

**CABECINHAS, R. & CUNHA, L. (Eds.) (2008).  
COMUNICAÇÃO INTERCULTURAL. PERSPECTIVAS,  
DILEMAS E DESAFIOS. PORTO: CAMPO DAS LETRAS.**

Renné Oliveira França

---

As a result of the Conference “Intercultural communication: perspectives, dilemmas and challenges”, held in April 2008 at the University of Minho, in Portugal, the book *Comunicação Intercultural* (Intercultural Communication) is a collection of different texts that contributes to the debate about the challenges of intercultural dialogue in contemporary societies.

*Comunicação Intercultural* is composed of an introduction and ten chapters organized in four parts that subdivide the main theme. As a group work, written by different authors, the narrative is quite diverse, featuring contributions from different disciplines. There is a part that leads to reflection, presented in the “Introduction”, followed by chapters that analyse and structure, through apparently unrelated topics, the elements that surround the main point. The reader will find in the introduction an excellent overview of what will be discussed, built by the contextualization and explanation of the book’s objectives and contents, additionally to the chapters that follow: although written by different authors, those chapters are consistent with each other, which allow both a random or a sequential reading according to its organization. To discuss the complex and controversial intercultural communication, which is still in conclusion, the several authors are able to point - despite their different theoretical references - a few aspects in common related to that issue in contemporary society, performing a good diagnosis of the edges and imbalances that mark our reality (and more specifically, the European reality). Causes and consequences are indicated – a few more explored by some authors than others – about problematic features of local and global sociabilities, while at the same time, indirectly, the book invites the reader to perceive those views from the perspective of the Other. For a good reading of this work, you must always be aware of the geographic and historical context. Thus, the theme of the dialogue between cultures will be better approached in all its aspects, be their political, economic, psychological, or spatial points of view; as the editors seek to organize it. In the “Introduction” there is a clear attempt to contribute to a stimulating debate of the subject and to avoid the common discussions about inequality that reduce this complex issue.

The decisive inequality that marks the relationship between different groups should be perceived from a multifocal mode. Several factors interfere on its persistence and reproduction, that goes from the international economic order to different historical experiences, factors permanently crossed with

the social representations field, that is, the way we think and imagine the world and social relations. (p. 8)

In the “Introduction” are still indicated the reasons behind the production of the book, such as the already mentioned Conference and also the celebration of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. Accordingly, the editors pointed out the care that should be taken with the use of the word “celebration”, once it’s not enough to celebrate the cultural dialogue. The search for alternatives to pre-established and simplified conceptions about interculturality defines the intention of the discussions presented in the book. The proposal seems to try to figure out the different ways to communicate in a plural world, and the strategy of using different authors from different nationalities to do so, already reveals the intercultural dialogue within the work itself.

In the first part, entitled “Spaces and Migrations: laws, flows, and looks”, there are three chapters that discuss the migration. In the first, “Immigration and Interculturality in the European Union”, the author Isabel Estrada Carvalhais starts from three key concepts (illegal immigration, circular migration and good neighbourhood) to investigate immigration in the European Union for a political prism. The text permeates the political contradictions of States that, on one hand require the immigration to keep its population stability and, on the other hand, consider easier to invest in the fight against “illegal immigration” than in the “reception” of immigrants. The immigration policy in the European Union appears, then, with the difficulty of dealing with the ambivalent discourse of freedom and acceptance on a way and the fear of terrorism and illegality on another way.

The second text, by Anna Zlobina and Dario Páez, analyses the strategies of acculturation of immigrants in Spain. With the title “Aculturación y comunicación intercultural: El caso de inmigración em España”, the chapter discusses the difficulties inherent to the integration of immigrants in the society without losing their cultural identity. There is a double challenge that passes through the societies that receives the immigrants as the immigrants themselves, who have to adjust both in the private – where the intimate sphere receives the impact of a new culture - as in the public, where political and economic aspects require adjustment.

The third chapter, “Trough the narrative of look: movie and photographic speeches”, by Joana Miranda, understand the narrative as a way of the sense of the migratory experience. From artistic productions as the documentary *Lisboetas* and the photographs by Sebastião Salgado, the author tries to understand how the act of storytelling orders these experiences. This first part of the book has the merit of bringing new information and interesting discussions about immigration in Europe. Despite the different contributions and perspectives, the chapters discuss among themselves through the understanding of the cultural complexity of the situation of immigrants, and how its dialogue with the society is developer of a mutual transformation that takes place in the intercultural sphere.

The second part, “Post-colonial Narratives and Representations”, seeks the understanding of the past to understand the present. In the first text, “Local worlds, Global worlds: the difference in history”, Maria Paula Meneses draws attention to the Eurocentric

look on Africa, in which an “inferior other” is waiting to be led by European. Starting by pointing the example of Mozambique, the author discusses how the ways of telling the History of colonization interfere in the representations that still survive today about the black person as incapable, which created a racial hierarchy that survives through the ages.

In sequence, “From everyday post colonialism to the hyphenated identities: identities in exiles” discusses the effects of Portuguese colonialism in identities. Also using Mozambique as an exemplary case, the author Sheila Khan listened to the “silenced” voices in the post-colonialism, crossing the depositions of the colonized with discussions of Stuart Hall in an attempt to understand the hyphenated identities, which were resulted from mestization.

At the end of the second part, “Colonial Memories and Postcolonial Dialogues: Guinea-Bissau and Portugal” brings the issue of social memory and the need to question the dominant narratives and to decolonize of thought. The authors Rosa Cabecinhas and Nesilita Nhaga propose a critical review of the Lusophony as a symbolic construction, by analysing the social representations of history in Guinea-Bissau and Portugal.

One of the virtues of this second part is to bring the political and historical dimension of the strategies of social representation. The dimension of the representations of the past is interesting for the perception of the intercultural dialogue and offers clues about the future of the relationship between cultures. The concept of representation is still present in the third part of the book, “Modes of representation and forms of belonging”. Now the symbolic cultural constructions are analysed as essential to the understanding of dialogue between peoples.

The first text of this part is called “What is a place? Anthropological reflexions about the near and the remote” and Ramon Sarró discusses the living space as a construction made by the accumulation of shared meanings and actions that become regulars. The author discusses about the language and its performance in the “domestication” of space, and traces an interesting approach that dialogues between culture and imaginary in an attempt to understand how the territorialisation came from a symbolic dimension that is in the cultural crossroads. The second text, “Spatial configurations and regimes of belonging”, by Luís Cunha, continues to look at the territory as a cultural dimension, but proposes a perspective of graphic narrative as the representations of different identity discourses in clash. The author tries to understand the enunciations by binding the belonging sense from the Portuguese reality, focusing on mapping to understand the signs that make up the collective identity. The two texts in this third part are significant to understanding how the territory’s narration reveals how we represent and establish the social.

The fourth and last part of the book, “Language, speech and symbolic exchanges”, presents a theorization about the culture in the contemporary world. The text “Symbol, metaphor and myth in intercultural communication” proposes the interculturality of the thinking of the language in its central aspects: symbol, metaphor and myth. The language is understood as the place of production and reflection of the cultural imaginary and also of Others, and the author Maria Manuel Baptista uses the concept of Paul

Ricoeur's hermeneutics in the attempt to understand the communication with the Other, pointing the culture as a possible solution for communication between people. The book ends with "Synchrétisme et postmodernité" by Jean-Martin Rabot. Dealing with a subject - religion - apparently disconnected from the rest of the work, through the discussion about syncretism, the author achieves to resume the complex dynamics of contemporary society, present in the first part of the book, from the vision of a kind of postmodern polytheism that reveals the cultural identity fragmentation. Using the concept of syncretism as sociological operator to understand the resulting culture of various migrations and the fusion of thoughts that seem to occur in current society, the chapter ends the book in a way that engages the whole rest. The last part of the book is efficient in its look about the alterity from the cultural objects present in society and that reflect the multiplicity of identities present in postmodernism.

*Comunicação Intercultural*, one might say, brings out a mixture of elements that together allows a more complex vision of the contemporary world. Despite having Europe as a place of speech, the panorama charted by their various authors allows do appropriations of its analyses in other contexts. For studies of Communication, *Comunicação Intercultural* can be seen as a useful tool to help the understanding of the contexts we deal, and can also be applied in empirical analyses that want to unveil the communicative and symbolic dimensions in the language of the various cultural objects that exist in our contemporary society. //

#### BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Cabecinhas, R. & Cunha, L. (Eds.) (2008). *Comunicação intercultural. perspectivas, dilemas e desafios*. Porto: Campo das Letras.

Berger, P. & Luckman, T. (1985). *A construção social da realidade*. Petrópolis: Vozes.

Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*. London: Thousand Oaks.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Renné Oliveira França is a professor and researcher of Cinema at the Federal Institute of Goiás, Brazil. He holds a PhD in Social Communication by the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil.

E-mail: [renne.franca@ifg.edu.br](mailto:renne.franca@ifg.edu.br)

Campus Cidade de Goiás, Instituto Federal de Goiás. Quartel do XX, Praça Brasil Ramos Caiado s/nº. CEP: 76600-000. Goiás-GO, Brasil.

\* Submitted: 31-01-2016

\* Accepted: 20-04-2016