating the *other*; the *other* of any and every totality that needs to subsume the other under the *same*. Liberating every human being from any system that totalizes and consumes other’s identity and freedom is emphasized. The issue of liberation is discussed giving it an ethical orientation. Ethics will be highlighted giving it metaphysical ground from the phenomenology of Levinas and its course will be more elaborated through Dussel’s Ethics of Liberation. The three principles of Ethics of Liberation are explained. The overall discussion is an endeavor to

make liberation enjoy a philosophical ground and an ethical argument that extols its cause.

The third chapter looks into the nature and process of state creation and nation building in Ethiopia. The hegemonic nature of Modern Ethiopian nationhood which is characterized by false universalization and unjust totalization is described. Since it is ontologic it could only look its own *Being* by concealing many others which are part of its establishment. This argument is substantiated with two different perspectives. First, its very nature of expansion, oppression, and subjugation in state formation and nation building is elaborated. Second, the impact of the metanarrative of European Modernity in modeling nation-state is examined and the role played by the European powers through their direct involvement is elucidated. It argues that Modern Ethiopia, as a nation-state, is a result of the global project of European Modernity which based itself on the concept of nation building as one of its peculiar characteristics. Generally, this part problematizes Modern Ethiopia in order to suggest a transmodern alternative in the next chapter.

As a second theme it is showed how Dusselian ethics could be applied to the ontologic Ethiopian nationhood. The discussion is put forward in such a way that could help to establish an ethical foundation for the transmodern suggestion. This one is explained by portraying the nature of metaphysical ethics in relation to the Ethiopian national construction. And the three ethical principles of Ethics of Liberation are discussed as applied to the Ethiopian context.

Finally liberation is suggested for the oppressed, discriminated, and underrepresented others in the state formation and nation building processes. It is liberating them from the hegemonic totality of Modern Ethiopia. An inclusive and pluriversal Transmodern Ethiopia necessitates this as the basic precondition for its establishment. In addition, as a transmodern critique, liberation of Modern Ethiopia itself, from the influence of the global hegemonic European Modernity project it has undergone, is recommended. This underlines, rather than adopting its own model of togetherness, it followed an imposed trajectory of the global project of modernity

The fourth chapter explains the transmodern alternative when applied to the Ethiopian context. It envisages Ethiopia on which this discourse is exercised. It tries to show its distinct features and peculiar characteristics. The need for recognition of others, which are neglected and marginalized so far, is emphasized based on the concepts in the Philosophy of Liberation. Here neither nominal rearrangements that has been claimed by different regimes (including the current one) nor accommodative strategies for recognition are implied. It is rather the ethical dimension that will result in a paradigmatic shift is brought to light. A radically transformed Ethiopia is suggested. Additionally a Dusselian procedure for global philosophical intercultural dialogue, based on the work of Moroccan philosopher Mohamed Abdel Jabir, is appropriated to help in creating transmodern pluriversality in Ethiopia. This polylogue is implicated with two significances. First, it helps in developing a socio-cultural context that is not shaped by univocal universality but nurtured with multicultural pluriversality. This facilitates the contribution of values and efforts towards creating shared vision, country and destiny. Secondly, it is argued that the polylogue is suggested as a tool and step forward to represent Ethiopian philosophy as a pluriversal philosophy. This is what I will call Ethiopian transmodern philosophy. Ethiopian transmodern philosophy is a name given to a philosophy that is the result of a pluriversal philosophical polylogue. It helps in universalizing the values and philosophies of particulars within it that could help in alleviating the fundamental “core problems” that its people face. It is in contrary to depicting Ethiopian philosophy by a philosophy and world view of a specific group/s.

The paper is concluded by summarizing its major points and arguments in the thesis.

Chapter One

Dussel's Transmodernity and Philosophy of Liberation

Dussel's critical political thought has influenced Latin America as of the 1960's. First presented as a continental liberation philosophy, it transformed into a transmodern metanarrative which could challenge and reconstruct the modern one. This chapter lays ground to his philosophical insights by presenting Transmodernity and Philosophy of Liberation. Transmodernity will be analyzed as an alternative paradigm and a critique of modernity. Philosophy of Liberation, which lays the foundation for the transmodern discourse, is also elaborated. As a continuation of these two basic concepts, a critic and a transmodern rereading of European Modernity is suggested. Moreover, one aspect of philosophy, its geopolitical leaning, is highlighted to portray a transmodern perspective. Finally, another aspect of Dussel's contribution which is liberating philosophy itself is outlined.

1.1 Transmodernity

Transmodernity could be understood as a new trend that tries to explain things in a different way than modernity or postmodernity does. As Dussel puts it, we are witnessing "a new age where the conditions necessary to sustain human life on Earth demand a transformation in our ontological attitudes regarding nature, work, property, and other cultures" (Dussel 2013b:17). In explaining the need for transformation and developing an alternative paradigm, two approaches could be discerned from the pioneers that advocate the concept.

The first approach assumes a new reality that couldn't be addressed by modernity's way of explanation (Rifkin 2005). This may be either because the very nature of the foundations of the modernity project turn out to be unable to address it, signaling an "exhaustion of the premises upon which modernity is founded", or it may be because of the emergence of new cultures and life outlooks that demand the change in the philosophical discourse that could explain them and the world around. This is what Dussel characterizes as the "irreversible uprising of universal cultures excluded by modernity (and [even] postmodernity)" (Dussel 2002:237). The second approach looks

critically at the project of modernity in general. It challenges the very nature and history of modernity and redefines it. Its hegemonic Eurocentric nature and monolithic stance that marginalizes, oppresses and disregards many others is taken as a point of departure. Therefore this approach suggests a reconstruction of the concept and history of modernity not from within but from the exterior perspective, from the victims. It calls for what Dussel calls “analogic reasoning: reasoning from outside the system of global domination” (Cole 2005:91).

Nevertheless, both approaches portray the need for change and a call for going beyond modernity. Though Dussel mainly seems to follow the second line, he also tries to address some aspects of the first approach in his works. He furthermore suggests what he calls a transmodern way-out. He mainly emphasizes on the “epistemological, philosophical and political aspects of transmodernity as a starting point to unsettle Eurocentric coloniality” (Ateljevic 2013:204). I will try to outline below some of the perspectives of the two proponents of transmodernity and then highlight with the basic precepts of Dusselian version.

Magda understands transmodernity, following a Hegelian logic, in a dialectic triad that comprises thesis, antithesis and synthesis (Ateljevic 2013). It is in the form of Modernity, Postmodernity and Transmodernity. For her, “the third tends to preserve the defining impetus of the first yet is devoid of its underlying base: by integrating its negation the third moment reaches a type of specular closure” (1989:13). It is neither of them however it takes some aspects from both.

For the Belgian theologian, philosopher and researcher Ghisi, transmodernity is a transformation which is wide, deep and radical. Even if he has a Eurocentric perspective, he believes that a paradigm shift is going on which is recognized by some people. He asserts that this paradigm shift is beyond postmodernity. For him, transmodernity is “an entirely new matrix of values”. It is not globalization, as claimed by many, rather it “is the quick decline of the capitalist Western-dominated industrial and patriarchal society and the beginning of a completely new post-capitalist, post-industrial, post-patriarchal transmodern society” (2010:39, 40). For him, the transformation involves four levels in

order: the danger of humanity killing itself; end of patriarchal values; the end of modernity; and end of industrial capitalism and birth of an intangible postcapitalist society.

For Dussel it “is a new liberation project with multiple dimensions: political, economic, ecological, erotic, pedagogic, religious” (Dussel 2000:474). Transcending a hegemonic and marginalizing tendency of modernity, transmodernity is born from emerging potentiality of other cultures omitted and suppressed by Western culture and Modernity. He explains: “From this omitted potentiality and altering ‘exteriority’ emerges a project of ‘trans’-modernity, a ‘beyond’ that transcends Western modernity (since the West has never adopted it but, rather, has scorned it and valued it as ‘nothing’) and that will have a creative function of great significance in the twenty-first century” (Dussel 2002:221). It is a civilizational project that transcends modernity. It is a call for new “civilization based on an absolute respect for life in general, and that of the human in particular, in which all other dimensions of existence must be reprogrammed on the basis of the postulate of “perpetual life” (Dussel 2008a:116).

Modernity is criticized for its egoist, hegemonic and oppressive tendencies by him. Eurocentric modernity subjugated and marginalized many of its others and created what is commonly described as center-periphery. Dussel asserts that it is “essentially bound up with an egotistical assumption of the right of mastery and domination” (Alcoff 2012:62). Therefore transmodernity calls for liberation from what it calls totalizing system and transcending it from the perspective of its others. “The worldwide liberation project of transmodernity differs from a universal, univocal project that seeks to impose violently upon the Other following: European rationality, unilateral machismo, and white racism, and which conflates occidental culture with the human in general” (Dussel 1995:138).

The universality claimed by Modern philosophy, starting from Descartes and later revised and retained in Kant and Hegel, exposes its totalizing nature that engulfs the *Other* under the *Same*. Alcoff explains this phenomenon as:

For Dussel, epistemic reflexivity in European modernity is less about putting one's own beliefs on firm grounds, as the story of Descartes is endlessly taught, than about deflating all possible reasons to listen to the other, or to accept the authority of others, or to consider alternative approaches different than those I myself have produced: the knowing *I* is imagined to be both universal arbiter and neutral or perspectiveless observer and as such need not give an account of its own prejudgments or accord presumptive authority to others. (2012:63)

Dussel is not optimistic like Habermas to assume the 'unfinished project' of Modernity. He is not also satisfied with the postmodern critic. He considers it as a continuation and a reaction from within modernity itself (see figure 1). Transmodernity suggests a reconstruction from modernity's exteriority. It is important to note that "exteriority" doesn't signify negativity. It is a positivity that comes from other cultures which are distinct from the West (Dussel 2002). It designates that values that emanate from other cultures different from the center (of Modernity) have significance. Hence transmodernity represents a radical transformation from the current status built by modernity without using the postmodernist deconstruction. It is a new interpretation of modernity that is constructed from a different perspective. It "criticizes modern reason for concealing an irrational myth" within it (Barber 1998:74). Dussel writes:

I seek to overcome modernity not through a postmodern attack on reason based on the irrational incommensurability of language-games. Rather, I propose a transmodern opposition to modernity's irrational violence based on the reason of the *Other*. I hope to go beyond modernity by discovering as innocent the so often denied and victimized other face of modernity. This innocent victim of modernity's ritual sacrifice convicts modernity of sacrificial violence and proves that its essential, constitutive features are those of the conquistador. (Dussel 1995:137)

Therefore it couldn't be represented by postmodernity. This doesn't mean denying the importance of postmodernity. It is to make distinction and emphasize the insufficiency of postmodern criticism upon modernity. The rejection of 'all forms of totalizing synthesis' is something common that it shares with postmodernity (Dallmayr 2004). By abandoning

the drawbacks of both modernity and postmodernity it nevertheless incorporates the positive aspects of both. It is not against rationality as is postmodernity and not as optimistic about the modern project as is Critical Theory.

Transmodernity is a multicultural engagement that addresses all cultures of the world. It has what Dussel calls a transmodern pluriversality which is “(with many elements similar in common: European, Islamic, Vedic, Taoist, Buddhist, Latin American, Bantu, etc.), one which is pluricultural, and engaged in a critical intercultural dialogue” (Dussel 2012:50). Since it has the potentiality of including other modernities and collaborating with others, including European modernity, Alcoff characterizes it as having “both inclusivity and solidarity” (Alcoff 2012:65). It proclaims that “modernity will come into its fullness not by passing from its potency to its act, but by surpassing itself through a co-realization with its once negated alterity and through a process of mutual creative fecundation”. This is what the project achieves. Transmodernity realizes “solidarity, which is analectic, analogic, syncretic, hybrid and mestizo”. This has the ability to unify “center to periphery, woman to man, race to race, ethnic group to ethnic group, class to class, humanity to earth, and occidental to Third World cultures” (Dussel 1995:138).

Transmodernity while giving credence to other cultures and civilizations, it tries to seek answers for different problems in a way that could fit into different contexts and cultures. It is an endeavor towards attaining a humane earth by correcting modernity’s predicament. By responding to the “core problems” humanity faces it is a hope for a better human life on earth. It proposes a future which is “multicultural, versatile, hybrid, postcolonial, pluralist, tolerant, and democratic (but beyond the modern liberal democracy of the European state)” (Dussel: 2002:236).

Transmodernity also challenges a unilateral teleological trajectory for history and development (Dussel 1995, 2000, 2002). World history shouldn’t be presented with the pretention of single European center. It takes an assignment of setting the world history without a single center by suggesting the inter-regional centers that existed through different historical periods (see 1.3).

Although transmodern thought accepts spirituality as one aspect of human deoprtment, it challenges both secularism and religiosity. It “is post-secular and, therefore, post-religious as well...Transmodern thought also recognizes that what is often referred to as religion can be as colonizing as secularism itself...” (Maldonado-Torres 2008).

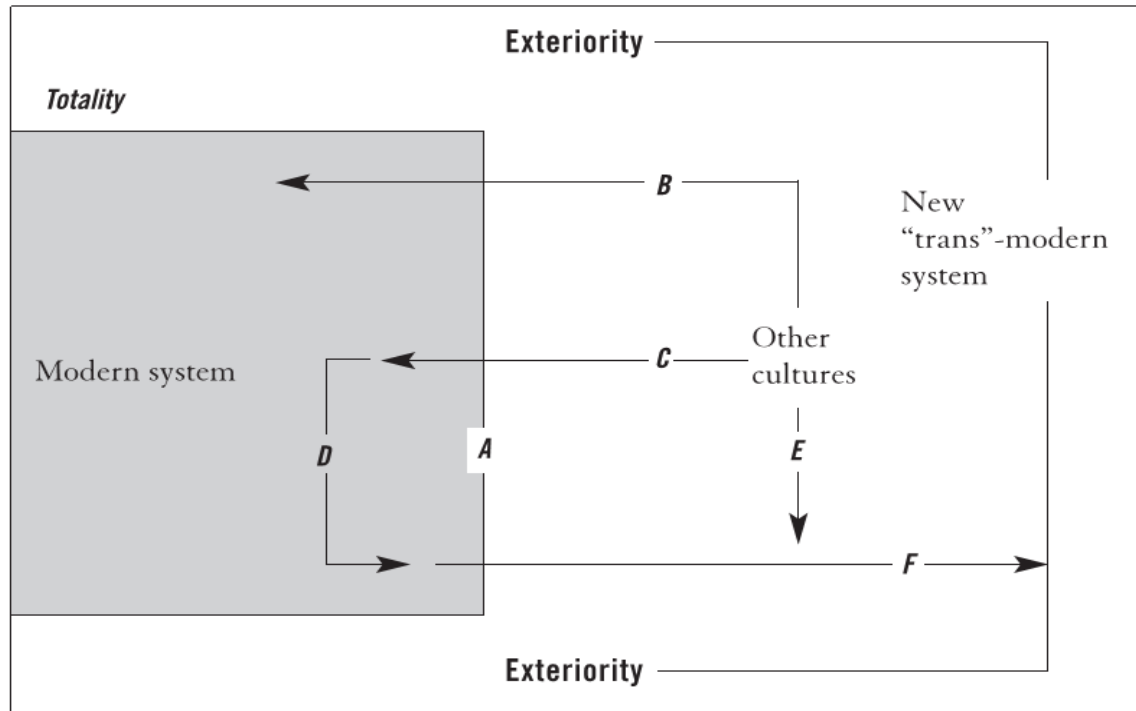


Figure 1. Totality, exteriority, affirmation of exteriority. Key: (A) “postmodernity” (the limit of modernity and of totality); (B) the inclusion of the other into the same (the old system); (C) the innovative interpellation before modernity; (D) the subsumption of modernity’s positivity; (E) the affirmation of the other in its exteriority; (F) the construction (as a synthesis of C+D+E) of an innovative “trans”-modernity (Dussel 2002:235).

1.2 Transmodern Philosophy of Liberation

Philosophy of Liberation sets the foundation for the birth of transmodern discourse. Making Latin America its point of departure, it challenged the Eurocentric project of modernity. It transposed from being a continental philosophy of Latin America to a level of global perspective. Through and with this philosophy a transmodern metanarrative that could address the whole global humanity is developed. That is why I put it as a

transmodern philosophy of liberation. This part is devoted to the discussion of Dussel's Philosophy of Liberation.

Philosophy of liberation gets into historical and political criticism and results in a transmodern discourse. By looking into the historical context in which Modernity emanated, it sets out a new look into the project. This time, it is not from within. It is from outside, from its exteriority. It is a philosophy of those marginalized and oppressed by modernity due to the center-periphery dichotomy the European Modernity created. Moreover, it is a philosophy of those who are "made invisible in history, in philosophy, in political thought, in law". Cleverly enough, "they are not merely the focus of Dussel's attention; they are the starting point from which Dussel develops his ideas" (Suárez-Krabbe 2009:181-182). This philosophy calls for the liberation of those 'others' subjugated by the totalizing ontology of the center. It claims for an ethical salvation that uses phenomenological and hermeneutic traditions. It uses the thought of Emmanuel Levinas at its core to define an ethical position towards the other and hence looks into the underside of modernity. Before delving into much detail, I want to emphasize the ethical nature of this philosophy. It calls for taking "responsibility for all possible sorts of alterity. And it does so with an ethical, "situated" consciousness, that of any human being with an ethical "sensibility" and the capacity to become outraged when recognizing the injustice imposed on the other" (Dussel 2008b:342). That is why Dussel declares that Liberation Philosophy affirms that ethics is first philosophy, *prima philosophia*" (Dussel 1985, 1996). This happens, metaphysically speaking, when the *Other* raptures and questions the ontological *Being*. It challenges the solipsism *Being* demonstrates when it takes every *Other* into the *Same*. It calls ethics to dwell in ontologic realm rather than dealing ontically with the issue of justice to those who are oppressed.

The following lines of Dussel give a somewhat general definition to the Philosophy of Liberation:

I call philosophy of liberation the strictly philosophical discourse, the scientific-dialectical knowledge (*Wissen*) that gives thematic priority to the praxis of liberation of the oppressed. The oppressed are considered historically and socially as a class,

geopolitically as a nation, sexually as repressed by macho ideology and practices, pedagogically as alienated and completely enclosed by an idolatrous fetishism. Philosophy of liberation also gives priority of origin and foundation to the liberation of philosophy from the naivety of its allegedly absolute autonomy as a theory. (Dussel 1985:188)

Philosophy of liberation makes its target those who are oppressed and subjugated who, using Fanon's expression, are the "wretched of the earth". It is a philosophy from periphery that uses "the language of the center" (Dussel 1985:viii). It calls for the emancipation of the oppressed and marginalized others from the project of modernity. It is a philosophy of those who, as Dussel characterizes them, are epistemically privileged to see into the reality; those who have "a clear mind for pondering reality" and "have nothing to hide". As Dussel emphasized, "philosophical intelligence is never so truthful, pure, and precise as when it starts from oppression and does not have any privileges to defend, because it has none at all" (ibid:4).

It sets out an ethical philosophy and political discourse for those who are from periphery and for those all others that are oppressed, marginalized, alienated. Through its critical discourse it claims to create a philosophical meta-language and "set the basis for a method" for a number of critical movements:

feminist movements; environmentalists; anti-discriminatory movements focused on different races, peoples or indigenous ethnicities; *movements concerned with marginalized social sectors*; immigrants coming from impoverished countries; the elderly; children; the working class and migrant workers; *the countries that belong to what used to be called Third World*; the impoverished nations on the periphery; *the "victims"* (using Walter Benjamin's term) *of Modernity, Colonization, transnational and late capitalism*. (Dussel 2008b:2) (emphasis mine)

Philosophy of liberation favors "metaphysics" not "ontology". Because the meaning metaphysics has is looking reality from the perspective of the other. "It is to know how to think about not just the negativity of a *Being*, which gives way to ontic novelty when it goes back to the origin of the world, the foundation, *Being*; it is to know how to think

about *Being* from the exteriority that judges it”. While ontology is “to reflect on oneself, to speculate on or look at oneself as in a mirror (speculum); it is to look for identity as the origin of what one already is” (Dussel 1985:48). It is against any totalized ontology and particularly ontology of the European center. It is forwarded from beyond the horizon of *Being* of the system. Therefore the philosophy ponders “not from the perspective of the center of political, economic, or military power but from the frontiers of that world, from the periphery [and therefore] this philosophy will not be ideological” (Dussel 1985:9-10). That is why this philosophy is critical of the center which is ideological and tries to keep its interests against the needs and rights of those in the periphery. The center has lost its critical power in order to sustain its privileged position. With much emphasis, “ ‘thinking about reality’ means, in this philosophy, ‘critical thinking.’ It engages in critical thought to deconstruct and reconstruct the thinking from the center.

It favors thinking from outside *Being*, not thinking about *Being*. “Thinking about *Being*, on the other hand, is a sign of the stillbirth of critical thought” (Irvine 2011:607). The philosophy of the center represents this. Studying logic, epistemology, philosophy of language retained within *Being* is reducing the potential of philosophical reflection to thinking about beings of reason. It leaves philosophy without critical prospect. That is why it challenges the “customary” way of doing Western philosophy. Dussel accuses of it losing capability of looking critically (Dussel 1985).

Even if the philosophy makes its point of departure the Latin American experience, its voice is for all the oppressed and calls for their liberation. Basically it criticizes the totalitarian ontology which takes all others into its own sameness. Thereby it tries to liberate those from the periphery by philosophizing transontologically from exteriority, from which the oppressed others are situated in. It could be taken “as one of many critical and ethical projects that have emerged” in recent times (Mingolo 2000:43).

It is an ambitious project that claims to transcend even the coming generations as they are among those who are victims and are beyond the reach of the system which controls power and economy. It takes as its responsibility to fight:

...for the Other, the victim, the woman oppressed by patriarchy, and for the future generation which will inherit a ravished Earth, etc (that is, it assumes responsibility for all possible sorts of alterity). And it does so with an ethical, "situated" consciousness; that of any human Being with an ethical "sensibility" and the capacity to become outraged when recognizing the injustice imposed upon the Other. (Dussel 2008b:342)

Dussel emphasizes that Philosophy of Liberation addresses those others which are not looked at even by Critical Theory of the Frankfurt school, which is thought to be the most critical of Western philosophy: "From our perspective, Critical Theory from the "first generation" to the "third" has been marked by a certain degree of ontological Eurocentrism that prevents it from glimpsing a global horizon beyond Europe and North America. It has always had a certain degree of blindness toward global alterity" (Dussel 2011:17).

As claimed by Dussel, the philosophy "has a tremendous destructive potential because it can not only assume critical methods (such as those of analytical philosophy, Marxism, critical theory, etc) but it can in addition criticize those critical methods , at least from a new angle, from geopolitical world exteriority, from the periphery, from the oppressed". On the other hand, it has also a "constructive capacity" as it ponders over "themes that are most urgent for the oppressed periphery, oppressed classes, women, and youth" (Dussel 1985:179). Its positivity is substantiated as it stands in favor of those who are negated by the system, which could be considered as the "negation of the negation".

Philosophy of Liberation is not negation of "rationality". To put it other way round: "it will not depart from the "Other of Reason" but instead from the "Other" of the dominating, oppressing, and totalitarian totalizing reason. That is, it will not depart from the dominating moment of rationality" (Dussel 1996:6). Its critique is forwarded from exteriority. Philosophy of liberation could well be characterized as the critique of "modern reason". This doesn't mean that it is "a critique of reason as such" (Dussel 1993:75).

1.2.1 The Analectical Method

In order to analyze his discourse and philosophy, Dussel uses his new methodology, what he calls analectical. This peculiar method is utilized in this philosophy. The method describes going beyond the reach of the totality. It indicates confronting the ontologic being from exteriority, not from within. It “refers to the real human fact by which every person, every group or people, is always situated "beyond" (ano-) the horizon of totality” (Dussel 1985:158). It is a critical look upon an oppressing system and bringing it into question from exterior. It “calls for an “affirmation of exteriority” that is revealed in the marginalized others” (Simmons 2002:9).

Dussel argues that dialectics is not enough because it only remains in the totality and circulates within itself. The analectic is not negative dialectics. It looks from exteriority and goes beyond the totality. Using Liberation Philosophy terminologies, the former is ontologic and the latter metaphysical. By dialectics we only produce and reproduce totality. We affirm and strengthen totality using the other. We never disclose the alterity in the other. Since dialectics is based on the existing norm in the system it does only an internal critique that will not break the system. It couldn't transcend it. Dussel argues:

The method of the self-mirroring (and self-projection of the same) is dialectics, and it is this method that has ruled all of Western philosophy at least since the pre-Socratics (Parmenides and Heraclitus). But dialectics is war, the war of the same and the *I* to affirm itself in and through the other, and to wrest from the other what makes the other inassimilable alterity (Dussel 2003:5).

It is only the analectic method that brings about new dimensions that are not within the system. It will result in a distinct outcome from what is used to be. It will not give in another variety of the *Same* which is the characteristic of the dialectic method. Its intrinsic worth in transcending the totality makes it fit as a tool for liberating others. That is what means to reveal the metaphysical other rather than circulating within the ontologic *I*. This is achieved because the point of departure for analectic method is the exteriority of the Other.

1.2.2 Totality, Exteriority and Proximity

To fully grasp liberation philosophy and hence transmodernity, it is important to understand some key paradigmatic terms which are integral to its structure and philosophic foundation. Next, I will elaborate three of the basic concepts on which the philosophy is based: totality, exteriority and proximity.

Totality is the characteristic of a system which incorporates every “other” to its own realm, rendering the “other” to non-*Being*. Liberation Philosophy is a metaphysical critique of the “Ontologic *Being*”. It goes beyond the ontologic paradigm of modernity, it is therefore transontologic and hence transmodern. As it is well explained by Irvine, Dussel claims that “ontology, in the Western philosophical tradition, has amounted to an ideology of totalization. Ontology is the superstructure that abets, while concealing, the enclosure of societies within a system of domination by powerful, white, European males” (2011:605). Like Levinas, Dussel’s philosophy depends much on the concept of totality. Totality is a state that is averse to difference. It is the state which wants to take the *Other* into the *Same*. Totality for Dussel is ontology. It is thinking within the system. Totality couldn’t transcend its own egoism and therefore makes mistakes. It considers the *Other* as the *Same* because its logic dictates so. It is unable to think and accept the *Other* as other.

On the other hand, exteriority is the horizon from which totality is challenged. It is the metaphysical realm that questions the totality of any system. It is the realm from which the other is revealed and breaks down the ontologic system. Exteriority is the origin from which the *non-Being* of the “ontologic *Being*” is revealed. As it is revealed beyond *Being*, it manifests its closeness: proximity. It is “meant to signify the ambit whence other persons, as free and not conditioned by one's own system and not as part of one's own world, reveal themselves” (Dussel 1985:40). It is also called interior transcendentality. It is “the most important category for philosophy of liberation” (ibid:39).

On an individual level, exteriority means the internal capacity for transcendence that each human enjoys (we could think of this as the ability we all have to imagine a

different social order). On the level of society as a whole, exteriority refers to those groups excluded from the various systems that constitute that totality (economic exclusion, political exclusion, gendered exclusions, etc). Finally, on the global level, Dussel speaks of the “cultural exteriority” of colonized and formerly colonized spaces, where collective practices predate or coexist with those constituting the global world-system, and it is only here that Dussel’s exteriority maps, however imperfectly, onto prevailing geopolitical categories. (Joseph 2010:136)

Proximity “is the primordial position of ‘somebody who is encountered beyond the world of ontology or *Being*, anterior to the world and its horizon” (Duseel 1985:117). It “is the most essential reality of a person, the beginning of the philosophical discourse of liberation, and metaphysics in its strict sense-real, reflective, and carefully thought out” (ibid:21). Proximity is the root of praxis and the point of departure for all responsibility for the other. Only those who have lived proximity in justice and joy accept responsibility for the poor, and desire for them the proximity of equals.

These three concepts are described together in the following way:

Totality, the system, tends to *totalize* itself, to center on itself, and to attempt-temporally- to eternalize its present structure. Spatially, it attempts to include within itself all possible *exteriority*. Having an infinite hunger, the fetish attempts to install itself forever in an insatiable cannibalism. Face-to-face *proximity* disappears because the fetish eats its mother, its children, its siblings. Totalized totality, Cyclops or Leviathan on earth, kills as many alien faces (persons) as question it until finally, after a long and frightful agony, it sadly disappears from history, not without first sealing its final days within numerable injustices. (Dussel 1985:49 *Emphasis mine*)

1.2.3 Metaphysical Moments

Philosophy of liberation is discussed in relation to four metaphysical moments: politics, erotics, pedagogy, and antifetishism which are pivotal to it. They pertain to the practical horizons in which the dominant totalization is exercised. Hence they are the practical realms on which liberation is sought. They have deep practical implications in the overall

framework of philosophy of liberation. The domination could be within a socio-political system in which powers marginalizes and excommunicates its victims; or it may be a man subjugating a woman; or a parent or a teacher repressing his child or student respectively. In all cases there is a justification so that the subjugation becomes acceptable. It is eulogized as divine, sacred, and absolute, in Dussel's terms it is fetishized.

The first one, politics is explained as a concept which "includes not only the activity of a politician, a professional in politics, but also all practical, social, human action that is not strictly sexual, pedagogical, or anti-fetishist" (Dussel 1985:67). It has much more influence and importance than the three. As exposed by Dussel, it is "the relation, person-to-person, at the level of equality, of fraternity, of solidarity" (Dussel 1996:7). It "applies as well to the one governing as to the one *Being* governed on the international or national level, to groups and social classes, to social formations and their modes of production, and the like. I want the expression "person-to-person" to suggest this very broad conceptual extension" (Dussel 1985:68).

The next one, not in the degree of importance, erotics, signifies the woman-man relationship. It portrays women as one of the oppressed groups among many that need to be liberated:

The best European diagnosis of machismo has been proposed by Freud. He clearly saw that "sexuality is by nature masculine," and because of this the phallus was defined as constituent and active and the vagina as passive and constituted, the sexual object. "*Being* is; non-*Being* is not" in erotic ontology should be stated: "The phallus is; castration is not." That is, woman is not; she is only an object, as was the Amerindian, the African, the Asian, the poor nations, the oppressed classes, the politically disenfranchised. If the constituent "I" is the "phallic ego," then the *Being* of machismo, the foundation of the alienating sexual totality is "phallicity" (the phallus as phallus). (Dussel 1985:82)

The third realm covers a wide scope from the fatherly advice to a child to the universities and research centers level. The others here are: the child at home, the pupil in a school, the youth in society and the people at large. They all face domination from respective entities that dominate them. They are deprived of their creativity, identity and freedom. The pedagogic domination of the father/parent at home deprives the child of its uniqueness: otherness. The same pedagogic domination of a teacher deprives the student of its ability to come up with new perspectives. He becomes the “object of the “Lectern” (Paulo Freire) who simply repeats or “re-remembers” (Socrates) the old” (Dussel 1996:10). From the above exposition we could easily discern that the pedagogic is the juncture “where politics and erotics converge. The child born in the home is educated in order to form part of a political community; the child born in a culture is expected to found a home” (Dussel 1985:87).

The final one is antifetishism. It “is a kind of summation, summing up the three previous moments as absolutization or critique of political, erotic, or pedagogical systems. They maintain diverse relationships complicated by exteriority” (ibid: 174). Totalities tend to assume absolute tendencies. In that case they declare sovereignty not to be challenged. It is then we say that they become fetishized. They claimed to have superhuman authority. The ‘other world’ will come and play a role in the human world; intervening negatively and creating oppression of the other. “A fetish is something made by the human hand but made to appear divine, absolute, worthy of worship, fascinating, tremendous, that before which one trembles in fear, terror, or admiration” (ibid:96). Philosophy of liberation strives for the total abolishment of fetishized systems calling for atheism towards them. It is denying and revolting against this absolutism what we call antifetishism.

Liberation Philosophy affirms that all Totalities can be fetishized: the political as in the empires or the State; as historical manifestations of the divinity; the erotic, as in fetishist machismo; pedagogy, because ruling ideology is a historical manifestation of the divine, such as the “Western and Christian civilization” or the American way of life. All critique, then, ought to begin by negating the divinity of the fetishized absolute which negates the possibility of human realization. Atheism as negation of

the negation of the person (Feuerbach) is the first thesis of Liberation Philosophy. (Dussel 1996:11)

1.3 Reconstructing the Meaning of Modernity with a Transmodern Perspective

Dussel challenges the traditional idea of modernity. For him modernity could be envisioned from two different paradigms: Eurocentric and planetary. The first considers Europe to be the beginning and end of modernity. This way of interpreting modernity never takes into account the contribution of other cultures in the long journey to modernity. It claims that, it is only the internal and special events that suddenly sprang up in Europe that resulted in modernity. This is the notion that is forwarded by Dussel as “the “Eurocentric paradigm” (in opposition to the “world paradigm”), [it] is the one that has imposed itself not only in Europe and the United States, but also in the entire intellectual world of the world periphery (Dussel 2013a: 25).

The first concept is Eurocentric, provincial, and regional. Modernity is emancipation, a Kantian *Ausgang*, or “way out,” from immaturity by means of reason, understood as a critical process that affords humanity the possibility of new development. In Europe, this process took place mainly during the eighteenth century. The temporal and spatial dimensions of this phenomenon were described by Hegel and commented on by Jürgen Habermas in his classic work on modernity (1988, 27). Habermas’s narrative, unanimously accepted by contemporary European tradition, posits, “The key historical events for the creation of the principle of [modern] subjectivity are the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution. (Dussel 2000:469)

The second one, which looks the occurrence from the global perspective, looks into the historical events that give birth to modernity. From this vantage point, modernity resulted through the contribution of non-European cultures even if the events happened in Europe played a triggering role. As Dussel puts it:

A second view on modernity takes into consideration a world perspective. This view posits the fact of *Being* the center of world history as an essential trait of the modern world. This centrality is achieved from various perspectives: state, military, economic, philosophical. In other words, there was not a world history in an empirical sense before 1492 (as this date was the beginning of the “world-system”). Previous to this date, empires or cultural systems simply coexisted. It was only with the fifteenth-century Portuguese expansion (which reached the Far East in the sixteenth century) and the discovery of America by Spain that the whole planet became the space of one world history (Magellan and El Cano circumnavigated the world for the first time in 1521). (ibid: 470)

Dussel’s critique on modernity is on the first one and calls for its deconstruction and reconstruction into the second. The reconstruction is important to this concept of modernity because it neglected those who took part in its construction. It is imperative to accept that modernity originated and developed in a dialectical relation with others (Dussel 1995). Dussel underscores that the point of departure for the reconstruction is the “Other” which is ignored, neglected and marginalized by the European “I” emanated from its “*Being*” which renders others to be “non-*Being*”. The reconstruction could never be a postmodern one because it looks from within and repeats the same modern discourse on which it is built up. It is not trying to accomplish the "unfinished project" as Habermas claims. The reconstruction should be from without, from modernity’s alterity. That is why he claims that “we saw need to reconstruct the concept of Modernity from an exterior perspective, that is to say, a global perspective (not provincial like the European perspective)” (Dussel 2012:37). The reconstruction is effected through a transmodern project.

[A] transmodern project that would emerge by real subsumption of the rational emancipatory character of modernity and its denied alterity (the other of modernity) by way of the denial of modernity’s sacrificial-mythical character (which justifies modernity’s innocence over its victims and, by this token, becomes irrational in a contradictory manner) (Dussel 2000:474).

I will try to show his arguments against the first paradigm which respectively are: historical, rational emancipatory, developmental fallacy, which seem, at least to me, important in developing a transmodern reconstruction.

From the historical perspective, Dussel suggests that the “birth date of modernity is 1492, even though its gestation, like that of the fetus, required a period of intrauterine growth” (Dussel 1995:12). It is from this time onwards that the West takes a privileged position to claim for the “ownership” of modernity. This is due to, as explained by Dussel, the expansion by Spanish and Portuguese powers that changes the interregional system that existed for centuries into world-system. Nevertheless, these powers themselves are not even acknowledged for their contribution let alone those countries in Asia and Africa, in the periphery, which have their own part in its construction. As of then, by considering other cultures as a periphery, Europe assumed a center in a world system replacing world history with a universal history of its own.

The reconstruction, denying the autochthonous version of modernity, entails the creation of modernity as a result of “the management of the world-system’s ‘centrality’” (Dussel 2002:222). This implies a “non-Eurocentric interpretation of the history of the world-system, a system only hegemonized by Europe for the last two hundred years (not five hundred)” (ibid:224). This one challenges the emergence of modernity due to the unique and superior internal characteristics that were peculiar to Europe. To explain his thesis Dussel suggests a periodization of the world history into four stages of “interregional system” (See Table.1). This one is in contrast to categorizing history into Antiquity, the Middle (preparatory) Ages, and finally the Modern (European) Age. He refutes and challenges this customary version by declaring pseudoscientific and ideological construct (Dussel 1995).

This shift from the interregional system into the world system is the one which signals the concept of modernity. Europe, only because it could manage this world system, denying the dialectical nature of the process within the Asian-African-Mediterranean interregional system, assumes for itself a superior and civilized position. However, Europe which was “never the center and during most of its history the periphery,

Europe rises to ascendancy when it finds itself blocked on the east by Islam and embarks upon the Atlantic in a history that began in Genoa (Italy)” (Dussel 1995:11).

The Eurocentric historical discourse equates world history with history of Europe. Europe, assisted by the technological developments and scientific revolutions, made its best to establish this distortion as a main stream discourse, narration, history.

Table 1: The Four Stages of the Interregional System that Unfolded as a World System after 1942 (Dussel 2013a:3)

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Diachronic Name of the Interregional System</i>	<i>Poles around a Center^a</i>
I	Egyptian-Mesopotamian (from 4th millennium BC): §I.1	Without center: Egypt and Mesopotamia
II	“Indo-European” (from 200 BC): §I.3	Center: Persian region, Hellenic world (Seleucid and Ptolemaic) from 4th century BC Eastern extreme: China Southeastern: Indian kingdoms Western: Mediterranean new world
III	Asiatic-Afro-Mediterranean (from 4th century AD): §I.4	Center of commercial connections: Persian region and Tarim, then the Muslim world (from 7th century AD) Productive center: China Southwestern: Bantu Africa Western: Byzantine-Russian world Extreme West: Western Europe
IV	“World system”: §§I.5–6	Center: Western Europe. Today, United States (after AD 1492) and Japan (from 1945 to 1989 with Russia) Periphery: Latin America, Bantu Africa, Muslim world, India, Southwestern Asia, Eastern Europe Semiautonomous: China and Russia (from 1989)

a. The “center” is only a zone of contacts in stages II and III; in stage IV it is the proper “center” of a periphery (Modernity).

Dussel indicated the contribution of modern thinkers and philosophers to that end:

This Eurocentric position—first formulated at the end of the eighteenth century by the French and English “Enlightenment” and the German “Romantics”—reinterpreted all of world history, projecting Europe into the past and attempting to show that everything that happened before had led to Europe’s becoming, in Hegel’s (1955, 235) words, “the end and center of world history.” The distortion of history begins with the Encyclopedists (Montesquieu’s. *The Spirit of Laws* [1989 {1748}] is a good example) but continues with the English “Enlightenment” thinkers, Kant in Germany, and finally Hegel, for whom the “Orient” was humanity’s “infancy” (*Kindheit*), the place of despotism and unfreedom from which the Spirit (*Volksgeist*) would later soar toward the West, as if on a path toward the full realization of liberty and civilization. Since the beginning, Europe had been chosen by Destiny as the final meaning of universal history. (Dussel 2002:222)

This transmodern reconstruction presupposes the history/story of modernity to be retold (Alcoff 2012; Dussel 1995). The significance of retelling implies recognizing the contribution of those who took part; adjusting the historical narrative that intentionally ignores the history of the other; and acknowledging the importance of engaging those cultures and civilizations. A transmodern discourse asserts that:

[M]odernity in its broader reach was born “when Europe begins its expansion beyond its historical limits.” At this juncture, Europe “arrives in Africa, in India and Japan, thanks to Portugal; in Latin America and from there in the Philippines, thanks to the Spanish conquest.” While Europe thus establishes itself as “center” and vanguard, other societies and cultures are deprecated as “immature, barbarous, under developed.” (Dallymar 2004:9-10)

The second, rational emancipatory argument looks how modernity hides a “sacrificial myth” in rationalizing its emancipatory claim. It presupposes others as barbaric, uneducated, primitive and hence need to be civilized. This could be considered as an

extension of Hegel's Eurocentric philosophy of history. Therefore the civilizing mission or modernization entails any act of sacrificing the objects. This is what we call "sacrificial myth".

Since the barbarian opposes this civilizing process, modern praxis ought to exercise violence (a just colonial war) as a last resort in order to destroy any obstacles to modernization.... This domination produces its diverse victims and justifies its actions as a sacrifice, an inevitable and quasi-ritual act. Civilizing heroes transform their victims into holocausts of a salvific sacrifice, whether these victims are colonized peoples, African slaves, women, or the ecologically devastated earth. (Dussel 1995:136 & 137)

Here it is not only the allegation against other cultures as inferior, undeveloped, and uncivilized is condemned. But also the justification of the violence with this presumption is criticized. Rather than using persuasion and way of example as a means of convincing it prefers violence. Modernity could have taken another course if it "would have taken account of the Other's culture, respected the Other's alterity, and engaged the Other's free, creative collaboration." (Ibid 72). Dussel tries to point out the origin of the irrational "myth of modernity," and recommends liberating it rationally (Ibid). This is a rational transmodern criticism. Liberation Philosophy "criticizes "the sacrificial myth" of modernity as irrational, albeit presupposing its "rational emancipatory nucleus," thereby also transcending modernity itself" (Dussel 1996:53). The act of transcending and deconstructing its irrational myth rationalizes and results a transmodern alternative "characterized by *ecological civilization, popular democracy, and economic justice*" (Dussel 1995:117) (emphasis added).

The third argument is what Dussel calls "developmental fallacy": Modernity's version of linear progress of development. It is of course this "fallacy" that drives modernity to commit the mistake just outlined above. For Hegel, Dussel argues, development has direction. "Universal history goes from East to West. Europe is absolutely the end of universal history. Asia is the beginning". However this suggestion excludes "Latin America and Africa from world history and characterizes Asia as essentially confined

to a state of immaturity and childhood (*Kindheit*)” (Dussel 1995:20) In this relation Hegel wrote about Africa what Dussel describes as “the most insulting pages in the philosophical analysis of world history”:

Africa is in general a closed land, and it maintains this fundamental character. It is characteristic of the blacks that their consciousness has not yet even arrived at the intuition of any objectivity, as for example, of God or the law, in which humanity relates to the world and intuits its essence. ...He [the black person] is a human *Being* in the rough.Africa... does not properly have a history. For this reason, we abandon Africa, we will mention it no more. It is not part of the historical world; it does not present movement or historical development... What we understand properly of Africa is something isolated and lacking in history, submerged completely in the natural spirit, and mentionable only as the threshold of universal history (ibid 22).

For Dussel this fallacy could bear neither sociological nor economic categories. Rather it is philosophical one, ontologic, that shows a specific world view of one “superior” in all aspects. That is why Dussel concludes that “Eurocentrism and the developmentalist fallacy are two aspects of the same world-view.” And therefore the fallacy should be named “developmentalism” or “developmentism” (ibid: 148). The “superiority” gives full right of doing violence in order to civilize those inferior ones.

As a conclusion, in order to make much more emphasis on the point I raised at the beginning of this section, I quote lines from Dussel that emphasize that his approach is a different one.

“My undertaking here differs from theirs [thinkers such as Charles Taylor, Stephen Toulmin, or Jürgen Habermas [who] consider [modernity], as exclusively a European occurrence], since I argue that while modernity is undoubtedly a European occurrence, it also originates in a dialectical relation with non-Europe. Modernity appears when Europe organizes the initial world-system and places itself at the

center of world history over against a periphery equally constitutive of modernity.”(Dussel 1995:9-10)

1.4 Philosophy and Geopolitical Space

Philosophy in general and modern philosophy in particular is discussed in relation to its “geopolitical space”. This section could be considered as one aspect of the critique on modernity’s or modern philosophy’s claims of universality. Assuming that philosophy could relate with its geopolitical space, we need to question the universal claims of modern epistemology. I need to point out that this has more significance. On the one hand, as part of a transmodern discourse it connotes the possibility of having philosophy or epistemology beyond the Modern European source. It suggests a pluriversal epistemology not the universal. On the other hand, it implies the need for making scrutiny and meticulous study in transferring and applying any philosophy beyond its context of production. However, this discussion is not a total denial of the universality of philosophy as human quest for wisdom.

Dussel underscores that philosophy is born in its own particular political space. It emanates from the contextual human reality it is in. “Philosophy ponders the non-philosophical; the reality. But because it involves reflection on its own reality, it sets out from what already is, from its own world, its own system, its own space” (Dussel 1985:3). Therefore, when philosophy is from the center where power resides it ponders its own *Being*. In the words of Dussel, it is “ontology, the thinking that expresses *Being*-the *Being* of the reigning and central system-is the ideology of ideologies, the foundation of the ideologies of the empires, of the center” (ibid:5). And hence “philosophy of domination, at the center of the ideological hegemony of the dominant classes, plays an essential role in European history” (ibid). Europe by claiming itself at the center and considering “itself the archetypal foundational *I*”, categorized itself as *Being* and the other as non-*Being*. Consequently its philosophy the philosophy of the center becomes ontology. That is why Dussel inquires rhetorically:

What is Nietzsche if not an apology for the human conqueror and warrior? What are phenomenology and existentialism if not the description of an "I" or a *Dasein* from which opens a world, always one's own? What are all the critical schools, or even those that launch themselves in search of a utopia, but the affirmation of the center as the future possibility of "the same"? What is structuralism but the affirmation of totality-though not leading to a politico-economic resolution in real liberation? (Dussel 1985:8)

Dussel further argues that the Cartesian *ego cogito* is born from and is an extension of the "I conquer" applied to the Aztec and Inca world and all America, from the 'I enslave' applied to Africans sold for the gold and silver acquired at the cost of the death of Amerindians working in the depths of the earth, from the 'I vanquish' of the wars of India and China to the shameful 'opium war'" (Dussel 1985:8).

1.5 Liberating Philosophy through a Transmodern Approach

The Eurocentric look to the modernity phenomenon resulted in assuming European model as universal standard of humanity and philosophy. European philosophy becomes 'the philosophy' *per se*. This happens because "Eurocentrism" is precisely characterized by the assumption that historical expressions of European particularity in fact constitute moments of abstract human universality in general" (Dussel 2013a:43). Therefore "modern European culture, civilization, philosophy, and subjectivity came to be taken as such abstractly human-universal" (Dussel 1996:132). Moreover, "this philosophy did not only have the pretension of *Being* universal, planetary, and the expression of human reason as such, but also categorized all other regional philosophies of the South as "backward," naïve, and particular" (Dussel 2013b:6). This implies the geopolitical influence of philosophy. That is what Dussel (hence its transmodern discourse) tries to criticize and challenge. As expressed well by Mingolo: "if a philosophy of liberation makes sense, its liberation would be in the first place the liberation of philosophy from its Eurocentric genealogy within the modern/colonial world" (Mingolo 2000:36). Dussel announces, "it seems as if a philosophy of "liberation" (*genitive objective: its theme*) requires the

liberation of “philosophy” itself (*genitive subjective: the subject that is active and at the same time that is activated*) as its point of departure” (Dussel 2013a:41).

Liberation of philosophy is one aspect and internal core of the transmodern reconstruction. As a conclusion, it is emphasized that the reconstruction entails historical, philosophical and rational critique to assume the transmodern planetary position. This will turn misinterpretations and misunderstandings right. A pluriversal intercultural dialogue needs to be the first step towards this.

A future trans-modern culture – which assumes the positive moments of Modernity (as evaluated through criteria distinct from the perspective of the other ancient cultures) –will have a rich pluriversity and would be the fruit of an authentic intercultural dialogue, that would need to bear clearly in mind existing asymmetries (to be an —imperial-core or part of the semi-peripheral —central chorus—like Europe today, and even more so since the 2003 Iraq War—is not the same as to be part of the postcolonial and peripheral world). (Dussel 2012:43)

Chapter Two

Dussel and the Foundation of Ethics

Thinking the human-self of humanity as a free being in general, is not as such a controversial subject in philosophical suppositions. 'Men are born free' is a maxim that many could applaud for. Nevertheless, the freedom one is thinking-of or assumes, may be enslavement for the other or at least affects her/his liberty. Had we had approved Hegel's universal history and its consequences we wouldn't have appreciated Nkrumah's 'Consciencism' or Fanon's 'Wretched of the Earth'. It may also seem paradoxical to berate Modernity, which has liberty as one of its basic maxims, as it has deprived many of their liberation unless we could have the willingness to listen the peripheral voices that challenge the modernity rhetoric. Therefore there are times at which liberation will be a controversial subject. We need to ask whose freedom, whose liberation, whose discourse of freedom or liberation?

This chapter speaks of liberating the *other*; the *other* of any and every totality that needs to subsume the *other* under *the same*; liberating every human being from any system that totalizes and consumes the other's identity and freedom. The issue of liberation is discussed giving it an ethical orientation. Ethics will be covered giving it metaphysical ground from the phenomenology of Levinas and its course will be more elaborated through Dussel's Ethics of Liberation. The overall discussion is an endeavor to make liberation enjoy a philosophical grounding and an ethical argument that extols its cause.

To that end, first Levinas will be discussed to clarify the notion of ethics as a first philosophy. This is highlighted in such a way that addresses the precedence of ethics before ontology. Then Dussel and its ethical thoughts are explained as a continuation of Levinas's thought. Finally, Dussel's ethics of liberation is invoked to bring forward a full-fledged ethical system that realizes liberation to those marginalized. This is looked through the three, among the six, principles he suggested. It is important to note that even if the *others* in Dussel's context are the oppressed and the marginalized, his ethical project is not of parochial nature. At the end of the day, this liberation also connotes the liberation of all humanity at large by the destruction of totalized systems' totalizing potential. At the outset, I need to emphasize the limitation of this discussion. The above

points will not have an exhaustive coverage. They will be covered in such a way that will help in elaborating my arguments in liberating the creation of Modern Ethiopia and the marginalized others in the process which will be discussed in the coming chapters.

2.1 Levinas' Thought as a Background

It was Emanuel Levinas whom Dussel claims to have awakened him from his “ontological slumber”. That is why this section is devoted to discussing his thoughts to shed some light on the upcoming discussion of Dussel’s ethics which has much relation with Levinas’ ideas. Emmanuel Levinas was a Lithuanian Jew who severed five years in a Nazi concentration camp. He studied at the University of Strasbourg (France) from 1923-30 and spent some time in Germany studying the philosophy of Husserl and Heidegger. He translated Husserl’s *Cartesian Meditations* and introduced phenomenology to France. Levinas was considered to have commenced the philosophy of Husserl and Heidegger in France. He became well-known as an original philosopher through his major work, *Totalité et infinity (Totality and Infinity)*, in which he gave phenomenology a radical ethical orientation through his conception of the *Other*. Levinas had had great influence on many philosophers other than Dussel, including Jacques Derrida, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Ricoeur (Dussel 1999; Moran 2000; Young 2012).

Levinas is recognized for his introduction of the concept of *Other* and presenting a severe criticism on the ontological assumptions of *Being* in the traditional Western thought. Through his concept of *alterity* (otherness, radical exteriority) he argues how the *Other* brings the *I* into question and calls for responsibility by breaking the solipsism of the *I* in the modern philosophical thought. Generally speaking, his philosophical insights could be considered as a radical criticism to the essence of Western ontological narrative which emphasizes totality and unity at the expense of multiplicity and particularity. He challenged this tradition which is apt to reduce, absorb or appropriate the other into its own structure and consumes it into its own, the Same.

He brings a new perspective on subjectivity by surpassing the ontological realm and suggesting an ethical dimension for the *I* and *Other* relationship. But his subjectivity “is not the subjectivity of Descartes, Kant, Husserl, or even Kierkegaard; it is not any form

of egoism, or self-reflexive subjectivity, nor a kind of authentic subjectivity focused on death (as in Heidegger)” (Moran 2000:343). Nor his subjectivity is that of Hobbes which assumes hostility to the other but a friendly welcoming one: “this book will present subjectivity as welcoming the *Other*, as hospitality; in it the idea of infinity is consummated” (Levinas 1991: 27). Levinas condemns the reduction of the *Other* into the *I* at all. Therefore his subjectivity is not even that of Hegel’s who is considered to present a relative (Paipais 2011; Kearney 2003) conception for otherness/ alterity:

The ‘I’ is not a Being that always remains the same, but is the Being whose existing consists in identifying itself, in recovering its identity throughout all that happens to it. It is the primary identity, the primordial work of the identification ... Hegelian phenomenology, where self-consciousness is the distinguishing of what is not distinct, expresses the universality of the same identifying itself in the alterity of objects thought and despite the opposition of self to self. (Levinas 1991:36)

His subjectivity is the one with ethical predisposition. It transforms the egoist tendency into inescapable responsibility towards the *Other*. His subject is the one whose ambition is not to grasp, control, comprehend the *Other* but to listen and respond to the call of the *Other*. It is a subject who is held in hostage and failed in the grip of the other human. The ethics he proposes is:

A calling into question of the Same - which cannot occur within the egoist spontaneity of the same brought about by the Other. We name this calling into question of my spontaneity by the presence of the other *ethics*. The strangeness of the Other, his irreducibility to the I, to my thoughts and my passions, is precisely accomplished as a calling into question of my spontaneity, as *ethics..... And as a critique precedes dogmatism, metaphysics precedes ontology*. (ibid:43 emphasis added)

As it is just forwarded, he emphasizes this notion of ‘ethics before ontology’, not the traditionally known ethics which is derived from ontology. This ‘ethics as first

philosophy' is highly related with Dussel's liberation philosophy. Thus I will discuss some important points to elucidate this concept.

This notion of 'ethics before ontology' has important implications in locating the source for ethics, or the 'ought'. For Levinas this is a primordial happening that comes before reason. It originates when we come in contact with the Other who makes us morally obliged towards her. For him, the world is a social world before it is a world at all. Even if the contact with the other person is the central point in Levinas' ethical disposition, there are accounts of the self that make the contact with other possible and sensible. I hereby try to show two of them that lead to the occurrence of the third. The third one is the ethical moment brought up by the absolute other.

The first stage of this account is the manifestation of the *I* as existing entity before the appearance of any existents. This is what Levinas calls "freedom", a metaphysical freedom that could be set as a starting out. This declares our identity as "each of us is fundamentally unique as an existing thing" (Morgan 2011:122). It is this metaphysical freedom that enables us to act, think and choose and it is considered as a basic feature of subjectivity (ibid).

The "I" arises and with it freedom, the freedom of beginning, "starting out from something now." This is "the freedom of the existent in its very grip of existing." The I can now exercise the "work of existing," and this work is the subject's "mastery over existing," its "power of beginning, of starting out from itself, starting out from itself neither to act nor to think, but to be." (Levinas 1987:53,54,67)

The above freedom makes the *I* to have a need and renders itself satisfy this need. This takes us to the second attribute of the self. This attribute tells how the self is related with the world. It is not Sartre's world in which we are thrown in. Nor are things encountered as tool as claimed by Heidegger. They are not also Husserl's objects to be 'represented' in our intentional acts. We encounter things (such as food) as objects of enjoyment: "Moreover furnishings, the home, food, clothing are not *Zeuge* [tools] in the proper sense of the term: clothing serves to protect the body or to adorn it, the home to shelter it, food

to restore it, but we enjoy them or suffer from them, they are ends” (Levinas 1991:133). Therefore when we are living in the world and being nourished, it results in satisfaction of our need. This is what Levinas calls “enjoyment”. It is a “posture of assimilating the world and yet remaining separate from it, of being hindered by oneself and fulfilled by the world” (Morgan 2011:123). In his words, “nourishment, as a means of invigoration, is the transmutation of the other into the same, which is the essence of enjoyment; an energy that is other, recognized as other, recognized ...as sustaining the very act that is directed upon it becomes, in enjoyment, my own energy, my strength, me.” (Levinas 1991:111).

Morgan comments that such enjoyment involves sensation and thought, but “it is fuller than mere sensation or mere thought. It is a kind of involvement with the world, not use but satisfaction, incorporation, and proximity. In a sense, I am at home in the world around me, not unqualifiedly, of course, but sufficiently to appreciate eating, breathing, exploring, viewing, feeling, and enjoying what is there for me” (Morgan 2011:38).

Therefore, before ordering the world and taking it into its own system it is sensibility that happened. Sensibility precedes thought. “Life as it is lived, (rather than understood), is lived as the satisfaction of being "filled" with sensations, the satisfaction of feeding on the environment” (Beavers 1990:3). The enjoyment makes apparent the otherness of what nourishes *me*. Through it, the *I* remembered what quenched it and emerged as the subject of its need. However this *I* is the selfish *I* that needs to make everything its own for its enjoyment. On this level, Levinas locates a subjectivity that is primordial than rational subjectivity. This gives Levinas “with a place ‘where’ the other can be met, not in the cabinet of consciousness, but on the street, in the classroom, or in the workplace, where the egoism of enjoyment has the possibility of becoming ‘filled’ with sensations”. Furthermore, establishing subjectivity on the level of sensibility leads Levinas “to a point where he can establish that the human subject is, first and foremost, passive” (ibid:4).

The third one is the ethical moment which is created when this egoist *Self* tries to enjoy the Other. It is created, for Levinas, because of the resistance of the *Other* to be engulfed to become part of that Self. The *Other* declares her absolute otherness asserting her uniqueness and not to be enjoyed. It is this time that the revelation-epiphany occurs. In

the words of Levinas, the *Other* exclaims "thou shalt not kill". This is the moment at which the Other appears to us with strong ethical demand. This happens by threatening our being-at-home with ourselves and stopping enjoying the nourishments around. Now the other is different from and more than a thing. She confronts me with her own uniqueness and otherness. Morgan summarizes the scenario in a way that we may come across in our day to day experience.

This person is different from me fundamentally – prior to considering her features or character, her height, complexion, her features, or the color of her hair, her humor and mood, whatever. She is a person like me, but because her perspectives, her experiences, are inaccessible to me, she is radically separated from me and different from me. And her difference is all about what she imposes upon me simply in virtue of being there, before me. What she imposes is dependence and need, integrity and demand. Her presence, before it says anything else to me, says “let me live,” “let me be here too,” “feed me,” “allow me to share the world and be nourished by it too.” I am imposed upon, called into question, beseeched and commanded, and thereby I am responsible, Levinas says. In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas says: “I must have been in relation with something I do not live from.” This relation occurs as an “encounter [with] the indiscrete face of the Other that calls me into question. The Other ... paralyzes possession, which he contests by his epiphany in the face.... I welcome the Other who presents himself in my home by opening my home to him.” (Morgan 2011:40)

The above lines clearly put that I am an ethical responsible person before I am an observer or explainer. I am a moral agent before I am a cognitive one. In other words, “my responsibility to the Other precedes and is more important than my knowledge or use of ‘being’ or of ‘beings’” (Young 2012:3). It is when I accept the other person that I become responsible. It is not when I interpret and include her to my own meaning. It is this responsibility that is the source of the moral “ought” which originates from the appearance of the other person. It is the grounding stone for human sociality. That is why

Beavers concludes: “there is no authentic sociality apart from ethics, and there is no ethics apart from sociality” (1990:8).

Morgan explains Levinas’ method to be “transcendental phenomenology or something akin to it and that its goal is to expose forgotten or hidden horizons of meaning that underlie our normal, objective experience of things and our thoughts about them” (Morgan 2011:42). Many also acclaim that his method is phenomenology (Mortley 1991:14; Barber 1998: 1; Moran 2000:320).

Bernasconi categorizes the interpreters of Levinas into two, as empirical and transcendental, according to how they treated the face-to-face experience with the other (Morgan 2011). The former ones treat the relationship as a concrete experience that we could recognize it in our day to day experiences. That means we are able to sense the experiences explained by him. The latter are claimed to have understood the relation to be the condition for the possibility of ethics. Both approaches seem to be indicated by Levinas when he treats the different aspects of the relationship. However the fundamental point is that it is well argued phenomenologically in a way that could serve as a challenge to the ontological presupposition that gives more privilege to the *I of Being*.

2.2 Dussel’s Appropriation of Livenas’ *Ethics as First Philosophy*

Born in 1934, in La Paz, a small village about 150 km from Mendoza, a major city in Argentina, Enrique Dussel² is one of the known living philosophers in Latin America. Explaining himself in relation to ethics he once said: “professionally, my philosophical field was, from the very beginning, ethics. My specialization was in ethics” (Gomez 2001:20). Dussel studied ethics first at Masters level under Soaje Ramose focusing on the German ethical phenomenologists Max Scheler and Dietrich von Hilderbrand, as well as Aristotle and Aquinas. His teacher demanded his students to study Latin, Greek and German. He graduated in 1957 with a thesis “Social and Ethical Philosophy”, which deals with the concept of the common good from the pre-Socratics to Aristotle, winning a

² It would be a disservice not mentioning what Dussel responded to me when I mailed him my plan to work on his philosophy. Here are his words: “*It is an honor for me that a student of Ethiopia takes this issue. I have been in this country for years and keep enormous respect for this old civilization*”.

gold medal for his academic achievement. He received his Doctorate in Philosophy with a three volume, 1200 page dissertation with a title of: *The common good: Its theoretical inconsistency*. Each volume has its own subtitles. In France, he did his masters in Theology, pursued his doctoral study in History at the Sorbonne and worked on another doctoral dissertation at the same time (Alcoff & Mendieta 2000: 15-16; Dussel 1996: xiv-xv). The above lines give a sketchy outline of the academic merits he enjoyed without mentioning plentiful books he published.

To discuss the overall itinerary of his philosophical life journey which he himself asserts that it has “an impressive continuity” is beyond the scope of this thesis. My intention now is only to give some glimpse into the development of his philosophy of ethics. Following Dussel's own clues in the autobiographical material in *Liberación latinoamericana y filosofía*, Barber presents the trajectories of his thought until it embraced Levinas (1998:19). The first one is what could be called a philosophically styled anthropology which was observed at the beginning of his academic career. The second is his ethics based on Heideggerian-hermeneutic grounds. It was in this phase that he was highly devoted to the study of Hegel. The last one is the development of his own theory of ethics based on Levinas. He draws attention to his Heideggerian position before he embraced Levinas' philosophy of the *Other*. “Dussel originally sought to overcome the ethics of modernity through a Heideggerian version of natural law ethics before passing on to Levinas” (Barber 1998:ix-x).

Even if he used Martin Heidegger to correct the subjective ethics of modernity, he never proceeded with Heideggerian ontological ethics which is only descriptive. It is when he discovered Levinas and embraced his methodology he could “see that Heidegger really presents, not an ethics, but the ethically neutral conditions of the possibility of good and evil. Levinas, on the contrary, provides him with an ethical context” (Barber 1998:xvii).

Therefore, it is possible to assume that his methodological transformation was achieved after he incorporated Levinasian thoughts. In one of his interviews he reiterates: “What occurred was that I reached a point at which, thanks to the philosophy of liberation, and also thanks to Emmanuel Levinas, I realized that ethics was the original philosophy” (Gomez 2001:20). Although many of his academic outputs revolve around ethics for

many years, Dussel's two major works deal with ethics extensively: a five volume *Towards Ethics of Latin American Liberation* and *Ethics of Liberation in the Age of Globalization and Exclusion*. Dussel differentiates these two works as my first ethics and second ethics respectively. Even if the latter is the continuation of the former, he claims that it is completely new. He states that his first ethics mixes up Levinas and Heidegger, and hence ontological and transontological; which he describes as an ethics devoid of contents. The second one is ethics with principles and contents. The latter will be discussed in the next section in some detail.

Dussel's ethical engagement could be assumed as a continuation of Levinas' thought. Nevertheless, it has taken another dimension after he was awakened from his "ontological slumber". This slumber was Hegelian as was Heideggerian (Dussel 1996). By endorsing ethics as first philosophy and adopting the philosophy of the *Other* from Levinas, Dussel has gone far in appropriating and transforming it. In his own articulation:

Soon enough, however, I realized that Levinas himself could not address our hopes. Levinas showed us how to formulate the question of the eruption of the Other, but we could still not develop a politics (erotics, pedagogics, etc.) which placed in question the ruling Totality (which dominates and excludes the Other) and could develop a new Totality. This critical-practical questioning of a new Totality was exactly the question of "liberation". With this Levinas could not help us. (Dussel 1996:181-82)

It should be well emphasized that Dussel developed it in a way that could answer what should be done next. Liberation philosophy is entailed with political philosophy which is not there in Levinas' thought.

After Levinas, Dussel separates ethics from ontology or more correctly brings ethics ahead of ontology. Ontology (phenomenology), he emphasizes, gives way to metaphysics (apocalyptic epiphany of the other) (Dussel 1985). Here by metaphysics he refers to the ethico-metaphysical exteriority of the *Other* that revealed herself to the ontologic *I*. He makes this distinction clear in his *Philosophy of Liberation*. "Ontology is

phenomenology; it is a logos or a thinking about what appears (the phenomenon, the *Being*) from the foundation (*Being*)” Dussel writes (ibid: 58).

Ontology is the thinking that expresses *Being* assuming others as *non-Being*. Due to its totalizing nature it is able to think of itself. Others are excluded and avoided. This dominant totality only moves, if it does so, in a rotating manner creating its own image dialectically. There will be no novelty that it could favor us to see. The values that the system produces will be naturalized and becomes a norm that others could be evaluated and in consequence categorized as outside, alien: *non-Being*. Any discovery of new *beings* is evaluated under the values and norms of the given system. Ethics derived from this system can only reflect the same values that are within the system. Everything is reconstructed vis-à-vis the existing system and incorporated into it and hence becomes part of the same system. That is why Dussel characterized ontology as “the ideology of ideologies” (1985:15). As Irvine puts it, “the net result is self-discovery, self-unfolding—and that process is ontology” (2011: 611). This making of totality as the only possible substance makes the possibility of any alterity negligible.

Dussel emphasizes that every hermeneutical and existential, or ontological totality is totalitarian, belligerent and martial. It makes no difference to approach such a system dialectically. We will remain in self reflecting and domination of the system itself. Dussel writes:

Ontology is to think the foundation, the ground, of the Being of a ruling Totality. The project (the Heideggerian ontological *Entwurf*) of the ruling system justifies the oppression of the oppressed and the exclusion of the Other. From the interpellation of the Other, and as a response to the other, the affirmation of the Other as other is the origin of the possibility of the negation of the dialectical negation (this is what I called the analectic method or the originary affirmation of the Other). (Dussel 1996:82)

It is this self enclosure that needs to be abated. It is an enclosure to the *other* and to oneself that could only repeat itself dialectically. The enclosure is opened through its encounter with the *other*; when it confronts the *other* which is beyond its boundary. From

the metaphysical exteriority the *Other* brings *I* into question. The *Other* is revealed to and announce that she is a radical other that will not be totalized into the *I*. She makes the *I* hostage and forces to take responsibility towards her.

Philosophy of Liberation “tries to formulate a metaphysics—not an ontology” (Dussel 1985:15). Metaphysics, for Dussel contrary to ontology, “is to know how to think about *Being* from the exteriority that judges it” (Dussel 1985:58). It is this way that we could see the system that totalizes everything from metaphysical exteriority. It is looking at the reality beyond the horizon of the system. It underscores the consistent affirmation of the exteriority of the other. “To affirm exteriority is to realize what is impossible for the system (there being no potency for it); it is to realize the new, what has not been foreseen by the totality, that which arises from freedom that is unconditioned, revolutionary, innovative” (ibid: 160). Dussel writes:

To do this it is necessary to deprive Being of its alleged eternal and divine foundation; to negate fetishist religion in order to expose ontology as the ideology of ideologies; to unmask functionalisms—whether structuralist, logico-scientific, or mathematical (claiming that reason cannot criticize the whole dialectically, they affirm it the more they analytically criticize or operationalize its parts); and to delineate the sense of liberation praxis. Post-Hegelian critics of the European left have explained it to some extent. Only the praxis of oppressed peoples of the periphery, of the woman violated by masculine ideology, of the subjugated child, can fully reveal it to us. (Dussel 1985:15)

This means to challenge the assumption and the system that considers *Being* sovereign; to defy the call that justifies the given system. The word fetish refers: taking it for granted without challenging and preventing it from any critics or challenge. When we think from exteriority, the Other is revealed. Dussel termed this revelation as *epiphany*. It is this way that ontology (phenomenology) gives way to metaphysics. Hence, “liberation is not a phenomenal, intra-systemic action; liberation is the praxis that subverts the phenomenological order and pierces it to let in a metaphysical transcendence, which is the plenary critique of the established, fixed, normalized, crystallized, dead” (ibid:58-59).

By maintaining a metaphysical exteriority it transcends the system beyond appearance or mere phenomenon. This is the beginning of liberation. As this appearance calls the „I“ of the system to be responsible and accept *the other as other*, it is declaring its freedom.

Here every person, every group or people, is always situated ‘beyond’ (ano-) the horizon of totality. That is why the method is referred as analectics. The analectical procedure goes beyond the totality and transcends it. “To break free of their coercion and subjugation, we must open ourselves to the other from the standpoint of the other. We must think, hear, see, feel, and taste the world from the standpoint of the other. This is the analectical moment” (Dussel 2003:6). It is with this analectic method that humanity gets its distinctive character and nobility:

The merely natural substantivity of a person acquires here all its uniqueness, its proper indetermination, its essence of bearing a history, a culture; it is a Being that freely and responsibly determines itself; it is person, face, mystery. The analectical refers to the real human fact by which every person, every group or people, is always situated ‘beyond’ (ano-) the horizon of totality. Negative dialectic is no longer enough. The analectical moment is the support of new unfoldings. The analectical moment opens us to the metaphysical sphere (which is not the ontic one. (ibid:158)

In general, Dussel proposes a transcendental thinking that pierces into any totalization. He argues for a new way of thinking what could be called trans-ontology. This is a genuine metaphysics that calls *Being* into question. Thinking this way, by breaching the self enclosure of ontology and thinking *the other otherwise than Being*, is thinking *ethically*. And therefore ethics becomes the first philosophy that precedes ontology. The analectic method results in ethics which is before ontology. It is this ethics that emerges from exteriority that the philosophy of liberation tries to formulate: ethics that could be the first philosophy, *prote/prima philosophia*.

This ethics as it is appropriated and transformed, has resulted in a number of philosophical trajectories. Three of them could be highlighted here. It doesn’t mean that these themes are separate and exclusive to each other. Rather they are interrelated and

overlapping. They all are disclosed when Dussel uses his ethical philosophy which rely upon the uniqueness of the *other* and the need to liberate those who are marginalized and excluded by the totalized system.

The first one is showing the distinctiveness of Latin American Philosophy “which is analogous to but not univocal with European philosophy” (Barber 1998:x). He constructed an emancipatory discourse for Latin America through, in addition to his historical and anthropological works, his liberation philosophy. We could say that the *other* in his philosophy started from the *other* Latin American. This has implications for a different perspective towards the history of philosophy and the philosophy of other peoples (be it Latin American, African or Asian). Dussel argues for the distinctiveness of every people and the freedom of any philosopher. Instead of speaking the history, philosophy, and discourse of a single center he suggested otherwise.

The second outcome of his thought is the critique of the logo-centric essence of European philosophy and Modernity. Dussel’s critique on Eurocentrism is directed on the basic assumptions of the Western philosophy, humanities and social sciences. It attacks the ontological supposition on which it is overlaid. Dussel asserts that ontology in the Western philosophical tradition is the ideology of totalization. For him, “philosophy as ontology means to reflect on oneself, to speculate on or look at oneself as in a mirror (*speculum*); it is to look for identity as the origin of what one already is” (Dussel 1985:48). An ontologic justification of a self-conscious and self-autonomous *Being* is advocated in the philosophical leanings of Western thinkers. It is only that *Being* who owns the truth. Examples are Descartes’ ego cogito, the Absolute Knowledge of Hegel and the Eternal Return of Nietzsche.

The third contribution he made is giving a new suggestion on the development of world philosophy. This is the contribution he made in portraying the insufficiency of "linguistic", "pragmatic", "hermeneutical", "post-metaphysical" turn, the academia in philosophy ascertained. He argued that the turn is “not in earnest and in accordance with the deepest insights of the triple paradigm shift” (Dussel 1996:xix). This is sketched out in the conversations and debates he made with Apel, Habermas, Ricoeur, Taylor, and Rorty. These witness how he confronts the post linguistic philosophy and able to make

his creative “synthesis of, British, North American, and German post-metaphysical and post linguistic philosophy in the second half of the twentieth century” (Alcoff & Mendieta 2000:24).

2.3 Dussel’s Ethics of Liberation

The discussion in this section is based on Dussel’s magnum opus, a magnificent book, entitled *Ethics of Liberation in the Age of Globalization and Exclusion*. As the translator notes, “it is the crucial cornerstone for the philosophy of liberation” (Dussel 2013a:xiii). It could be considered as a culmination of his ethical works published so far. In this book, Marsh comments, Dussel “has put the ethical-political Humpy Dumpy back together again. Opposites such as right and good, deontology and teleology, justification and application, duty and happiness, universal and particular, which have fallen apart in contemporary thought, he has integrated” (2000:60). Eduardo Mendieta has expressed this book as: “a strikingly original, prodigiously documented, staggeringly systematic and coherent work of moral philosophy and it is, furthermore, unusual in its historical scope” (2008:ix).

In his interview with Gomez Dussel delineates the transition he made as a result of this work:

My first ethics was a mixture of Levinas and Heidegger, that is to say, ontological and transontological, an ethics devoid of contents. There were no principles, no truth-claims, there was nothing Kantian. In this new ethics, by contrast, I think I convincingly articulate the combinations of the formal aspect and contents. In other words, there is a synthesis between Aristotle and Kant, but after Habermas. (Gomez 2001:59)

The book’s main concern is standing for the victims of the global neoliberal capitalism and European hegemony in the global context. Nevertheless, the theoretical underpinnings propounded provide ethical framework for individuals, communities, and cultures excluded from dominant forms of cultural, social, economic and political reason. It is a work that showed how it could be argued for the poor, the marginalized and the

oppressed in a rigorous philosophical manner. His ethics established in this work has also reappeared in his two recent³ works.

Other than the introduction part which discusses a non-Eurocentric account of world history of ethical systems, the book is divided into two large parts. The first is the foundation of ethics and the second critical ethics. In total the two parts constitute six principles. He affirms that it has been amazing for him to reach in these principles with a full ethical structure: “This is an amazing thing for me, and this is one of the first conclusions: All ethics spring from one principle, out of which all other principles are deducted. By contrast, I am going to propose at least six principles, and these will articulate a very coherent architecture” (Gomez 2001:60).

The first part, foundational ethics lays out the universal conditions and principles for any ethical system. Three principles are suggested that could be foundational for a just ethical system. These are the material principle, the formal principle and the feasibility principle. It is with these principles that “the goodness claim (with reference to the subject of the norm, action, microphysics of power, institution, or ethical system) is attained” (Dussel 2013a: xvii). All the three should be in place for the fulfillment of the “goodness claim” for a maxim, act, institution, or system of ethical claim. The critical ethics, which is second part of the book, is the negative critique of the global socioeconomic system that oppresses and marginalizes the majority of the world population. He explains how it violates the three foundational principles explained. Dussel notes that Ethics of Liberation could provide “some guidance as to ethical criteria and principles for the unfolding of the praxis of liberation from the perspective of the victims, as they confront the effects of oppressive norms, acts, microstructures, institutions, or ethical systems in the context of everyday life, in the present historical moment” (ibid:xvii).

In setting a comprehensive framework for ethical judgments and actions that pertain to them, Dussel engages and/or criticizes many philosophers that have relation with his ethics. In this regard he explains:

³ This refers two Dussel 2008a and 2010. Here the word ‘recent’ refers to their original publications in Spanish. Otherwise *Ethics of Liberation (2013a)* is more recent as an English translation.

I will incorporate both of these for varying reasons but situate them at distinct moments of the architectural process of Ethics of Liberation. I will include the communitarian ethics (of Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor, or Michael Walzer) at the material level of my ethical architecture.... In a similar fashion I will also incorporate aspects of proceduralist and formalist moralities (ranging from Emmanuel Kant up through Karl-Otto Apel to Jürgen Habermas, in particular), but thus will be accomplished through a radical reconstruction of their function in the overall ethical process. We will also engage philosophical perspectives such as those of (e) pragmatism (as reflected in thinkers running in the gamut from Charles Sanders Peirce to Hilary Putnam) or (f) system theory(Niklas Luhmann); I will draw from these what is necessary in order to define (g) a third principle: that of feasibility, inspired by the thought of Frank Hinkelammert. (ibid xvi-xvii)

Henceforth, I will discuss only the three principles in the first part which have some relevance to my work. Dussel himself says that this part is “the most demanding and the most novel for me” (Gomez 2001:60). I will not delve into the other part which shows their application. With the latter Dussel further goes into a critical judgment of the existing reigning global system.

2.3.1 The Material Moment of Ethics-Practical Truth

This is the ethics of content. Dussel distinguishes between ‘*material*’ with an ‘*a*’ and ‘*materiel*’ with an ‘*e*’. The first one stands for content, matter, essence which is opposed to form-formal. While the second one means ‘of physical matter’, which is opposed to mental or spiritual. This ethics is the ethics of life (Dussel 2013a:55). He declares that: “the ethics of which I speak is human life. By “human” we should understand the life of the human *Being* at its physical-biological, historical-cultural, ethical-aesthetic levels, including even the mystical-spiritual level, and always within a communitarian horizon” (ibid:434). This principle which claims universality is the principle of “the obligation to produce, reproduce, and develop the concrete human life of each ethical subject in community” (ibid:55). Here the production, reproduction and development of human life

never signify the physical aspect of life only. It is not only to indicate actions like eating, drinking, sexual gratification, healthy bodily life etc. They also incorporate “cultural, scientific, aesthetic, mystical and ethical” aspects too (ibid:438). Therefore this principle underlines that human life should be cherished, cared for and should not be endangered. The ultimate goal of all cultures and ethical systems should be nurturing the human life which is the eventual aspiration that every human engagement needs to achieve. This human life is not a mere “concept, idea, or an abstract or concrete ontological horizon. Nor is it a ‘way of life’ ”. It is “a mode of reality”. It is “a pre-ontological point of departure of ontology” itself (ibid: 434).

Dussel underlines how fundamental ethical judgments about life are. In making logical correlation of the “ought” and the “is” naturalistic fallacy is warranted. It is not because *‘it is’* that *‘it should be’* is concluded. In dealing with this principle, we need to ascertain that the “ought” is implicitly contained in the “is”. Which means the so called naturalist fallacy is not exercised. What is implemented here is not “analytical deduction” but “dialectical grounding through contents” is exercised (Dussel 1985:68). Describing the reality of living human could be the other face of establishing a strict normative ethical “ought to be” (ibid: 69). Therefore, for example, from “descriptive judgments like “John is eating” we could proceed to ethical judgments as “John ought to continue eating” (Dussel 2013a:97-103).

Affirming that many have considered life as the material, not formal, aspect of ethical claims, Dussel points out one fact which he considered to be his discovery (Gomez 2001:60). That is, life should not be a criterion for “good” because “goodness claim” has other aspects that need to be considered. However life should be the criterion for truth.

2.3.2 Formal Morality-Intersubjective Validity

This principle is about the validation of the first one. This one sets a principle for procedural aspect of the moral consensus (Dussel 2013a:108). This principle states the necessity of communication among equals to decide how to implement the material principle. To put it other way, “the ethical function of the basic norm of formal morality

is that of grounding and applying in concrete terms the norms, ethical judgments, decisions, normative statements and different moments of material ethics” (ibid:141). This principle implies about validity of the first one. Without it “ethical decisions have no communitarian and universal ‘validity’. What they have, instead, could be an effect of egotism, solipsism, or violent authoritarianism” (ibid).

It should be noted that truth and validity are co-determining. There will be no truth without validity and no adequate validity without truth. A truth may be defended if it couldn’t qualify a consensus among the participants. By the same token, intersubjective agreement among the community of communication could not be of value if it hasn’t any material truth (Marsh 2000:55). The proposal of ethics of liberation is the intersubjective moral criterion of validity need to be defined in relation to and with the agreement of the criterion of practical truth of producing, reproducing and developing a human life.

With regard to the involvement of those affected for the decision, Dussel is in agreement with the suggestion of discourse ethics as put forward by Karl-Otto Apel and Jürgen Habermas. His disagreement is “in their tendency to reduce truth to validity, the material principle to the moral principle and, thus, not to distinguish adequately the material principle from the moral principle” (ibid:56). In short, this principle makes incumbent upon the members of a community of communication to debate and communicate a given material truth in order to produce, reproduce and develop the human life and as well the communication ought to be symmetrical. If killing or any form of exclusion happened in a given situation from the members in the communication, the excluded party would no longer be part of it. Therefore, the validity of the moral claim is threatened and hence its goodness claim is lost.

2.3.3 Ethical Feasibility and “The Goodness Claim”

This one is the third principle that needs to be incorporated to qualify the “goodness claim” of the Ethics of Liberation. For this to happen the synthesis of the above two from the perspective of feasibility of both need to occur. This need to take the contextual situations and the outcomes of its achievement into consideration (Dussel 2013a:158-9).

It involves reflecting on the appropriate means to achieve the proper goals using instrumental reason and the best way of convincing to choose proper means and ends through strategic reason. This is performed from the stand point of the two former principles: material and formal, applying the ethical reason. Therefore, feasibility is assessed through the application of instrumental-strategic reasoning framed by the bounds of material and formal principles as to its capability to establish a concrete social good to produce, reproduce and develop human life.

Without instrumental- strategic reason, ethical-discursive reason falls into utopian illusions (since it could commit itself to the impossible). Without ethical-discursive reason, strategic-instrumental reason falls in the perversity of formal fetishized self-referentiality (which makes absolute the means-ends rationality, the efficient feasibility that can turn against the life of the human subject or against his or her free, necessary participation). (ibid:190-191)

This principle in short put a structural boundary on how, when, where, and with what means to achieve the claimed good. It outlines “under what circumstances, with ethical feasibility a norm, act, institution, or system operates with a ‘goodness claim’” (ibid:196). Therefore, natural laws in general and human laws in particular are taken into consideration to reach to the aspired ends towards the good. This means that possibility is indispensable for feasibility. Logical, empirical, technical, ethical etc possibilities should be integrated.

The latter in the series presupposes the former. If something is empirically possible, then it must be logically possible. I don’t have an ethical obligation to do what is logically, empirically, or technically impossible. On the other hand, the former in the series doesn’t imply the latter. Something can be logically possible without Being empirically possible, empirically possible without Being technically possible, and technically possible without Being ethically possible or desirable. (Marsh 2000:57-8)

To sum up, the grounding of an ethics of liberation before it reaches to the level of its critical and liberatory stage, it should transverse at least three moments (Table 2.1). The *ethical-material* moment which set normative statements on grounded judgments of fact which have a practical truth claim; the moral-formal moment which fulfils the intersubjective moral validity through the symmetrical communication of the parties involved; and finally the *ethical-processual moment of possible feasibility* that denotes the possibility any norms, acts, institutions, or for that matter systems of ethics qualifying *Being* feasible. “All three come together as a “goodness claim,” a claim that holds that something is true (i.e., coheres with the continuation of life), is valid (is agreed to by all affected), and could actually work out well (is feasible)” (McAfee 2013:2). However, Dussel stresses that the three principles discussed so far need not necessarily come in their order of presentation outlined above. Different sequences may come into the picture and applied with infinitive variations. What is important and mandatory is to guarantee that they are compatible with the overall scheme (Dussel 2013a:201).

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

Table 2.1: The overall scheme of Ethics of Liberation (Burton 2011:28; Dussel 1998)

Chapter Three

Ethical Liberation of the Ethiopian Nationhood

It is very important to put clearly what I am going to bring forward in this chapter since it is the central part of my thesis. So far in the last two chapters I have tried to elucidate the main themes of Dussel's philosophy explained in Transmodernity, Philosophy of Liberation and his Ethics of Liberation. In the next chapter I am going to make a suggestion of new Transmodern Ethiopia which could be constructed on the premises of Dussel's philosophy. Therefore this chapter could be taken as a bridge that could link what I have done so far with the next chapter. That is why it becomes the central part of my work.

I will discuss three central themes in this chapter other than section 3.1 which discusses some general points that need to be considered. The first one (3.2) is explaining the hegemonic nature of Modern Ethiopian nationhood which is characterized by false universalization and unjust totalization. It is ontologic and could only look at its own *Being* by concealing many others which are part of its establishment. This argument is substantiated with two different perspectives. First, its very nature of expansion, oppression, and subjugation in state formation and nation building is elaborated. Second, the impact of the metanarrative of European Modernity in modeling nation-state is examined and the role played by the European powers through their direct involvement is elucidated.

In the second theme (3.3), I deal with how Dusselian ethics could be applied to the ontologic Ethiopian nationhood. The discussion is put forward in such a way that could help to establish an ethical foundation for the transmodern suggestion. This one is explained by portraying the nature of metaphysical ethics in relation to the Ethiopian national construction. And the three ethical principles of Ethics of Liberation are discussed as applied to the Ethiopian context

Finally (3.4), liberation is suggested for the marginalized others in the state formation and nation building processes and for Modern Ethiopia itself. An inclusive and pluriversal

Transmodern Ethiopia necessitates the former as the basic precondition of its establishment. The latter, liberation of the Modern Ethiopia, is recommended as it was the outcome of the influence of colonial powers and global hegemonic European Modernity project.

3.1 Some Important Considerations

At the outset I want to bring some important points into consideration that may have relevance to the topics in this chapter and the next one.

First, I never assumed nation-state as the only legitimate and acceptable central unit for sociopolitical structure nor do have I any particular problem with this model. It is one of the options and any other alternatives could be put on the table. Suggesting a working model for the existing Ethiopian nation couldn't mean accepting it as the only option. If it is to be accepted it needs to be transformed into a transmodern one.

Second, I never presumed any geographical territory to be the only valid and single option that could represent Ethiopia. I am making suggestion for any 'Ethiopia' that needs to be established in togetherness. Of course, I have the current Ethiopia in mind because it is the one which qualify the endeavor to live in togetherness. Of course, I will dwell more on the characteristics and peculiarities than territories and forms.

Third, this work should never be envisioned in the sense of a call from the peripheries to the center, or from the oppressed to the oppressor or a kind of beseeching to listen to the voice of the *Other*. But beyond that, it tries to bring forth a working philosophical foundation that could sustain Ethiopia and its people. It is a humble trial in the quest of a kind of Hobbesian 'state of nature' or Rawlsian 'veil of ignorance' that could result in a stable state or a just bonding for those living within its fold. It is a suggestion that springs from a firm belief that the national construction needs revision and change. The suggestion underscores that the future of Ethiopia and her people is highly dependent upon their ability to establish a just order that could hold them together.

Fourth, the totality that is reflected in the hegemonic nation-state edifice is mainly political totality. As there is also a monolithic historical discourse that is manipulated to

serve specific groups, it is also a historic totality. It is also economic totality in which many are oppressed economically while some get privileged. Since these three aspects are highly interrelated, it is difficult to single out one leaving the other. Nevertheless, my main point of emphasis is the political aspect. Hence, I have analyzed mainly the state formation, nation building and nationhood ethos with which Modern Ethiopia is built upon. Therefore, my victims are those who are neglected from the national discourse, national ethos and political fabrics which defined Modern Ethiopia. It may be observed that I didn't give much space for the economic aspect. It doesn't mean that I am denying that. But it is not my main point of interest. As far as economic oppression is concerned the victims even may be within the oppressor's group. For example, even if there is an Orthodox Christian-Amharic national discourse in the nationhood, it doesn't mean that there are no economically oppressed Christian Amhara peasants.

Fifth, I concur with what Olatunji indicated as the tendency of philosophical investigations which, unlike other enquiries, are not following specific patterns and rules. This helps to deal with themes in a more flexible manner to come up with a final suggestion. And this "allows for wider and freer imaginations" (2011:13). I have tried to show how philosophical propositions may result in practical solutions. The advantages of the aforementioned flexibility are explained more in the following lines:

On the one hand, the eclectic nature of philosophy empowers philosophical enquiries to come up with novel ideas that sometimes challenge conventional assumptions. It equips and allows philosophy to challenge the conclusions made within its own domain and within the domains of other disciplines without undermining the authority of those disciplines and their experts. On the other hand, it has empowered philosophers throughout history to suggest aspects of issues, which hitherto have been taken for granted, or have been unimaginable, unnoticed, ignored, or unknown (ibid).

3.2 The Modern Ethiopian National Construction

The destiny of the Ethiopian state and its people has been an issue of serious debate. Many speculations are deliberated including the potential break up/ ‘balkanization’ of the current state, low possibility of a viable nation state that could last long, or a nation with extensive conflict and poor national consensus (Lewis 1993 , Solomon 1993, Muhabie 2015).

I couldn’t share the pessimist projections that doubt even the mere existence of Ethiopia as a nation in the future anyway. Nor could I share an innocent optimism that supports the sustainability of the current Ethiopia while it keeps on neglecting its others otherness. The third practical alternative is transforming the current status-quo by considering the other’s otherness and creating a viable state that could accommodate its entire people. This is what some expressed as, “the contemporary challenge of nation building” which is the ability of a state to integrate various ethnic groups without eliminating them (Solomon 1993:140). This is also the predicament of Ethiopia.

The real essence of what Conti Rossini conveyed as “museum of peoples” (1928) can only be guaranteed if these peoples are recognized rather than being assimilated or accommodated willy-nilly. A unity which endorses the ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity could only be sustained if and only if we are able to accept the other as other. This acceptance could be strong and enduring if it has a deep-rooted ethical foundation. Doing so results in a new stable Ethiopia with multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural polity.

The difficult task so far and ahead is to create an inclusive national discourse, cultural ethos and shared national consciousness that could be accepted by the different cultural, ethnic and religious groups in the country. The ideal model should be able to make the balance in sorting out which should remain as part of the national identity and which should be abolished. This model should suggest a transformed Ethiopian nationhood that makes the “golden average”, so to say it, between the old fabric and the new framework. It should also be able to show how to make the transformation from the old hegemonic

structure to the inclusive new one. As Solomon once noted, the task is “to synthesize a notion of ‘nationalism’ that transcends the old and accommodates the new” (ibid: 56)(inside quotation added). It is this model that I want to suggest in this paper as Transmodern Ethiopia.

3.2.1 Hegemonic Nationhood: Incorporating Others into the Same

This work could be considered as a critique of the hegemonic characteristic of Modern Ethiopian nationhood. It is a transmodern critique on the Ethiopian nation state construction couched with a critique of the project of global Modernity. European Modernity in general and Ethiopian nation state construction in particular are the results of an egoist hegemonic *I*. This *I* could only think of itself making “the net result [...] Self-discovery, self-unfolding and that process is ontology” (Irvine 2011:611). Hence every *other* becomes part of the same system losing its own identity. This ontology is “the ideology of ideologies, the foundation of the ideologies of the empires, of the center” (Dussel 1985:5).

In the state formation and nation building process an egoistic tendency of incorporating the other is reflected. It is this totalization of the Modern Ethiopian establishment that resulted in asymmetrical relations and unbalanced national discourse. The state formation incorporated many cultures and identities forcefully. This was observed during Menelik’s expansion to the South. The nation-building has also been tried through imposition upon those groups another culture, religion and language. Although there are differences in the extent and ways in which it is manifested it has been there in the regimes from Menelik to EPRDF. This centric propensity denies the *Other* and forces it into its own image, *the Same*. To use Dusselian expression, it is purely ontologic. Hence, it is unethical. Therefore there have been marginalized and neglected peoples in the process. These are the repressed parts from being included in the political totality of Ethiopia. “The oppressed classes, as oppressed, are dysfunctional parts of the structure of a political totality. They are parts that must perform functions that alienate them, impede them from satisfying the needs that the system itself inculcates in them” (ibid: 69). These are the exteriority of the system that created Modern Ethiopia.

Furthermore, nation-state which is considered to be an extension of the project of European modernity was modeled. Hegemonic totalization, which is a characteristic feature of European modernity, is depicted in the process of making a nation-state. In addition, the state formation is triggered and supported directly by European colonial powers during their scramble for Africa, particularly the Horn. Then after, modernization facilitated and consolidated the hegemonic nation building.

The critique is directed at the totalizing ontologic nature of this construction. It “ought to begin by negating the divinity of the fetishized absolute which negates the possibility of human realization” (Dussel 1996:11). This totality should be approached from exterior to be looked critically and analyzed accordingly. The critical look could never be achieved from within. It should be from the exterior; from the perspective of victims of the system. Dussel addresses well when he explicates as: “If the dialectical method allows one to be able to approach the foundation of scientific knowledge itself, the fact of approaching the exteriority of the system as totality allows one to be able to reach the maximum possible critical consciousness” (Dussel 1985:179). It is analectic method (not dialectic) that is used to transcend the totalized system because “by dialectics we only produce and reproduce totality” (Dussel 2003:5). It is when we could look at the Ethiopian nationhood from the perspective of the marginalized, from exteriority that we could transcend it. It is “only those who can interpret the phenomena of the system in the light of exteriority can discover reality with greater lucidity, acuity, and profundity” (Dussel 1985:170). This is the perspective with which the current Ethiopia could be transformed into a transmodern one.

To achieve that, both the Modern Ethiopian construction and its marginalized others should be liberated. That is why philosophy of liberation is invoked. The Modern Ethiopian national construction is liberated from its modern underpinning which is not “Ethiopian”. And those whose identity and culture have been suppressed with the hegemonic state formation and nation-building need to be liberated from its inherent totality.

Better than any other enforcement, an ethical enforcement, which considers the other as other, needs to be called upon to bring things back in order more effectively. This could be realized by considering a Dusselian ethics which bases the metaphysical revelation of the other. This metaphysical ethics is well elaborated in his three principles of Ethics of Liberation and used as an ethical foundation for the construction of Transmodern Ethiopia discussed in the next chapter. Ethiopia, which is neither the one we used to have, constructed as an outcome of modern metanarrative, nor that may result through a postmodern theoretical deconstruction⁴.

3.2.2 Hegemonic State Formation and Nation Building

Even if Modern Ethiopia⁵ was formed as a nation state, it is very straightforward to claim that the nation building is yet to be completed. As Gebru notes, “Ethiopian leaders have been far less successful in nation building than in state creation and consolidation” (Gebru 1996:29). The present day Ethiopia, modern multi-national empire state, is formed in the second half of the 19th century as a result of the incorporation, assimilation and accommodation of different ethnic, religious and cultural groups. From 1875 to 1898, Menelik’s expansion gave Ethiopia almost the size now it has (Perham 1948; Lewis 1993; Aalen 2002; Barnes 2003; Keller 2005). Bahru writes: “it was the unification of these two parts [North and South] in the second half of the nineteenth century that gave birth to modern Ethiopia”. He further points out that South is not used “in the strictly geographical sense” (2002:16). South represents many states and peoples that have not been fairly represented in the nation building. Different lines of arguments are forwarded by different writers from their respective stand point to explain the above inclusion of South to North. We have different narrations to expose the process.

⁴ Except some critical works such as (Semir 2009), there are no full detailed works reflecting the discourse postmodernity to Ethiopian nationhood. But as postmodernity “articulates a respect for other cultures in terms of their incommensurability, difference, and autonomy” (Dussel 2002), we could consider some ethno-nationalist works as such.

⁵ Some make distinction between the ancient Abyssinian state of two or three millennia and the modern state of Ethiopia emerging in the second half of the 19th century (See Markakis 2003:1). Without delving into the continuity-discontinuity issue between the two my work deal with the later.

In general, three opposing interpretations emerge in characterizing this process: (re)unification, expansion or colonization (Aalen 2002; Alem 2003; Bach 2014; Merera 2011; Mesay 2015). Accordingly each represents the process as nation building, as national oppression or as colonization respectively. The first consider it as a legitimate restoration of lost territories which once belonged to Ethiopia and see no injustice in the course (Zewde 1975; Solomon 1993; Admassu 2010). The second interpretation implies the imposition of a culture, religion and language upon the adjoining and pre-existing kingdoms, principalities, and sultanates of the Southern peoples and the injustice is categorized as oppression (Lewis 1993; Merera 2003; Alem 2003; Mesay 2015). The colonial thesis assumes it as a colonial conquest that forms a colonial empire-state (Mohammed Dolal 1992; Gemechu 1997; Asafa 1998).

Merera writes:

“Oppression was very severe, and can be equated to ‘internal colonialism’, a term preferred by Oromo and Somali nationalists with the agenda of separation and adopted by several Oromo and non-Oromo academics (Baxter, 1983; Donham, 1986; Holcomb & Sisai, 1990; Asafa, 1993; Mohammed Hassen, 1996). However, in the Ethiopian context in spite of the use of force in the expansion of the empire and severity of the oppression the various peoples of the South were subjected to, the relation between the conquerors and the conquered resembles more the relations among various groups constituting Great Britain where the term ‘national oppression’ appears more appropriate than reference to the relation between Great Britain and peoples of her overseas empire” (ibid: 63).

We do have a variety of rhetoric and contentions among these interpretations and even within the respective categories. Looking into the arguments, it is possible to take for granted the intricate nature of the process. However, it should be underlined that the state was formed by Menelik bringing together different groups that had their own identity, culture, and language. The process resulted in the imposition upon those groups another culture, religion and language (Clapham 1969; Getahun 1974; Markakis 1974; Abebe 1994; Messay 1999). Moreover, the history of the oppressor was considered to be the

history of the country without giving recognition to the oppressed (Teshale 1995; Gebru 1996; Clapham 2002b).

Without delving into many of the issues, it is possible to point out the three ideological manifestations in the state creation process: Orthodox Christianity, Amhara cultural ethos and Ethiopian unity Shewa at its center (Merera 2003:60). It is not within the scope of this work to discuss the historic developments that created it and the different debates that revolve around. Nevertheless, it is possible to conclude that the ‘making’ of the Ethiopian state is achieved with “unequal terms in many major ways” resulting in the “existing asymmetrical relations”. Furthermore, the complications it resulted in called for its ‘remaking’ which is not yet achieved as Merera (2009) explains:

The struggles of the 20th century have been for the reversal of the same historical process that created the multi-ethnic polity of Ethiopia. To put more specifically, the class and national/ethnic struggles of the 1960s and 1970s that precipitated the revolutionary upheaval of 1974, the various struggles that led to the change of regime in 1991 and the ongoing struggles for self-rule and democracy are all part of the ‘remarking’ of Ethiopia on equal terms.

At the dawn of 20th century the creation of Ethiopia is completed and nation building, to some extent, started. The nation building strategy started by Menelik was consolidated and elaborated during Haile Selassie’s stay in power (1930 -1974) (Aalen 2002; Merera 2003). “Adopting the French model, modern Ethiopian governments attempted to forge cultural homogenization through state centralization and one-language policy during most of the 20th century” Alem writes (2003:10). The centralized and controlled nation building with Orthodox Christianity, Amharic language and Abyssinian cultural ethos as manifestations occurred (Walleign 1969;Merera 2003; Vaughan:2003). The consequence was incorporating many groups with diverse religious, cultural and language background into one nation and representing them with unbalanced national ethos. The included groups were not at equal terms from different perspectives. It could be characterized as a policy of assimilation and domination.

The modernization move, political centralization, and nation building in a more ethnocentric base were mentioned to be the three main contributions of Haile Selassie's period (Marcus 1983; Bahru 2002; Merera 2003). All resulted in a full-fledged modern nation with hegemonic tendency and marginalizing potential. This point is well elucidated by Solomon: "During his reign from 1930 to 1974, Emperor Haile Selassie pursued a policy of modernization begun by Menelik II. Modernization is a strong force which can either undermine or forge the bases of nationalism. The policy of the state under Haile Selassie was to create a strong centralized nation" (1993:145).

The nation building also continued in the two successive regimes of Derg and EPRDF (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front) with some variation. The nation building during the Derg regime followed its socialist ideology. Accordingly, it made some changes like abolishing the role of the church in the state (Andargachew 1993; Kiflu 1993; Solomom 1993), land reform (Pausewang 1990) and declared equality for the oppressed ethnic groups through National Democratic Revolution Programme (NDRP) (PMAC 1976). Nevertheless, Derg followed a unitary Ethiopian nationhood that didn't consider the oppressed groups either (Clapham 1989; Dias 2008). Brietzke observes: "In true Leninist fashion and apart from celebrations of local music and dances, Mengistu's style of governance was universalist and unitarist in the extreme; through 'popular' mobilizations, 'the masses' were to be emancipated from their nationalities as well as their class" (1994:3). Mengistu replaced "the monarchical absolutism with military Marxism as the ideology for building the nation" (Aalen 2000). It never appropriated the oppression and inequality the marginalized groups suffered.

The nation building that is proclaimed after 1991 during EPRDF was expected to bring about radical shift for the marginalized and neglected groups in the regimes that had been before (Abbink 1995; Asmalash 1997; Clapham 2002a). It was meant to free those oppressed and marginalized from the assumed 'prison house'-Ethiopia. It was expected to bring about "the end of an era of subjugation and oppression thus starting a new chapter in Ethiopian history in which freedom, equal rights and self-determination of all peoples" shall prevail (Transitional Charter 1991:1). It even declared "every nation, nationality and

people in Ethiopia has unconditional right to self-determination, including the right to secession” (Constitution 1994:18). However it was at its early stage that many observers condemned the vast gap between declaration and /application/practice (Mohammed Hassen 1994; Vestal 1994; Ottaway 1995; Leenco 1999).

Furthermore many have discussed the shift EPRDF made in its nation building approach to assume the one that was in the older regimes (Jacquin-Berdal & Plaut 2005; Assefa, 2006; Tronvoll 2009). Dias characterized it as “the emphasis on diversity and decentralization (...) was increasingly substituted by the focus on unity and on a revived and more salient centralizing trend” (Dias 2008:208). However, Bach argues that both the assumed “new vision of Ethiopian identity” and the “imperial inherited Ethiopianness” were part of EPRDF’s nationhood. What was manifested is “a complex articulation of these two conceptions of Ethiopian nation” using them “as a political and pragmatic tool to grasp and keep power, the “multifaceted” nationalism of the EPRDF was adapted and adjusted to new circumstances” even before 1991(Bach 2014:104,111).This could be related with the extreme centrality manifested in the name of Federalism. Moreover, a kind of unionist-nationalism tendency that is manifested with the current regime may also be ascribed to the above explanation.

Therefore the promised egalitarian nation-state was not yet to be born from the years long established hegemonic empire-state. And hence, Merera (2009) notes that “the ongoing struggles for self-rule and democracy are all part of the ‘remaking’ of Ethiopia on equal terms” which is not achieved yet.

3.2.3 State Formation, Nation Building and European Modernity

In this sub-section, I will try to explain how European Modernity affected the Ethiopian state formation and nation building making its establishment inherently hegemonic, oppressive and totalizing. It is this inherent modern identification that entails transmodern critique and transmodern liberation to the Ethiopian nationhood. Three points are signified here. The first is illustrating that the nationhood model is not inherently ‘Ethiopian’ because it is a part and an extension of the project of European Modernity.

This implies the neglect of Ethiopian otherness. Although the Ethiopian nation hasn't faced a colonial occupation, the nation-state created as of Menelik's time qualifies the nation and nationalism of modernists⁶ (Kohn 1945; Kedourie 1960; Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990). Hobsbawm's contention that "the basic characteristic of the modern nation and everything connected with it is its modernity" accentuates it (1990: 110). Moreover, the characters of modern state such as its homogenizing nature (Maria 1994; Gellner 1997) and its brutal means to form it and normalizing the "historical error" it went through (Renan 1990) are only few characteristics among the many that the Ethiopian nation could qualify. Donald Levine argued otherwise to show Ethiopian nationhood before modernity following a perennial reading of history (2011). However, "Levine did not succeed in proving [pre-Modern] Ethiopian nationhood by modernist standard as he set out to do" (Admassu 2010:40). Therefore it is possible to assume it as a legacy of modernity which extended to other parts of the world "through imitation, competition and imposition (Leenco 2004:43) after it was raised in Europe (Watson 1984). Ethiopia's case meets the first two (imitation and competition) if not the third. Therefore by taking nation-state and nation building as an inherent nature and mark of European modernity, it is possible to make a point to justify that the Ethiopian modern nation-state is modeled on the West. What Nugent called "alien model of a nation-state" for African countries also holds true for Ethiopia (2004:8). Consequently the ontologic nature of European Modernity, which is argued as unethical engagement in my work, is reflected, shared and transferred to Ethiopia. This point uncovers that Ethiopia, like many other countries, has not been experiencing its own natural course in the process. Rather it adopted a foreign model that needs to be rethought over and replaced if needed. Hence it receives a transmodern critic. That is why I recommend at the end that Ethiopian nationhood needs liberation before it assumes a transmodern identity.

⁶ The list includes earlier historians Hans Kohn and Carleton Hayes; 1960s theorists Karl Deutsch, Elie Kedourie, and Ernest Gellner; and as of 1980s Benedict Anderson, Eric J. Hobsbawm, Anthony D. Smith, and again, Ernest Gellner. For the detailed discussion see Özkirimli (2005): *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism: A Critical Engagement*; and Jacquin (1999): *Nationalism and Secession in the Horn of Africa A Critique of the Ethnic Interpretation*.

The second point to show the impact of European Modernity is their direct involvement during the state formation. European Modernity, manifested through colonial scramble for Africa, played considerable role in triggering and facilitating expansionist and oppressive mode of state formation. European scramble for Africa and particularly their arrival to the Horn triggered Menelik's expansion to the South. Markakis pointed out that the advance of Western imperialism to the area served as one of the stimulating factors to the expansion. Menelik's message was: "if powers at a distance come forward to partition Africa between them, I do not intend to be an indifferent spectator" (Markakis 1974:2, 24). Furthermore, the involvement of colonial powers in helping the Shewan powers by giving arms to subdue the Oromos and Southern peoples facilitated the brutal expansion. Their involvement and support have played a great role in the state formation that could have been otherwise. The contribution of European firearms in subduing the southern states is particularly emphasized by many (Holcomb & Sisai 1990; Gebru 1996; Asafa 1993; Merera 2003). Gebru informs: "... the Ethiopian state attained, more or less its present spatial organization during precisely this period [of European appearance], taking full advantage of European capital and weaponry" (ibid). Considering the above roles we might think of another arrangement in the current demeanor of Ethiopia without the intervention of European powers. They helped Menelik in making mode of expansion observed in European countries. This is what Charles Tilly described as: "the history of modern state formation in Europe shows that most of the population resisted the process of incorporation. It took heavy coercion to subdue people under an effective state control" (1975:8). This could be compared to what European powers did even to other cultures thought-out the world. "Europe's domination of other cultures was envisioned as a pedagogic action, a necessary violence, a just war, a civilizing and modernizing task" (Barber 1998:74).

Finally, the Modernizing endeavors by Emperor Menelik and Emperor Haile Selassie through their contact with European powers contributed significantly to the subordination of many groups and resulted in a hegemonic establishment. Merera comments "Modernization was initiated partly to facilitate the 'nation-building' project and partly to catch up with Christian Europe which the Ethiopian rulers sought to emulate" (2003:68).

This project continued and consolidated exceedingly during the reign of Haile Selassie (Keller 2005; Adejumobi 2007). He was considered to pursue much of the modernization and nation-building process (Marcus 1983; Bahru 2002). This very act of modernization served in cultural, linguistic and religious domination. Adejumobi rightly observed that “the metanarrative of modernity was channeled into Ethiopia” in a way that alienates and marginalizes other cultural, religious and ethnic groups. He writes that it was channeled “through the political center controlled by Amhara, and the notion of progress was mapped onto ethnic differences. As a result, the non-Semitic speaking population was compelled to transform or reconfigure its ethnic and religious identity in order to become modern” (2007:64).

Emulation of the West and the support received thereof helped much in the modernization process. Gebru articulates it : “It was European capital and technology that laid down the communication and transportation structure, totally transforming the means of coercion and enabling Ethiopian rulers to centralize, unify and consolidate the state, a pattern unevenly duplicated in the rest of Africa” (1996:27). Especially Haile Selassie⁷ “cultivated foreign alliances that provided his regime with capital and economic development and arms for his police and military” (Keller 2005:93). At the same time, it was this modernization process that marginalized and disregarded others from having equal access in education (Adejumobi 2007:64), being benefited economically (Bahru 2002:178), even joining the military (Markakis 1974:225) and other modern sectors of state establishment (ibid:251; Merera 2003:66).Therefore modernization, which facilitates the nation-building process, was another name for alienation and cultural and religious subjugation.

⁷ British support in restoration to power after exiled by Italians occupation and establishing a new modern Army, US military aid (200 million USD in twenty years) are notable ones making him one of African leaders who received large amount of arms support. (Sorenson 1993, Keller 2005, Markakis 1974; Marcus 1983). “Up to 1970 Ethiopia had received 60% of all American military aid to Africa” (Markakis 2011:124).

From the three points discussed so far, it is possible to conclude the impact of European Modernity on the Ethiopian state formation and nation building. It made possible the incorporation, assimilation and accommodation of different ethnic, religious and cultural groups forcefully. The exclusion, neglect and disregard of different groups was reflected under its hegemonic construction. The very ontologic and totalizing nature of European modernity also affected the Ethiopian nationhood. It is this very nature that is the main theme of this paper. Therefore the very Modern establishment of Ethiopia needs to be replaced with a transmodern construction which transcends it. That is why it needs to be liberated first.

3.3 Setting Ethical Foundation for the Construction of Transmodern Ethiopia

The totalizing construction of the Ethiopian state formation, nation-building and its respective discourse of nationhood has ontologic essence. This renders it egoist and unethical. It should be transcended with analectical procedure that overcomes it. Experiencing it through the perspective of the victims, the marginalized groups could achieve that. “To break free of their coercion and subjugation, we must open ourselves to the other from the standpoint of the other. We must think, hear, see, feel, and taste the world from the standpoint of the other. This is the analectical moment” (Dussel 2003: 6). Metaphysical ethics that is created through the revelation of the *Other* is implied below. First I have depicted this through a hypothetical fable forwarded. Then (in 3.3.2) the three principles of Ethics of Liberation are analyzed in a way that could suggest a just ethical foundation for a Transmodern Ethiopia.

3.3.1 The Ethiopian Other and One’s Responsibility towards Her

Let us bring a hypothetical situation that could make us reflect on the positioning of the Ethiopian *Other*. Let us make it a fable. This is to ground Levinasian/Dusselian ethical moment in a metaphorical Ethiopian *Self* and its *Other*.

Think of the first Ethiopian who appears to this land alone; enjoying and participating in a world full of excitements. Animals with their exhilarations, the birds with their melody,

and the plants with their verdure are all sources for his enjoyment. She⁸ is “‘filled’ with sensations: the satisfaction of feeding on the environment” (Beavers 1990:3). This ecstasy is not utilizing the world rather it is engagement with being near and in touch with it. At this state he is enjoying the world and ascertaining what nourishes it. Becoming aware of the one which ‘nourishes me’, she becomes aware of herself. A subject, the *I* appeared which is the subject of his nourishment, satisfaction, quench. This is the egoist Ethiopian self that needs to make everything her own. She needs to overwhelm the other to her own. It is in this state of egoist act that the *Other* human being appeared who resists to become part of the *I*. It is revealed declaring its uniqueness. At this juncture, “what she imposes is dependence and need, integrity and demand. Her presence, before it says anything else [to me], says ‘let me live,’ ‘let me be here too,’ ‘feed me,’ ‘allow me to share the world and be nourished by it too.’” (Morgan 2011:40). Unlike the former experience with the world, this unveils that “touching or feeling something is very different from caressing or kissing someone” (Dussel 1985: 17). He is confronted by an encompassing *Being* (the *Other*) that forces him to surrender for her need rather than trying to proceed with his enjoyment. This experience is what Dussel describes as “an archaic act (if *arche* is the origin anterior to all other origins)”. It is “anteriority anterior to all other anteriority” (Dussel 1985:17). More emphatically, “anterior to *Being* is the reality of the *Other*. Anterior to all other anteriority is the responsibility for the weak one” (Ibid 19). It is this moment that alarms the egoist Ethiopian his responsibility towards the *Other*. It is therefore a metaphysical ethics which is a begging of philosophy, a philosophy of liberation in particular. It is an ethics that precedes ontology. As Dussel properly defines it: “**Ethics** is the name we give to this calling into question of my spontaneity by the presence of the Other” (Dussel 1999:129). Barber underlines: “Before the *Other*, the universalizing intelligence finds itself perplexed and impelled to surrender its arms. The veneration of the Other's liberty is founded, not in reason or logos, in intuition or comprehension, but in the confidence that affirms the *Other* as prior, anterior to oneself” (1998:44).

⁸ I deliberately switch between feminine and masculine in this section using both *she* and *he* to denote the Ethiopian *Self*. I don't want to assume a *she* or a *he*. The *Other* is left as *she*.

It is at this moment that he accepts that he is with the other for whom he should care for. It is this one what is described as acting towards the other as other. In Levinas' terms, this is becoming 'hostage to the other' (Levinas 1981:125). I will call this moment being *in the state of accepting the metaphysical exteriority of the other Ethiopian*⁹. It is this primordial state of accepting responsibility that compels us all Ethiopians to think ethically towards the other. This responsibility "is neither *sympathy*, which remains bound to the eros of the Same, nor the *love of friendship*, which demands mutuality, but rather the habit of creatively putting oneself forward without seeking reciprocity, gratitude or gratification" (Barber 1998:68 emphasis added). It is with this social burden that we engage with the other we encounter. This "responsibility of the other obligates me to search in the prevailing system or Totality for the causes of the victimization of the victims, and this is the critical moment of ethics as such" (Dussel 1999:131). It is this responsibility that Dussel points out:

Responsibility is obsession for the other; it is linkage with the other's exteriority; it entails exposing oneself to traumatization, prison, even death. Heroes of liberation (not the heroes of the ancient expansionist homeland), antiheroes of the system, put their life forward and risk it. Re-responsibility is thus supreme valor, incorruptible strength (2.6.8), wisdom, authentic clairvoyance of the structures of totality. (Dussel 1985:60)

The Ethiopian Other "...is what I myself am not. The *Other* is this, not because of the *Other's* character, or physiognomy, or psychology, but because of the Other's very alterity. The Other is, for example, the weak, the poor, 'the orphan and the widow,' whereas I am the rich or the powerful" (Levinas 1987:83). This is the beginning of the philosophical discourse of liberation and transmodernity in general and the beginning of philosophical discourse of the liberation of Ethiopia and its *Others* in particular. It is because I believe that Modern Ethiopian nationhood should have been built by this ethical foundation, that I argue it is a misshapen. The builders never exercised this state

⁹ The same expression will appear in other places to express this moment. We need to be in this state a kind of "veil of ignorance" that helps to understand and be in the place of the other.

of ethical consciousness and included every other into themselves without taking heed to their (others') uniqueness. Moreover, after its establishment, the same ethical consciousness has not been developed to incorporate those marginalized others. They are left to stay in state of inclusion under the same which veils their otherness. That is why Transmodern Ethiopia that is constructed from the perspective of those excluded should be constructed. It is from the exteriority of the builders, from the standpoint of the marginalized others, that this perspective should be sought,. They are beyond the horizon of *Being* of the system. This is the analectical disposition that needs to be addressed. This is the philosophical wisdom that could save Ethiopia because "philosophical intelligence is never so truthful, pure, and precise as when it starts from oppression and does not have any privileges to defend, because it has none at all" (Dussel 1985:4).

The above philosophical situation also implies how we Ethiopians relate with one another. It implies that we are contingent and originally related to one another ethically. Nobody has the right and privilege to dominate anybody. The *I - Other* relationship need also to be thought reversely. It means that the *I* in turn becomes the other for the *Other*. This way we all are *Others* for whose wellbeing many Ethiopians take responsibility. We all are *Selves* who should care for the wellbeing of many Ethiopians. This is why we should be responsible to one another and need to construct a nation that is built upon this ethical foundation. Based on the ethical foundation, that is what I want to propose as Transmodern Ethiopia.

3.3.2 An Ethical Framework for the Construction of Transmodern Ethiopia

This part is devoted to discussing ethical framework for the construction of Transmodern Ethiopia based on the three Dusselian ethical principles: material principle, formal principle and feasibility principle. For any ethical goodness claim should fulfill the three principles (See 2.3). All the three should be in place for the fulfillment of the "goodness claim" for a maxim, act, institution, or system of ethical claim (Dussel 2013a: xvii). Accordingly, we need to have these three fulfilled to have an ethical framework or the construction of a just order, an inclusive system represented by Transmodern Ethiopia.

The material principle defines the goal for which we need to have Transmodern Ethiopia. It is “the obligation to produce, reproduce, and develop the concrete human life of each ethical subject in [Ethiopia]” (ibid: 55). By “human” we should understand the life of the human being at its physical-biological, historical-cultural, ethical-aesthetic levels, including even the mystical-spiritual level, and always within a communitarian horizon” (ibid: 434). Here a comprehensive aspect of human life is suggested. As we need to address the economic aspect to cherish the physical needs, we need also to deal with the aesthetic one to fulfill the psychological needs in the form of art, culture etc. It is based on this noble goal that we need to construct a sustainable Ethiopia. It should be a land, a nation, a territory in which humanness is respected and dignified in every sense of the term. All aspects of human life highlighted above should be taken into consideration: physical-biological, historical-cultural, ethical-aesthetic levels, including even the mystical-spiritual level. In its boundary this goal should be the maxim. In its fold each and every human being should enjoy the essence of being human. The principle should be valorized for all equally beyond their color, religion, ethnicity or social group they belong to.

Setting the criterion of practical truth of producing, reproducing and developing a human life is not sufficient. We need to show how this could be valid. This leads us to the second principle: the formal principle. This principle informs the importance of inter-subjective communication among the parties involved. It insists that the implementation of the material truth should be effected only after rigorous involvement and participation of the peoples of Ethiopia. No party should be excluded for any reason whatsoever. An imposed nationhood or unshared national vision is exclusivist, authoritarian and ineffective. Therefore all the peculiarities and details of the Transmodern Ethiopia should be the result of meticulous discussion and debate among her people among all who agree to rest under her shade. It is an agenda of all who chose to use the Ethiopian umbrella to signify their identity. A transmodern pluriversal polylogue is a scheme that materializes the needed inter-subjective communication.

The third principle puts forward that both (1st & 2nd) be feasible to occur in the particular context of Ethiopia. This demands to take the contextual situations into consideration both in the process and as the outcome of its achievement. For any material truth to come to effect and the inter-subjective communication to be implemented it needs to take for granted the Ethiopian context; Ethiopia with all its characteristic features and defining peculiarities. It is inside this noble land that we want to declare a heaven for her people. It is neither in an imaginary promised land here nor the one in the Hereafter to come. It is in the very context of Ethiopia that we need to materialize a transmodern paradigm, an ethical togetherness, a profound foundation. The goal we have set in the first principle should have appropriate ‘Ethiopian’ means that enables it to be achieved. We need to have ‘Ethiopian’ methods in selecting/deselecting appropriate means and convincing each other towards a workable solution. Within the bounds of the above two principles, feasibility is assessed for its capability to establish a **concrete social good** to produce, reproduce and develop human life in Ethiopia. It is under this principle that we need to reconcile ‘ethical-discursive reason’ that denotes what we want to implement in Ethiopia and ‘instrumental- strategic reason’ that implies the means to achieve that. If the first one is alone, we end up with utopian transmodern Ethiopia that could never be realized and concretized. If the second is not supported by the first, we are having a partial and exclusivist Ethiopia that has never engaged all its parties towards their common good. It is when we make appropriate balance that we are to transform the current reality to what we aspire to have: Transmodern Ethiopia.

The “good” represented as a system by Transmodern Ethiopia is a synthesis of three “claims”: practical truth claim, validity claim and feasibility claim. It makes human life (with all its dimensions) a “criterion for truth (and falsity)”. This is its first principle. To be good it needs the incorporation of the second, formal: “the freedom, autonomy and consensus of subjects, without which it would become a mere vegetable or animal ‘reproduction if life,’ but not ethical human” (Dussel 2000:273). Both are interdependent and necessary. Their feasibility (effectiveness) is considered in the very context of Ethiopia.

Let me conclude with the same wording frame I summed up section 2.3 to show the importance of traversing the three principles to set an ethical foundation for constructing Transmodern Ethiopia. We need to have the *ethical-material* moment which set normative statements on grounded judgments of fact which have a practical truth claim guaranteeing the sustenance of human life in the Ethiopian context; the moral-formal moment which fulfils the intersubjective moral validity through the symmetrical communication of the peoples of Ethiopia with all their diverse identities; and finally the *ethical-processual moment of possible feasibility* that denotes the possibility the norms, acts, institutions, that we suggest should create systems of ethics which are feasible in Ethiopia. We need a Transmodern Ethiopia that guarantees *the production and reproduction of life*, with the involvement of all Ethiopian people and in a way that could work within the very context of Ethiopia. This is the Ethics of Liberation that makes a two-fold liberation of Ethiopia that will be discussed in the next section (3.4).

3.4 Liberating Ethiopia and Its Others

Since transmodernity implies a "liberating reason", we need to take liberation as a step towards making a transmodern suggestion. Here it is important to demarcate clearly the liberation implied. By liberation we mean freeing from any false universalization and unjust totalization that takes every *other* into its own and considers it to be the *Same*. Liberation is "the act of the oppressed by which they express or realize themselves" (Dussel 1985:62). It is this realization that implies liberation. Liberation is implied in Ethiopia as one among the "concrete levels of the Philosophy of Liberation" (Dussel 1996:x). Liberation put forward is twofold.

It calls for the liberation of Ethiopia from its construction which happened as a result of extension of the global European modernity project and the direct involvement and support of European colonial powers who also took part a bit in its consolidation. Therefore the nationhood needs to be liberated and reconstructed in its own 'Ethiopian' way. This never recognized the otherness of Africa emphasized by one of its known philosophers Léopold Sédar Senghor (1971:37) in general and the otherness of Ethiopia in particular.

Additionally and more importantly the liberation sought is the liberation of those marginalized others that are not included in the nation building process and hence not recognized in the one sided national ethos of Modern Ethiopia. As “every oppression has its ideology and each commences when it situates the *Other* in non-being”, the Ethiopian nation building considers itself *Being* and considered its others non-Being (Barber 1998:59). This is a Northocentric totality. It tried to define the nationhood only in its own image by depicting its cultural ethos as Ethiopian. It is this intrinsic nature and characteristic of Modern Ethiopia which is centric and marginalizing that necessitates the liberation. It is this hegemonic and exclusivist nature that dictates the need for liberation.

The victims, the marginalized, the neglected others should be liberated. They are the exteriority of the Ethiopian totality. There are many (in number) others which could be majority that are not yet included genuinely. Therefore the liberation needs to address all these people so that an inclusive Transmodern Ethiopia could be established. They need to be liberated from this totality and need to be recognized as other who will be the integral and essential parts of the new Transmodern Ethiopia. “As one of many historically located **social** and **intellectual** projects of **analyzing, denouncing, and overcoming** oppressive regimes and social structures, whether they are globally hegemonic (neoliberalism) or locally hegemonic (religious fundamentalism and local patriarchies)” Liberation Philosophy is called upon to address the Ethiopian setting (Mingolo 2000:42 emphasis mine).

Chapter Four

Transmodern Ethiopia

This chapter is a culmination of what has been discussed so far. It forwards Transmodern Ethiopia which is constructed on the basis of Ethics and Philosophy of Liberation. It is this construction, I suppose, that could have value for the Ethiopia we want to have in the twenty-first century and beyond. A Transmodern Ethiopia which will be part of a transmodern upcoming with “a multipolar twenty-first century world, where cultural difference is increasingly affirmed, beyond the homogenizing pretensions of the present capitalist globalization and its supposedly universal culture, and even beyond the postmodern affirmation of difference” (Dussel 2002:236). The purpose of this chapter is not to give an exhaustive account of this establishment but a suggestive indication that could help in comprehending it.

I want to emphasize the basic contribution of this work and its scope. It is fundamentally a philosophical critique of hegemonic construction of Modern Ethiopia. And it is an academic contribution to establish a Transmodern metanarrative on a different form or model of ethical togetherness represented by Transmodern Ethiopia. To that end, it is a liberation of Modern Ethiopia as a modern entity and liberation of its subjugated and marginalized others. This is the fundamental theme that this work needs to address.

However, it doesn't mean that it has much more significances. To point out at least two: it signals a call to transcend the tradition that is found to be counterproductive. Namely the ontologic political tradition we had so far. It also implies the need for cultural reform towards being responsible for the other. This may be on individual and societal level. It underlines the cultural reform starting from our political culture.

The chapter consists of four sections. The first section discusses points that give general framework for the overall scheme of Transmodern Ethiopia. The next section brings forth the basic characteristic features of this entity. The third part gives some distinctions and comparisons. And finally a philosophical pluriversal polylogue that symbolizes the transmodern discourse is forwarded.

4.1 Foundations for Transmodern Ethiopia

4.1.1 Framing Its Construction

Transmodern Ethiopia is never a utopian suggestion that is too ideal to be realized. This is an important point. It is true that it is a phenomenological engagement that needs to be what I called *in the state of accepting the metaphysical exteriority of the other Ethiopian* (See 3.3.3. p.69). This is not all of it. The ethical framework discussed through the three principles serve more than suggesting a philosophical criteria for an ethical system or institution. They could be grounded well to be materialized into practical terms. For instance, we may start with the second principle that assumes symmetrical intersubjective communication. We may think, propose, discuss different means to achieve that. Then we may proceed to defining the material principle that may produce, reproduce and, and develop the concrete human life in Ethiopia. Then this could be interpreted in economic, social, and political terms. Then we may ascertain the practical feasibility of our suggestions in both cases.

Transmodern Ethiopia is the result of deconstruction of the old establishment which marginalized many and reconstruction of a new one with deep ethical consciousness. It necessitates that all dimensions of existence must be reprogrammed on the basis of the postulate of "perpetual life" (Dussel 2008a:116). It never satisfies with making some superficial rearrangements to give 'recognition' for the marginalized others. It underscores the necessary ethical consciousness that is very critical to overthrow any totality for good. Political, erotic, pedagogic totalities are all abolished. Fetishization that could be manifested in each is condemned. That is why it originates from exteriority of the system, from those who never have any privilege to protect rather who have many demands to be given as a right: the victims, the marginalized, the excluded ones.

Transmodern Ethiopia implies the declaration of her people to be mature, clever and capable enough to creatively discover their own model of nation (or any other model of togetherness), development, and future which is not necessarily dependent upon or related with any other foreign model of construction. Be it the European Modern or any

other. That is why the transmodern suggestion necessitates the liberation of Ethiopia itself. This never excludes the use and adoption of ideas and knowledge that could suit its situation. Rather it implies using it after sufficient inter-subjective communication and critical deliberation. This is what the transmodern alternative does. It tries to create a platform for searching indigenous way-outs without neglecting the transfer and communication of available knowledge that is found to be relevant. Therefore the transmodern alternative takes for granted the accumulated indigenous knowledge, experience and wisdom of its people and at the same time utilizes available knowledge, technology and philosophy the age has come up with.

Transmodern Ethiopia is part of a new transmodern age which will make its goal the perpetuation of life in general and human life in particular. Transmodernity aspires for a world that makes justice its guiding principle; equality its rule; pluriversality its emblem. A world in which we may not be presaged with clash of civilizations; instead, we hope to see a world with dialogue, complementarity, constructive competition, synthesis or merge between and among civilizations.

4.1.2 The Rationale for Its Construction

Since the modern Ethiopian establishment is an outcome of the domination, marginalization and subjugation of many others, another establishment that presumes the recognition for the victims is needed. Because the Modern nation-state alienated many from being part of its structure while it instrumentally used their resources to facilitate its building process, another formation that recognizes the contributions they made in the process ought to be created. A transmodern Ethiopia that proposes accepting *the other as other*, as an ethical obligation, should come into the scene.

Because the cultural ethos and the nationhood discourse upon which Ethiopia is constructed couldn't express the realities of many who are under it; for the reason that the national fabric on which Modern Ethiopia has been built couldn't represent many that may happen to be majority, it needs to be replaced by a one that is inclusive and pluralist.

Because it was the European modern nation-state on which it was modeled and therefore hegemonic; because this model rather than being developed from within, was imposed and therefore not reclaimed; we claim that another foundation which could avert the above inconsistencies should appear. This alternative is what we claim to be a transmodern paradigm which could give rise to Transmodern Ethiopia.

Because it is high time that we need to recognize and pay attention to the emerging potentiality of other cultures, omitted and suppressed by the Ethiopian state formation and nation building process, that we propose a new Transmodern Ethiopia. It is important to recognize that the consciousness of those excluded identities and cultures is on the rise. Their appearance to the horizon shouldn't be threatening or terrorizing. It should be considered as a potential for enriching. The time has arrived that we need to include them as actors of their own history not as observers. This necessitates the incorporation and inclusion of these scorned cultures to the national ethos of the country. The transmodern alternative is an option before the worst comes. We should take heed that many are not willing to go through the course has gone so far.

We should admit that we don't have a well-built nationhood that could sustain the internal challenges. We haven't worked out many of our differences on which we are very far apart. Some of our differences are threatening and may result in chaotic situation and at worst what is referred to as 'balkanization'. To reverse this we need to search for ways which have not been undertaken so far.

We need to say no to the notion of 'the winner's idea should overwhelm' and hence we need to go to battlefield to prove who the winner could be. We have been witnessing and suffering the outcome of this. This course needs to be and is obsolete. We need to have more civilized way in making consensus towards a stable nation. We need to endorse the transmodern way.

4.1.3 The Method of Its Construction

Transmodern Ethiopia is the result of Philosophy of Liberation that gives it critical standpoint and Ethics of Liberation which sets its foundation. These two result in a

transmodern discourse which transcends the modern one and is different from the postmodern. The transmodern discourse which has “an entirely new matrix of values” for the twenty first century humanity is accommodated. It has hopes for the ailing humanity and so does for Ethiopians.

In delineating the course of Transmodern Ethiopia, what is done is not a kind of full scale demolishing and reconstructing a new one. This one doesn't go with the basic assumptions of the transmodern paradigm. What will be done is keeping the best of modern Ethiopia and transforming into another one. The transmodern suggestion never excludes all in the present national discourse. It is amalgamating the best of what is in the older establishment with the best of the creative out puts of the victims.

Not only the final construction what we call Transmodern Ethiopia matters. But also the process in which it is going to be established is a crucial one. More than achieving the material ethical principle both the formal and feasibility principle should be taken into account throughout the process of its establishment. Therefore the full and equal participation of all the peoples of Ethiopia is more than mandatory. We should make sure that both the practical truth and the means to reach it should be feasible to the Ethiopian context and situation. Equality among all groups involved should be reflected both in the process and in the outcome.

In addition, we need to have a firm belief that we are able to work out a viable solution that could fit to the demands and ambitions of all those living under the fold of Ethiopia. We should affirm to ourselves that the solution is within the reach of our people. In connection to this, we need to believe that we are in a state of desperate search for a way out from the knowledge, the wisdom, philosophy, and life experience of all societies, ethnic identities, and religious groups found in Ethiopia.

4.2 Basic Features Of Transmodern Ethiopia

Transmodern Ethiopia is basically an establishment based on ethical foundation. Its ethical standpoint is the metaphysical revelation of the *Other* which obliges to be accepted as a free *Other*. It is established with a goal of producing, reproducing, and

developing the concrete human life of each ethical subject in Ethiopia after it has been well communicated and debated within all the parties involved. Contextual situations should be considered so that the outcomes of its achievement could create a **concrete social good** in the territory.

Analectic method is used to construct Transmodern Ethiopia. This concept is connoted by the *trans* in the transmodernity to denote its beyond nature; its inherent exteriority. It is “to discover in the transcendental exteriority of the oppressed the actual “presence” of utopia as actual reality of the impossible, which is impossible for the system of domination without the help of the Other” (Dussel 1996:7). That is, Transmodern Ethiopia is very different from the one that could be projected, even in the future, by the extension of Modern Ethiopia. It is beyond (*trans*) the capacity of the horizon, the reach of Modern Ethiopia’s conception and destiny. The “take-off point” for Transmodern Ethiopia is the exteriority of Modern Ethiopia (See Figure 1 Chapter 1). To suggest Transmodern Ethiopia we need to think from outside of the Modern Ethiopian *Being*; this is “to think about Being from the exteriority that judges it” (Dussel 1985:58). This needs to expose the wrong foundations and assumptions on which Ethiopia is constructed. It “is necessary to deprive [Ethiopian] *Being* of its alleged eternal and divine foundation; to negate fetishist religion in order to expose ontology as the ideology of ideologies; (ibid: 15). We need to think radically to imagine a new Ethiopia that may result from the exterior other.

Transmodern Ethiopia is a multicultural, indigenous, versatile, hybrid, spiritual, just, and democratic one. It is multicultural: meaning it should well represent all the cultures available in Ethiopia. It reflects cultural ethos and national discourse in which all elements are included. This is not a liberal multiculturalism based on cultural relativism. It is a pluriversal multiculturalism. It is indigenous because it is an outcome of the creative capacity of all peoples of Ethiopia. At the same time it is versatile since it needs to be adaptable to the global and regional developments going on. It should be hybrid in a sense that it is an output of the hybrid wisdom, hybrid philosophy, and hybrid knowledge of its people. The hybridization is achieved taking into consideration the feasibility principle of Ethics of Liberation and applying transmodern pluriversal polylogues. It

recognizes the spiritual tendencies and values of the people living in its fold. The material principle establishes the justice and the formal principle guarantees the democracy it needs to have.

Another important point is that Transmodern Ethiopia should be able to uproot the oppression that is manifested in excluding some of the children of the country. It doesn't seek to change the way the exclusion is manifested in form. Rather it needs to guarantee that it will be abolished once and for all. It is not only making them free to the past oppression they have experienced. It is creating Ethiopia on a new foundational grounding which is an ethical one.

The transmodern suggestion commends a real incorporation that makes Ethics of Liberation as its foundation. It is not nominal inclusion that is indicated. It is an inclusion that should be portrayed both in the process of its making and as an outcome. An inclusion that presupposes an ethical acceptance of the other as other is underlined. What is suggested in the what will be constructed Transmodern Ethiopia is not increasing the "membership" of ethnic groups or nations and nationalities that will be enlisted by those who "recognize" them. This is the best that has been tried so far. The transmodern suggestion is a genuine acceptance of the values of all who could be considered to be part of Ethiopia and be willing to incorporate those values in the internal fabric of Ethiopianess.

4.3 Distinctions and Comparisons of Transmodern Ethiopia

The scope of this work is to make a critique of the construction Modern Ethiopia and suggest a transmodern alternative. It is beyond its scope to give lay-out of or a 'road map' towards the transmodern suggestion. Nevertheless, some distinctions and comparisons are suggested to make the transmodern suggestion more clear.

- First of all it is an ethical suggestion based on the metaphysical revelation of the other. It is founded upon the responsibility one bears towards the other. But this responsibility is not for the other's sake or not for certain gain; rather it is for one's own sake. This suggestion is structured with ethical principles that could

clarify its normative stand and help its materialization. This tendency is peculiar to it and enables to reconstruct Ethiopia with ethical foundation.

- The transmodern suggestion recognizes the oppression, marginalization and subjugation suffered by different ethnic, religious and social groups in the historic past. This is its basic point of departure. It is from their vantage point that the reconstruction is done. To assume this, as our recent history informs, those marginalized shouldn't necessarily fight for their freedom and come to power to enforce it. They should spontaneously be recognized and their perspective incorporated in the very fabric of the country.
- It necessitates our ability to think radically to go beyond the status-quo we are in. For example we may end up in endorsing a political system based upon one of our Southern tribes by updating and synthesizing it with liberal democratic values available. Or we may suggest a state construction that could accommodate our diversities and balance it with our solidarity. The transmodern suggestion implies to think Ethiopian nationalism beyond the modern ideological scope of nationalism. It tries to propose Ethiopian nationalism in a form of human solidarity which balances the pragmatic global trends in building national identity.
- It designates that all cultures have equal values that have much significance to the future of Ethiopia. It is not about giving recognition to the 'neglected ones' only. The concept of giving recognition has itself a problem of positioning one as recognizer and hence the other to be recognized. One is the subject and the other object. It doesn't show equality. This is against the transmodern perspective. It is beyond only accepting the other's identity as a member, nothing more as if to mean giving 'membership' to the forgotten 'non-members' of Ethiopia. The transmodern suggestion is a sincere commitment and a belief in those cultures to have value that could contribute to the togetherness.
- Its ethical dimension makes it more gorgeous than other schemes. Its ethical distinction enables it to transcend other systems and enables them to complement

their deficiencies. For example one of the failures of the Federal suggestion is that, it doesn't have a transmodern pluriversal discussion and action. It is put forward from power holders and it is being practiced with holding power centrally rather than sharing it. The egoist power centralizing political culture that we accustomed to overwhelms it. It also confuses solidarity that is based on accepting each other with homogenizing unification. These could be appropriated with the transmodern suggestion.

- Transmodern suggestion makes distinction between togetherness based on ethical consciousness and apparent willingness and stubborn call for homogenizing unity. Those voices for primordial and essentialist call for one Ethiopia need to reconsider their notion while the theoretical literature is discussing about “erosion of nations” even in Europe a place where nation-state was born (Smith 2007:21). They need to reassess their extolling of a totalizing nationhood which is characterized as ontologic in this work. Transmodern suggestion concurs with solidarity that bases itself on ethical recognition of the other as other.
- A transmodern politics in Ethiopia should reflect the need of the masses not the interplay of the political elites. It denounces the hegemonic political culture we had so far. It abolishes the political culture which legitimizes everything for the one who controls power. A transmodern government favors multi-party politics, free and fair elections, rule of law, power sharing. A transmodern economy doesn't favor capitalist corporations or state-owned mega projects. It favors downtrodden citizens and community services. It favors publicly owned social service companies.
- The transmodern suggestion accepts secular politics in a sense the state with no religious fervor to avoid fetishization of religion in politics. But it respects the spiritual values of its people. It favors a mundane politics. It makes distinction between secularization of state and secularism as an ideology. The latter as ideological engagement that calls for the avoidance of religious life at all.

4.4 A Philosophical Intercultural Polylogue towards a Transmodern Pluriversality

This is a pluriversal philosophical intercultural polylogue that could assist the transmodern project and help in developing a transmodern discourse. It shouldn't necessarily be thought in a teleological manner to end up with the creation of Transmodern Ethiopia. However it is a symbolic one in which philosophers and thinkers try to address the basic philosophical issues that could help the transmodern suggestion. Moreover it serves as a model in creating pluriversal polylogues in other aspects too. This model could be imitated in history and politics. It develops a pluriversal epistemic scheme instead of epistemic solipsism that we witness in many cultures and social groups. It gives lesson that the way-out from the modern universalism is not postmodern relativism rather a transmodern pluriversalism.

The basic framework for the pluriversal polylogue is outlined below. It has two parts. The first part suggests three principles that could help in framing it. The second part suggests a four-staged procedure for the polylogue. The procedures are presented appropriating the work of Dussel which he himself adopts from the Moroccan philosopher Mohammed Abdel Al-Jabir (Dussel 2008c, 2012).

General Principles of the Polylogue

Principle 1: The main goal of the philosophical search is to know how the wisdom, philosophy, knowledge of the people of Ethiopia dealt with fundamental issues of human life. This is what Dussel referred as humanity's 'universal core problems' (2008c). It is to find out more intuitions in dealing with the same and more problems the people of Ethiopia may face in the future. In his explanation:

“I mean those fundamental questions (of an ontological character that homo sapiens posed upon attaining a certain level of maturity. Once their level of cerebral development allowed for consciousness, self-consciousness, linguistic, ethical and social development (that is, responsibility for their own acts), human beings

confronted the totality of the real in order to manage things in such a way as to achieve the reproduction and development of human life in community” (Ibid:3).

Principle 2: We need to be very critical of the often told transition from the *mythos*, the realm of myths, to the *ló gos*, the world of concepts which is portrayed as a leap from the irrational to the rational. They are both rational but the degree and nature of rationality varies. Dussel explains, “there is a progression in terms of degrees of univocal precision, semantic clarity, simplicity, and in the conclusive force with their force with which their foundations have been laid” (ibid:5). The production of myths should be taken as first rational explanation of reality. More elaborately:

“From this perspective myths are symbolic narratives that are not irrational and do not refer exclusively to singular phenomena. They are symbolic enunciations, and therefore have a “double meaning” that can only be fully elucidated through hermeneutical process that uncovers the layers of reasoning behind them. It is in this sense that they are rational, and that they must be grasped in terms of the extent to which their content has a universal significance,” (Ibid:4).

Principle 3: We need to have a clear criterion in demarcating the philosophical universality to the cultural particularity. We need to promote that every culture should live its own values with the commitment of its universal practicality without any intention of imposing it upon others when the situation allows. Nevertheless, we should have the acid test to identify whether there is a possibility of that specific value to be adopted to the whole human (Ethiopian) context. We need to be able to make distinction of the particular element from the universal claim. Then we could be able to select from the ethno-centric, communo-cetric and religio-centric claims on the table.

Procedures for the Polylogue

Four stages of procedure for pluriversal dialogue are sketched below. Philosophers and critical thinkers of each culture are the ones who get involved in the following important stages to come up with new horizons that will make much difference.

Stage 1: The Affirmation Stage: this is the stage at which each culture gets the affirmation with ‘self valorization’ of its own values. At this stage each culture need to assess as to the potential of its own culture and study it systematically. This “requires time, study, reflection, a return to the texts or symbols and constitutive myths of one’s culture” (Dussel 2012:47).

Stage 2: The Stage of Critique: in this stage each culture is expected to look critically into its own culture and differentiate the strengths and weaknesses. For this one the philosophers from every culture should evaluate their own culture as to the basic principles and assumptions of its own. For this purpose, they need to use the critical potential and hermeneutical possibilities and the achievements of modern hermeneutics to critically look into the cultural values and principles. A deconstruction of one culture may be important.

Stage 3: Stage of Development: Now it is possible to bring forward potential themes and beneficial insights that may help in the process towards the transmodern alternative. At this stage the thinkers have clearly developed potential themes for dialogue from their own culture and are also ready to respond to the challenges that may face them from their counterparts in other Ethiopian cultures.

Stage 4: Stage of Dialogue: This is the stage at which serious dialogue could occur among the thinkers of different cultures. All come up with a common goal of the production, reproduction, and development of the concrete human life. The dialogue is now among those who are ready to look their own and other cultures critically and work towards responding the “core problems” of Ethiopia.

An important point to emphasize is that the dialogue also helps in liberating Ethiopian philosophy and suggesting a transmodern alternative. As Mingolo explains, Dussel’s project helps in “liberation of philosophy as one of the consequences of philosophy of liberation” (2000:39). Ethiopian philosophy should not be presented as if it is a philosophy of one dominant group. The hegemonic culture we used to have in nation building shouldn’t be repeated here. Another approach is presenting the list of

philosophies of every ethnic or religious group to represent Ethiopian philosophy. This one is not also satisfactory. My suggestion is Ethiopian philosophy should be present as a Transmodern Ethiopian philosophy. This one is refers presenting Ethiopian philosophy as a pluriversal philosophy after analyzing, criticizing and discussing how different ethnic, cultural and religious groups solve humanity's core problems.

As I have pointed out at the beginning of this section the pluriversal polylogue could be exercised in other realms too. A socio-political transmodern dialogue could be made on issues which have political relevance. Power politics, system of governance, economic development, social welfare, human rights etc may be points of interest. As well a transmodern pluriversal polylogue could be implemented to come up with a transmodern historical discourse. In this discourse rather than incorporating all the historical regions as a single Ethiopia and try to historicize and create futile hegemonic discourse, an “interregional system” of narration suggested by Dussel for the global world history could be adopted (See 1.3). This takes into account the contribution of all cultures that have part in the historic time line.

Conclusion

Philosophy is not only engaging in theoretical presuppositions and working on them. It also involves a commitment to the real world and thinking the context. When it does, it needs to be critical so that it could challenge, analyze and correct the status-quo. That is why we affirm that philosophy “is not only to know objects or to have ontic knowledge of the understanding, but it is also an ontological or metaphysical knowledge” (Dussel 1985:181). It is its ability to transcend the given that helps in creating alternatives and suggesting new horizons. If not, it will only repeat and re-repeats what already is.

This work presents a transmodern perspective to the Ethiopian state and nationhood. Transmodernity is a concept suggested mainly by Enrique Dussel which claimed to be a discourse for a new order. It is a philosophical discourse that asserts a need to make radical transformation on the foundations of ethos of modernity. Nonetheless, it is not a postmodern deconstruction. It is transcending both and synthesizing a new one. Dussel analyzes this concept through his Philosophy of Liberation which applies what he calls *analectic* method. A method that proposes a *metaphysical ethics* that could assumed to be the first philosophy *prima philosophia*. This method presupposes the revelation of the *Other* which challenges any egoist *I* and renders it responsible.

This thesis is a phenomenological exercise in looking the Modern Ethiopian nationhood from the perspective of the marginalized. It is fundamentally a philosophical critique of hegemonic Modern construction of Ethiopia. And it is a contribution to establish a transmodern metanarrative on a different form or model of ethical togetherness represented by Transmodern Ethiopia. It is a transmodern critique that uses *analectical* method of the Philosophy of Liberation.

The present day Ethiopia, modern multi-national empire state, is formed in the second half of the 19th century as a result of the incorporation, assimilation and accommodation of different ethnic, religious and cultural groups. Moreover, the nation building has been marginalizing so far resulting in the existing asymmetrical relations. The nature of expansion, oppression, and subjugation in state formation and nation building is hegemonic. Furthermore, impact of the metanarrative European Modernity in modeling nation-state and the role played by the European powers through their direct involvement

affected the Ethiopian state formation and nation building making its establishment inherently hegemonic, oppressive and totalizing. Therefore Modern Ethiopia is assumed to be a *totality* that conceals many others within it which are part of its establishment. It is an ontologic *Being* that could only reflect on itself oppressing and subjugating the *Other*. Therefore, this totality needs to be questioned metaphysically from exteriority, from the perspective of the *Other*. It is this inherent modern identification of the Ethiopian nationhood that entails transmodern critique and transmodern liberation.

Liberation is part of and a way towards the transmodern suggestion. Hence, both the Modern Ethiopian construction and its marginalized others should be liberated. The Modern Ethiopian national construction is liberated from its modern underpinning which is not “Ethiopian”. And those whose identity and culture have been suppressed with the hegemonic state formation and nation-building need to be liberated from its inherent totality.

The Transmodern suggestion is not privileging one, even the *Other* which helped as a point of departure, but is establishing a just order in which non is especially privileged but all are equally privileged. Transmodern Ethiopia is an ethical establishment. This means it is founded on the basis of the three ethical principles to create a concrete social good. It makes its goal the production, reproduction, and development of the concrete human life of each ethical subject in Ethiopia. It further involves a critical conversation, a pluriversal polylogue, inter-subjective communication among the community of Ethiopians which are ready to involve. Thirdly it ought to be contextually tamed and practically realized. This is what results in a Transmodern Ethiopia which is multicultural, indigenous, versatile, hybrid, spiritual, just, and democratic one. The philosophical pluriversal polylogue that involves the cultural diversities in Ethiopia is very vital and constructive in creating transmodern pluriversalism.

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