

# Intercultural Philosophy as a Viable Option

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## Abstract

This paper tries to show how various historical forces, intellectual discourses and interests affected intercultural relations in the past and the present. Furthermore, intercultural philosophy and relations which are suggested as one way out of the dichotomy of the universal or the particular will be discussed, along with its challenges and prospects. Liberation philosophy's significance in this regard will also be one theme to be assessed in this regard.

**Key words:** Homogenization, Hybridization, Postmodernism, Intercultural philosophy, Liberation Philosophy.

## Introduction

Any attempt to discuss the various notions and traditions in intercultural relations should start from explaining what culture is and what connotes it well. Despite the controversy on the meaning of culture different scholars have forwarded what they mean by culture. Among others the British anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn states that "culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, moral, custom, and habits acquired by man as a member of a society."(Kluckhohn quoted in Yu, 2002: 23)

This definition of Kluckhohn as compared to other definitions tries to be as inclusive as possible. It is free from the misperception of understanding culture only as material or spiritual (non-material) entity. Furthermore George F. Mclean states that, etymologically the term culture is derived from the Latin term for tilling or cultivating. So, culture seen from this perspective is about the creative potentials of human beings. Furthermore, this creativity does not limit its horizon to producing cultural objects, but also takes part in shaping the material, spiritual, economic and political aspects of our lives.

It is true that the various cultures of the world have interacted with other cultures having similar elements. Thus intercultural relation has a long history.

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Some scholars suggest that these relations of cultures could be characterized either in the conflict or cooperation model. However, some cultures have developed themselves beyond such a dichotomy.

Intercultural philosophy which is a new approach to philosophy tries to transcend the universal versus the particular dichotomy. It is critical of any kind of centrism, whether it is Euro-centrism, Afro – centrism or any other type of centrism.

However, beyond its attempt to develop a universal human culture without erasing human particulars, intercultural philosophy left some questions unanswered. This urges us to look for other ingredients which could possibly answer partially, if not absolutely, the unanswered questions.

Intercultural relations which are basically about the relationship among cultures are phenomena having strong relations with various historical forces and interests affecting its direction. These forces basically fall into two categories. They are the forces of homogenization and the forces of heterogenization. These forces include interests, discourses, socio-economic, political power and agendas.

This discussion of homogenization assumes that there is someone to homogenize and to be homogenized. Furthermore, the homogenization could take place due to different reasons. The presence of the process (that is to homogenize and to be homogenized) entails that there are non-human (man-made) factors acting via various structures and human beings themselves for these process to take place. These man-made factors are various values, customs, morals, laws, and different elements of the material culture.

The Forces of heterogenization in almost all cases are like guards against attempts to override existing differences in various human societies. So, they are counter claims against diverse theses and arguments trying to express humanity in a single mode. It seems that forces of heterogenization make much more sense when perceived comparatively.

### **Forces of Homogenization**

Although limiting the topics of homogenization and heterogenization to the dominating tendency of the West over the non-western societies is reductionist, this is the most apparent trend in history; still we should acknowledge that there have been attempts to dominate each other among the non-westerners themselves.

Let me start with the forces of homogenization and then I will come back to the forces of heterogenization. Colonialism which was one of the biggest events in human history, I think could be taken as the first explicit attempt to homogenize. Though Socrates argued that ignorance is the source of evil and the one who knows the good would not do the bad that might work always, for, as Aristotle says we also need what he calls the will. My point is, the Euro – centric claims of

Immanuel Kant and G.W.F. Hegel might not be all the results of their ignorance. For we have not yet encountered any philosophy developing a body of knowledge based on ignorance. Furthermore, being critical which is one of the attributes of philosophy and philosophers seems absent in those Euro-centric claims of Kant and Hegel. For Messay Kebede, it is less possible to give the tag rational for someone who exclusively claims rationality.

Declaring its uniqueness, the West exposes that the given self-image is also the result of its own invention. This becomes very clear in the attempt to reduce, if not eliminate, the influence of irrational and mystic thinking in terms of their self-image. Furthermore, Messay argues that such a picture of the White man is a distorted one, for that really is not what history in its various aspects tells us. As an instance, Messay mentions the Bible and other ordinary beliefs of the white man. As in the case of non-Western societies, Western societies also believe in a number of myths. This can be seen from the Bible and the white man's belief in dreams. To demonstrate this, Messay refers to Sigmund Freud, who despite his declared allegiance to Western rationality, attempted to give a "scientific" interpretation of dreams. Here Messay argues that it is not plausible to try to draw hard and fast lines between rationality and irrationality. Citing F. Nietzsche and K. Marx, Messay argues that it is with the acknowledgement of irrationality that rationality begins.

The discourses developed by Euro-centric thinkers, though not designed for that purpose, as some scholars suggest have contributed in some ways for the colonization of Africa and other non-Western countries by Europeans. It seems that the claim that blacks (non-Westerners) are inferior made both the Westerners to pursue their colonial project and the non-westerners themselves to be submissive to the power of the west, an assertion which is not all in all fair.

In showing the injustices of the West over the non-Westerners, I am not denying the triumphs of the West over the rest. It is true for the West has advanced in science, technology, in conducting different researches and so on. However, this should not be used to deny the great achievements of various traditions. I am not again saying that all traditions were and are great; and have something to tell and give to the world.

Declaring your values as absolute and transcendent of contexts implies both your ignorance and arrogance except in few situations where your deeds and values are totally non-human. However, forces of homogenization, by overriding the subjective colors of cultures and societies either attract or assimilate others.

In connection to this, modernity, I think, was one of the historical forces that attempted to push humanity to homogeneity. Modernity for the American cultural critique, Marshal Berman is, an era of constant transformation that affects all aspects of experience from science and philosophy to urbanization and state

bureaucracy. To be modern, Berman contends, is to situate oneself in the inevitable progress of history. According to some scholars, this equation of modernity with the new, the rapid, the inevitable and continual change is problematic. It is with emphasis to the new that modernity wanted others to change in certain determined ways.

Albeit represented as a universal emancipatory force the critique of modernity says, modernity is a refined and reformed mechanism of enslaving and controlling people substituting formerly used ways including coercion, religion and so on. Contrary to this Jurgen Habermas says, modernity as a project of the enlightenment thinkers embraced these notions of objective science, universal morality and law, aiming at rational organization of everyday life. He argues, modernity is an unfinished project for it tries to redefine itself through various instances.

Disagreeing with Habermas' claim, others argued, apart from material benefits gained from modern science and reason, modernity failed to maintain individual autonomy or knowledge of oneself. According to some scholars, rather than being listener modernity was working to universalize its particulars in the name of rationality, science and technology.

Though modernity outlined 'what ought to be', unlike colonialism, it did not force others to accept its 'what ought to be' which was developed and cultivated in a particular context.

The misperception of the new as equivalent to the west by the non-westerners also made the ground favorable for the expansion of Western cultures and values.

The proximity created by modern transportation and technology is also a factor in the way cultures interacted. Intercultural relations are affected by globalization. Cultural globalization being about the intensification and movement of cultural values all over the world, some scholars argue that, cultural globalization in its current form is leading to homogeneity or sameness than to heterogeneity. The Western culture, by transcending its particularity is to situate itself on the top of others.

Although some argued that interdependence, diffusion and flows are the main features of the World, Eghosa E. Osaghae says, this by itself is not a guarantee that there is equal exchange or mutuality. He emphasized the need to question which side of the world is engaged in producing and which at receiving these various structures, trends, patterns and processes.

A group of commentators named 'pessimistic hyper - globalizers' strongly contend, we are not moving towards an all-inclusive type of culture which really embraces the other's experience. Rather, guided by the cultures of the West we are moving to a situation where we are to end with sameness. Despite, a few

successful attempts to resist this homogenizing force of the Anglo-American values and consumer goods, their movement seems unstoppable.

Benjamin Barber who is one of the pessimistic hyper – globalizers argues that, this attempt to colonize and impose one’s own values on others provokes cultural and political resistance. In support of his claim, Barber presents the confrontation between Macworld, which he thought is a product of a superficial American popular culture assembled in the 1950’s and 60’, driven by expansionist commercial interests; and the rejection of this homogenizing force by the Jihadists and Jihad. Barber says “Fuelled by opposing universal aspirations, Jihad and Macworld are locked in a bitter cultural struggle for popular allegiance,” (Steger, 2003: 73) However, Barber says, both sides basically reflect elements of undemocratic participation for they equally override civil liberties, thus jeopardizing global democratic episode.

Unlike the pessimistic hyper-globalizers, optimistic hyper-globalizers take homogeneity as something good. Among others Francis Fukuyama accepts the expansion of Anglo-American values as something good. This is mainly because this expansion is seen as the expansion of democracy and free market. People like Ronald Robertson refraining from both sides tell us that cultural globalization will end neither in sameness nor difference rather in hybridization.

A hybrid identity, Jan Aart Scholte states, draws from several different sources so that no single marker holds clear and consistent primacy over others. Scholte emphasized that this idea of hybridization is not a new phenomenon. In earlier times too, people were part of and practice collective identities. Showing the tendencies in the blend of cultures Scholte states:

A Fijian citizen of Indian descent works in Paris for a US based accountancy firm: who is she? What collective identity do we ascribe to the computer programmer (sitting behind me in a flight from Chicago to London) who moves between South Africa, Western Europe and North America, having no fixed address and never staying in any country more than a fortnight? What do we make of prostitutes from Africa lining Tverskaya Street, Moscow, dressed in traditional Russian costume that hardly any local would today wear? (Scholte, 2000:181)

Despite the fast changes in our cultures, I think, what people can learn about the others’ cultures has increased. This is mainly because of the increased interconnectedness. But, the problem that we could possibly have at this point is that this knowledge might not be enough. It is such superficial understanding of the others’ cultures that causes troubles and conflicts both with the others’ cultures, and even when we try to import and use the others’ cultural elements.

### **In favor of Diversity**

As historical forces which are part of the academia and the historical and socio-political life of human beings, modernity, the myths of the West, globalization and capitalism pushed the non-Western part of humanity to be part of this process. As K. Marx says, “In one word, it [capitalism] creates a world after its own image”. (Marx 1976: 112) One of the central ideas of globalization is that of turning the world into “a global village”. In connection to this we can say that there are globalizers and the globalized. These processes in general are both intellectual and historical forces that pushed those outside of these processes to a destination about which they are less certain. It is true that modernity did not begin in Africa. But, you see Africa and Africans trying to make themselves part of this historical phenomenon. In connection to this, there is this question whether the West intentionally developed these forces to dominate others. In this regard we can see two possible alternatives.

On the one hand, there were thinkers who argued that Europe is the most developed part of humanity. So that European values should be made part of one’s value system. And others should pass via the same route so that they can be fully developed, though what best means is still in question. Such a position can be seen as an intentional attempt to assert dominance from one side. So, western culture is universalized following both the intentional and unintentional routes.

Presenting arguments in a way that it only tells the intentionality of the West in dominating the rest would be unfair, for there are also other factors to be considered. First, we should acknowledge that, the West is very powerful in many aspects of our lives. This has given the West the power to drive others in the way it prefers. Meanwhile, we should also not ignore that most non-Westerners resisted the Euro-centric homogenizing forces weakly and less responsibly. So, the notion of intentionality can be taken or seen from both perspectives.

In general, it was against the background of Euro-centrism and imposed homogenization that, postmodernism, cultural relativism, multiculturalism and hermeneutics tried to establish themselves at a level of discourse and in certain ways, as historical forces.

Postmodernism as some scholars say is a critique of modernity. In connection to this, it tried to break away from many of the traditions that modernity established. Defining postmodernity in an uncontroversial way is difficult for it embraces a number of elements in it. The way the philosopher perceives postmodernism is different from the way the political scientist or the theologian does.

It evokes ideas of irony, disruption, difference, discontinuity, playfulness, parody, hyper-reality and simulation. It has been, for some, a radicalization of modern art that has pushed avant-garde experimentation to new limits and for others a democratization of cultural studies that has allowed critics to pay much attention to, and place as much value in popular entertainment as it does the old masters. (Malpas, 2005:7)

The promotion and celebration of multiple stories is what is central to the postmodernist thought. The effectiveness and validity of these stories are not determined by transcendental grounds. Christopher Butler in this regard says, postmodernism consists of a highly critical epistemology, and is strongly opposed to any doctrine that tries to have an overarching position. Butler characterized the postmodern generation as skeptical of many things including the truths offered by religion or theology, capitalism and also American 'imperialist' inconspicuous movements.

Postmodernists, especially skeptical postmodernists are against objective criteria of judgment including consistency, coherence, data based theory, and so on. "Postmodernists seek not to dispense knowledge but rather to provide a basis for people to decide for themselves because truth outside the individual, independent of language, is impossible." (Jaquard in Marie, 1992:134)

Postmodernism as a discourse attempting to make itself part of the historical process or continuum, tried to restore the notion of diversity of human values and standards of judgment. In general it tried to associate the being of the oneself with one's own world or horizon. In modernity, apart from those who are originally part of this event, others were both pushed and attracted to make themselves part of a new world without fully understanding what this world is and its relationship to their world.

Postmodernity's skeptical attitude brought into question many of the things which remained unquestioned in modernity. Modern science and its truths were also subject to the skepticism of the postmodernists. Postmodernists were against the privilege given to modern science. This is mainly because modern science is one of the stories among the diversity of stories. So, treating scientific truths and claims as the only one while we have many competing theories is incorrect. This thesis of the postmodernists has definitely re-established the notion of diversity. So, the competition in this case would not be among the West and non-Westerners rather among the Westerners themselves. There are not only two sides competing but many sides with their own voices. Truth is not to be decided objectively by someone. Rather, socio-cultural, political and historical forces are part of this process of the construction of truth. Here I am not entirely denying that science can still tell certain things objectively.

The notion of diversity, which is more general in postmodernism, is made more specific in cultural relativism, which is particularly about culture and its elements. According to Rosado, cultural relativism is, “the idea that each culture or ethnic group is to be evaluated on the basis of its own values and norms of behavior and not on the basis of those of another culture or ethnic group.” (Rosado, 1994:4)

Cultural relativism while acknowledging the diversity of human values, like postmodernism, failed to forward what the next step should be. We can contend that cultural relativism and postmodernism have re-established a place for the others and their values. But, what about the other’s relation with others having similar and different values? Would it be possible to remain in one’s own box or cage? Is that the way cultures and value systems have been working?

Sarah Song states, “Multiculturalism is a body of political philosophy about the proper way to respond to cultural and religious diversity.” (Song 2010: 1) Given that this is the case, moving a step further implies how this notion of diversity should function in a world composed of diverse voices. Rather than simply trying to establish this notion of diversity, multiculturalism tries to show how one should relate himself/herself to his/her other equivalents.

According to some scholars, there are still problems in really knowing each other in a multicultural society. Rather than getting closer to each other and learning from each other’s experiences, cultures and multicultural societies try to remain in their own horizon while acknowledging and respecting the other’s world. What is strong here is recognition rather than mutual enlightenment. So as compared to intercultural philosophy, which is about mutual enlightenment among cultures, multiculturalism could be said to be one step behind.

It seems that it is with similar intention, that hermeneutics being the art of interpretation, says understanding is not only about reaching consensus. But if not, the implication is, either an agreement is reached through understanding or the failure to reach agreement should be explained in terms of an objectifying account of the other. In connection to this, Hans Herbert Kogler suggests, substantial equality which is mainly expressed in terms of agreement on basic assumptions should not be taken as a criterion in the process of recognizing the other. If this is the case, the other is simply the mirror image of the self. And this brings into question the re-establishment and the being of the other.

The equality of the other should entail its acceptance as a historical-cultural and unique part of a large global society rather than limiting its recognition to a substantial commonality of shared truth. This notion of moral recognition of the other has opened up the dimension of acceptance. According to Kogler, what is important is a hermeneutic competence that allows us to see things with the eyes

of the other and to admit such perceptions as “situationally valid” despite their inconsistency with our views.

Given the background of historical situatedness of meaning one may contend, a genuine hermeneutic task should dwell on opening up and emptying this situatedness in the process of reconstructing the original meaning, as it makes sense to the contemporary reader or actor. Furthermore, it would be a paradox for any hermeneutic process, if it fails to admit its own historical situatedness because, hermeneutically produced knowledge is characterized by an eliminable perspectivity that emerges from the positionality of the interpreter. It is this perspectivity that enables such historical knowledge as such.

It is this embeddedness of a discourse in a horizon that enables the other to speak about itself from the perspectives that s/he constructed by herself/himself. The denial of such embeddedness and perspectivity in some ways is a manifestation of an imposition or objectification of the other.

As compared to hermeneutics, intercultural philosophy and multiculturalism; postmodernism and cultural relativism restricted themselves only to describing ‘what is’ in a narrow sense. By this I mean both postmodernism and cultural relativism seem to forget that relation among cultures is inevitable. It is true that this relationship of cultures is affected by a number of factors all of which need to be taken into account.

In hermeneutics, multiculturalism and intercultural philosophy apart from establishing the particular, there is an attempt to understand the other, its stand and one’s relationship with the other in a more strong sense. But, it is true that all three are not the same in the way and effort they exert to actualize mutual understanding and enlightenment. In intercultural philosophy apart from recognizing the other, there is a project which is of a common agenda to include all cultures in parts of the whole. This common agenda is a mutual enlightenment via an all-inclusive polylogue. A polylogue when compared to a dialogue could possibly achieve more. It is capable of involving multiple voices and participants. The term ‘poly’ itself implies the diversity and multiplicity of the participants. It also shows that there is a seat for anyone capable of entering into the conversation.

In philosophy we always continue with those unanswered basic questions for those questions with a definite answer establish themselves as a science. I think it is this lack of conclusive argument that gave birth to intercultural philosophy. The argument launched both from those who are in favor of a homogeneous culture and those who tend to defend heterogeneity fail to consider that we, as agents of culture, interact and that this interaction goes in a certain direction.

Any intentional attempt to homogenize cannot be seen differently from an attempt to colonize. Especially, in situations where those who are to be colonized

have their own way of learning, clothing, dinning, relating themselves to nature and so on. With regard to this, someone could say that, the expansion of modern European education in Africa is colonization. Given the above argument I would like to say yes it is colonization, for these people used to have their own way of being. But, it should not be forgotten that there could be knowledge and wisdom exchanged among a diversity of traditions and people.

I do not think that imposed homogenization is a good option, for it destroys the `goods` of others. As I have discussed earlier, homogenization could come from two directions. On the one hand we have different historical forces and discourses that established the supremacy and paradigmatic position of few or certain traditions. Basically, a tradition's alleged greatness should not necessarily make it repressive, for that greatness would be brought into question by any critical mind. On the other extreme, weaker cultures may be illusioned and come to see the culture of the colonizer as the `best`. So, we have both the power of the colonizer and the `uncritical will` of the colonized. This uncritical will could be the result of ignorance and a trivial understanding of things.

Diversity is more defended by postmodernism and cultural relativism than enlightenment and modernity. However, this defense of diversity by postmodernism and cultural relativism fails to acknowledge the presence of intercultural relations and commonality among cultures. It seems that the deviation from modernity and enlightenment is a radical one. An attempt to deconstruct the project of modernity has placed postmodernism itself in trouble. Establishing relativism in a way that it cannot defend itself has resulted in its refutation.

As some scholars say if relativism has only been about cross-cultural matters, how was understanding among cultures possible in the past? Or are we going to say there was no understanding among them? This would be difficult for we cannot do anything without some mutual understanding. At least we have understood each other on some topics. Therefore, both the intentional and unintentional historical forces and arguments favoring homogenization over heterogenization and vice versa are incomplete for the reasons stated above.

### **Intercultural Philosophy**

It is with the intention of filling this gap that intercultural philosophy as a new orientation in philosophy came into being. However, there is thus a question whether intercultural philosophy is a new branch or orientation of philosophy. According to Franz Martin Wimmer, philosophy should go beyond its western constructed cage, if it is to answer the questions of humanity. It is such capacity to transcend particularity that enables philosophy to realize authentic globalization. Thus there has always been an intercultural aspect in every authentic philosophy.

Intercultural philosophy, Adhar Ram Mall says, is an attitude, conviction and insight. “No philosophy is the philosophy, and no culture is the culture. Such an insight accompanies all of the different philosophies and cultures and prevents them from being absolutizing themselves” (Mall, 2000:15)

For Mall, truth claims of absolute nature are violent. An intercultural society which is driven by the idea of shared values (unity) without sameness is preferable than merely multicultural society. This is because a multicultural society dreams of static identity where cultures remain in their purity.

Intercultural philosophy, representing a different spirit of emancipation than the one in the enlightenment period, aims at reconstructing the distorted picture of philosophy. It needs for the history of philosophy to be rewritten in a non-Eurocentric way or with an intercultural orientation. In connection to this, Mall wants us to strictly distinguish having a center from being centeristic.

Whoever thinks a universal logos, reason, culture, philosophy, and religion are to be fully and exclusively realized in one particular tradition-whether European or non-European- does not accept the independent reality of the other and jeopardizes a cross-cultural understanding. Truth is nobody's possession alone, and it does not favor one particular *Weltanschauung* exclusively. The availability and non-availability of one ultimate Truth, if there is one, go hand in hand and teach us to be diffident in our claim of possessing the Truth alone. (Mall, 2000:23)

Intercultural philosophy in its orientations tried to bring together the dispersed parts of the ‘ought to be’ whole. Intercultural philosophy, after having tried to deconstruct Euro-centrism, has portrayed how various centers should interact. So, we can argue that, intercultural philosophy based on ‘what is’, that is, that cultures are both similar and different, tried to project, what their, ought to be should be. That is why it is a new orientation with one step ahead, as compared to cultural relativism and postmodernism.

Though it is not unique to intercultural philosophy, like postmodernism, cultural relativism, hermeneutics and multiculturalism it has affirmed particularity. It also has made a way as to how these particulars or many centers/voices interact. Instead of taking culture as a self-intelligible system, intercultural philosophy takes it to be a system to be enlightened more via an inclusive as possible polylogue. I think that is why the question of standard is more contestable in cultural relativism and postmodernism than in intercultural philosophy. Cultural relativism and postmodernism tend more to focus on and lead to disagreement than intercultural philosophy. The attempt should not always

be about constructing an anti-thesis. Having an anti-thesis is not the only way rather one of the ways to deconstruct imposition.

A whole with incomplete parts is less perfect. Therefore, we know more, the more we know each other and the more we discuss. Our knowledge could be both renewed and become better the more we are close to each other. In connection to this, mutual enrichment and enlightenment is more likely in intercultural philosophy than in postmodernism, cultural relativism and multiculturalism, which tend to follow a separatist approach than making one-self part of such a dialogue. I think, unless there is an imposition, everyone should take the responsibility to motivate such a dialogue. There should not be anyone to allow and prohibit you from participating unless there are just, agreed on legal grounds.

Intercultural philosophy is not the first to deconstruct and move against Euro-centrism. Postmodernism did that too with a different fashion and earlier. Beyond deconstructing Euro-centric claims intercultural philosophy laid down the ground for how the intercultural relations of various centers should be. The projection made by intercultural philosophy is more plausible than the discourses in postmodernism, cultural relativism and multiculturalism. And this makes it more favorable than other discourses on intercultural relations.

If we are expecting something better out of the current relationship of cultures, intercultural philosophy should be the way. As compared to most of the discourses on culture, intercultural philosophy is better despite its idealistic assumptions. Though idealistic in its assumptions, intercultural philosophy tries to be realistic in terms of acknowledging all centers, and tries to be just by declaring that the polylogue should be inclusive of all.

In connection to this there are two problems that need to be stated. First, it is a bit difficult to have an exclusion free world. This is because there are extra-philosophical factors that create inequality among cultures or civilizations. In other words, the difference in power of cultures, which is manifested in various ways, is a huge factor that affects intercultural relations. Second, though it is possible to include everyone in the polylogue, everyone might not have something to say on the given topic. Experiences and the expertise of cultures differ. With regard to this, not considering these factors would be difficult. Not considering these factors would be making the same assumption with Rawls's notion of justice. So as to enable a fair system and the development of fair principles of justice, John Rawls introduced the idea of a thick veil of ignorance. A thick veil of ignorance is a situation in which the parties are expected to deny specifics about themselves, so that they can free themselves from misjudgments and development of unfair principles.

But, this seems unrealistic, in a sense that s/he who does not know who s/he is and who others are might not effectively participate and contribute. Such

assumptions are true in contexts where there are homogeneous forms of life. How could you act in a thick veil of ignorance while you are living in a diversified society?

Doing justice to all seems one of the focuses of intercultural philosophy. Previous discourses like modernity, postmodernism, cultural relativism and multiculturalism, though tried to maintain justice were exclusivist. The way they tried to construct justice has done a bit injustice to some. Postmodernism while giving a room for the marginalized tried to move against modern discourses, ideas, standards and cultures. It was a bit exclusivist. Cultural relativism in its orientation portrayed culture as something living on an island. Culture in most cases is taken as a complete whole which others from outside cannot criticize. Openness to others is one of the ways to 'cultural progresses. However, in cultural relativism the credit given for such openness is insignificant. In multiculturalism too, though you respect others' values, the respect and tolerance you have might not always last long; in other words, there might be a tendency in which you can exclude and undermine others. It is from this point of view that intercultural philosophy is advantageous over all the above discussed discourses on culture and intercultural relations.

Intercultural philosophy is ideal in the first place for we cannot have an all-inclusive system where everyone participates in a polylogue. The main reason for this would be the insufficient focus given to extra-philosophical forces.

If exclusion is the problem and this exclusion comes from some extra-philosophical factors intercultural philosophy should be backed up by some other discourse which can fill this gap. For that matter, I suggest liberation philosophy as a component that intercultural philosophy should consider. Enrique Dussel writes:

The philosophy that knows how to ponder this reality, the de facto world reality, not from the perspective of the centre of the political, economic or military power but from beyond the frontiers of that world , from the periphery-this philosophy will not be ideological. Its reality is the whole earth: for it the "wretched of the earth" (who are not nonbeing) are also real. (Dussel, 1985:10)

Dussel states that liberation philosophy's pattern of movement is strongly characterized by its move beyond any given system and it attempts to project a new emancipatory system. Liberation philosophy, for Dussel, always inquires who is situated outside the system, and as alienated and marginalized.

One way to eliminate exclusion to the maximum degree would be liberation philosophy. This is because, in the first place, liberation philosophy always asks

whether there is someone outside the system, someone who is excluded; in other words someone who needs to be liberated. Liberation philosophy is against an order that objectifies anyone, whether it is a human being or nature. It liberates not only the oppressed majority, but it also liberates intercultural philosophy from its hypothetical positions. Economics based on analysis of marginalization, exclusion and objectification of the other could provide a strong foundation for genuine intercultural relations as portrayed by intercultural philosophy.

If not intercultural relations for most part of it will continue to promote the culture and values of the have's to the have not's. The majority belongs to the second category; it remains to be receiver of different cultural units. Rather than being a creator and producer of its own culture, it remains to be a receiver of the designed output. This relationship whether it is in or among cultures represents master/slave relations than human to human or culture to culture relations. So, the relation is between two others. One is negating the other.

In connection to this, in his discussion of the notion of the other Enrique Dussel, a Latin American philosopher talks about two kinds of consciences. The first one is a moral conscience. Such a conscience is the one which is committed to the principles of a given system. For example, he says, someone who sells products at most profitable price to make more profit for the company s/he works in and takes nothing from the profit has a 'moral' conscience.

When it comes to the second type of conscience which is 'ethical' conscience the situation is different. An ethical conscience in the first place is one's ability to listen to the other's voice. Such ability requires one to be atheistic in Dussel's words. This is to mean that we should not be stubborn or have such a view of the given. We should not try to absolutize our metaphysical assumptions and beliefs. Additionally, it is necessary to respect the other in its otherness. We need to give the other the honor that s/he deserves.

Respect is the attitude of metaphysical passivity with which honor is rendered to the exteriority of the other: it lets others be in their distinctness. ...it is not respect for the law (which is universal or abstract)... it is respect for someone, for the freedom of the other. Respect is silence, not the silence of someone who has nothing to say (Wittgenstein), but of those who want to listen to everything because they know nothing about the other as other. (Dussel, 1985:59)

Dussel's argument on the possibility of liberation gives a crucial place for the idea of responsibility. His ideas on responsibility are very much related with real life situations of both the past and the present. Those who take responsibility for the poor, for the other, for the exterior always face punishment in return from those in

power. Those who argue for a new order are always under pressure. Dussel says, "responsibility is obsession for the other; it is like linkage with the other's exteriority; it entails exposing oneself to traumatization, prison, even death." (Dussel, 1985:60)

Liberation for Dussel is to take oneself out of the prison. Denying the denied and affirming the history of the person on harassment who may have been previously thrown into jail is important. Liberation as praxis is a quest for a new order, new structure with new beings and their functions.

The ethos of liberation which is one of the concerns of Dussel, is an aptitude for innovation. Such an aptitude for innovation emanates from one's responsibility for the other. The other is not an object rather it is a concrete person in a different situation. The ethos of liberation is not all about compassion or sympathy rather it is all about placing oneself in the pain of the other. This is what Dussel calls commiseration.

### **Conclusion**

If we are to have just intercultural relations, considering extra-philosophical factors seems mandatory. In other words liberation philosophy could be one important input to genuine intercultural relations and philosophy. If not intercultural philosophy will be no more than mere rhetoric. It is when we work with the excluded that we can be as just and inclusive as possible. In a world where the majority is powerless and oppressed, working on liberation is an issue that demands huge attention. It is when intercultural philosophy is sensitive to such matters and comes up with an alternative path to such problems that it could make sense or be meaningful.

It is when intercultural philosophy is concerned about asymmetrical power relations that it could be a liberator in the real sense. Furthermore, mutual enlightenment itself is possible in just communication among cultures. One of the ways through which this mutual enlightenment could be manifested would be hybridization (the mixing or blend of values). Neither imposed homogenization nor heterogenization is the goal of intercultural philosophy. Though hybridization is not the main motivating factor for the emergence of intercultural philosophy, intercultural philosophy is closer to hybridization than to homogenization or heterogenization. Hybridization, which is one of the directions which intercultural philosophy could go, is possible when there is a fair and open ground for discussion and knowledge of each other.

Hybridization could also occur in a situation where the participants are not fully conscious of what really is happening. Hybridization might not always equally contain the elements of the participant cultures. But, it is still hybridization. Hybridization if not done properly could result in some changes in

one's identity negatively. In other words, we will get more close to the other than ourselves, if we take much from the other and vice versa. In almost all cases, hybridization is associated with a new insight and something better. This is because; a hybrid identity is an identity having unique features while having the color of the original elements.

Mutual enlightenment beyond its intrinsic value is important in the context of addressing various particular and universal (common) problems. This enlightenment which is expected to be among all traditions, cultures and philosophies for it to be real, needs to be backed up by notions of justice and liberation. First, we need to have a just environment for communication. Situations of exclusion are against both interculturality and real, mutual enlightenment. The oppressed should be liberated from all forms of injustice. So, intercultural philosophy, for it to be more meaningful and coherent, should work in collaboration with the ideas of justice and liberation.

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