

INTERCULTURAL HERMENEUTICS.
LIFESTYLE, DISCIPLINE, METHOD, AND PARADIGM
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LIFESTYLE, DISCIPLINE, METHOD, AND PARADIGM

Abstract

Intercultural Hermeneutics is an ever-changing state of being, thinking, and acting; hence, its specific feature of being a lifestyle, discipline, method, and paradigm. As a mode of thinking, it likewise operates as a scientific, interpretive tool in which the material object is the inherent interculturality or natural interconnectedness between human cultures. Its formal object consists of a constructive dialogue between selected cultures among ancient, intermediary, and contemporary ones. A culture implies the totality of a human experience shaped by an ancestral language or a lingua franca in a spacious temporal realm and beyond. It includes knowledge and know-how (religion, rationality, ethics, politics, and art). The central thesis of the present plea contends that Intercultural Hermeneutics deserves a Faculty position within a tertiary education system. It is a subject that, by its nature, promotes interdisciplinary cohesion and learning based on cultural interconnectivity, which has been neglected in the configuration of the university curriculum.

Introduction

I am Jean-Claude Loba Mkole, an Índrű born from Índrű parents: Ivone Kodhu Kanawa of Zadhu (Impala totem) and Benjamin Anyatsi Hangu (Aardvark totem), the son of Hangu, the son of Loba, the son of Mb'opi, the son of Androzo, the son of Ibhí, the son of Djugu, the son of Rutsi, the brother of Logo, Lugbara, Zande, Ndrűtso, and Lega (DR Congo), all sons of Funzi (Sudan), the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God. My educational background is in literary and translation criticism of sacred texts. I was schooled in DR Congo (Ecole primaire St Martin de Kagaba, Ecole primaire St Charles Lwanga de Gety, Institut de Gety, Institut de Bunia, Philosophat St Augustin de Kisangani, Université Catholique du Congo), Belgium (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven), South Africa (UNISA) and Italy (Università degli Studi di Palermo).

Intercultural Hermeneutics is an ever-changing state of being, thinking, and acting; hence, its specific feature of being a lifestyle, discipline, method, and paradigm. As a mode of thinking, it likewise operates as a scientific, interpretive tool in which the material object is the inherent interculturality or natural interconnectedness between cultures. Its formal object consists of a constructive dialogue between selected cultures among ancient, intermediary, and contemporary ones. A culture implies the totality of a human experience shaped by an ancestral language or a lingua franca in a spacious temporal realm and beyond. It includes knowledge and know-how (religion, rationality, ethics, politics, and art).

The central thesis of the present plea contends that Intercultural Hermeneutics deserves a Faculty position within a tertiary education system. It is a subject that, by its nature, promotes interdisciplinary cohesion and learning based on cultural interconnectivity, which has been neglected in the configuration of the university curriculum. This curriculum sometimes includes cultural studies as a section of social or anthropological sciences, but intercultural studies would embrace more areas of expertise. This narrative presumes that human beings are

intercultural persons; consequently, most scientific domains should fall under intercultural studies. The Faculty of Humanities already points out what the Faculty of Intercultural Studies may entail, but naming the former by the latter could highlight the importance of understanding humanity as an intercultural entity.

This narrative aims at raising awareness about the relevance of intercultural studies among university students, scientific personnel, policymakers, and program designers. It targets university policy and program makers and expects the inclusion of Intercultural Studies among University Faculties. Regarding the research method, this presentation will use an expository method and proceed through Hegelian steps of the thought process, which include thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. These steps will be handy in portraying Intercultural Hermeneutics as a lifestyle, discipline, method, and paradigm to justify its suitability as a Faculty.

Lifestyle

A human person is a culturally bound and relational being who, owing to his or her limitations and desires, constantly aspires to fill them through an unlimited process of integrating the culturally other (Herder 1967:107- 108; Pannenberg 1985:43; Loba Mkole 2021:5). In other words, 'the intercultural dimension is inherent to any cultural identity' (Santedi-Kinkupu 2013:132-143). Put in simple words, a human person is an intercultural being. However, every human being may not be aware of the interculturality as a constitutive part of his or her identity founded in divine and human relations. Nevertheless, the campaign for creating awareness can reduce ignorance or denial of the importance of interculturality as a way of being, thinking, and acting. The genealogy of Jesus (Mt 1:1-25; Lk 3: 23-38) shapes and shows the intercultural relations as integral parts of his divine and human cultures together with his Jewish and other human cultures. My genealogy and others support

and explain interculturality as a constitutive part of our being, thinking, and acting.

Discipline

Intercultural Hermeneutics is an interpretive tool that some sages and scholars use to engage in a constructive dialogue between different cultures. Different models of Intercultural Hermeneutics have been developed or are emerging. By virtue of its nature, Intercultural Hermeneutics is a macro discipline that involves different cultures and tackles each of them with an appropriate method, such as historical-literary criticism, sociology, or anthropology, to name but a few. For this reason, intercultural hermeneutics develops into specialised disciplines like intercultural philosophy, intercultural theology, intercultural exegesis/intercultural literary criticism, intercultural translation criticism, intercultural anthropology, or intercultural ecology. Other disciplines like linguistics, history, sociology, and many more still evolve on intercultural components. As a result, Intercultural Hermeneutics is an all-encompassing discipline or an inter-disciplinary subject.

Example: The Faculty of the Humanities at the University of the Free State (South Africa) comprises mutatis mutandis what the name Intercultural Studies could cover. The rationale for promoting the name Intercultural Studies instead of the Humanities pertains to the fact that it clearly highlights the nature of human beings as intercultural entities.

Undergraduate Qualifications

- [BA Programme](#)
- [Communication Science](#)
- [Drama and Theatre Arts](#)
- [Fine Arts](#)
- [Governance and Political Transformation](#)
- [Language Practice](#)
- [Music](#)
- [Social Sciences Programme](#)
- [Social Work](#)

Undergraduate Major Study Fields

- [African Languages](#)
- [Afrikaans Dutch, German and French](#)
- [Anthropology](#)
- [Art History Visual Culture Studies](#)
- [Communication Science](#)

- Criminology
- English
- Geography
- Hebrew
- History
- Linguistics and Language practice
- Philosophy and Classics
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Sociology
- South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies

Postgraduate Qualifications

- Africa Studies
- African Languages
- Afrikaans Dutch, German and French
- Anthropology
- Art History Visual Culture Studies
- Classical Languages
- Classical Studies
- Communication Science
- Criminology
- Drama and Theatre Arts
- English
- Film and Visual Media
- Fine Arts
- Gender Studies
- Geography
- Governance and Political Transformation
- Health Systems Studies
- Hebrew
- History
- Linguistics and Language practice
- Odeion School of Music
- Philosophy and Classics
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Social Work
- Sociology
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However, as I indicated somewhere else (Loba Mkole 2021:2): “Some critics could point to the interdisciplinary nature of intercultural construction as its weakness, as Sparks (1997:24) puts it: ‘a veritable rag-bag of ideas, methods and concerns ... lumped together under the convenient label of cultural studies’. Nonetheless, this alleged weakness is what gives strength to Intercultural Hermeneutics as a scientific interpretive discipline, which runs of “the total cultural system of relevant literature and inter-cultural communication” (Deist 2000), as well as an openness to the infinity, a multiform dialogue with the other (Betancourt-Fornet 2011:153; Ndala-Kabemba 2013:62).

Method

Each discipline strives for a constant development of its methods. My Intercultural Hermeneutics Model has mainly covered the field of literary criticism of sacred texts, ranging from exegesis (2005, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2019), translation studies (2013, 2019, 2023, and canonical studies (2016, 2022). It carries out its constructive dialogue between cultures (Cf. Waldenfels (1971, 1997, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2006). This method includes a triple pitfall, a triple frame of reference, a triple epistemological privilege, a triple epistemological value, a triple ethical value, and a triple cultural position (Loba Mkole 2021). A triple pitfall to avoid consists of the cultural juxtaposition, cultural assimilation and cultural resignation (see Ndayango 2001, 2003:46–47; Tshiamalenga-Ntumba 1977:183–184). The triple frame of reference includes original biblical cultures, past ecclesial cultures and contemporary target cultures. The triple epistemological privilege pertains to the unique epistemological privilege of canonicity granted to the original biblical cultures, the unique privilege of seniority conferred on ecclesial cultures and the unique epistemological privilege of liveliness bestowed upon contemporary cultures (contra Tamez 2002a:10, 2002b:58; Ukpong 2002a:17–32). The triple epistemological value concerns the consonance of an interpretation with the worldview of the target culture, with a historical message of Jesus and with past church culture. The triple ethical value evaluates a biblical interpretation in terms of its correctness vis-à-vis the original biblical culture, loyalty towards the target culture and sincerity towards the ecclesial culture of the interpreter. Finally, the triple cultural scope features the current cultural position, horizontal cultures and vertical cultures of the interpreter (cf. Jonker 2006:19–28). In short, a full intercultural hermeneutic operates on an hexagonal dimension basis.

The intercultural method penetrates the concerned culture through the language of the latter. For instance, it interprets a Judeo-Christian sacred text through the data available in Hebrew/Aramaic/Greek language

(ancient culture), Latin / Greek language (intermediary Catholic / Orthodox Church culture), and Indrűna language (contemporary Indrű culture). Sometimes, an ancestral language in its earliest form may be part of ancient culture. A word in the fore-ancestor of the Indrűna language from which derives the Ancient Egyptian and Hebrew - both spoken by Moses - could share space and time with original sacred text languages and the contemporary Indrű.

However, someone might say that not everybody is competent in ancient, intermediary, and contemporary languages to carry out an intercultural exegesis. Nonetheless, an intercultural interpreter, mediator, or hermeneut already knows two languages. He or she may learn others that seem relevant to his or her interpreter's role.

Paradigm

In Africa, "the intercultural method expands the inculturation paradigm or that of the inculturation paradigm coupled with other paradigms such as reconstruction and others" (Loba Mkole 2021: 6; cf. Manus 2003a, 2003b). The inculturation paradigm has transmuted into the intercultural paradigm because of several of several types of confusion of the former: lack of an accurate definition (cf. Santedi), confusion between Christianity and one type of Christianity (see Neckebrouck, cf. Santedi), lack of logically conclusive premises (see Metena), confusion between topic and method or methods (see Ngindu), confusion between a contingent and an essential pastoral option (see Kapopwe), or lack of coherent epistemological foundations such as the "pôles théandriques" (cf. Bimwenyi) (Loba Mkole 2022:25-26). In short, I argued elsewhere that "Interculturality is the closest paradigm that can legitimately take care of the inculturation paradigm legacy because they share the same disciplinary matrix but avoid their traps." (Loba Mkole 2022:26). However, not everybody may see the deadlock of the inculturation paradigm the way I look at it. Nonetheless, some other scholars have already indicated the different confusions entertained by the

inculturation paradigm before I could discuss the issue and develop a way forward (transmutation of inculturation into interculturality).

Conclusion

The paper argues that Intercultural Hermeneutics deserves a university faculty to link it clearly to human sciences that revolve around cultural interconnectedness. It has described cultural hermeneutics as a lifestyle, scientific discipline, method, and paradigm that could justify its position as a Faculty. Alternatively, Intercultural Studies could better name the Faculty of Humanities.