

## **Tata Pume**

### **Episode 1 – What is Identity?**

#### **Introduction**

Welcome to Tata Pume the Intercultural Dialogue European Radio Campaign (IDERC). The aim of this series is to highlight the fact that European culture was built and is still being built by migrating populations and therefore mixing cultures.

The aspect of European which has been most affected by Interculturalism is language, it could be said that it is the gateway through which diverse and disparate cultures initially seek and subsequently achieve understanding. It is indeed most telling in the continued use of the term Lingua Franca. The modern description of this term is; a language used by speakers whose native languages are different as a system for mutual understanding. Historically also, Lingua Franca, meaning Frank language, was originally a pidgin (i.e.; a hybrid of other languages) used by Mediterranean traders in the middle ages as a result of Frank being the Arabic word for European.

With 2008 being the European year of Intercultural Dialogue it is the intention of this series producers to approach the subject through the medium of Linguistics and Philology. Linguistics is simply the scientific study of Language and it is quite fitting that one of the earliest recorded studies of particular languages was of Greek grammar by Dionysius Thrax of Alexandria around the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. Philology was a term that connoted the study of language in general, before the growth of modern Linguistics. It originally applied to the study of Classical Languages and Literatures but came to be applied to what is now called Comparative Linguistics, which is mainly concerned with establishing the history and relationships of the Indo-European Languages. Comparative studies were undertaken in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century by many Philologists including Jacob Grimm, who helped to identify and trace the relationships of the Indo-European languages. The brothers Jacob and Willhelm Grimm, known to children and adults alike the world over for their compilations of Fairytales, were also very competent Philologists aswell. Indeed a later publication of theirs the 'Deutsche Grammatik' (1819, 1822) was a historical and descriptive German grammar containing observations on the regularity of sound changes in Indo-European languages, known as Grimm's Law.

The Series will be broadcast in the form of 10 Episodes whose aim it is to explore the current languages spoken in different European countries through the philological analysis of Linguistic Stratification (i.e.; to arrange in social grade or class) which composed and created them. The primary intention of this campaign is to generate an awareness amongst European citizens of the long and complicated process of Intercultural Dialogue which European people have always experienced, which has played a formative roll in shaping the mosaic of European cultural identities which exist today and provide scientific proof of this.

Down through the centuries, European people have always migrated across our continent from one place to another. The occupation of large regions where other people lived created over time a sort of new human settlement with cultural, religious and linguistic features that were absolutely original because the new culture was the result of both peoples, the natives and the new ones. This is the story of our Continent, the story of an ancient yet continuing phenomenon which we would like to give an account of and document with this project. To this end the producers feel that it is important that we emphasize the importance of the following factors;

- 1) The contribution that the multifarious cultures of European people have brought to our common European heritage.
- 2) The ordinariness of this social, cultural and religious phenomenon strictly connected to the current globalisation phase and that our continent experienced many other periods like this one.
- 3) The futility of defining someone who lives in Europe as “pure” from an anthropological point of view: everyone is the result of Ethnic integrations which occurred over the passage of time.
- 4) The importance of taking part in the present dialogue with people from different cultures to create a clearer awareness of who we are today: there is no reason for us to be afraid because our ancestors have lived the same way before us and have through the faculty of Intercultural Dialogue helped shape the mantle of this identity of which we are its proud and grateful heirs, we are the progeny of Europa.

In this the first Episode we will deal with the themes on which the project will be based. In Episode 2 ‘Migrations’ we will explore how migration is a fundamental element in the evolution of the human species. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Episode ‘Cities’ will examine how culture and economy, to name but a few, have contributed to the cities evolution and the people who dwell there. Episode 4 ‘Culture’ how European culture has been defined through the medium of Intercultural Dialogue will be followed by Episode 5 ‘Food’ in which we will be dealing with the effects and influences of European cuisine upon the Irish diet, for example the transition from the traditional cabbage and potatoes to spaghetti bolognaises. Episode 6 will be Commerce and Finance, from the trading at Dublin Docks to how historically trading was the initial reason for Intercultural Dialogue. Episode 7 ‘Art’ the one universal language of Europe, from Music, Dance, Literature and Art we find out how different countries of Europe have contributed to this important medium. Episode 8 is entitled ‘Why Not’, what are the barriers that prohibit Intercultural Dialogue in 2008, why do stereotypes still exist. In this program we hope to discover what these reasons may be and find solutions. Episode 9 is called ‘Traces’, the aim of this program is to look for evidence of external influences upon Language, Culture and Architecture as a result of the meeting of people. And finally in Episode 10 we deal with the issue of ‘Identity in Europe Today’.

In conclusion this project will effectively find its fruition in the combined efforts of a joint collaboration between a network of 7 European radio stations including stations from; Austria, France, Ireland, Italy, Hungary, Spain and Slovenia and in a way the inter-relation and communication between these different modern European cultures bares testimony to the efficacy, validation and continued existence of Intercultural Dialogue.

So “Lets Talk” and learn about one another. Let’s explore multicultural Europe and celebrate its diversity through a study of the hidden unity between its cultures. Finally, a new website will be created for the project and all the broadcasts will be uploaded onto it, in pod cast format. All content and materials will also be transcribed and uploaded onto the website, the purpose of which is to gather these educational documents in the one place to be available at the free disposal of anyone interested in this subject.

## **Vox Pops:**

C.O.: “Are you aware that it’s the year of Intercultural Dialogue?”

V.P.1: “Not really actually.”

V.P.2: “Not really.”

V.P.3: “I wasn’t, no.”

V.P.4: “No actually, I wasn’t aware of that, no.”

V.P.5: “No.”

C.O.: “In your opinion do we need Intercultural Dialogue?”

V.P.1: “Yes I do. I actually personally agree that this is very important because it’s a way for you to get to know everyone around the world because it is becoming more of a global village these days. So having the basic understanding of each culture in that sense will make everyone very happy at the end of the day.”

V.P.2: “Well yeah, absolutely. Europe should talk, everybody should talk and listen and have fun and enjoy their life.”

V.P.3: “I think we do, yeah. I think it’s the only way of solving any problems we have and it stops people becoming violent if we can keep talking about things.”

V.P.4: “Yeah, yeah I think so. Yeah, yeah I think that’s a good idea because I’m here to learn another language to know some people so I can learn many things and I can learn other culture, other languages and for me it’s good because I am very young and so I can become another person if I learn these things.”

C.O.: “In your opinion do we need Intercultural Dialogue?”

V.P.1: “I think it’s a good thing. I think this Festival of World Cultures that I’m at now in Dun Laoire is a great way of just an awareness in a kind of a fun way of other cultures and I think that just gives people a good feeling about people from other cultures. Dun Laoire-Rathdown seem to be particularly good because they’ve also organised a photographic competition which is on at the moment where people can take just ordinary pictures of diversity in the borough and I think that those sort of things are good ways of creating awareness of other cultures.”

V.P.2: “I think so yeah. I mean the changing times in Ireland you know and across the world. I mean there’s challenges facing Ireland now, you know the times when we went away to foreign countries and we had trouble there and now we have the sort of similar situation of people coming in here and it’s not even necessarily that there’d be racism. It’s just different cultures need to work together kind of thing.”

One can’t speak about the history and formation of Europe without mentioning the pivotal role that concentric identities contributed to it. Though the Europe of today is a varied and diverse hotchpotch of mutually respectful peoples carrying on their traditional customs, rituals, celebrations and culture, it was once a vast expansive geographical landmass which was becoming home to tribal, family-based, hunter-gatherer pilgrims migrating further North with the receding ice-sheets.

The fundamental mechanism which enabled this to happen was through the faculty of co-ordinated communication and this ever evolving and improving technological breakthrough facilitated the initial meeting and mixing between separate, individual, scattered, differing cultures and led the way toward trading and the founding of economic financial structures. This eventually led onto the villages, towns and finally cities which we inhabit today.

Places where Art, Culture and Food began to thrive and develop until they defined a geographical location's inhabitants as a particular people. This paradigm shift in human-kind's conscious awareness of ourselves and the world in which we lived was all made possible through the simple medium of language. It was through the invention of language that we were able to send these words to your distant ears and tell you the story of how Europe has come to be. It is through language that we pass on our culture, language being the carrier of culture and integrate new, useful, and desirable cultures into one another to advance towards a more inclusive society.

Language has provided us with an opportunity to voice our concerns, opinions, ideals and fears and hopes down all of those generation's ages to ours. It is the perpetual link that spans time, allowing us to reach out even beyond our world and onto future achievements.

Explanation of Concentric Identities by Esther Murphy (the projects academic):

"O.K. thanks Ciarán. Just following on from your introduction there to highlight where culture the word itself even originates. It's originally from the Latin 'collieri', which means to inhabit, cultivate, protect, honour with worship. I suppose it has been said that when we speak another language we in fact have the potential to inhabit another culture. Before even thinking about communicating with people from other cultures and other languages, I suppose it's a good place to start at just our own identities and also I suppose against the backdrop of today's world of globalisation of economic and communications dimensions of life. We need a new, a radically new, different design to approach identity as opposed to a singular dimension. We have much more than in the past we have to see each individual as being at the centre of a concentric universe, I suppose such that the circles circumscribing each individual on the continuum of humanity intersect at myriad different points as a result producing a network of possible identities and paths, in a way which each and every individual is in principal open.

I suppose a good way to think of a concentric identity is like a Venn (check spelling) Diagram. A Venn diagram was invented in the 1980's, it's been around a while it was invented by John Ven. And it's this idea that intersecting circles which describe spaces or in fact unions which constitute possible or actual identities for the individuals. So it's nearly the idea of various colours and overlapping spaces and within these spaces you have possibility for different identities. For instance you have maybe what we could call; I suppose nearly a repertoire of allegiances. Like an allegiance to your family, to your work, to your wider community and in fact to your nation. The idea of an allegiance to the flag, to your nationality we would associate nationality with this. Then again we can have the concept of a specific ethnicity, race and so on.

So I suppose the idea of the concentric identity is that they're overlapping spaces and all of these spaces make up the individual identity, the different components, the different facets it's this mosaic idea. And within that I suppose we have in Ireland we use the term 'Clan' to talk about our allegiance to our particular family and other cultures have their own terms and it's basically from the idea of being part of a tribe. Another way to look at is this is one idea of the concentric metaphor and another metaphor that's quite useful is the idea of an Iceberg, where you have an Iceberg the majority of it is beneath the surface and about one-tenth of it is the visible part of it above the surface.

And we can consider this in relation to identity if we think about language. Language when you first meet somebody it's the first component that one can take in or also with regard to fashion, with regard to sports allegiance if someone's wearing a football jersey you know what team they're supporting and this kind of thing. They are the things that will strike you on an initial meeting.

Then beneath the surface about nine-tenths we're talking about here, we're talking about more difficult things to grasp like people's values, customs, beliefs that are very hard to say. For instance people's political allegiance or religious beliefs when people first meet may not be something as noticeable and then again it may be. With different cultures, in Muslim cultures you'll have people more identifiable by perhaps a Hijab, their headscarf. One cultural critic has remarked that no one today is purely one thing, for instance labels like Indian or woman or Muslim or American are no more than starting points which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind. And that's in fact what we're talking about here, it's a particular starting point in the way that a stereotype can be perceived as such and in fact in the way that we can construct our own identity by pitting ourselves against something else and this whole concept of the other although can be deemed to serve negatively to define a social group in fact in essence can define yourself positively.

Like I said there about allegiance to a particular community group, your own nation group, and your own family in a very positive way as well. And also he went on to say that just as human beings make their own history they also make their cultures and ethnic identities therefore it's within our control. No one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions, sustained habitations, national languages and cultural geographies but he goes on to say there seems no reason accept fear and prejudice to keep insisting on their separation and distinctiveness as if that all human life was about. Indeed survival is in fact about the connections between things. So I suppose this brings us back to the idea of the overlapping spaces that we deem possible with a multiple identity as can be conveyed by the metaphor of the Venn diagram. Also its one thing looking at our own personal identity and own multifaceted complex nature and in fact that the shaping of our own intrinsic identity happens at these intersections and these differences. It's more difficult communication when we're in encounters with people who don't share the same background as ourselves or indeed of the same language or cultural customs and values and beliefs. These hidden aspects that I mentioned in the metaphor of the Iceberg that it takes time to negotiate this process and often one of the chief stumbling blocks as one sociologist has pointed out, Barna, has mentioned that the key stumbling block is an assumption of similarities between people.

In fact even the idea of common sense, it seems absurd when we're all not coming from a common place or common language and common cultural background. And yet it is a possibility in the same way that you learn a language, people describe themselves as bilingual when they speak more than one language, there is a possibility for intercultural competence to be achieved and to become in fact bicultural. Many words are used around now in relation and we hear it in many...we have recent Minister of Integration and many aspirations on how to deal with a changing society of a myriad cultures and diverse languages mixing together.

I just want to mention two particular idea's of assimilation and adaptation and the nature of these two, that indeed assimilation can actually lead to a sort of a substitute of identity whereby its in fact becoming a new person in order to fit in, in order to belong to this new group. Where in fact we're substituting a part of ourselves, we're dissolving a certain aspect of your identity in order to fit in with the new group. Lots

of new Irish newcomers are facing this challenge. Then in a more positive light, I suppose there's the concept of adaptation which we can see in the form of this word 'add'aptation where it's an additive, it's actually adding something to your identity, its opening the circle. It's making an extra connection rather than having to minus and dilute a part of your personality or identity, it's saying it's adding something on, an aspiration for biculturalism in the same way as I said you can learn another language and many people are fluent in more than one language. We can talk about a cultural fluency whereby somebody feels at ease to communicate in more than one cultural community."

You have been listening to Esther Murphy our academic for the duration of the series.

"O.K. thanks Ciarán. Just to say I'm really delighted and privileged to be part of this very timely project on Intercultural Dialogue and I'm really looking forward to exploring and discussing this topic more, thanks very much."

### **Vox Pops**

C.O.: "Do you think there are any common cultural aspects shared amongst European countries?"

V.P.1: "Amongst European countries, I think we all share the basic human need for food shelter and a safe place to live. So yeah I do, I think all humans share that, so we're not very different really."

V.P.2: "Oh yeah definitely. I'd say the underpinning of it would be the Christian civilisation which at one point like in the Middle Ages would have united the whole of Europe. In fact you would have said that you were sort of Catholic European rather than any particular nationality. So there's that, we've a lot of shared heritage, architecture and culture. Yeah definitely."

V.P.3: "Lots, lots. Particularly music for instance, you know you always find sort of the roots of the folk music is very similar and that, so I think so, yeah."