

## The Trauma Of Colonial History In Literature: Which Approaches In The Language Classroom?

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### Abstract:

In a context of historical and cultural tensions, teaching intercultural skills represents a complex challenge. This challenge is further compounded when addressing the trauma of colonial history in literature, which often generates mistrust and identity withdrawal, obstacles to dialogue and reconciliation. The central question of this research is: How can language classrooms effectively approach the trauma of colonial history through literature to foster intercultural understanding and empathy? We hypothesize that literary texts, by conveying diverse perspectives on colonial experiences, can serve as valuable tools for developing intercultural empathy and dialogue. The objective of this study is to provide a critical synthesis of key concepts in intercultural pedagogy and to explore specific pedagogical approaches for addressing colonial history in the language classroom. Our approach involves analyzing theoretical frameworks and pedagogical practices that aim to harness the potential of literary texts for intercultural learning, with a particular focus on the didactics of literature. By examining various reflections in this domain, this article seeks to shed light on effective strategies for teaching intercultural competencies and to highlight the role of literature in bridging cultural divides and healing the wounds of colonial history.

**Keywords:** Colonial trauma-Literature didactics-Intercultural skills-Language teaching-Memory

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary French and Francophone literature, writers like Maryse Condé and Alain Mabanckou delve deeply into societal contexts, embedding their narratives within historical and present-day frameworks to illuminate complex socio-political and cultural dynamics. This trend underscores the ongoing relevance of literature as a medium for interrogating societal changes, tracing memory, and situating individual and collective identities within broader historical processes. As French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu notes in *Les Règles de l'art* (1992), literature possesses the unique ability to function as both a reflection and a critique of society, providing a space where cultural, historical, and social concerns intersect. Through this dual role, literature becomes a "social field," a realm where the forces of historical change, cultural memory, and social critique coexist, evolve, and influence one another.

Many contemporary authors use literature as a tool to question and reframe historical events, thus engaging in what is often termed *mémoire collective*, or collective memory. In the Francophone context, this process is particularly prevalent, as literature has long been used to respond to historical ruptures, such as colonization, postcolonial shifts, and the traumatic legacies of conflict. French-Algerian novelist Kamel Daoud's *Meursault, contre-enquête* (2013), for example, revisits the narrative of Albert Camus's *L'Étranger* through the lens of postcolonial critique, shifting the focus to the previously silent Algerian perspective. This reframing not only addresses the historical erasure embedded in canonical narratives but also raises questions about the implications of colonial legacies on present-day identity and memory.

This phenomenon extends beyond historical reconsideration, however, to address contemporary societal issues such as migration, globalization, and cultural hybridity. Works by authors such as Maryse Condé and Kaouther Adimi, for instance, do not merely situate themselves in historical frameworks but actively engage with the complexities of modern society. In *Moi, Tituba, sorcière... noire de Salem* (1986), Condé examines the intersection of race, gender, and identity, invoking both historical and mythical dimensions to shed light on the marginalized voices of history. Adimi's *Nos Richesses* (2017), on the other hand, links Algeria's literary heritage

to current societal conditions, creating a dialogue between past and present to examine how literature itself becomes a repository of cultural and historical memory.

French and Francophone literature's capacity to embed narratives within a societal framework is not a new phenomenon, but its contemporary forms underscore a heightened sensitivity to globalization and transnational identity shifts. As argued by theorist Pascale Casanova in *La République mondiale des lettres* (1999), the modern literary field operates within a "world literary space" where national and cultural boundaries are permeable, allowing for cross-cultural dialogues that transcend singular historical or geographical frames. This global perspective informs much of today's Francophone literature, which frequently engages with multiple identities, histories, and cultural references, reflecting the realities of an increasingly interconnected world.

This trend is also apparent in works addressing themes of migration and displacement, which have become central concerns in contemporary Francophone literature. Authors such as Alain Mabanckou and Fatou Diome have long engaged with these themes, using literature to probe the intersections of identity, culture, and belonging. In *Le Sanglot de l'homme noir* (2012), Mabanckou explores the complex realities of migration and identity within the African diaspora, while Diome's *Le Ventre de l'Atlantique* (2003) examines the diasporic experience and the longing for both cultural roots and integration. These narratives, rooted in the personal yet reflective of larger societal issues, depict the fragmentation and reconstruction of identities within the context of migration, underlining the role of literature in addressing and articulating the tensions inherent in displacement.

As scholars have noted, this embedding of the literary in socio-political contexts often requires readers to engage actively with questions of historical and cultural awareness. Nathalie Heinich's *La Sociologie de l'art* (2001) posits that literature, when rooted in societal issues, prompts a form of participatory reading, where readers are compelled to confront and consider the historical and societal implications of the narrative. This interaction between text and reader enables literature to serve as a space of reflection, where societal complexities can be navigated and questioned.

However, when these historical facts or social contexts refer to traumatic historical or social episodes or conflicts still vivid in the collective memory, the relationship between fiction and reality becomes more complex. How can we approach this literature that evokes painful events without rekindling tensions? Can we reconcile the duty of memory and the desire for reconciliation?

This intersection between real facts and fiction inevitably raises the delicate question of literature-history relations. The novelistic transposition of reality questions the tenuous link between the reality of facts and the freedom of literary invention. Subject to controversy, this grey area is the subject of many debates. Can literature help to soothe historical antagonisms or is it likely to exacerbate them?

Several theoretical approaches emphasize the ability of literature to develop understanding of the Other and empathy between plural imaginaries. Nevertheless, teaching texts from various cultural backgrounds requires taking into account the plurality of learners<sup>1</sup> references without falling into relativism.

The traumas and injuries inflicted and present in this literature can breed distrust of each other and prevent one from reaching out to the other. How then can we integrate teaching this literature to train readers open to the complexity of the world? How can we explore the wealth of diverse perspectives without sacrificing the uniqueness of the works? What approaches make it possible to build through literary reading (Collès, 1994) a common culture oriented towards dialogue<sup>1</sup> and living together?

This issue aims to question the issues, challenges and avenues of teaching literature (Gruca, 1993) really nourished by contemporary intercultural thought.

The article in question is a synthesis of some theoretical reflections proposing approaches that can prepare for the teaching, didactisation or pedagogication<sup>2</sup> of literature in a specific context related to historical or social trauma. They offer multiple ways to address this complex and important theme, which rather promotes the understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity, by exploring different perspectives. This reading seeks to offer a global and coherent vision of a certain intercultural issue, with the aim of making a significant contribution to the development of intercultural education.

Indeed, in the field of intercultural studies, researchers recognized as great specialists have advanced solutions to facilitate its implementation. For this article, we have selected those that we believe are relevant and best address our issue. The aim is to remind him once again to suggest strategies that prepare for the assumption of intercultural competence and that draw on intercultural theories to promote intercultural training through literary texts.

Of course, this is not just a display of these strategies, we will also try to ensure their translation into concrete actions adapted to the specific needs of learners. The interest is that these reflections can have a real and concrete impact on the teaching of intercultural through literature so that learners can develop their intercultural competence in an effective and relevant way.

Intercultural literature is a valuable source of analysis and reflection on the challenges of intercultural communication. However, it is regrettable that this research is often only considered as simple intellectual readings, with no real impact on practice. This is why it is essential to implement these reflections and adapt them to the fields concerned. The process of didacticizing these reflections begins with the clear definition of the intercultural skills to be installed or developed in the learners, as well as the setting of clear intercultural objectives.

Also determine an appropriate approach and find appropriate content (literary texts and activities), which will achieve convincing results.

The starting point of this didacticisation process is an in-depth analysis of the situation and context in which intercultural education will be implemented. This will simplify the journey to the end goal by having a clear understanding of the direction to take.

## **2. Fernando Ortiz's approach to transculturation**

The concept of transculturation, developed by Fernando Ortiz in *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* (1940), highlights a process of mutual cultural transformation in which the identities in contact influence each other and create hybrid realities. Ortiz opposes the idea of a dominant culture assimilating a subordinate culture, and prefers to see interculturality as an interaction where each culture contributes to the formation of a new cultural entity. This model, very relevant in postcolonial contexts, shows how colonized societies transformed the elements of colonial culture to adapt them to their own needs and perspectives, thus creating a unique and hybrid culture. In literature, this idea of transculturation is visible in works where cultural influences mix, such as in the novels of Aimé Césaire and Patrick Chamoiseau, which reinterpret the colonial past through narratives and styles specific to the West Indies. Transculturation offers a vision of interculturalism where the cultural mix does not erase the original identities, but reinforces them by integrating them into a broader collective framework.

## **3. The communicative interculturality of Edward T. Hall**

Edward T. Hall, in *The Silent Language* (1959), addresses intercultural differences through communication styles, highlighting the importance of proxemics, i.e. the management of interpersonal space, and contextual differences in communication. Hall differentiates between cultures with a strong context, where the message is based on implicit elements, cultures with a weak context, where communication is mainly explicit. This distinction makes it possible to better understand the misunderstandings that can arise in intercultural interactions, as well as how these differences can enrich exchanges. Applying this approach to literature, it is possible to see how some authors use different storytelling styles and cultural codes to represent the diversity of cultural experiences. The characters who navigate between cultures with strong and weak contexts illustrate the challenges and riches of interculturality, offering readers a glimpse into the complexity of interactions in a globalized world.

## **4. Emmanuel Levinas' ethical approach to "otherness"**

Emmanuel Levinas, in *Totality and Infinity* (1961), develops an ethical perspective of interculturality based on responsibility towards the Other. For Levinas, welcoming the other should not be motivated by curiosity or simple tolerance, but by an ethical imperative where the Other is recognized in his dignity and rights. This radical otherness implies a moral commitment to the other, considering him not as an object to be known or integrated, but as a subject with values and perspectives of its own. In the context of intercultural exchanges, this approach emphasizes the importance of deep respect for cultural differences, placing interculturality in an ethical dimension of responsibility. In literature, this thinking is reflected in works that deal with the encounter of the other with a dimension of respect and openness, where diversity is welcomed not as an obstacle but as a wealth to be preserved.

## **5. Mikhail Bakhtin's Dialogical Perspective**

Dialogism, as proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1975), is based on the idea that each voice is in constant dialogue with other voices, which makes any interaction a process of co-construction of meaning. For Bakhtin, this dialogue is at the heart of intercultural interactions, because it connects different points of view and cultural perspectives, without one dominating or erasing the others. In the context of literature, narrative polyphony becomes a clear example of this dialogism, where several voices coexist in the

same narrative to illustrate the diversity of perspectives. This approach is particularly useful in literary works that deal with themes of migration and intercultural encounters, allowing readers to hear the contrasting experiences of characters from diverse cultural backgrounds. Dialogism thus offers a theoretical basis for understanding how literature can represent interculturalism as a space of dynamic cohabitation, where identities are transformed and defined through exchanges.

## **6. Charles Taylor's approach to recognition**

In *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition* (1992), Charles Taylor develops the idea that the recognition of cultural identities is essential for living together in a pluralistic society. Taylor argues that each culture must be recognized in its dignity and value for a true intercultural dialogue to take place. This mutual recognition makes it possible to reduce tensions and misunderstandings, promoting integration that respects cultural differences. Taylor argues that non-recognition or denial of a culture can lead to a form of cultural oppression, while recognition values identities and their contributions to society. In literature, this approach sheds light on how works from cultural minorities claim their place in the literary canon, providing a voice for marginalized identities and contributing to better cross-cultural understanding.

## **7. The critical interculturality of Homi K. Bhabha**

Homi K. Bhabha introduced in 1994, in *The Location of Culture*, the concept of "third space", where cultural differences meet to create new forms of identity. Contrary to a fixed vision of culture, Bhabha sees interculturality as a space for negotiation and reinvention, where identities are in perpetual transformation. This third space becomes a place where hybridity is at the heart of intercultural interaction, allowing individuals to navigate between their cultures of origin and the new influences they encounter. Bhabha uses this model to critique rigid conceptions of national identity and to promote a vision where cultural differences are sources of enrichment and creation. In the literary field, this concept is particularly useful for analyzing narratives where hybrid characters navigate multiple and fluctuating identities, thus offering a more complex and nuanced representation of interculturality in a postcolonial context.

## **8. Jacques Derrida's approach to hospitality**

In *De l'hospitalité* (1997), Jacques Derrida questions the concept of hospitality as a pillar of interculturality, highlighting the importance of an unconditional reception of the Other to overcome cultural tensions and allow authentic interaction. Derrida distinguishes two forms of hospitality: conditional hospitality, which is established under rules and laws to regulate hospitality, and unconditional hospitality, an absolute welcome that sets no limit to the encounter with the other. For Derrida, this tension is fundamental in interculturality, because it reveals the paradox of welcome: how to fully welcome the other without wanting to transform or restrict him? Derrida argues that interculturality must go beyond mere tolerance to become an act of surpassing oneself, where everyone is ready to question their own values and get rid of their prejudices. He considers this unconditional openness as an act of radical otherness, in which the Other is welcomed not to be assimilated, but to be recognized and respected in his difference. This reflection has significant applications in literary studies, where works often examine the tensions between assimilation and respect for cultural differences.

## **9. The thought of wandering and nomadism by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari**

In *Mille Plateaux* (1980), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari introduce the concept of "nomadism" to rethink identity as a mobile entity, evolving, and open to external influences. This nomadism is opposed to the notions of fixed and stable identities, and it proposes a dynamic approach where identities are distorted and reformed through encounters and cultural exchanges. For Deleuze and Guattari, nomadism is a movement of "deterritorialization" and "reterritorialization", where individuals leave their original cultural space to reconfigure themselves in new contexts. This concept becomes essential in a globalized world where identities can no longer be defined homogeneously, but rather as fluid entities, influenced by intercultural interactions. In the field of literature, this nomadism is found in stories of migration and exile where the characters continually adapt to new cultural environments, exploring a hybrid and constantly evolving identity. This approach helps to understand how French literature approaches the themes of exile, adaptation, and the quest for identity in a globalized context.

## **10. Merging identities**

In studying French or Francophone literature, one uncovers the nuanced and layered nature of identities, as literary texts serve as dialogical spaces that foster encounters with otherness. This exploration of identities



through literature enables readers to see beyond monolithic cultural narratives and to engage with diverse perspectives and voices. Such a practice holds particular resonance in contexts where historical conflicts have fragmented societies, raising barriers that hinder intercultural understanding.

Amin Maalouf, in *Murderous Identities* (1998), addresses these complex intersections of identity, history, and conflict, underscoring the importance of cultural dialogue in overcoming past divisions. His work emphasizes the deep, often unseen roots of cultural conflicts and the traumas that perpetuate them. For Maalouf, effective intercultural engagement must begin with a recognition of these traumas, as well as an awareness of how historical grievances shape contemporary relations between individuals and groups.

Maalouf's approach suggests a model for intercultural commitment that foregrounds respect and tolerance without erasing the distinctiveness of cultures. This approach does not call for the dissolution of differences but rather for an acknowledgment of them as a basis for authentic dialogue. By advocating for bridges between cultures and valuing intermingling and hybridity, Maalouf sets forth a framework for addressing the delicate balance between embracing diversity and fostering social cohesion. He encourages readers to confront and understand the sources of intercultural tension as a necessary first step toward building a respectful and empathetic approach to otherness, thus defining the fundamental question at the heart of any intercultural relationship.

This is how he introduces the issue governing this type of relationship:

How can we not have the bruised personality? How can you not feel your identity threatened? How not to have the feeling of living in a world that belongs to others, that obeys rules laid down by others, a world where one is oneself as an orphan, a stranger, an intruder, or a untouchable? How to avoid that some people feel they have lost everything, or have nothing left to lose, and come to wish, like Samson, that the edifice collapses, Lord! About them and their enemies? (Maalouf, 1998, pp.101- 102)

In his book, Amin Maalouf sets out solutions for fostering intercultural relations that are based first on the recognition of the complexity and diversity of identities, then on the recognition of the cultural rights of minorities, allowing them to preserve and promote their culture, language, and heritage. This can be done through inclusion and diversity policies.

-The first condition is that of preparing for changes: Amin Maalouf explains that changes can be perceived as a form of self-denial, which can create resistance, the change must also be symbolically consistent with the values and identities of individuals: "For a change to be accepted, it is not enough that it is in line with the spirit of the time. It is also necessary that at the level of symbols it does not clash, that it does not give those who are encouraged to change the impression of denying themselves." (Maalouf, p.100).

-Being sure of oneself, one's culture and one's approach: "To go resolutely towards the other, one must have open arms and head held high, and one can only have open arms if one has head held high, If at every step one takes, one has the feeling of betraying one's own, and of denying oneself, the approach towards the other is flawed" (Maalouf, p. 60). Maalouf stresses the importance of openness and self-acceptance in order to be able to move resolutely towards the other, to free oneself from many prejudice and any fear of difference. The fear of losing one's traditions or losing oneself in a changing world hinders any possibility of opening up to the world around us.

-Position themselves as "relay beings" and not "frontier beings" in intercultural relations and commit to building bridges between cultures and overcoming past events. Work towards reconciliation through the implementation of concrete actions targeting effective and respectful intercultural communication such as the recognition of wrongs committed, the commemoration of significant events in history.

-Meditating on the components of the culture of the Other that deserve to be transmitted; this is a key element for a successful intercultural approach, it will allow a better understanding of this culture and respect it, and will avoid misunderstandings and misunderstandings that can arise in intercultural interactions. This allows us to better appreciate the richness of cultural diversity. This can be done through the establishment of cultural exchange programs or intercultural training to allow individuals to discover the specificities of the culture of the Other.

- Avoid the adjectival discourse: "Discourse that remains of the order of discourse on the other and not of an encounter of the Other, of communication with. (Abdallah-Prétceille, 1996, p.29). This discourse is characterized by the use of adjectives that describe the Other in a stereotyped or essentialized way. This discourse can lead to a misperception of the Other and reinforce cultural prejudices. To avoid this discourse, it is necessary to focus on meeting and communicating with the Other, by listening to his experiences and his vision of the world.

- A renegotiation of the relationship with "the Other" through intercultural education that will be done according to the needs of the learners and is based on a simultaneous articulation of the affirmation of identity and intercultural dialogue. The first pillar of this approach to intercultural education is to allow learners to recognize and value themselves in their own culture, while being open to the experience of the Other. This assertiveness

makes it possible to position oneself in an intercultural exchange in a more serene and constructive way. As for the second pillar, it presupposes openness to the Other and the will to understand his culture. This will require specific training of teachers and trainers with the establishment of programmes that integrate this dimension.

## 11. Intercultural Thinking

Martine Abdallah-Prétceille's work on *Intercultural Education* presents a pioneering approach to intercultural thought, situated at the intersection of cultural pluralism and baroque aesthetics. By positioning interculturality within this framework, she challenges static conceptions of culture, arguing instead that cultures are fluid entities, constantly reshaping and enriching one another through continuous dialogue and exchange. This vision moves away from traditional understandings of identity rooted in fixed notions of belonging and heritage, offering instead a dynamic model where identities are in perpetual transformation.

Abdallah-Prétceille draws on baroque aesthetics as a metaphor for this process, using its characteristic blending of genres, forms, and influences to illustrate the intricate, ever-shifting nature of intercultural interactions. For her, the baroque serves as a symbol of the multiplicity and complexity inherent in cultural exchanges, where hybridity and cross-cultural fertilization become central. She views intercultural thinking as an invitation to break free from the "identity trap"—the restrictive narrative that ties individuals to a singular, unchanging origin. By advocating for this pluralistic and flexible perspective, Abdallah-Prétceille encourages an understanding of identity that embraces fluidity, intersectionality, and the ongoing negotiation of cultural difference.

This model of intercultural thought, deeply rooted in the recognition of diversity and the potential for mutual enrichment, invites individuals to move beyond rigid frameworks of identity. It promotes an open, dialogical space where shifting identities and cultural intermingling are not only accepted but celebrated. Abdallah-Prétceille's approach challenges the tendency to reduce intercultural relations to simplified equivalences or superficial tolerance. Instead, she promotes a deep engagement with cultural difference, grounded in respect and an ongoing effort to question and expand one's own cultural perspectives.

It should be noted that Baroque is an artistic style that mixes shapes and colours, breaks down borders and celebrates complexity and diversity. Baroque literature thus offers a meeting space conducive to intercultural decentering, thus becoming an illustration of the dynamics and creativity of this intercultural thinking.

Martine Abdallah-Prétceille's intercultural approach, known in the field of intercultural pedagogy, promotes intercultural exchanges. The author assumes that theoretical knowledge about the Other is insufficient and supports the idea that: "Accepting otherness and dialogue is an approach that requires a constant effort to question oneself and a perpetual struggle against any ethnocentrism, amalgam and preconceived idea." (Montreal Racism, Multiculturalism and Intercultural Resource Centre, 2005). Abdallah-Prétceille thus identifies three steps for this approach:

- Decentralization: This consists of going out of one's own culture to try to understand and see the world through the eyes of the other by becoming aware of one's own frame of reference through a critical and objective look at oneself, taking a distance from oneself and reflecting on oneself. The approach is necessary since "in this challenge of intercultural discourse, it is the discursive work that imposes the need to speak" in terms "of the other, to see like the other, beyond easy equivalences and factual explanations" (Porcher, 2003).
- Penetration into the Other's reference system: This step aims to understand the Other's frame of reference: his values, his beliefs, his way of thinking, in order to better to understand one's culture by showing empathy, to be curious about the culture of the Other and to dialogue if necessary.
- Negotiation and mediation: this is an approach to the relationship itself. They imply a recognition of the existence of cultural differences. The first aims to create common ground between the parties, recognizing differences and working to understand and accept them in order to live together, without prejudice and with as little compromise as possible on cultural values. It is a question of taking a step towards the Other. Mediation, on the other hand, aims to facilitate dialogue and mutual understanding between the conflicting parties, helping to overcome cultural barriers that may exist.

## 12. Intercultural or war: The choice?

In *Intercultural or War* (2005), Issa Asgarally addresses the profound traumas of communities scarred by histories of slavery, colonization, and cultural domination. These historical experiences, justified by oppressive ideologies such as racial hierarchies and the so-called "civilizing mission" of dominant cultures over perceived "inferior" ones, have left enduring wounds that continue to fuel intercultural tensions today. Asgarally's work warns of the real dangers posed by unresolved conflicts between cultural communities and underscores the urgency of fostering a new, transformative understanding of identity. He advocates for an

intercultural model that transcends superficial multiculturalism, aiming instead for a substantial exchange between cultures, grounded in mutual respect and genuine dialogue.

Central to Asgarally's argument is the need to critically rethink historical experiences that have shaped, and often divided, communities. Rejecting the "clash of civilizations" narrative, he calls for a more holistic, integrative approach to interculturality—one that moves beyond cultural silos and includes the interconnected domains of culture, philosophy, religion, education, and international relations. This broader perspective is necessary, he argues, not only to address past grievances but also to lay the groundwork for a future where intercultural relationships are defined by understanding rather than division.

Asgarally's approach recognizes that intercultural education, particularly when implemented within school systems, plays a vital role in challenging inherited prejudices and fostering intercultural dialogue. He envisions an educational framework where young generations are equipped to engage with diverse cultural perspectives and to question simplistic narratives of cultural superiority or difference. By embedding intercultural principles within educational and social institutions, Asgarally seeks to dismantle historical barriers and to cultivate an environment where cultural diversity is valued as a strength, rather than as a source of division:

A new way of conceiving identity, transcending multiculturalism, promoting the true exchange between cultures, thinking of reformulating historical experiences, refusing the thesis of the "clash of civilizations", defusing the "war of languages", analyzing the relations between culture, information and communication in the era of globalization, building bridges between the literatures of the world, training and developing critical thinking through the contribution of philosophy exploring the cultural and non-cultural dimension of religious And finally to introduce this new way of seeing and acting at school, a common space for meeting and living. (Asgarally, 2005, p. 9).

To transfer the foundations of interculturality previously explained by Asgarally. It does not concern itself with generating critical knowledge, but rather with:

- "revisit the causes of hostility and war, to conceive divisions and conflicts differently". (Asgarally, pp.9-10). This step encourages to get out of the binary logic of "us versus them" that often prevails in intercultural conflicts. Rather, it inspires us to seek lasting and constructive solutions, examining the root causes of hostility and war, exploring the socio-political, economic, historical and cultural elements that contribute to division and violence.

- Take into account "the differences (natural or cultural) that constitute a richness in human relations. (*ibid.*). Differences that exist between individuals, whether natural differences such as age, gender or race, or cultural differences such as language, religious beliefs or values are to be considered as a richness in human relationships. It is recognizing that cultural diversity is a source of creativity and mutual enrichment, rather than a threat to unity and stability.

- Reconsidering the Other, changing one's perspective by going beyond the idea that difference necessarily implies hostility and antagonism between individuals. It is a question of seeing difference as an added value, a wealth and not as a complex or a handicap whose repercussions are often harmful to the relationship: "the difference involves hostility, a fixed set of incompatible essences and a mutual knowledge built on this antagonism, which perceives the other as an adversary, even an enemy. *Ibid.*

Literature makes it possible to understand otherness, to discover plural world views and other cultural imaginaries.

### 13. The triptych approach

In his *Triptych Approach*, Gilles Verbunt outlines a structured methodology for engaging with intercultural issues through three key steps: **knowing**, **understanding**, and **acting**. This model, introduced in *The Intercultural Society*, moves beyond theoretical awareness to incorporate practical engagement, fostering a pathway toward meaningful intercultural integration. Verbunt's triptych approach responds to the complexities of multicultural societies, where mere awareness of cultural diversity is insufficient to bridge the divides between communities.

- Stage 1 of intercultural enrichment (knowledge): this is the minimum requirement: according to Gilles Verbunt, it consists in asking the question of the minimum requirement in terms of cultural and linguistic knowledge necessary to establish effective communication between people from different cultures. Here are the questions that may be asked: why should we learn so little about other cultures and other languages? What is the minimum knowledge needed to establish good communication?

- Stage 2 of intercultural enrichment (understanding): this is a more demanding stage: Faced with a cultural conflict, it is important to seek to understand the points of view and perspectives of the other. This can be done

by adopting an empathetic attitude, i.e. trying to put yourself in the other person's shoes and seeking to understand their values, worldview and beliefs. What to do when Conflict Happens How to negotiate? A little empathy won't go overboard. It leads us to the place where interculturality requires personal commitment.

-Stage 3 of intercultural enrichment (action): considered the most demanding and rewarding, as it requires more personal commitment and openness than the first two stages. It is a question of how to ensure that cultural differences become an enrichment for everyone. What can be done to ensure that cultural differences become an enrichment for everyone? ». It leads to the enrichment promised by the intercultural relationship. This is the wonderful peak you reach after a flat start followed by a grueling climb. In other words: from a simple and fundamental form of dialogue we gradually move to a very engaging dialogue, from work on knowledge we move to work on ourselves. (Verbunt, 2011, p.3)

The application of the approach to the literary text first invites us to explore the cultural contexts of the works, then to confront the imaginations and develop a mutual understanding in order to encourage action for living together.

#### **14. The theory of trust and third-party culture**

The *Theory of Trust and Third-Party Culture* provides a framework for understanding how trust can serve as a foundational element in the development of positive intercultural relationships. This approach posits that trust, often fragile in intercultural encounters due to differences and misunderstandings, can be nurtured through the creation of a shared or "third-party" culture. This "third-party culture" emerges as a distinct cultural space that both parties in a conflict can claim as a common ground, one that respects their original cultural backgrounds yet transcends them to foster mutual understanding and resolution.

At the heart of this model is the acknowledgment that intercultural interactions inherently provoke a certain level of anxiety, given the uncertainties and potential risks associated with engaging across cultural boundaries. Drawing on the work of Broome, Gérard Marandon introduces the idea of a "space to be created"—an intercultural space that embodies elements from the original cultures involved while allowing participants to co-construct a new cultural framework. This shared space, or third-party culture, is not simply an amalgamation of existing cultures but a dynamic and evolving environment where common values and objectives can be pursued collaboratively.

The third-party culture thus becomes a future-oriented model of intercultural engagement, where participants focus on shared goals rather than on the divisive elements of their cultural differences. By redirecting attention towards common aims, this approach seeks to diminish the anxieties and apprehensions that often arise in intercultural contexts, replacing them with a constructive commitment to mutual growth and understanding. Trust is cultivated as both parties invest in this jointly developed cultural space, allowing for a transformation of their relationship from one defined by difference to one unified by purpose.

Marandon's theory is built on the premise that creating this shared space requires intentional effort and a willingness to engage in processes that facilitate the co-construction of meaning. Such processes may involve open communication, the establishment of common cultural symbols, and the development of rituals or practices that represent the collective identity of the parties involved. The theory of trust and third-party culture thus provides a strategic framework for achieving long-term intercultural harmony by promoting shared values, respect, and cooperation.

To support this system, in addition to commitment to the relationship, Marandon proposes an unavoidable and determining factor, *trust*: "In the creation of this space, trust plays a central role, since it is necessary for any exchange, but above all because it is crucial in intercultural situations, given their complexity. (Marandon, 2003). This is how he explains the challenges of trust:

The current experience shows that the success of a meeting (in the sense of interaction, exchange contact) is associated with the establishment of a climate of trust, and in the best cases of successful meetings may give rise to authentic and lasting friendships, which characterizes the trust and stability conditions. *Ibid.*

Marandon's approach to the resolution of intercultural conflicts revolves around four stages: acknowledging the existence of the conflict, identifying the third culture, building trust through this third culture, and finally, negotiating for the resolution of the conflict.

In Marandon's theory, this process assumes the satisfaction of a set of conditions: creating a space for communication and cooperation, allowing the sharing of new negotiable meanings can offer a new setting for



the meeting, based on the empathy/trust dynamic.

Hybrid literary texts illustrate the creolization of imaginaries and help to overcome sterile antagonisms between cultures. The joint reading of these mixed-race works builds a third-party culture.

## 15. CONCLUSION

Engaging in a literary education that foregrounds interculturality represents a commitment to the potential of peaceful interaction through the exchange of cultural imaginaries. This approach relies on the transformative power of narratives to counteract the fractures left by historical conflicts and to foster new ways of relating to others. In a context marked by inherited tensions, the challenge is not merely to recognize the Other, but to fundamentally rethink how dialogue can be established—through genuine listening, mutual exchange, and without reducing the Other to mere assimilation.

Restoring trust in the Other becomes essential for dismantling the obstacles that hinder intercultural learning. It is within this reestablished trust that we create the conditions necessary for effective communication. Literature, with its capacity to reflect and expand plural imaginaries, offers a fertile ground for such dialogue. It allows us to move beyond superficial or tokenistic notions of interculturality, toward a deeper, more nuanced engagement, echoing Jacques Demorgon's (2009) call for an interculturality free from illusion and pretense.

Through the study and analysis of texts written by authors from diverse cultural backgrounds, students are encouraged to develop an empathic understanding of otherness. Literary works act as bridges, fostering emotional and intellectual connections that help dismantle ethnocentric perspectives. By immersing readers in the lived experiences and emotions of characters from various cultural settings, literature becomes a powerful mediator, offering keys to better understand complex, plural societies. In this way, literary education not only cultivates empathy but also provides a roadmap for engaging in meaningful intercultural dialogue that is both informed and transformative.

## 16. Notes:

<sup>1</sup>See on this subject the conception of intercultural dialogue according to Edouard Glissant in Programme Invitation au voyage on TV5, from Monday 14 February 2005 at 21:05 [<http://www.potomitan.info/atelier/glissant3.php>].

<sup>2</sup>Henri Holec uses the term "pedagogization" to refer to the integration of a learning process into an institutional teaching framework. He mentions in particular the "pedagogization of self-direction" in the context of foreign language learning.

<sup>3</sup>G  rard Marandon, wondering about the peculiarities of intercultural communication and the factors conditioning intercultural exchanges, defines the intercultural situation as: "an intercultural situation occurs when people or groups do not share the same universes of meanings and the same forms of expression of these meanings. ».

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