

## **"Dynamics of Translation in The Light of Intercultural Negotiation"**

**Contributions of the Arab-Muslim thought**

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## Abstract:

This article has two objectives. On the one hand, it strives to "de-Westernize", in a way, the intercultural by questioning the Arab-Muslim intercultural thought through two emblematic figures: Ibn Rochd and Khatibi. On the other hand, it lays the groundwork for a tradition of orienting translation work towards intercultural research, especially non-Western research that is likely to reposition the intercultural epistemologically and conceptually and to contribute, in a certain way, to the desired living together, in other words, the melting pot. Hyper-mobility, incessant and hardly manageable migratory flows, multiform fundamentalism, discriminatory and ethnocentric discourses, reification of cultures and identities, all these are not the least of the aberrations threatening today's society. The only alternative is the intercultural, which imposes itself and imposes a negotiation between Western and non-Western thoughts, in order to make cohabitation possible. In this sense, translation is of paramount importance as it allows access to the vision of the other.

**Keyword:** Intercultural, Translation, Arab – Muslim thought, Ibn Rochd, Khatibi, Negotiation.

## INTRODUCTION

Generating an academic disputatio because it is not conceptually the object of unanimity, interculturality is not however a superfluous domain or a fashion item, but a historically, sociologically and scientifically legitimized necessity: highly pluricultural societies, incessant migratory flows and internationalization of daily life, hyper student mobility, imposed passage from autonomy to heteronomy, from the individual to the person; etymologically, the individual is a person of the world: "persona" refers to masks and identifications replacing identity (MAFFESOLI, 2016, <http://corps et culture.revues.org/250>), "the return of fundamentalism, nationalism and ethnicity" leading not only to knowledge of other cultures and the bearers of these cultures but also and above all "the recognition of the individual and therefore of a philosophy of the subject based on an ethic" (ABDALLAH-PRETCEILLE, 2005).

These complex intra- and inter-personal/country realities characterizing the current era naturalize the "raison d'être" of intercultural discourse and reflection, which seem to require interactionist rather than unidirectional communication, a negotiation of principles and values for the establishment of a common framework necessary for cohabitation (WOLTON, 2009, p.21). Interculturality proves useful, even indispensable, and implies the mobilization of the translator's act as a means of access to the thought of the other/the other. Endowed with a new utilitarian dimension, translation could prevent the confinement of people, cultures and civilizations in "perverse or illusory modes of knowledge" by helping them to better know themselves/relativize by transcending "reductionism, Manicheism, reification" (WOLTON, 2009, p.21).

The present work aims to attribute to the translator's action another mission, that of making it possible to know how Western and non-Western societies (following an orchestral and systemic logic) perceive cultural diversity. It is precisely a question of questioning, in a non-exhaustive way and by means of translation essays, Arab-Muslim intercultural thinking. To this end, we will limit ourselves to two representative figures: Ibn Rochd (Averroes) and Khatibi. However, before highlighting the vision in question, it would be interesting to try to define the concept of interculturality, given the two major paradigms approaching it.

Concretely, we will first look at the different definitional possibilities by evoking the "lexi-intercultural" crisis. In a second step, we will review the two major movements characterizing the intercultural landscape. With this conceptual and paradigmatic substratum in place, we will dwell on the contribution, partly translated, of the two previously identified thinkers.

## 2. Definitional attempts of the “interculturality” concept

Relatively new, and part of a "poorly stabilized terminology" (ABDALLAH-PRETCEILLE, 2013, p.48), interculturality has been the subject of changing, opposing and generally unclear definitions. This conceptual vulnerability can be explained, among other things, by the highly politicized nature of this field of reference as well as by its multidisciplinary nature. The following development will focus successively on the different definitional attempts proposed by dictionaries, international bodies and researchers.

### 2.1 Language dictionaries and the "lexi-intercultural" crisis

In many of the language dictionaries consulted, the term "intercultural" is not mentioned. The “Grand Dictionnaire Larousse”, the “Dictionnaire Emile Littré de la langue française” and the “5-volume Grand Larousse”, among others, do not provide any indication of a concept that is very much in use today, very much in vogue, consumed by the political scientist, the anthropologist, the educationalist and the journalist.

Nevertheless, some dictionaries touch on this concept, proposing basic definitions that reflect the essentialist tendency, personifying the culture that, rendered static and closed, replaces people; definitions from which we have selected some representative samples. Here are some of them:

- a. Concerns relations, exchanges between cultures, between different civilizations: an intercultural dialogue.
- b. Concerns contact between different cultures.
- c. Concerns the contacts between different ethnic, social and cultural cultures.
- d. Relating to the exchange between different cultures.

The "lexi-intercultural" seems to be lacking in specialists in the field and in dictionaries. Some of them limit themselves to the solid or fixed aspect of interculturality. Reality reflecting the conceptual indeterminacy and fragility of a field not yet stabilized. As a "cultural text", the dictionary should, in fact, also be an "intercultural text or text of the intercultural" in permanent use and with a popularizing vocation, hence the need to develop research on intercultural issues, particularly in terms of terminology.

### 2.2 European body, a globalizing pro-intercultural vision

The Council of Europe, one of the representative bodies of Europe, proposes the following definition of interculturality dating back to 1980: "The use of the word "intercultural" necessarily implies, if we attribute to the prefix "inter" its full meaning, interaction, and exchange, elimination of barriers, reciprocity and true solidarity. If the term "culture" is given its full value, it implies recognition of the values, ways of life and symbolic representations to which human beings, both individuals and societies, refer in their relations with others and in their conception of the world". (Council of Europe, 1986).

If the definition of the Council of Europe, focusing on the semantics of the prefix "inter", highlights the interactionist dimension induced by the noun "intercultural", one notices, paradoxically, the repetitive, synonymous use of the term "exchange". We also note the idealizing and hyper-generalizing perception of inter-human relations, ignoring the contradictions, resistances, and natural disharmonies. Finally, the fragment of the institutional discourse obscures the phenomenological component: culture is an objective reality, bloodless, ready-made, made up of values and ways of life, to which Man refers and of which he is not the actor

### 2.3 Definitions, amalgamations and territorial conflicts

This is what Fred Dervin expresses in these terms: "Other notions sometimes compete with interculturality. A geopolitical difference can be perceived, particularly in the use of the labels "intercultural" and "multicultural. Politically, these have often been opposed by their origins. The latter emerged in the United States (multicultural), the former in Europe (intercultural) ». (DERVIN, 2014)

Dating from the 1960s and closely related to the political choice governing the migration issue and secreting the ideology of the melting pot, "the multicultural model (essentially of Anglo-Saxon inspiration) gives the possibility to all or more exactly obliges the individual to belong to a community other than that of the nation-state" (ABDALLAH-PRETCEILLE, 2010, p.13). Although belonging to another territory, multiculturalism is terminologically confused with interculturality, something that can be explained in the eyes of Martine Abdallah-Pretceille: "The synonymous use of the terms "multicultural/intercultural" reveals the semantic vagueness, but also "the symbolic and political stakes". ((ABDALLAH-PRETCEILLE, 2010, p.13)

The confusion is due to imposing habits: "There is currently an extreme confusion between these terms, which is a source of misunderstandings, even misunderstandings between researchers. Removing this ambiguity is not a simple linguistic analysis, because behind each expression are in fact authoritative habits", (ABDALLAH-PRETCEILLE, 1986, p.114).

### 2.4 Terminology shift: from reified model to the co-constructed one

An examination of the corpus of existing definitions reveals two diametrically opposed categories of definitions. The first one chooses culture, fragments it and presents it as a set of static facts, listed and beyond the people who are, as a consequence, mere consumers and representatives. In fact, "the complexity it implies (the intercultural) is (...) reduced to grammars of cultures" (DERVIN, 2009, p.77), while "the plural dimension of culture and its constructed character are incompatible with the rigid and fixist character of determinism" (ABDALLAH-PRETCEILLE, 1986, p.99). We are in the presence of a "descriptive type of treatment, in the form of curiosities, facts, characters, which can only lead to freezing by globalizing, decontextualizing, and reifying culture"(ABDALLAH-PRETCEILLE, 1986, p.184).

The second category of definitions, on the other hand, approaches culture as an action or rather a co-action of permanent construction-deconstruction and re-construction". The "subject-perspective" is central here. Precisely, "the place given to the subject in interpretations and perceptions is central. The intercultural approach breaks with the objectivist and structuralist point of view" (ABDALLAH-PRETCEILLE, 2010, p.12). In addition to this phenomenological aspect and this "subjective awareness" to use Claude Levi's expression. In addition to this phenomenological aspect and this "subjective awareness", to use Claude Levi Strauss' expression, the definitions identified and falling into this category emphasize the importance of the analysis that underpins the intercultural fact, which has no material existence. In fact, it is "analysis that confers on the object studied and analyzed the character of "intercultural" (ABDALLAH-PRETCEILLE, 2010, p.50), whereas the latter 'does not correspond to an objective reality'" (ABDALLAH-PRETCEILLE, 2010, p.50).

From the above, it should be noted that the various definitions inventoried and analyzed are very approximate and reveal, to a certain extent, the instability of a concept that depends as much on political and ideological uses as on the theoretical paradigms and angles of attack adopted at this level. It would therefore be wise to question the nature and fundamentals of these paradigms.

### 3. Paradigms in interculturality: culturalism and "liquid" interculturality

In general, in intercultural matters, we commonly make the departure between two major paradigms: culturalism, which reifies culture and identity by excluding the role of the subjects-actors and the impact of interactions (many expressions have been coined to designate this tendency: "cultural determinism; grammar of cultures; cultural essentialism, etc."); and cultural identity, which reifies culture and identity by excluding the role of the subjects-actors and the impact of interactions (many expressions have been coined to designate this tendency: "cultural determinism; grammar of cultures; cultural essentialism, etc.") and the "renewed" interculturality, as Fred Dervin puts it, based on criticism, interactionism, valuing the subjective and the human and insisting on the co-construction of culture as a changing reality. Abdallah-Pretceille; Maffesoli; Bauman; Dervin; Khatibi; Ibn Rochd, among others, represent this last paradigm, which is nourished

by advances in the human and social sciences and the epistemological and terminological shift they imply.

### 3.1 Culturalism and cultural relativism: outdated "cultural scientism"

Culture as a vertical, sui generis reality, determining the behavior of human beings, programmed and "non-programmers", passive beings, non-cultural builders, are the essence of the culturalist movement, born in the 1930s of the last century and represented, among others, by anthropologists: Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead and Ralph Linton. This essentialist current is objectivist, chooses and freezes people and cultures. The notions of culture and identity are approached in a unidirectional way, leaving aside the person and the context. In the same way, "beyond particularisms and societal diversity, it is a question of highlighting the influence of institutions and customs on the personality", (Interculturel: Encyclopédia Universalis, [www. Universalis.fr](http://www.Universalis.fr)).

"The historical context for the birth of culturalism in the social sciences is that of the 1930s. It developed in anthropology and psychoanalysis in opposition to biological racism and dominant ethnocentrism" ([www.lesfiguresdeladomination.org](http://www.lesfiguresdeladomination.org)). Two tendencies are to be distinguished. Contrary to "classical" culturalism, 'the contemporary culturalist vision tends to produce the other by reducing it to a non-biological but cultural difference which does not exclude a biologization of culture, through the essentialization that often accompanies this projection'. ([www.lesfiguresdeladomination.org](http://www.lesfiguresdeladomination.org)).

It should be pointed out that these culturalist visions have been accompanied by interesting disciplines, each offering an angle of attack, namely: psychoanalytical anthropology, ethnopsychiatry, cognitive anthropology and ethno-pedagogy. However, the inadequacies of these disciplines must be noted. Let us take the case of cognitive anthropology and ethno-pedagogy. In fact, as Martine Abdallah-Pretceille affirms, the important thing is not to know and explore cultures but to "recognize them". It is also important to recognize that "the plural dimensions of culture as well as its constructed character are incompatible with the rigid and fixist character of determinism". (ABDALLAH-PRETCEILLE, 1986, p. 99).

Derived from the principle of determinism, "cultural relativism has developed, in opposition to the evolutionary conception, an ethnocentric conception that analyzes, observes, compares (...) cultural systems from a single point of view, a single reference, which is moreover never explicit. Cultural relativism thus invites cultural decentration, the acceptance of culturalism" (ABDALLAH-PRETCEILLE, 1986, p.101). Selim Abou clarifies the evolutionary conception, whose ethnocentric and Euro-centric drift he shows: "Cultural relativism is first of all against the evolutionary vision inspired by Lewis Morgan, according to which the history of cultures and that of continuous progress from savagery to civilization (...) In this perspective, Western civilization, placed at the top of the hierarchy, appears to be the obligatory destiny of all cultures", (ABOU, 2009, [uqac.ca/contemporains/abou\\_selim.html](http://uqac.ca/contemporains/abou_selim.html)).

As far as cultural relativism is concerned, the anthropologist Selim distinguishes two types of relativism; in this case: moderate relativism and radical relativism. The first "while recognizing cultural specificities and particular values, does not exclude the existence of universal values, the possibility of intercultural communication, or the virtues of acculturation" (ABOU, 2009, [uqac.ca/contemporains/abou\\_selim.html](http://uqac.ca/contemporains/abou_selim.html)).

The second qualified as "radical" "absolutizes cultural specificities to the point of denying the existence of this universal values, the radical cultural relativism associated with a reifying and dehumanizing culturalism is nourished by a positivist vision that scotomizes the diverse and the complex.

### 3.2 "Liquid intercultural", pro-human paradigm

To this "cultural scientism" reacts the "liquid intercultural" (BAUMAN, 2010, p.1) which promotes the relationship and "de-personalizes" culture by rehabilitating human action and coaction: "The intercultural is first of all a relationship between two individuals who have internalized in their subjectivity a culture, unique each time, according to their age, gender, social status and personal trajectory. We do not encounter a culture but individuals and groups who stage the interculturality" (DEMORGON and al., 1999, p.229).

Culture as sharing and cooperation refers to an ideal, that of living together, of non-conflictual coexistence. (Let us recall the concept of communication-negotiation initiated by Dominique Wolton): "The prefix inter, which suggests interactions, exchanges, sharing, complementarities, cooperation and reciprocity (...), serves to maintain, in the best of cases, wishes, hopes, an ideal to be achieved: that of a peaceful and solidary coexistence between populations" (DEMORGON, 1989, p.30). Intercultural relations as "the bringing together of different identities" (JURADO, 2002, p.79) presupposes "forms of

negotiation" (RAKOTOMENA, 2005, p.668).

If intercultural discourse "is based on disciplinary knowledge and tools" (ABDALLAH-PRETCEILLE, 1986, p.158), it "is at the level of a strategy of questioning and understanding problems and difficulties" (ABDALLAH-PRETCEILLE, 1986, p.158) by setting itself an objective that goes beyond declarative norms and knowledge: "The objective of an intercultural approach is not to seek laws, but at most, regularities, not to accumulate knowledge, but to emphasize convergences. It is, in fact, to focus on problems, situations that need to be addressed in all their complexity and globality" (ABDALLAH-PRETCEILLE, 1986, p.158).

According to Martine Abdallah-Pretceille, three axes organize this kind of intercultural discourse; namely: 1. The recognition and introduction of the individual both in the act of appropriation of a knowledge and in the perception of the object itself; 2. The recognition of the individual as a person, both in the act of appropriation of a knowledge and in the perception of the object itself. The reciprocity of perspectives, resulting from the value given to the "I" following the identity/otherness problematic and concretized by an interactionist and situational approach; 3. The dialectic diversity/universality which structures the discovery of the other as well as the relationship to the other », (ABDALLAH-PRETCEILLE, 1986, p.87).

It should be noted that this paradigm conceived in favor of the human and the diverse is represented by many thinkers who have shaken the certainties of culturalists and "cultural relativists" seeking to define the notion of interculturality: "Researchers have attempted to clarify the various interpretations and uses of the notion of interculturality: Martine Abdallah-Pretceille, Tania Ogay in education sciences; P. Dahl et al, Adrian Holliday in sociology; Fred Dervin and Donna Humphrey in applied linguistics, (DERVIN, 2014, p.2) a "non-exhaustive list".

Nevertheless, only Western thought has positioned itself and is positioning itself with regard to migration and other issues (fanaticism, "social fears and security obsession...") calling for interculturality and redefining it. This westernization of the intercultural seems reductionist since it is centered on a one-dimensional and vertical reading, that of the West. It excludes the other, the other non-Western thoughts whose contents could provide other useful insights and answers. The co-existence of which Dominique Wolton speaks would only be possible if the two thoughts acted, interacted and were the object of negotiations and readjustments. Hence the legitimacy of the translator's act and of the translators called upon to fully play their role as mediators. The following is an illustration of what has been put forward.

#### **4. Translation at the service of the Arab-Muslim intercultural thought**

##### **4.1. Ibn Rochd, precursor of positive intercultural negotiation**

Many centuries before, the thinker Averroes proposed a basic conception of the intercultural encompassing many aspects (civilization, religion, inter-individual exchange and gender or sex), promoting an intercultural that humanizes and unites human beings, a "liquid intercultural" in favor of the diverse and the just, in short, a negotiated and negotiable intercultural (BOUCETTA, <http://www.mominoun.com/articles>). The excerpts from Ibn Rochd's writings listed, we have translated them from the article by the teacher-researcher Boussetta to support our thesis.

" in Arabic) encourages the discovery قرطبة On the "civilizational" level, the philosopher from Cordoba (Cordoba " of the culture and sciences of the other: "the knowledge of the sciences of the other is a duty according to the Sharia" (IBN ROCHD (Averroes), 1935, p.13). He states. In this vein, there is no question of rejecting, in the name of religion, the scientific contribution of others since it is Islamic law that requires this openness to this contribution and experience.

Religiously, the cross-cultural discourse of the philosopher Averroes is unifying the different religions and thus combating religious fanaticism and the violent, even "terrorist" actions resulting from it: "All religions are unanimous on the existence of an afterlife. However, they differ as to the nature of this existence beyond the grave" (IBN ROCHD, (Averroes), 1987, p. 581)



Falling within the subject-perspective, the nodal point of the "liquid intercultural", Ibn Rochd's ideas institute the rules of positioning, positive negotiation and management of the diverse. According to him, the practitioner of wisdom (the philosopher) should: "love his interlocutor-opponent by avoiding any hostility towards him. He is also required to put forward fair and equitable data by accepting his opponent's remarks, which he accepts when they come from him, that is to say by admitting the latter's proofs according to the conditions to which his own obey" (IBN ROCHD, (Averroes), 1987, p68).

Communication with the other presupposes decency and empathy, i.e., passing through oneself. No hierarchy or sign of power but rather a willingness to learn and change. Revolutionary at the time was the recourse to gender as an intercultural variable making the female sex the lever of missed development, thus advocating equality between men and women, on condition that the physical constitution of women is taken into account in the professional field: "Women do the same work as men. However, they must be given less arduous tasks"(IBN ROCHD, (Averroes), 1998, p. 124)

Averroes goes further in this form of intercultural "pro-feminine or pro-couple" highlighting similarities. According to him, women are capable of assuming all functions, even those of "philosopher" and head of state, which he translates in a more nuanced way in these words: "Some women are naturally intelligent. There is nothing to prevent some of them from being philosophers or presidents because they are predisposed to these functions" (IBN ROCHD, (Averroes), 1998, p.125)

Thus, by being concerned about the other and the dialectic that the latter induces with oneself (adaptation, respect, recognition/love...), by relying on the logic of similarities at both the interpersonal and inter-civilizational levels, and by appealing to positive argumentation and therefore to win-win negotiation, Ibn Rochd would bring a plus to the apprehension of the intercultural provided that these allusively processed data are analyzed in a thorough manner. The questioning of other texts by non-Western thinkers (Asian, Arab, African...) would also be of great scientific value. From this perspective, the sociologist Dominique Wolton calls for listening to thinkers and societies outside the West whose conception of cultural diversity can only be beneficial in order to negotiate values and principles and to set up a concerted common framework for cohabitation. Such an initiative would also contribute to stabilizing and "de-fragile" this still vulnerable and unstable field of research and applied research.

## 4.2 Khatibi Intercultural Initiative: basic concepts revisited

Khatibi is also one of those non-western, Arab-Muslim thinkers who make coherent and original proposals on intercultural issues. Centuries after Averroes, this figurehead of sociology in Morocco and around the world, gives us an anti-culturalist reflection that should be highlighted. In the manner of Nietzsche, he revolutionized intercultural thinking by inviting decolonization not only with respect to so-called traditional concepts such as identity and nation, but also with respect to the other and oneself. "To think of oneself is at the same time to think of the other, in other words, it is an act of decolonization of oneself and the other.

Founder, among other things, of the new intercultural paradigm not generally cited by researchers, Khatibi conceives identity as dynamic, continually transforming itself, depending on the context and adapting to it: "Identity is not defined by an eternal structure, but according to our argument, it is governed by asymmetrical relations between time, space and culture structuring the life of a group, an ethnic group, a society. Translation of the movement of being and its flexibility, of its adaptation to events, to its own energy of renewal.

The identity to be promoted, according to the author, is that of "otherness", an identity of otherness, a kind of "asymmetry of all identities (individual, social, cultural)" implying the decentration of the "I" "I am always another and this other is not you, that is to say a double of myself "which constitutes the ontological condition of the self" (KHATIBI, 1987, p.30). Indeed, it is an innovative perception in phase with the current state of scientific research in this field of investigation.

Culture, too, is redefined, liberated, at the antithesis of essentialist and fixist approaches. It becomes migrant, diasporic, incipient and reborn, crossing borders: "culture can only be understood in its transtextuality and transnationality"(KHATIBI, 1987, p.29). This perception embodies social science research work well, deepening it, in a way, by shaking up, with arguments in support, their reference "truths".

Khatibi goes far in his vision of interculturality by associating it mainly with encounter; encounter between human beings, all alike, all strangers in the face of existence "Encounter as an initiatory quest, because both the other and "I" are

strangers in life, death and survival" (KHATIBI, 1987, p.54). A vision through which the universal and therefore unifying dimension emerges, fighting fanaticism and isolation and promoting cosmopolitanism and "being together".

## 5. CONCLUSION

Thus, the Khatibian intercultural discourse promotes "other-thinking", a "transnationalist" and "internationalist" (KHATIBI, 1993, p.82) thinking in favor of "diasporization" and hybridity, pluralizing cultural codes, experiences and identities. Khatibi in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries and Ibn Rochd (Averroes) in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, two precursors of constructivist and subjectivist intercultural thinking; critical, universal, "pro-meeting" thinking, decentralizing the "I" which "floats in the atopolis" (KHATIBI, 1987, p.66), multiplying it and inscribing it in a continuous dialectic with the world; a dialectic that goes beyond "the chimera of origin" to use Foucault's expression.

Translated, profiled thinking embodies not only the innovative intercultural paradigm qualified as "liquid" but also nuances, completes and surpasses it, in perfect synergy with the advances in the social and human sciences that this thinking seems to readjust and reposition. The Arab-Muslim intercultural paradigm not only focuses on the concepts of culture and identity, which it humanizes and relativizes, but also and above all on the relationship with others according to a common project of identity and cultural co-constructions, a project based on similarities, decentration and win-win negotiation.

At present, "one can only be surprised at the disproportion between the inflationary use of interculturality in practice and the low number of university studies" (ABDALLAH-PRETCEILLE, 2013, p.46). One can also only "regret the low number of studies on complex societies marked by heterogeneity, especially cultural heterogeneity" and focused on "the strange foreigner" to the detriment of recognition of diversity". In the end, they arouse astonishment and regret "the current amalgamations linked to interculturality (...) present as much in the worlds of research (...), in education, sociology, intercultural communication, etc.) as in societal, political, institutional and supranational discourse" (DERVIN, 2010, p.58) and which would explain in part the errors and wanderings of fanatics, manipulators and manipulated people.

Following the example of other as yet unquestioned approaches, the Arab-Muslim intercultural approach could well fill this scientific void and contribute, as a consequence, to disalienation, disinformation and the fight against all forms of aberrations that currently threaten societies of any kind. The role of translation and translators in this perspective is no longer to be demonstrated, so obvious it is. Only translation would make it possible to inter-comprehend, to negotiate between the bearers of different cultures and thus to live together, far from linear discourse and the obsession with security.



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