EXPECT_art

D2.1 REVIEW REPORT

Cross-disciplinary review of scientific literature on cultural literacy and arts

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List of Abbreviations

ABM: Art-based methods
CBR: Community-based research
CCL: Critical cultural literacy
CEE: Central and Eastern Europe
CL: Cultural literacy
CPed: Critical pedagogy
CRP: Culturally relevant pedagogy
CSP: Culturally sustaining pedagogy
EXPECT_Art: Exploring and Educating Cultural Literacy through Art
GCE: Global Citizenship Education
GCE: Global Citizenship Education
NGO: Non-governmental organization
PAR: Participatory action research
RPTU: University of Kaiserslautern-Landau
UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA: United States of America
YPAR: Youth participatory action research

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INTRODUCTION

In accordance with task 2.1 (Review of Literature on Cultural Literacy and Arts Education) in the EXPECT_Art's Description of Action, this deliverable takes the form of a narrative review of conceptual and methodological literature on cultural literacy and arts education through a cross-disciplinary approach, including critical pedagogy, decolonization theory and community-based and art-based research. While the University of Barcelona took the lead on the deliverable, the other five research partners involved in the EXPECT_Art project (University of Southern Denmark, University of Kaiserslautern-Landau, Hungarian Research Centre, University of Wrocław, Science and Research Centre Koper) have also contributed to the task by reviewing available literature, databases and case studies. Thus, the report provides an in-depth overview of research regarding cultural literacy (CL) and critical cultural literacy (CCL) in their multiple connections to arts education. Some of the quotations in this report have been translated into English, as the review includes a number of sources in languages other than English.

During the first stage of task 2.1, from January to mid-April, working groups of 4-6 researchers revised literature according to six categories: decoloniality, art education, multiliteracies, arts-based methods, community-based research and critical pedagogy. Each researcher focused on their corresponding category, selecting and summarizing at least five references (such as articles, book chapters, dissertations, conference proceedings, etc.) directly or potentially associated with CCL. In total, 139 references were reviewed. For the second stage, from mid-April to June, additional searches in databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, Eric, Google Scholar and Academic Search Complete were carried out, providing another 286 references. Finally, 425 references were systematically reviewed in Covidence by a team of 15 reviewers from the five research partners of the EXPECT_Art consortium.

Kamler and Thompson (2014) compare literature reviews to hosting a dinner party where there are never enough seats to invite everyone. This report is not an exception. Among the 425 references that were reviewed, 119 were directly related to CCL, 208 were potentially related, and 98 were discarded for not being related to CCL. Most of the references discussed in this review belong to the first group, while only some from the second group have been occasionally mentioned to point out other lines of thought and methodological perspectives that may need to be considered when reflecting on CCL. The criteria for determining if a reference was related or not to CCL did not solely rely on the use of the term. Instead, we considered the following approaches: 1) Including subaltern repertoires and cultural practices 2) Challenging dominant habitus conceptually or empirically 3) Considering multiple viewpoints from marginalised groups 4) Challenging established cultural discourses.

Section 1 of this report consists of a genealogical review of the notion of CCL. It has been developed by breaking down and discussing each of the three terms included in CCL: literacy, cultural literacy and critical. CCL is then linked to the EXPECT_Art

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project to highlight several possibilities, tensions and challenges in fostering art education proposals associated with the cultural diversity of marginalised social agents.

Section 2 explores six key notions that are deeply connected to CCL: decoloniality and curriculum, art education and curriculum, critical pedagogy, multiliteracies, arts-based and community-based research, and cultural awareness. The subsections are structured distinctly, reflecting the contributions of different working groups during the first stage of the literature review, with each group focusing on a specific intersection. Each subsection elaborates on one of these intersections by presenting and discussing references that illustrate how the concept has shaped the theoretical scope and methodological aims of CCL.

Section 3 gives an account of the specific relationships between CCL and the contextual singularities of each research partner participating in EXPECT_Art. Each segment examines local perspectives and references from Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Spain, addressing three key questions: 1) What tensions and gaps (epistemic, terminological or practical) may arise in the application of CCL? 2) How does the concept of CCL broaden the scope of thought in each respective context? 3) What specific issues does CCL intersect with and address?

During the literature review, we found that most of the references were from the USA or English-speaking academic contexts, often reflecting an objectivist and instrumentalist perspective. We acknowledge this bias in the reviewed materials, seeking to balance it through the contributions in section 3. Moreover, we will continue addressing it in the upcoming work in WP3 (Researcher Art Ex). While the world is not solely North American and English, EXPECT_Art is a European project. Therefore, we will strive to decolonize the literature we have been given.

References

Kamler, B. & Thompson, P. (2014). *Helping doctoral students write. Pedagogies for Supervision*. Routledge.

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1 CRITICAL CULTURAL LITERACY: A TENTATIVE GENEALOGY

In this chapter, the review of the concept of CCL is approached from the breakdown and genealogical review of each term (literacy, cultural literacy and critical). This operation allows each revision step to link the concepts' production to the onto-epistemological and contextual frameworks in which they have been generated. At the end of the tour, the notion of CCL is reached to link it with the EXPECT_Art project proposal and reveal some of its possibilities, tensions and challenges regarding the promotion of arts education practices that account for the diversities of the social agents who participate in them.

1.1 Introduction: The complexity of searching a critical and decolonial genealogy on critical cultural literacy

This section reviews the concept of cultural critical literacy (CCL) – central to the European project EXPECT_Art – which is intertwined with the concepts of Literacy and Cultural Literacy (CL). To carry out this purpose, some of the movements of these concepts are traced as a genealogical approach, with the aim of providing a basis for the continued reflections in the consortium, including in WP3: Researcher Art Exploratorium. According to Foucault (2001), who takes this notion from Nietzsche, a genealogy can illuminate the ways in which past patterns resonate in contemporary ideas. It "makes history a journey, accomplished in successive stages, across the simultaneous patterning of representation and words" (p. 120).

Inspired by Foucault's investigations on the formation of discourses and concepts, it seems important to raise awareness of historical and conceptual formations, including the history of concepts and etymologies. Concepts are materialized world-relations enabling us to make the absent become present. While there can be many individual animals of a specific kind present, the idea of its kind – for example, an elephant – is the absent ideality made present in the concept. The performative character of concepts in making something become present, as well as the materialization in the concept, are both dimensions that reveal how concepts are world-relations that are subject to the world-relating practices of the speakers. They change with practices and differ with cultures, and they reveal different implications between languages. For example, the English notion of a concept does not have the same implication as the German Begriff and the Danish begreb, both of which suggest that a concept is what you reach out and try to get hold of something with (with griff/greb deriving from words meaning catching). These terms indicate a world relation of acting (with our hands), while our acts and intentions change with cultural formations and human practices (our world-relation today is probably more a matter of vision than tactile, which does not imply the world is out of our hands). Consequently, when using concepts, they may reaffirm interests and materialize figurations. In that sense, they are never politically neutral. An intellectual task is to question the origin of concepts and to potentially decolonise their hidden implications.

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In anticipation that this task exceeds the possibilities of this review, we will suggest a brief approach to the notion of literacy as proposed by Paulo Freire (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Freire's transition moves from deciphering texts to interpreting the world to intervene in it:

> The act of learning to read and write must start from a comprehensive understanding of the act of reading the world, something that human beings do before reading words. Historically, even humans changed the world first, proclaimed the world second, and then wrote the words. These are moments in history. Humans didn't start naming. They began by freeing their hand, understanding the world (p. xiii).

Afterwards, a more extensive approach to the notion of CL is provided from its beginnings as linked to the creation of a national identity to the current cosmopolitan movements that assume the importance of considering the fertile and multiple character of the notion of culture in an interconnected world. We then finish with the notion of CCL, which is nourished by the turn of cultural literacy towards including perspectives linked to the intersectionalities (of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, culture, social class...). These perspectives demand complex responses to address common life practices.

In this task, two considerations are necessary. The first will lead us to question the dominance exercised by the academic tradition of the USA and other Anglo-Saxon countries (especially the United Kingdom and Australia) on these terms. This consideration activated a decolonizing attitude in developing this genealogical project, for which references from European sources and the Global South are retrieved.

The other consideration is keeping sight of how the European project EXPECT_Art does not see CL merely as something to learn, but as an ability to read the culture one lives in and the cultures that people, as cultural beings, already have. In EXPECT_Art, CL is understood as a social practice (Lähdesmäki et al., 2022), a dialogic and co-creative endeavour "constructed or negotiated in interactions that are framed in cultural models or schemes" (Rutten et al., 2013, p. 445) embedded in turn in specific contexts (Perry, 2012).

This consideration emphasizes CL as what subjects are involved in by practising it, rather than something they merely confront and decipher/read, as expressed in this quotation: "To be a literate reader, in particular, requires that one has accumulated a stock of cultural data which will be called into play by a given verbal communication" (Levinson 1990, p.19). The practice of CL relates to education by the educational aim of transforming the subject into an educated person. In this sense, CL is not only about knowing cultural data and excelling in cultural references but also about living and enacting them. It is not sufficient that one knows about hip hop culture, such as naming all the correct figures in music and performances, knowing the slang or understanding the movements. One will still appear as an

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outsider if unable to embody and enact the hip hop culture. Similarly, someone with extensive knowledge of literature and art may still fall short in salons as if s/he doesn't not know how to talk about it and navigate social interactions.

Some current versions of CL may be problematic as it too easily becomes instrumental, which may be seen as a problem and likely a result of its context (which determines it as instrumental). EXPECT_Art suggests another and more critical understanding in line with a European Bildung tradition. Hence, the following understanding is to be explored through the project: "Critical cultural literacy, which rests on the assumption that people are always already culturally literate, and their everyday lives are already saturated and shaped by cultural and artistic forms of expression" (DoA part B, p. 3).

1.2 On literacy

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), *literacy* is of American origin (from 1880) and means: "The quality, condition, or state of being literate; the ability to read and write". It is important to pay attention to a change in significance. As an adjective (from 1475), *literate* initially meant "acquainted with letters or literature" (OED). This was later replaced by the ability to read and write (originating in 1613, according to the OED). Since 1919, it has also meant "competent or knowledgeable in a particular area" when used with a modifying word. As a noun, *literate* has meant "a member of the learned class" since around 1540. Much later, since 1875, it has come to mean "a person who can read and write". Foucault (2001) explains this kind of change as a shift from an order becoming present in language to one where order is represented in models that *stand for* and thus allow representations (models, institutions) to be independent with their own logic.

The skill of reading grants one access to knowledge inaccessible for others and has given status or position in illiterate societies. Educational initiatives have promoted literacy to many as a practical skill, causing the association of literate with learned to fade. This is of significance for whether the ability to read also implies a cultural understanding or is merely a skill whose use is related to other matters. Does literacy characterise moral progress or only a technical skill when "literacy became a means by which in the modernising west the nineteenth-century could describe itself as the era of progress" (Vincent, 2019, n/p)?

The relation between literacy and education, i.e. in acquiring skills for life and practices in the cultural setting one lives in, is problematized by Dewey (1916):

> ...in an advanced culture much which has to be learned is stored in symbols. It is far from translation into familiar acts and objects. Such material is relatively technical and superficial. Taking the ordinary standard of reality as a measure, it is artificial. For this measure is connection with practical concerns. Such material exists in a world by itself, unassimilated to ordinary customs of thought and expression. There

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> is the standing danger that the material of formal instruction will be merely the subject matter of the schools, isolated from the subject matter of life-experience. The permanent social interests are likely to be lost from view. Those which have not been carried over into the structure of social life, but which remain largely matters of technical information expressed in symbols, are made conspicuous in schools. Thus, we reach the ordinary notion of education: the notion which ignores its social necessity and its identity with all human association that affects conscious life, and which identifies it with imparting information about remote matters and the conveying of learning through verbal signs: the acquisition of literacy. (p. 15f)

The problematic assumption is that learning a technique such as reading also leads to "an increase of power of observation, attention, and recollection which may be employed whenever these powers are needed" (Dewey, 1916, p. 77). But the more the student engages in learning technical skills, "the less likely is he to acquire an ability which can be used for anything except the mere noting of verbal visual forms" (Dewey, 1916, p. 77. See Dewey's full critique is on pp. 73-81).

A question is whether reading is a skill that can be viewed as merely instrumental so that the reader remains unaffected by the reading. Is there a reading subject, the skill of reading, and something disseminated through the reading? Or is the literate transformed through the practice of reading? Obviously, one is transformed in achieving knowledge, but to know something is not merely to store information in one's mind; reading literature (which should also include listening to music, visiting art exhibitions, watching plays, etc.) is also to be affected by it. Through reading (listening, watching, etc.) we learn to interpret and understand our feelings, including which feelings to value and which to suppress or ignore. We are not merely informed, we are also transformed.

At this point, it is relevant to include Chege (2019) on literacy as a loaded concept. Contending approaches to literacy exist since there is no one standard or universal definition of literacy: what constitutes literacy varies from one cultural context to another – differences are dictated by the socio-economic and political structure of any given society. Furthermore, and most importantly, any definition of literacy is ideologically conceived. As Gee (1990) argues, every approach to literacy, consciously or unconsciously, "incorporates a tacit or overt ideological theory" (p. 27). A view corroborated by Knoblauch and Brannon (1993), who assert that "the concept of 'literacy' is and must always be ideologically situated" (p. 15).

According to White (2008), the meaning of literacy depends on ontological and epistemological cleavages. For instance, if ontology refers to a basic truth or understanding about knowledge, and epistemology refers to how that truth is represented (Willis, 2007), then one's ontological worldview directly impacts one's epistemic beliefs and how those beliefs are to be represented. For example, if

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literacy means to be *lettered*, that is, to be able to read and write, epistemologically speaking, reading and writing are going to be the sole representations of this worldview. Literacy will be tightly tied, then, to print media alone. However, if literacy ontologically is understood as a system of meaning-making that can epistemologically be represented through various systems, then it engenders multiple avenues through which meaning can be represented and interpreted.

Currently, beyond traditionally describing reading and writing, the term literacy is often used to describe competency in a particular field. To be literate is to be competent and knowledgeable. The term is used to normalize understanding, and describe people as being emotionally literate or financially literate to indicate a certain competence and skill set (Maine, et al., 2019, p. 383). Following this approach, Chege's (2019) analysis of the concept of literacy highlights five paradigms that, although not exhaustive, do shed light on the different epistemological perspectives on literacy: "Great Divide" or "Great Leap" approach, Functional, Post-structural, Literacy as Discourse, and Critical Literacy. With this classification in mind, in the following section we explore the genealogy of the notion CL.

1.3 Starting to think about cultural literacy

As we have seen in the previous section, literacy was initially related to the importance of reading associated with the Enlightenment's ideals to educate people. One thing that is often ignored, but still represents interesting historical background, is what happens throughout Europe in the 19th century, when cultural forms – the different revolutions, class-struggles, national movements with conflicts between peoples and administration (like German as the ruling language in the Austrian-Hungarian empire), and *sub-cultural* movements like bohemians – were competing in a European context.

The original concept of CL can be seen as adopting literacy as a desirable standard with the stance that culture is a set of knowledge to acquire and that those most literate are those well versed in this knowledge set. The most frequently cited author writing about CL, Hirsch (1988), created a list of 5,000 names, dates, phrases and ideas that every American needs to know. The idea of a fixed set of knowledge that might then be used to form a *curriculum for all* in formal education has also had an uptake in the UK by Gove (2009) and Gibbs (2015). They adapt Hirsch's ideas to the curriculum in England and Wales by foregrounding a White British perspective on history and move away from the skills-driven focus that was prevalent in the early 21st century (Young et al., 2014). Because of Hirsch's influence, we will focus on his conception of culture and the criticisms he has generated.

Hirsch (1980), a liberal philosopher of education, challenged the idea of literacy as culturally neutral when he noted a decline in the quality of students' writing. He attributed this decline to a disregard for the cultural dimension of writing, which he defined as "that whole system of unspoken, tacit knowledge that is shared between writer and reader" (p. 29). He termed this intergenerational, shared canonical

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knowledge "cultural literacy". Hirsch argued that CL must entail both common pieces and types of knowledge that lead to shared experiences. He argued at length that the achievement gap between privileged and underprivileged students can be explained by variations in exposure to this cultural knowledge. His liberal perspective led him to champion cultural literacy as a means of breaking the cycle of poverty and illiteracy to facilitate communication with strangers, which he argued was necessary to "promote the general welfare and to ensure domestic tranquillity" (Hirsch, 1988, p. xii). If people were able to draw on the same cultural knowledge, they would be better at communicating on equal terms.

Critique of Hirsch's work is commonly concerned with the association with traditionalism, elitism and representation as noted by Edwards (1984), who argued that the list's Anglo-Saxon focus undermined the values of cultural diversity and would lead to a "rigid, tradition-based book list" that would be "too elitist, too exclusionary". Defending the association with traditionalism, Hirsch (1988 in Maine et al., 2019) noted the unavoidable paradox that "the goals of political liberalism require educational conservatism" (p. 384). However, while it is of importance to have knowledge of one's dialogue partners across cultural differences to establish a common ground for dialogue, it is equally important that the effort of understanding goes both ways, otherwise the *educational conservatism* is a means of cultural repression. Consequently, Hirsch is prone to a criticism similar to what already Woodson (1931) rose regarding the American curriculum where coloured students "are taught to admire the Hebrew, the Greek, the Latin and the Teuton" but "[t]heir education does not bring their minds into harmony with the life as they must face it", thus conflicting with the idea that education means "to learn to begin with life as they find it and make it better" rather than a mere "process of imparting information" (pp. 266-267).

Hirsch's model – that culture is merely something to be accessed or *read* – is illustrated by Woodhouse (1989), who, in his critique of Hirsch, argues that "the world is a text to be interpreted, criticized, and reinterpreted" (p.87). Missing from Woodhouse's critique is that culture is not just received (even if critiqued and reinterpreted), it is also created. Giroux (1992) however, did recognize this, arguing that Hirsch's view ignores "how schools and other institutions function as complex sites of cultural production" (p. 233). Woodhouse also criticized Hirsch for depoliticizing the issue of culture and presenting "a single durable history and vision, one at odds with a critical notion of democracy and difference" (Giroux in Maine et al., 2019, p. 385).

Hirsch's views appear out of place in the culture (and CL) of a contemporary global and mediated society, which is inherently multicultural and multilingual. It cannot be constructed by unseen *intellectuals* or politicians with a nationalist agenda. This position was challenged when the thinking of authors like Freire reached the USA and other Anglo-Saxon countries. It is no longer a matter of deciphering a text but of interpreting the world, and the interpretation of the world cannot be done only

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from what was considered the *own culture* of a country. Among other reasons, because with migratory flows and the recognition of different otherness (of gender, ethnicity, class...), one must question the idea of a country's culture or who defines such a national culture. Furthermore, the idea of *a national culture* is also not compatible with the complexity-oriented and critical views on the concept of culture prevalent in the field of anthropology today (Abu-Lughod, 2008).

With Street's (1984) model of literacy as a social practice, CL is linked to the context of multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996) and proposed as dispositional, dynamic and dialogic. Thus, becoming *culturally literate* means being disposed to be, and competent in being, sensitive to one's own and others' identities, heritages, and cultures. Finally, as Maine and Cook (2019, p. 384) argue, what this means for the classroom should be considered, proposing that through dialogic pedagogy (and not only by thinking of the concept of CL as dialogic) young people can be encouraged to become tolerant, empathetic, and inclusive of other positions and perspectives.

Countries are realities where different people with different traditions, references and identities converge. Therefore, one must recognise different sources and references beyond the *national* culture to be culturally literate. Today, most contemporary young people are nourished by cultural references that go beyond the local and place them in a certain cosmopolitanism. In the current digital era, many students are curiously exploring the cultures of other countries and may, especially regarding popular culture, appreciate it more than their own.

As a summary of this section, CL seems to originate in the USA context out of a desire for a common cultural source for education and nation-building, which, in the case of Hirsch, is to empower people by ensuring they speak from the same starting-point. A problematic assumption of his is that the *common source* is not merely an instrument for empowering, but a means of subjecting to particular understandings/worldviews.

Balancing the local and global cultural references is a great challenge for today's CL, and CCL is, in some way, a response to the hegemonic white cultural narrative on CL and a contribution to a more multicultural and diverse society. This is where the critical perspective of CL begins to be articulated. From this framework, in the following section we discuss the notion of *critical* linked to CL and the challenges and possibilities it poses for the EXPECT_Art project.

1.4 A tentative genealogy of CCL

This section is the central part of this genealogy. The two previous sections on the concept of literacy and CL have been the necessary path to arrive at the concept of CCL. To explore this concept, we review three notions of critique: *liberal*, *emancipatory*, *postcolonial and queer*, and *critical proximity*. Next, we investigate the notion of CCL from critical pedagogy (CPed).

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1.5 The meaning of 'critical' from different lenses

The word critical is widely used in different ways, in different contexts, and for different purposes, often emptying it of meaning. In this section, we explore its various meanings to demarcate our epistemological commitment to the concept based on the revision made by Tilio and Hilsdorf Rocha (2024).

From a liberal perspective, the key notion is critical thinking where criticality is centred exclusively on the individual, who concentrates all the necessary efforts on critical distancing. From this perspective, being critical means using cognitive skills that allow for a detached perception of the phenomenon. To understand a phenomenon critically, one must distance oneself from it, as proximity could interfere with one's understanding. This concept guides a widespread idea of critical thinking in academic life, understood as the ability of the individual to distance themselves from the phenomenon to see its different sides and enable a more convincing argument. It is informed by ideals of objectivity, achieved through the neutrality of the observing subject detached from the observed object, which is often decontextualized to ensure analytic clarity. Although the apparent coherence of this perspective cannot be denied, the subjectivities, differences, inequalities, power relations and conflicts inherent in social relations and the social positions occupied by the interlocutors are not considered. This approach can be seen as a naïve view in the belief that any individual can distance themselves from a phenomenon and that such distancing would occur in the same way for everyone, despite their different subjectivities and social insertions.

Considering the transformative character inherent in the concept of critical, the perspective of emancipatory modernism understands that the function of critical theory is to unveil to the oppressed the dominant ideology of the oppressor, raising awareness of oppressing structures to resist them and give rise to emancipation. This perspective is guided by (neo)Marxist social theories, which (re)interpret Marx's ideas in various ways and are commonly concerned with social issues of inequality, injustice, domination and oppression. The relevance of this conception of critical cannot be denied since the hegemonic discourses that circulate socially are permeated by ideologies present in the wider ideological systems (Volóchinov, 2017 [1929]) with a false, naturalized appearance. This naturalization can attenuate its oppressive character, so the oppressed do not even notice it. Therefore, this conception of the critical plays a fundamental role in making subjects aware of oppression and in any reflections that are critical to dominant ideas and worldviews.

However, one must avoid falling into the trap of reducing social problems to the division of society between the dominated/oppressed and the dominator/oppressor, considering social classes in a homogeneous way and as the only determining category of differences. Although social stratification into classes determines hegemonic discourses and the way social (inter)relations take place in a capitalist society, one cannot ignore the subjectivities that operate in (inter)relations that are not homogeneous. Different forms of domination/oppression are

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established depending on the subjects involved, just as different forms and degrees of resistance on the part of the dominated/oppressed are possible, depending on the other social places they occupy besides class, considering that even class belonging does not homogenize subjects. Social hegemonies and power relations are articulated through the (inter)relationship between class and intersectionalities: race, gender, sexuality, age, profession, family life, religion, academic background, etc. In its critique of dominant ideology, the perspective of emancipatory modernism contributes therefore to the construction of part of the concept of critical but does not account for all its complexity (Tilio, 2019).

From a post-colonial and queer perspective, criticality can be defined as the ability to engage with differences based on problematizing practices to construct meanings that are socio-historically situated. This perspective incorporates elements of the previous conceptions since engaging with differences requires a certain distance that allows for a diversity of arguments, a situated understanding of the phenomenon and recognition of the omnipresence of relations of domination and oppression when talking about differences. One criticism of this perspective is its inherent relativism, but this is precisely its central point: all interpretation is relative to cultural frames that are constitutive of meaning, and to believe in and defend objectivism would contradict this concept of critical. Relative to does not mean randomly: patterns of behaviour are relative to a cultural understanding and change along with cultural changes, but in this view, cultural frames are not changed by mere decisions. Scientific interpretations are relative to changing research agendas (concepts have histories and contexts), but that does not mean that there is no common understanding between researchers. Knowledge production is relative to what questions are asked in a specific time and culture, similarly to which answers are acknowledged as sufficient answers. Relativism does not mean opinion, guesswork or anything goes. Problematizing and engaging with differences require the grounded and ethical subjectivities necessary for research and interpretative analysis.

In dialogue with the critical perspective as a problematizing practice and engagement with differences, it is also worth mentioning the idea of critical proximity (Sousa Santos, 1997 [2013]), according to which the critical eye should not “distance itself from the phenomenon, but rather get closer and closer to it, immersing itself in it in order to understand it better, but without losing the autonomy to think critically” (Tilio, 2019, p. 28). This concept corroborates the idea of the in-world researcher (Abrahão et al., 2014), who acts in the world without distancing themselves from it. This being part of the world, blending in with the issues that they analyse, characterizes their engagement with differences.

These perspectives can serve as a navigational chart to situate the different meanings of critical related to CL. In summary, critical is generally defined as an attitude of questioning commonly accepted ideas and ideologies by demonstrating a sceptical attitude towards dominant agendas and their assumed legitimacy. The

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term critical is embedded in three related concepts in educational settings: critical pedagogy, critical thinking and critical literacy (Cooper & White, 2008, in White, 2008, p. 24). Below, the report explores some routes to the genealogy of Critical Literacies as a "subset of Critical Pedagogy" bringing the focus "on the premise that literacy cannot be divorced from politics, that literacy is, indeed, hegemonic. The political nature of literacy stems from the reality that dominant groups strive to" (White 2008, p.23). And, without forgetting that, as we have seen in the previous sections, literacy, and CL in particular, always serves an ideological agenda: it embodies the "struggle [for] the control of the whole process of social reproduction" (Mouffe, 1979, p. 5).

1.6 Critical literacy linked to critical pedagogy

The term *critical literacy* builds on critical pedagogy (CPed). According to Chege (2009, p. 232, paraphrased), CPed is grounded on the belief that "naming the world", to use Freire's (1993) phrase, is a political enterprise, and that:

> as Lankshear and McLaren (1993) put it, 'culture is best understood as a station that serves as a locus of multivalent practical and discursive structures and powers [that] Knowledge is construed as a form of discursive production;' that 'the process of constructing knowledge takes place within an unevenly occupied terrain of struggle in which the dominative discourse of mainstream research approaches frequently parallel the discursive economies of the larger society, and are reinforced by the asymmetrical relations of power and privilege which accompany them' (p. 381). (Chege, 2009, p. 381)

CPed is based on the premise that literacy cannot be divorced from politics, that literacy is, indeed, hegemonic. The political nature of literacy stems from the reality that dominant groups strive to capitalize on their vintage position to set the agenda for literacy. However, critical literacy seeks to overcome the limitations of the initial models of CPed, which were considered binary (oppressor-oppressed), deterministic (the ideology of the ruling class oppresses the working class), and, why not, naïve (unveiling the ideology of the ruling class would liberate the worker). It adds to other ideals besides class struggles: race, gender, sexuality and other forms of oppression and power struggles, which intersect with class struggle.

From this starting point, critical literacy develops the capacity to read and represent, linking the development of self-efficacy, an attitude of inquiry, and the desire to effect positive social change. Not surprisingly, critical literacy is frequently described as a theory with implications for practice, rather than as an instructional methodology (Behrman, 2006). Being critically literate, therefore, represents an attitude towards history, culture, politics and social systems in opposition to a dominant power (Shor, 1999).

Situating this notion sociologically, Luke (1997) suggests that these critical approaches to literacy necessitate "a shift away from psychological and

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individualistic models of reading and writing towards those approaches that use sociological, cultural and discourse theory to re-conceptualize the literate subject, textual practices, and classroom pedagogy" (p. 143 in White, 2008, p.24).

Luke (1997) describes critical literacy as "a commitment to reshape literacy education in the interests of marginalized groups of learners, who on the basis of gender, cultural and socioeconomic background have been excluded from access to the discourses and texts of dominant economics and cultures" (p. 143). Gee (1996) and Edelsky and Cherland (2006) support this description of critical literacy. Central to this is the notion of dialogue, or in Freire's terms, "reading the word" and "reading the world" (Freire & Macedo, 1987).

In essence, critical literacy entails more than an operating knowledge of a vocabulary or a system of meaning: it is also a way of being, doing and performing. As Shor and Pari (1999) claim, critical literacy challenges the status quo to discover alternative pathways for social and self-development. Critical literacy aspires to ensure social, political, and emancipatory inclusion for all individuals and groups of individuals within any given society (White, 2019, pp. 30-31).

The goals of critical literacy are to incorporate the development of self-confidence and self-esteem, which, in turn, has the potential to benefit not only the individual but also society in general. Critical literacy may be viewed as having at least three supporting dimensions: the operational, the cultural, and the critical. This has the potential to give rise to a new meta-language inter-playing and interfacing among language, meaning and context (Lankshear & Knobel, 1998) which may have the intended or unintended benefit of democratizing cultural production (Sefton-Green, 2003). Consequently, school curricula that move beyond print-only media may be in the process of becoming poised to recognize the linguistic, social, economic, and cultural capital that students bring to school (Walsh, 2007 in White, 2019, p. 32).

After this review, we come to the question "what is Critical Literacy?" (Willinsky, 2008, p. 7). Shor (1999) treats it as a means by which we "redefine ourselves and remake society, if we choose, through alternative rhetoric and dissident projects. This is where critical literacy begins, from questioning power relations, discourses, and identities in a world not yet finished, just, or humane" (p. 2). It is also with the questioning of power relations, discourses, and identities that critical theory begins in Shor's work.

1.7 Critical cultural literacy as a patchwork of possibilities and tensions

Having reached this point of the review, we will outline some of its meanings and tensions, after giving an account of the three concepts articulated in the notion of CCL.

In the face of the idea that cultural literacy must go beyond a patrimonial and unique understanding of culture and incorporate the different cultural baggage of those

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who are part of European nations today, CCL is about engaging with cultural practices and repertoires from marginalised groups. Decolonial, feminist, queer, and anti-ableist perspectives, among others, are key to recognizing which groups remain subordinated to which dominant frameworks and how this occurs. But it can be argued that culture becomes crucial to understanding how that subordination works, and which forms of resistance (or lines of flight) are performed to escape such dominance. In a nutshell, the project is interested in cultural practices and expressions in marginalized groups and communities.

CCL moves beyond recognizing and theorizing the political nature of literacy. Its agenda is emancipatory. The pedagogy of CCL offers teachers, students, and cultural institutions a theoretical framework and a set of practices designed to question educational and cultural policies and mainstream discourses that alienate the marginalized.

As we delve deeper into this review, it's crucial to highlight the significance of the three key concepts that form the basis of CCL. These concepts, which we will now outline, are integral to our understanding of the meanings and tensions within CCL. With this precaution in mind, CCL can be seen as a response to 1) a hegemonic cultural narrative on cultural literacy from the intersectional perspective of a diverse society; 2) literacy as multiliteracy because *reading* is extended to other media with a focus on cultural and artistic expressions (visual, electronic forms, gestures, spatial arrangements, etc.), to the lived experiences that are essential for making sense of *the reading*; 3) what education is for, which is not the mere acquisition of knowledge of culture(s) (i.e. of cultural artifacts), but an ability to move self-consciously and critically within the cultures one lives in.

Taking as a reference Tilio's (2019) proposal for critical education, we transpose his principles to what a CCL proposal can entail:

1. Challenging students to distrust and challenge everything naturalized as *normal*.
2. Working on education for social justice, demonstrating a commitment to social change and destabilizing naturalized, normalized and standardized knowledge.
3. Questioning representations: history(s) and knowledge(s) are socially constructed narratives.
4. Advocating for constructing a robust knowledge base that fosters *estrangement*, a process that encourages students to critically distance themselves from familiar ideas and perspectives.
5. Creating transformative conditions for self-reflection, encouraging both oppressed and oppressor students to work towards personal growth rather than resorting to silencing or warning them.

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6. Keeping expectations high, assuming students can have a mature discussion and transform themselves.

EXPECT_Art's proposal is linked to artistic practices and arts education. That is why it seems essential to point out the challenges that Freedman and Hernández-Hernández (2024) face:

7. Promote equity and dismantle colonialism.
8. Enable caring connections among people.
9. Encourage a conscious use of traditional and newer media.
10. Bring attention to the power of visual culture for social action.
11. And use evidence to provide students with even more effective opportunities for making and studying arts in personally and collectively meaningful ways (p. 300).

All the above without forgetting that EXPECT_Art understands CCL as linked to an inclusive and relational vision of cultural expressions in a society characterized by its diversity in terms of social classes, ethnicities, religions, genders, dis/abilities, ages and marginalities. With such starting point, it is relevant for the project participants to consider that the project will take place in an epistemological and political matrix that goes beyond the dualisms between majority-minority and marginalized-hegemonic and fully enters the power relations that organize society and cross-cultural practices.

1.8 Final remarks

The term 'literacy' does not work in the same way in the project partner's languages, as they explain in their local reports. The difficulty of translation is a reason to emphasize the epistemic dimension of CL. CL partly comes from an intellectual tradition where a dominant mode of thinking turns the world into objects and relations into competences. For EXPEXT_Art, a keyword is meaning making: it is about the process of making the interaction between individuals and the environment meaningful. Culture is not a fact, not a piece of meaningful data: it is a way of living relations. This approach to culture connects well to the multisensorial dimension, and to arts as practice and knowledge.

In EXPECT_Art, cultural literacy must be related to critical to prevent viewing both culture and literacy as instrumental and decontextualized. This critical position, informed by decoloniality, has the potential for being self-reflective and self-critical, to avoid reproducing the embedded power structures in the concepts and the approaches (methods) used. Critical theory (i.e. Marxist) approaches along with Feminist theories (in a broad sense) can inform this with the awareness of the concrete subjects in interaction rather than of general and structural models.

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2 CCL CROSSING OTHER NOTIONS

Section 2 delves into six key notions closely related to the emergence of CCL: decoloniality and curriculum, art education and curriculum, critical pedagogy, multiliteracies, arts-based and community-based research and cultural awareness. Each segment examines one of these intersections by showcasing and analyzing references that show how each notion has enhanced the scope and objectives of CCL. Consequently, this section expands on several theoretical and methodological points introduced in the previous section.

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2.1 Decoloniality and curriculum

In recent years, the concepts of *decolonisation* and *decoloniality* have undergone a process of (re)popularisation, with a corresponding increase in debates about their meanings and uses in different semantic and disciplinary spaces. The concept of decoloniality has captured the academic and popular imagination. However, the contemporary manifestation of decolonisation in academia follows years of debate over the concept and its meaning, especially in the Global South (e.g. Mazrui 1978; Quijano 2000). From this starting point, and before presenting the state of the art derived from the review of texts carried out, in this introduction we present a brief framework to situate the concepts of coloniality and decoloniality.

A decolonial perspective is a comprehensive approach built from contemporary social sciences on the assumption that coloniality is an unfinished historical process that has only transformed over time and realities, but that has not been definitively overcome (Argüello Parra, 2015). In the words of Castro-Gómez and Grosfogue (2007),

> We are witnessing a transition from modern colonialism to global coloniality. This process has undoubtedly transformed the forms of domination deployed by modernity, but not the structure of centre-periphery relations on a global scale [...] From the approach that we call here "decolonial", contemporary global capitalism resignifies, in a postmodern format, the exclusions caused by the epistemic, spiritual, racial/ethnic and gender/sexuality hierarchies deployed by modernity. In this way, the long-lasting structures formed during the 16th and 17th centuries continue to play an essential role in the present (pp.13-14).

In this way, understanding coloniality beyond colonialism, as a coercive structure, explicit or implicit, of the dynamics of recent history, requires thinking about a definition beyond the episodic, beyond the details of the event that could eventually be considered *colonial*.

For this reason, Argüello Parra (2015) remarks that the complexity implied by the coloniality of power is better understood from the world-systems analysis model, widely developed by the North-American sociologist Wallerstein (2005), to mean that the economy, politics, culture, education and other dimensions of human and social life do not exist separately and unconnected with each other, but rather maintain a substantive connection character to understand realities:

> Part of the problem is that we have studied these phenomena in watertight compartments to which we have given special names – politics, economics, social structure, and culture – without realizing that these compartments were constructions of our imagination rather than reality (p. 10).

For its part, decoloniality can be situated as a critique of modernity, but at the antipodes of itself, beyond a critique added to the broadcast of the so-called postmodernist, postcolonialist, or de-westernizing spectrum. In this sense, Mignolo

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(2023), one of its exponents, speaks of paradigm-other, which is different from simply saying another paradigm.

The first part of this introduction concludes that coloniality survives as a network of structures, ideologies, and sociohistorical practices articulated from a dialectical movement between the supremacy of a universal and absolute reference of rationality versus the epistemic undervaluation of all possible otherness. Furthermore

> [t]he coloniality of power is the device that produces and reproduces the colonial difference. The colonial difference consists of classifying groups of people or populations and identifying them in their faults or excesses, which marks the difference and inferiority concerning whoever classifies. The coloniality of power is the epistemic place of enunciation in which power is described and legitimized. In this case, colonial power (Mignolo, 2003, p. 39).

Situated in this matrix of thought, we arrive at decolonial pedagogy that could be considered, as Argüello Parra (2015) mentions, like a lens to read critically and from within – not as external spectators – the history that passes as the history that passes to you. This means exploring what is not said beyond the labels, the headlines or the official speeches. It is about interpreting the silences and what lies behind the *politically correct* forms.

> Decoloniality is a perspective, stance, and proposition of thought, analysis, sensing, making, doing, feeling, and being that is actional (in the Fanonian sense), praxistical, and continuing. Moreover, it is prospectively relational in that it looks, thinks, and acts with the present-future-past, including with the peoples, subjects, and situated and embodied knowledges, territories, and struggles that push toward, advance, and open possibilities of an otherwise (Walsh in Mignolo and Walsh, 2018, p. 100).

All this is not only to realise the mimicry of the colonial structure and its scope but mainly to prepare for the transformation of realities. Ultimately, decolonial pedagogy is knowledge referred to as geo-referenced actions resulting from the formation of critical consciousness. It thus appears linked to Wallerstein's utopianism, seeking "possible ways of constant liberation and emancipation from the structures of exploitation and domination" (Mignolo, 2003, p. 28).

The project of decoloniality is not just an intellectual exercise, but a social and human choice that empowers us to dismantle the numerous colonial extensions that persist in the various globalisms of our time. These extensions, despite their different forms and strategies, perpetuate the differences of non-being. Decoloniality challenges these extensions, revealing the fallacies of their claims to common well-being.

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The connection between education and decoloniality is not just about meeting the immediate needs of the professional market or promoting a national project. It is about reorienting education towards its ethical foundation, encompassing the human, the cosmic, the vital, and the ancestral. This comprehensive framework for education in the current millennium is a step towards a viable planetary project. A key aspect of the decolonial position is the recognition and promotion of the wisdom and agency of traditionally marginalised collectives, such as Indigenous, Roma, racialised, socially and economically excluded individuals, and those with special needs (Montalti, 2024), migrants and more.

In the end, the decolonial paradigm in social sciences, education, and artistic projects stresses the importance of paying attention to a local, contextualised way of thinking. It allows us to find stories with a multiplicity of temporalities, intersectionality, and other categories and ways of seeing the global world.

2.1.1 Relationships between CCL and decoloniality

Our review of articles and chapters on interculturality, social and cultural inclusion, racialisation, migration, media literacy, multimodalities, multiliteracies, feminist education, critical education, and Indigenous studies has revealed a complex web of relationships between decoloniality, CCL and various aspects of the decolonial perspective in education and social research. These relationships, while contributing to the expansion of the CCL framework, also highlight tensions to be found in the EXPECT_Art project, particularly in the incorporation of diverse voices into decolonial educational approaches.

The profound connection between CCL and decoloniality is underscored by the shared emphasis on *critique* and being critical, which involves questioning preconceptions and dominant knowledge. Notably, some authors (Govender, 2023; Romero Walker, 2021) argue that critical literacies serve as a catalyst for creating conditions of decolonial possibility through political-pedagogical action. However, the strength of this link appears to vary, with a more pronounced impact in the Global South than in the North.

Authors such as Paraskeva and Steinberg (2016) draw attention to the importance of questioning the prefigurations of researchers and teachers about school knowledge, power relations, what it includes and excludes conceptions about the relationship between cultures. The search in international literature shows us that most authors, in addition to conceptual considerations, focus on different aspects of the interactions of CCL and school education and, mainly, on approaches that emphasise the importance of incorporating different voices into a decolonial educational approach.

To review the relationships between decoloniality and CCL, we followed three steps. First, the authors of this section looked for references that relate these two concepts in the different languages of the group's countries. We picked up forty

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references that we reviewed based on two questions: Why is this text relevant regarding CCL? How does this text relate to CCL and decoloniality? In the second moment, we collected 66 references related to decoloniality that we analysed through the Covidence program according to their direct or potential relationship with CCL, the author's purpose and their relationship with decoloniality. In the review, we saw that many of these references coincided with those reviewed at the outset. For this reason, we have taken from this second review some of the references that addressed the four themes chosen for the analysis.

When we carried out the review, the authors made explicit the need for uniformity in decoloniality across European countries. In some, such as Slovenia or Denmark, it is not widely recognised, at least outside academic circles. The closest approximation would be interculturality, but without the weight of decolonising epistemes and knowledge that this concept carries from the South. This diversity is exemplified in Poland, where cultural homogeneity often impedes constructive discussions about race in teaching geography, a critical subject that shapes knowledge production (Balogun & Ohia-Nowak, 2024).

A particular case, especially in Eastern European countries, has to do with the relationship with the Roma people, the most significant and most discriminated ethnic minority in Europe. Dunajeva (2022) points out that although there is a consensus about the importance of education, a critical analysis of curricular content revealed the potential impact of textbooks in perpetuating inequities. For instance, Roma is either omitted from the curricula, or its representation revolves around negative stereotypes. Hungary is a prime example of a country where the education system is increasingly nationalised and centralised. Some textbooks arguably follow a nationalist agenda and, in the process, engage in Othering practices, further marginalising Romain.

In any case, the notion of the decolonial is shown or hidden depending on governments and migration policies and whether or not they assume the existence of a society based on a single culture – the national culture – or the recognition of the cultural plurality that today makes up European countries. Examples exist in some European countries where national curricula have drifted towards nationalism, xenophobia and authoritarianism rather than multinationalism and democracy. As highlighted in Brooks et al. (2022) and Petkovska (2022), European countries must dovetail with broader decolonisation theories, methods and practices regarding issues such as curriculum content, assessment strategies, staff/faculty biographies and reading lists.

To support this last recommendation (and wish), we have organised the review's analysis around four themes that allow us to reveal some relationships between decoloniality and education or decolonial pedagogy and CCL.

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2.1.2 Decoloniality and the critical perspective of cultural literacy

Critical literacy pedagogies and decolonial pedagogies coincide in their role to critique the established (prefigurations, knowledge, practices) and the value of the plural and the recognition and authorship of those who have been (and are) marginalised. However, they differ in their ethical onto-epistemological configurations and geographies (South versus North). Although some of their aims are shared, their genealogies are different. The Frankfurt School's critical theory and Paulo Freire's critical literacy pedagogy are the two driving forces in the former. The second, decolonial thought, is linked to the authors questioning the coloniality of power and knowledge (Mignolo, Fanon, Quijano, Mazrui, Welsh, and others). In this part of the review, we will focus on this relationship.

We could also see, as Brownell (2021) points out, this connection if we consider that a primary goal of critical literacies is to encourage individuals to invoke tools of analysis to "transform the norms, rule systems, and practices governing the social fields of institutions and everyday life" (Luke, 2014, p. 21). Thus, a critical literacies stance is "an overtly political orientation to teaching and learning" that draws attention to issues of equity and justice while situating learners as active agents for knowledge production and societal change (Luke, 2014, p. 21).

Considering these relationships and differences, one of the contributions of the decolonial approach to CCL is questioning the critical researcher's self-understanding of good intentions as possible embedded in problematic structures and inviting researchers to a self-critical approach to learning about other people's cultural literacy (Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021). These authors consider that "decoloniality aims to open up distinct canons of knowledge with the motive of displacing Western thought as the only framework or possibility for knowledge" (Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021, p.2).

The decolonial perspective emphasis on culture is a crucial aspect, particularly in its mission to amplify the conceptions and sentiments of collectives historically marginalised, as Spivak's (1998) term subaltern suggests. In contrast, the CCL, in response to the initial understanding of culture tied to a national collective, places more weight on acknowledging and incorporating the cultural expressions of other groups that are often socially excluded. This point about subalterns can be a blind spot in some understandings of cultural literacy due to its tendency to marginalise/silence some people (Vergès, 2019).

Authors such as Schroeter (2019) point out that there are relationships between the decolonial perspective and other perspectives placed under critical perspectives (feminist pedagogies, critical race studies, and Indigenous education critiques). All these approaches put the focus on embodiment and subjectivity as central to teaching and learning because race, intersectionality, and White supremacy influence interactions in the classroom.

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Besides, Maine et al. (2019) stress that culture and heritage are plural and fluid, continually co-created through interaction between people. This position reconceptualises CL as a dialogic practice that allows new expression and collaboration. It transcends consideration of

> my culture and your culture into a transformational concept that creates a dialogic space between people in which culture is created. Thus, cultural literacy becomes the process of engaging with cultures, the disposition to do so and the creation and expression of cultural identities and values. (p. 389).

One perspective that holds promise in bridging the decolonial perspective with the critical sense of CL is Jack Mezirow's (2003) model of transformative education. This model, rooted in Habermas' distinction between instrumental (received) and communicative (critical) learning, offers significant potential in navigating our national cultural landscape. Mezirow's focus on a practice of critical discourse to transform one's thinking through exploring assumptions and habits of mind inspires hope for the future of cultural literacy.

This review allows us to see some relationships (ontological, epistemological, pedagogical and ethical) between decoloniality and the CCL.

2.1.3 Coloniality and education: problematising decolonising the curriculum

A generalised assumption in some references (Sleeter, 2010; Paraskeva & Steinberg, 2016) is that formal education is an institution that somehow collaborates with colonising values and knowledge. Education curriculum must be reevaluated because "curriculum is one of the great apparatuses designed to produce and reproduce a hegemonic modern(ity) way of existing and thinking" (Paraskeva & Steinberg, 2016, p. 3). Some authors reflect on how school scenarios cannot be optimal sites to de/construct de/colonial possibilities where relations of power and knowledge must be reorganised through new ways of meaning and being.

Recognising the colonial character of school education has the consequence of facing the need to decolonise curricula and escape normalised whiteness to interrogate how Western power structures dominate educational discourses and materials and how thought is controlled, undergirding the loss and inequities of those minoritised (Sleeter, 2010). Hence, the need to consider that "traditional school curricula teach the values, beliefs, and knowledge systems that support colonisation" and to decolonise that curriculum "is to critically examine that knowledge and its relationship to power, recentering knowledge" (Sleeter, 2010, p. 194). A decolonised classroom means fostering engaged learning outside the banking system – depositing knowledge into passive students (Freire, 2018). This approach to decolonisation in education means disrupting reverence and hierarchical power structures of classroom rules (Fassett & Warren, 2007).

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One way to face a decolonising curriculum is engaging as political and pedagogical agents by reading and re-reading places, power, and texts. Moreover, explore how a scholar-activist position could influence the design of a school curriculum project (Govender, 2023; Shahjahan et al., 2022). Another way could be by engaging students and other school and institution members as political and pedagogical agents by reading and re-reading place, power and text. (Govender, 2023). The change in curriculum would be needed to change the status quo:

> to learn to see the world in new, holistic, and inclusive ways and include the voices that are not heard a lot in the education system to change the current state of affairs. It calls for the development of decolonial literacies--learning how to check normative tropes, uncover curricular assumptions, and include Indigenous voices, perspectives, and pedagogies in meaningful ways in our work as educators (Leddy & O'neill, 2022, p. 3).

The decolonising curriculum could be possible by engaging social and educational actors as political and pedagogical agents by reading and re-reading place, power and text and exploring how our scholar-activist position and its influence on the design of a project (Govender, 2023; Shahjahan et al., 2022). However, critical good intentions are not always sufficient to develop a decolonised school curriculum. For this concern, some of the mentioned authors (Gorski, 2008; Dutta, 2020; Shahjahan et al., 2022) have questioned the coloniality of school curriculum precisely by inviting us to examine these intentions when making proposals guided by a decolonial sense of the CCL.

In this direction, Dutta (2020) considers that depending on how the decolonial curriculum is developed could reproduce practices that silence the Global South appropriating the critical themes, imposing structures of powers in rankings and themes (how to/what to present at conferences/in literature), hence, reproducing (unintendedly) Northern hegemony. What is an invitation to be aware of decolonising our minds in our work and not only use critical or decolonial vocabulary?

Because this question is essential to EXPECT_Art, we go deeper into this contradiction. Particularly despite its interest, the proposal to decolonise the curriculum has received criticism, considering it as a notion that from the North is imposed on the South. As the criticism of Azada-Palacios (2023), (an author coming from Global South, i.e. the Philippines) departs from the generalised approach to promoting a decolonised curriculum, we will explain Azada-Palacios's (2023) argument in detail.

Firstly, she criticises the notion of decolonising the curriculum as a hype from the Global North, and thus she emphasises we must go further:

> The ‘softest’ way of interpreting this phrase might be to see decolonisation merely as the task of diversifying curricular content. What is insufficient about this interpretation is that it separates the task from the much more robust and radical political and epistemic project that is expressed in the

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> verb 'decolonise' and in this sense, decolonisation must be seen, first and foremost, as a project motivated by a desire for justice. (p.4).

The author explicitly stresses:

> It runs the risk of creating the illusion that once we start including more Indigenous authors in our classrooms, we have won the war. However, as we see these small battles as part of this larger vision, it does make sense to speak of decolonising the curriculum (or rather, decolonising curricula because there are, of course, many curricula that need decolonising). Doing so requires understanding that the task of decoloniality cannot end with changing the curriculum. If decoloniality aims at justice for people, it must also entail decolonising the structure of the school, our teaching practices, our learning practices, the world outside the school, and how we view our students. (p.6).

This approach would entail dialogic practices in specific situations and liminal spaces producing new meanings, in line with CCL. The author continues with the exercises in the philosophy of education to reimagine a de/post-colonial way of educating national identity, finishing

> acknowledging this contentiousness presupposes a more dialogical approach to teaching: it creates the space to recognise and critically examine alternative understandings that teachers and pupils may hold about this identity, and it admits that political or institutional constructions of national identity are sometimes met with resistance. (p.11).

Considering the previous criticism, Azada-Palacios engages in three related tasks to decolonise the Philippine education of national identity: historical critique, conceptual retrieval and creative reimagining. Her starting point was to reimagine an education of national identity that would not be rooted in colonialism:

> Given the legacy of coloniality that remains embedded in presumptions about national identity, the question that motivated my project was, what would it look like if we were to rethink the teaching of national identity, looking at the notion of identity from our perspective, that is, a post-colonial perspective? (p.8).

An alternative approach that can contribute to facing the challenge posed by Azada-Palacios (2023) could be to develop an educational proposal that focuses on developing a student-centred inquiry based on conversations that include students' identity, reality, and interests (Fassett & Warren, 2007). Allowing students to vocalise their experiences connected to their identities is valuable in creating a classroom environment where other students can build understanding and empathy (Romero Walker, 2021).

A student-centred educational perspective emphasises the interpersonal relationships developed in the classroom space between teachers and students, in

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which the curricular contents have extraordinary importance, make necessary that teachers recognise the plurality and diversity of ways of living, being, being and thinking of their students, so as not to incur in these exclusionary actions in which coloniality underlies some of its dimensions (Ortiz Ocaña et al., 2018).

To close this subsection, we want to point out another perspective that coincides with the purposes and strategies of a decolonial pedagogy without using the notion of decoloniality. We refer to the perspective of Global Citizenship Education (GCE), which we will return to later in other sections.

> Reflective questions and group processes can also be employed as practical approaches to promote a GCE for critical consciousness to promote decolonialism. Reflective questions encourage students to analyse power relations within institutions that uphold systematic injustice. (...). A GCE for critical consciousness approach goes beyond simply unveiling the truth; it also cultivates pedagogical opportunities to resist unjust formulations of truth. GCE for critical consciousness demands that educators foster critical literacy and a politics of resistance. Instead of exploring neutral universal subjectivities, GCE for critical consciousness pedagogues must examine decoloniality and diversity in depth (Bosio & Waghid, 2023, p.5).

2.1.4 Decoloniality and cultural awareness

Cultural awareness has emerged over the last decades as a significant part of conceptualising the cultural dimension of language teaching and incorporating cultural knowledge within the foreign language classroom. By some authors (Hoyos Martínez, 2019), CCL is associated with cultural awareness, which, by extension, can be linked to some aspects of decoloniality. As will be deeply explored in section 2.6 on cultural awareness, this concept involves being open to learning about cultures that are different from your own. This learning means being sensitive to the differences and similarities between cultures when communicating or interacting with members of other cultural groups. Cultural sensitivity is required for this learning to occur, which means being open to values, attitudes and knowledge. This cultural sensitivity is a skill and a mindset that fosters empathy and understanding.

Cultural awareness has two purposes: (1) to familiarise learners with the culture associated with the target language they are learning and (2) to help learners find discrepancies and differences between their own culture and the culture of the target language.

An example to which this notion is linked is that of critical global citizenship in its relationship with the notion of critical conscience in Global Citizenship Education (GCE) mentioned above. This notion refers to

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> "critical reflection and action upon the world to transform it" (Freire, 1973, p. 51). This process fosters a classroom environment where educators and students can collaborate to critically examine their reality and determine the best means of transforming it. This transformation requires addressing ideological differences and a diversity of viewpoints while promoting change in specific educational, social, and historical contexts. Genuine community-university partnerships and collaboration may help to foster these dynamics. Racism, social exclusion, and injustice are current local and global challenges that students and historically marginalised community members can critically reflect on (Bosio & Waghid, 2023, p. 3).

Although the notion of cultural awareness circulates in countries that seem far from the decolonial perspective, for the reasons noted above, although it may be a *transitional* concept, it is important to note that they are not equivalent. The notion and praxis of decoloniality goes beyond recognising the cultural plurity that, as has been pointed out in other points, contributes to having a good conscience, but not to questioning the forms of oppression that are maintained when 'only' one travels through the recognition of others. They exclude reviewing the prefigurations governing the prejudices and forms of exclusion sustained from *mere* cultural awareness. It is crucial to question these forms of oppression to truly understand and address the root causes of cultural inequality.

2.1.5 The role of the arts to promote decolonial engagement

Since one of the purposes of EXPECT_Art is to address CCL from the perspective of the arts, in this section, we will present some examples that can contribute to crossing the bridge between cultural literacies and decolonial pedagogy.

To link cultural awareness with decoloniality, Hoyos Martínez (2019) introduced storytelling as a powerful strategy for revealing varied imposed ways of being and doing, even ways that may obscure students' own set and feelings as Colombians concerning dominant countries.

For their part, Kambunga et al. (2023) point out the role of participatory design intervention in creating a safe space for young people to speak about colonial issues in a delicate context. Creating a safe space is presented as a way of opposing dominant structures and empowering participants otherwise marginalised.

Moreno Madrano and Corrall Guillé (2019) used non-conventional methods such as children's authored photography, photovoice, and living maps as alternatives to decolonise traditional pedagogies to reach a cross-comprehension and foster dialogue. The artistic strategies they propose are valuable research strategies and useful tools for fostering new educational practices to make visible other ways of understanding and dwelling in the world.

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Iddings and Rosoff (2023) mention that in learning spaces that have yet to understand their positionality collectively, educators can create a language and literacy environment that strengthens each learner's abilities to tell and elaborate on their own stories in various ways. This alternative can offer opportunities for them to connect and grow. This article also provides examples of accomplishing this aim through improvisational theatre, playback theatre, and spoken word (p. 478).

Burke et al. (2023), drawing on Higgins et al. (2015), points out that "there is a growing consensus within Indigenous educational literature in Canada that most white teachers deliver a curriculum that is reflective of and is shaped by Eurocentrism and whiteness" (p. 251) and that only recently there has been a shift in commitments to teaching the history of residential schools in some Canadian classrooms. The authors emphasise that one way to introduce such issues is using postcolonial literature. In their case, it was Indigenous children's picture books, but other researchers also shared a collection of 80 picture books that addressed many social issues such as poverty, bullying, racism, immigration, and Indigenous issues, ranging from residential schools to missing women.

Leddy and O'Neil (2022) introduce the study "contemporary identity-based and political Indigenous art" and argue that it "provided the mechanism for mobilising a shift in knowledge" (p. 6. The authors, following Hoggan et al. (2009), emphasise the transformative power of creative expression, at the same time, stressing "that artistic experiences by themselves do not create transformative learning; they require educators to create learning spaces that make use of these experiences, reflect on them, and make sense of them in meaningful ways" (p. 6).

Hiemer (2023) demonstrates, based on a case study where multiple cultural texts and audio-visual methods were applied, how gaining a deeper understanding of shared legacy and space (in this case, urban space and history) beyond imposed nationalistic perspective requires a critical and broad understanding of cultural texts. The article presents decolonisation as a more accurate perspective for exploring shared memory (in this case, urban memory) and identity, than a more popular concept of palimpsest. It also presents how the decolonial perspective combined with the help of artistic/audio-visual means (in this case, exhibition) could help to overcome the connection between the identity of place and territorial claims. In other words, the authors – in the example of the urban space of the city, which was subjected to significant changes due to the movement of borders and people – demonstrate how the decolonial approach relates to providing a broader understanding of texts using the cultural studies' concept of cultural scripts with semiotic and semantic structures to decode.

Bukowiecki et al. (2020) introduce an original concept of duality of decolonisation (the *discovered it* when analysing actions of artist's memory activism). According to them, not only do they (artists) address the legacies of foreign dependencies, but also, with an eye on the future, seek to destabilise nation-oriented essentialist

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interpretations of those dependencies. The essay claims that such a dual decolonial approach constitutes a relevant critical heuristic tool for studying other cases in which the nationalistic framing of heritage and memory is the most robust decolonial response to the fall of empires and their aftermaths.

Balogun and Ohia-Nowak (2023) explain how the field of cultural geography necessitates a critical reflection on methodologies and an awareness of cultural differentiation, material expressions of people and their spatial distribution of ten convey iconographic meanings. These meanings encompass racial classification and racist assertions. To this end, this article examines racist assertions regarding Africa and its people embedded within Polish children's literature**.**

These examples have the value of linking artistic practices with social situations and problems that make visible experiences and situations of injustice that, otherwise, would remain invisible.

2.1.6 Final considerations: thinking decoloniality in the EXPECT_ Art project

In reviewing the references in this section, we have seen that decoloniality, with its connections to transculturality, cultural hybridity and liminality, holds a transformative potential. While distinct from CCL, decolonial pedagogies share essential aspects, such as the culture in the making of participants (dialogic and acknowledging the presence of different actors and their agency in local connections) that can inspire a shift in current mainstream educational practices.

As mentioned in the previous subsections, it is crucial to recognise that critical intentions alone are insufficient in decolonising. As Dutta (2020) points out, they can inadvertently reproduce practices that silence the Global South, perpetuating Northern hegemony. This danger invites us to engage in self-reflection, decolonise our minds and work and move beyond critical or decolonial vocabulary.

At the beginning of this chapter, it was emphasised that good intentions were not enough. Now, it is added that critical intentions are not enough either. One reason is that, as pointed out by Gorski (2008), they are often based on the deficit theory. This approach justifies inequality and aligns with the neoliberal global propagation of the *free market*. The deficit theory was thus essential to coloniality. This consideration underscores the importance of questioning and challenging existing power structures.

At this point, it seems essential to ask ourselves if the intercultural (or critical or decolonial perspective (in line with this chapter) can favour it because, in many cases, such practice is domination. In any case, "ignoring systemic oppression means complying with it" (Gorski, 2008, p. 519). Furthermore, according to Gorski (2008 after Aikman, 1997), the essential elements of the definition of intercultural and decolonial education (facilitation of intercultural dialogue, appreciation for diversity, cultural exchange) still maintain "the distribution of power and forms of control

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which perpetuate existing vertical hierarchical relations ... and embedded in relations of internal colonialism" (p. 469).

Gorski (2008, after Jons, 1999) is especially critical about intercultural dialogue:

> The powerful – who, as individuals or institutions, usually control (implicitly or explicitly) rules of engagement in intercultural education experiences – tend to leave unacknowledged the reality that the marginalised voices they invite into dialogue do not need organised opportunities to hear the voices of the powerful. (...) So, in addition to being ill-conducive to a movement for fundamental social change, this brand of intercultural (and decolonial education) reifies power hierarchies (p. 521)

In the end, Gorski (2008) proposes seven shifts that may be necessary to consider so that the CCL that EXPECT_Art seeks to promote is not a proposal that follows good intentions, leaving aside questioning the conceptions and practices that the project should take into account: 1) cultural awareness is not enough; 2) justice first, then conflict resolution; 3) rejecting deficit theory; 4) transcending the dialogic surface; 5) acknowledging sociopolitical context; 6) *neutrality* = status quo; 7) accepting a loss of likeability.

Finally, we want to point out, as Bosio and Waghid (2023), that adopting a decolonial perspective for CCL demands that educators foster critical literacy and examine decoloniality and diversity in depth.

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2.2 Arts Education and curriculum

As mentioned above, the EXPECT_Art project aims to identify current barriers and potentials in promoting CCL through arts education across various educational contexts in Europe. The ultimate goal is to generate and activate knowledge on how to enhance CCL among European citizens. To achieve this, the literature review seeks to establish a common understanding of what arts education entails, while mapping different experiences that link arts education with CCL. This cartography also places special emphasis on curriculum, as well as other key terms of the research project that intersect with arts education.

2.2.1 Towards an understanding of arts education

The notion of arts education is neither homogeneous nor neutral. After reviewing more than 130 texts focused on this term, with an implicit or explicit connection to CCL, it can be said that arts education encompasses a broad conception, characterized by various specificities depending on the context, the authors, or the genealogies employed, among other factors. Nonetheless, most of the sources advocate for the value of arts education, emphasizing that this field has been broadly underestimated in educational systems throughout Europe.

For the EXPECT_Art project, it is also important to collect references that help transcend the notion of arts education beyond the productivity of capitalist and neoliberal logics (Eisner, 1999; Herraiz et al., 2022; Hirsch, 1990). These logics frame education as a commodity, positioning arts education as a means to develop creativity as human capital, an ability that can prepare individuals for the labour market and drive economic growth. This perspective is evident in the “UNESCO Roadmap for Arts Education”, which suggests that

> art education can contribute to the valorization of human capital by stimulating imagination, aesthetic perception, and human intelligence as well as by mobilizing skills, activities and experiences. From this point of view, the investment in art education emerges as a central instrument for the accumulation of capital (Mahlknecht, 2017, p.120)

New steps are being taken to understand arts education in ways that avoid its capitalist conception of merely fostering creativity and productivity. This new approach is committed to gender struggles and anthropocentric challenges, placing affects, bodies, and matter at the centre of the learning experience (Carou, 2023; Hood et al., 2017; Mahlknecht, 2017; Skriver, 2024). It also means that arts education transcends institutions and disciplines, positioning itself as an in-between practice. In this context, the arts are more than just a technique (Eisner, 1999). Following Smith (1991):

> It is not enough to speak generally about the high humanizing goals of art education. It is not enough to speak generally about to desire simply to train the aesthetic sense of students, giving them an appreciation of design, seriousness, complexity, and harmony. (p. 4).

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It is necessary to understand arts as a medium for collective learning experiences. Or, as Castro et al. (in press) point out: “Arts education is recognized and inhabited as a field of practices that exceed teaching discipline-based skills and techniques, encompassing formal and informal settings” (p.2). In other words, arts education is not solely focused on developing artistic skills (which would be seen as artistic education), but rather, the arts serve as a bridge for new purposes (an education through and with the arts). This concept further expands when arts education is connected with CCL.

2.2.2 Some research experiences among arts education and CCL

In a previous report (Castro et al., in press), we stressed that arts education, in its intersection with CCL:

> embraces a perspective in which the most significant artworks become participatory processes enacted through and along with communities (Helguera, 2011). This turn is necessarily related to experimenting with diverse semiotic systems and forms of meaning-making, reshaping educational institutions as spaces of shared knowledge and thinking, and strengthening people’s autonomous creative interplay both among themselves and with their environment (Illich, 1973). (p. 2)

The reviewed literature reveals that enhancing CCL through arts education is not merely about building, representing or learning about cultures with the arts. Instead, it shows that artistic practices act as mediators and, as such, serve as a tool for producing social interaction and activating critical thought through creativity, sensoriality, affectivity, embodiment and imagination (Addison et al, 2010; Bigé, 2019; Shusterman, 2014).

For instance, the experience of Garcia (2012) as an arts educator serves to evidence the possibilities of arts to develop multiple literacies (or multiliteracies, as it can be seen in a section below). That is, to think, to construct meaning and to communicate beyond words. The work of Lähdesmäki et al. (2022) shows that CL can be arisen in understanding children as cultural agents and using creativity to embrace more tolerant and inclusive attitudes toward cultural diversities and differences. This is similar to Billings’ (1995) evidence, which affirms that arts can be a bridge to express cultural ideas and beliefs and put them into dialogue, embracing diversity.

Another example is the research of Knight (2015), which helps art teachers to prepare to work in an environment of cultural diversity. The author presents strategies for a specific participatory teaching, where threats resulting from cultural incompatibility can be turned into success, thanks to which it will be possible to conduct diverse cultural dialogue through art education. An idea that is similar to the conclusions of Birkeland (2015), who says that “global processes are not ‘out there’, but can be studied in the dialectics between national guidelines and local practice” (p.89) though arts education.

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This idea is in line of the work of Méndez Cota and López Cuenca (2020), who points out that cultural literacy "has to do with the generation of new practices for thought and existence rather than with technical problem solving on behalf of pre-given communities or political selves" (p.10). In these new practices, arts enhance a stronger sense of community, increasing conscientiousness of political struggles and creating new relational spaces of politics.

2.2.3 Connections with the curriculum and beyond

As mentioned above, arts education transcends education institutions, extending into both formal and informal spaces. According to Hernández (2019):

> This means projecting education through the arts not as a discipline divided and closed in itself in institutional settings that establish its "should be," but as an event that breaks into established discourses and practices, to denature them and question them from other points of view (partial, not fixed and often multiple). (p.31)

However, it is crucial to note that most of the literature reviewed for this section pertains to formal education contexts. Consequently, much of the discourse on arts education and CCL is framed within institutional settings. Therefore, it is pertinent to conclude this discussion by exploring the relationship between this notion and the curriculum.

Promoting CCL through arts education can cause "fissures and breaks in the dominant curricular, disciplinary, cultural and social narratives, to destabilize them and open up to other ways of knowing, imagining and being" (Hernández, 2019, p.32). However, as already emphasided during the genealogy section, discourses like Hirsch's (1990) can be problematic for its elitism:

> The concept of cultural literacy recognizes the complex heterogeneity of cultural origins and thus provides a helpful basis for making curricular choices. The core knowledge that is to be shared in art education will, according to the principle of cultural literacy, not be made up exclusively of works deemed good according to transhistorical principles [...] The task of art education in deciding upon a definite curriculum is simultaneously to raise everyone to a level of existing mainstream culture and to attempt to advance existing culture beyond its current level. (p.5)

There is limited research on methods to construct a CCL that subverts this vision, as well as there are few publications offering concrete guidance for teachers and researchers in developing arts education projects related to CCL (for some recommendations, see Knight, 2015). This scarcity of guidance is related to the fact that the hybridation between arts education and CCL is such a context specific practice, that pre-established actions are not possible. Instead, what is possible is to connect these practices with CPed, and with the decolonial project. That is, deconstructing ethnocentrism through gaining awareness of it though arts practices (Méndez Cota and López Cuenca, 2020); using some arts-based methods for working

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with Indigenous knowledges with youth (Brown and Begoray, 2017); or by adressing social diversity and struggling for social justice (Keifer-Boid et al., 2022).

In the end, the practices within educational institutions are shaped by political decisions that influence curricula and educational policies. These decisions often uphold dominant narratives and naturalize systems of knowledge (Hernández, 2019). Therefore, and following Verner and Cahnmann-Taylor (2012), enhancing CCL through arts education offers opportunities to reformulate institutionalized approaches in the realms of arts, education, and culture.

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2.3 Critical pedagogy (CPed)

CPed is a philosophy and practice that emphasizes education based on critical consciousness, empowerment, and social justice for its participants. Based on the work of Freire (1972, 1993[1970]) and further developed and popularized by other authors after him (Giroux, 1988; Kincheloe, 2008, among others), CPed aims to challenge traditional teaching methods that perpetuate social inequalities, advocating instead for a participatory, dialogic approach where students and teachers co-create processes and apply knowledge, in a cycle that must include reflection and assessment. This model encourages learners to question and critique power structures, societal norms, and oppressive systems, aiming to transform both the individual and society, in the aspiration of freedom (Freire, 1972). Arguably a widespread educational philosophy – although with different levels of application, utopianism and radicality (McLaren, 1995; 2015) – CPed seeks to cultivate active, engaged citizens who can contribute to democratic and equitable communities, by fostering critical thinking and social awareness. However, some authors (Hodgson et al., 2017) argued that the potential of *traditional* CPed is, nowadays, compromised, as "the constitution of prejudice and structural inequality is different now than it was when such theories proposed radical contestation to the status quo – and achieved huge shifts" (p. 80).

Observing the previous description, nevertheless, it is reasonable to establish direct connections between CPed and CCL, as the latter may be paramount for the first – as a framework – to succeed. Yet, it will be necessary to observe the space linking both terms with contemporary, *critical* lenses in order to make it pertinent for our current endeavours.

In the following text, a dialogue between both terms is engaged based on the work of a group of researchers from the EXPECT_Art consortum, which conducted literature reviews and exchanged conversations on their situated, geographical knowledge (from Danmark, Hungary, and Spain), in two separate stages (a pilot and a second one) during this WP.

2.3.1 Interconnection, dialogue, intertwining, overlapping

Revising literature in the pilot stage, the research team preliminary concluded that CPed appeared *intrinsically* linked to CCL, as both considered questions of power positionality, race, gender and multiliteracies in the educational processes, as a way to prefiguring alternative worlds (Zavala & Golden, 2016); both categories also relied on *active* strategies, resulting in methods as Youth Participatory Action Research (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008).

Regarding historical-geographical issues, the research team discussed that CPed was usually inherently related to Marxist theories (Chege, 2009). This perceived leftist background implied that the use of the term, in certain geographies that had a past of communist oppressive governments – such as Hungary – had little implementation of it as a framework, at least under its *traditional* name. However,

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the philosophy of CPed appeared to be embedded nevertheless in other frameworks more accepted in these countries, in forms like Christian Liberation Theology (Oldenski, 1997), which focused on spirituality based on *praxis*, and to which Freire was itself was akin (Kyrilo, 2011; Valenzano, 2021). Following this line of thought, the discussion also considered that CPed, identified in its Freirean original form (Freire & Macedo, 1983), although not rejected, could be perceived as *out of date* in certain countries, such as Denmark, where however CPed recently seems to be reviving (Tireli & Jacobsen, 2019). Thus, to work with it and to regain attention to its goals, it would be needed to perhaps consider a plural approach as *critical pedagogies* (Mészáros, 2021) or rather look at it with a *critical* contemporary lens (Hodgson et al., 2017). Regarding geographical-historical issues, the team also noted the fact that each country could be in different *educational time zones* regarding new forms of CPed and CCL, especially if literature regarding these categories was not present in the local language, in order to make it widespread or generate iterations. Although with the generalisation of English as a vehicular language this has become less of an issue in recent years, it should be accounted that the translation of certain seminal works has the potential to accelerate the process.

Conversely, issues related to language and translation were also noted during the pilot literature review. In this sense, when researching references in the local languages of the team – Danish, Hungarian, and Spanish – questions were raised on how to translate certain terms to certain languages: How do we translate certain terms – CPed and CCL – to our own mother tongues, in order to search into databases? Should we pinpoint and try to relate the concepts across the languages that the project partners speak? Creating a table of relationships was considered at some point but discarded. Pondering the span of the project, and due to constraints of time, the searches remained focused into English, but tension on the subject remained present. This tension and approach are partially mirrored in the work of López-Bonilla and Pérez Fragoso (2013), where the term *literacy* is related to its multiple translational meanings in Spanish (*alfabetización, cultura escrita* and *literacidad*) and put into historical context along with CPed in Latin American context. This work serves also as example of another detected issue, as the searches on CPed and CCL in databases returned mostly results centred on written/spoken/verbal language, over other types of literacy, and consequently regularly related to Language Education. Notice of this latter issue implied that some searches were performed excluding specifically this term.

Along with other terms naturally reflected elsewhere in the report – such as (critical) multimodality/multiliteracy, or cultural awareness – the pilot stage also evidenced frequent relationships between CPed/CCL and culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) and culturally-relevant pedagogy (CRP). These two terms, based on education in highly culturally diverse contexts and closely related themselves, define approaches that focus into supporting and sustaining the cultural identities and practices of students and their families (Paris, 2012), while integrating their cultural references into all aspects of learning (Howard & Rodriguez-Minkoff, 2017). However, after

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discussion, these terms were deemed not pertinent enough to the project to be object of further research.

During the second stage, the *feeling* of CCL as inherent in CPed, noted in the pilot stage, became evident in the comments and excerpts of researchers. On the work of Vasquez et al. (2019), one of the researchers' excerpts states that the key aspects they list as pertinent to *critical literacy* overlap with the postulates of *critical pedagogy*. In regard to the article of Pillay & Wassermann (2017), another researcher asserts that

> by critically engaging with literary texts, student teachers learn to question dominant narratives and develop a deeper understanding of social injustices. Critical pedagogy involves reflective practice, where educators continuously reflect on their own biases and the impact of their teaching.

Reviewer's considerations seem to converge with the *political* position of Chege (2009), as in that:

> critical pedagogy goes beyond recognizing and theorizing the political nature of literacy. The agenda of critical pedagogy is emancipatory, it is liberatory. The pedagogy offers teachers and students a theoretical framework with commensurate praxis designed to confront educational policies and mainstream discourses that consign them to the 'other' status. (p. 232)

Expectedly, the positions of the researchers seem to overlap with the conclusions on the work of Villanueva and O'Sullivan (2019), where a comprehensive literature review concerned with *consensus* on CPed determined that: 1) CPed is about pursuing social change and emancipation from oppression of all sorts 2) Education is a political endeavor that is based on particular acts of social justice that students and teachers can perform 3) CPed is based on valuing lived experiences and dialogue, and the promotion of critical awareness about the existence of regimes of oppression, and the human ability to produce change in regard to them.

It is significant to note, going forward, that the concept of *literacy* is embedded in CPed, as Freire considered that only through this literacy people could achieve *conscientization*: a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality that shapes their lives, and of their capacity to transform that reality through action upon it (Freire, 1972), thus, *critical consciousness* or *criticality*. Elias (1975) argues that, after teaching people *how to read*, Freire's method was interested in them to develop *political literacy*, and to do so in order to overturn their oppressions: "rather than generative words, generative themes now form the basis of education ... as 'oppression,' 'domination,' 'imperialism,' 'welfarism' would serve as the basis for discussion and action" (p. 209).

Chege (2009) notes, however, the importance of spotting the paradox that *literacy* itself is both an apparatus of oppression and a tool for liberation – *hegemony* versus

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counter-hegemony – that should be consciously used by individuals and as social groups to overcome their subordination, particular struggle, as *cultured subjects* (Lai & Ball, 2004). Critical Literacy – and CCL – can be read here as a motor that pushes CPed forward. Freirean CPed model in the mid and late twentieth century was based on a localized, binary analysis of oppressed and oppressors, but the complexity raised from 21st century forced to consider other subalterns and social relationships, as well as more subtitle ways of oppression being performed into the equation (Luke, 2012). Guided by feminist theories, questions and intersections of gender, critical awareness of race and social class inequalities, and the voices who incarnate them, come to play into the equation (Luke, 1994; Pillay & Wassermann, 2017; Pollard, 2019). In this sense, the question of the role of authority in *the teacher* – as *enlightener* of students – is also problematized (Luke, 1994; Hodgson et al., 2017). The hegemony of Western culture as a template for global knowledge is also pointed out, as something to be identified, transformed and broadened to become interculturally responsive, and allow other templates to develop (MacKinnon & Manathunga, 2003).

Spaces where CPed and CCL happen are identified, in scholarly literature, mainly in Higher Education (García Ochoa et al., 2016; Gitlin & Ingerski, 2018), and especially related to teacher's education (Brooks & Normore, 2010; Ross, 2019; Gilmore et al., 2020). Although born to perform basic education (Elias, 1975), and included in academic curricula, authors like Gitlin and Ingerski (2018) argue that CPed does not have much influence in diverse schools because it can be too ambitious in its goals. In this sense, micro-actions and tailored interventions (Matteson & Boyd, 2017), either in Basic or Higher Education, with tools familiar to students and guided by participatory action research (PAR), may be advisable for implementation (van Sluys et al., 2006; Pillay & Wassermann, 2017). Literature states the need for teachers that are "able to read, understand, and criticize the documents and other information that make up the professional knowledge base of teaching and learning" (Brooks & Normore, 2010, p. 63), and considers long term professional development and the establishment of communities of practice that can provide locally relevant pedagogical interventions (Chinn, 2006). These positions are arguably not new, as Luke (1994) considers that:

> what is at stake in the pedagogical and theoretical choices teacher-scholars make, is a politics of (student) voice and (textual) authority. Such choices can variously enable or limit different kinds of access to knowledge and, by extension, a critical literacy of local and global inflections of the cultural present. Such a pedagogical agenda extends beyond narrow disciplinary-based issues and concerns. (p. 41)

Media and data literacies are mentioned in several references (Luke, 2012; Markham, 2019; Pollard, 2019) as the current place of interest for CCL/CPed. As information on the internet has become widely available, help should be provided to individuals and groups to find means of critically examining and understanding the contexts within which they are drawn into. Markham (2019) puts his scope in seemingly innocuous

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practices, such as sharing images, clicking thumbnails or having a GPS permanently in our pockets through our smartphone. The control in the access to information performed by providers and governments on the net recalls the questioning inherent to CPed: "What is 'truth'? How is it presented and represented, by whom, and in whose interests? Who should have access to which images and words, texts, and discourses? For what purposes?" (Luke, 2012, p. 4). Critical (media) literacy entails an understanding of how text and discourses can be manipulated to represent, and indeed, alter the world. Other authors, such as Lai and Ball (2004), put also into consideration the paper of interaction of people when bodies become asynchronous and *disembodied*, which adds complexity to the situation. Expanding on Freire and Macedo (1987) before, any issue or artifact – like the *world* itself – can be *read* now as a text (Vasquez et al., 2019).

Being critical, insomuch, implies constant changes in names and definitions (Luke, 2012), to better address social issues and changes. This position resounds with the variety of terms that both literature and researchers in the review use to refer to this body of knowledge, frequently interchanging or combining *critical cultural literacy / critical literacy / cultural literacy / pedagogical literacy*, among others already mentioned, such as CRP or CSP. Pollard (2019) alludes that working with *critical literacy pedagogy* must tolerate some degree of messiness, as it deals with cultural collisions and a diverse world.

Although most of the papers reviewed refer to *literacy* as mainly in a verbal form, several examples – as follows – can be found that include arts-based practices (visual and performing arts) as means to implement CCL/CPed. In this sense, we can assert that arts might be the adequate medium for the interconnection of CCL and CPed, as they have potential, from the divergence of formats and generating counter-narratives, of discussing and challenging societal norms and power structures (Billings, 1995). Arts allow the generation of non-explicit connections, based on sensation and human experiences (rose, 2003), and become spaces for the holistic interconnection of meanings from different disciplines. Acting as *texts*, art *praxes* have the potential to overturn the stratified nature of classrooms and extend influence to other spaces, such as museums, with their own actors (Rice, 1988). From *critical aesthetics* it is possible to engage in intercultural dialogue and deal, for example, with anti-immigration sentiments in pre-service teachers (McDermott et al., 2012), or as a way to engage failing aboriginal students in their educational process (Pirbhai-Illich, 2010). Socially engaged art practices, from a Service-Learning approach, are suggested for students to participate in the history and local issues of their multicultural communities (Garcia, 2012), especially in contexts of *border pedagogies* (Kazanjian, 2011). Addressing everyday popular culture as a site of struggle, from visual culture, might also help to involve students and adults into the development of their CCL (Tavin, 2003).

Lastly, researchers in the second stage suggested that a way of moving forward on the intersection between CCL and CPed is under the framework of *global citizenship*

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education (GCE) for critical consciousness. Bosio and Waghid (2023) describe it under six pedagogical priorities: praxis, reflexive dialogue, decolonialism, ecocritical views, caring ethics, and empowering humanity. Although the term might run the risk of becoming commodified or depleted of transformational meaning, just as Hodgson et al. (2017) venture to criticise on certain forms of CPed, GCE has the potential of including in CCL/CPed questions that might be overshadowed or generally unaccounted for – such as eco-responsibility and, in less measure, politics of care – and to be implemented in broad educational contexts, due to their push by institutions like UNESCO (Cerrato, 2024).

2.3.2 Closing remarks

This section offered an overview of relevant connections and reverberations between CCL and CPed, that might be pertinent to EXPECT_Art. The scope of the review is necessarily reduced and fractional, as it is part of a bigger review which includes other terms relevant to the project but accomplishes to point out areas of interest to be considered when addressing CCL with a CPed mindset. As stated throughout the text, both terms appear completely intertwined with each other, in terms that make it 'difficult' to establish relations of comparison. In this sense, we suggest instead some areas of contact, to be extended:

12. *CCL/CPed seek empowerment through knowledge:* providing individuals and collectives with the tools and knowledge to assist them in understanding and influencing their direct environment, and therefore empowering them.
13. *CCL/CPed seek to question and analyze cultural forms*: enabling individuals and collectives to question local and global status quo, and the forms on how culture is produced, transmitted and generates meanings. In this sense, analysing theoretically and engaging in praxis to overcome inequalities from a politically situated approach.
14. *CCL/CPed seek to promote dialogue and cultural exchange*: emphasizing the importance of interrelationships between individuals, their cultures, environments and cultural objects, in any given form (language, texts, images, data or the *world* itself).
15. *CCL/CPed relies on engaged individuals and collectives:* implied actors (being educators, artists or any other citizen) are responsible to help others to better understand and critique their social contexts, and to advocate for social change. In doing so, relationships must be based on co-creation and co-assessment of knowledge, rather than in dynamics of vertical power.

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2.4 Multiliteracies

From the mid-90s onwards, the definitions of literacy have engaged with a variety of semiotic forms (visual, aural, digital, spatial, behavioural, gestural, etc.), simultaneously expanding critical literacy understanding of language, texts and discourse structures as the principal means for representing and reshaping possible worlds (Luke, 2012). In this respect, the New London Group's approach (1996) is recognized as a turning point in advocating for "a pedagogy of multiliteracies". In their seminal article-long manifesto, the term *multiliteracies* is used to bring into question the textual prominence within traditional literacy, pointing toward the proliferation of multimedia communication channels at that time. Beyond "monolingual, monocultural, and rule-governed forms of language", it called for:

> understanding and competent control of representational forms that are becoming increasingly significant in the overall communications environment, such as visual images and their relationship to the written word – for instance, visual design in desktop publishing or the interface of visual and linguistic meaning in multimedia. (p. 61)

The New London Group's pedagogy of multiliteracies become highly influential in the following years (Leander & Boldt, 2021), leaving its imprint on multiple subsequent theoretical and/or research contributions to issues such as visual culture (Duncum, 2004), multimodal education (Hassett & Curwood, 2009) or digital life of Indigenous youth (Katsi'Sorókwas Jacobs, 2019), among many others. However, Cope and Kalantzis (2009), both members of the group, revisited their proposal almost 15 years later and highlighted that multiliteracy education ran the risk of being instrumentalized to the benefit of the new *knowledge economy*. They asked, in this respect, for a renewed critical approach away from naïve intentions and focused on supporting the growth of a kind of person "comfortable with themselves as well as being flexible enough to collaborate and negotiate with others who are different from themselves in order to forge a common interest" (p. 174). Also, multiliteracy opens to other embodied dimensions in this paper, approaching meaning-making as an active, transformative process connected to "viable life courses for a world of change and diversity" (p. 175).

Another appealing revision of a pedagogy of multiliteracies was carried out by Leander and Boldt (2021), who follow a 10-year-old boy through one day as he engaged in reading and playing with text from Japanese manga. Drawing from Deleuze and Guattari's line of thought, the authors developed a nonrepresentational approach to a literacy-related activity "not as projected toward some textual end point but as living its life in the ongoing present, forming relations and connections across signs, objects, and bodies in often unexpected ways" (p. 22). In so doing, the study also discussed other works that, in tune with the New London Group perspective, tended to characterize youth literacy practices as purposeful, rational design, thus subtracting "movement, indeterminacy, and emergent potential from the picture" (p. 24). In this perspective, multiliteracies refers to embodied spatio-

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temporal practices, rather than multimodal texts, technologies or identities taken as resource models to design social futures.

2.4.1 From multimodal artifacts to transdisciplinary practices

Previously to the New London Group manifesto, Eisner (1991) had already rethought literacy as not limited to text and related to the ability to construe meaning through any cultural form. In line with this shift, multiliteracies have primarily entailed the interaction between language, images and sound, acknowledging that the visual and the textual constantly intertwine and involve other sign and perceptual systems (Duncum, 2004). This interplay is usually referred to as multimodality and encompasses multiple artifacts in art education and socially engaged arts projects, such as picture books (Alford & Yousef, 2023), CD cover art (Pardue, 2005), graphic novels (Brown & Begory, 2017) or just *talking* drawings (Cappelo et al., 2019). Additionally, multimodal tools in these projects aim to promote more inclusive cultural and educational practices among participants, particularly for those from marginalised groups. The use of hybrid modes of expression is expected to channel attention to and engage with cultural diversity, thereby approaching differences as a "generative force" (Alford & Yousef, 2023, p. 305).

Several research projects also connect multimodal approaches with decolonial attempts regarding learning environments and educational systems. Jacobs (2019), for instance, emphasizes the hybridity and combination of literacies and contexts enacted by Indigenous youth, who have to negotiate in their lives "two (or more, in some cases) worlds constantly" (p. 62). Therefore, according to the author, it is crucial for educational institutions to consider these digital multimodal experiences and foster more socially just practices. Brown and Begory (2017), on the other hand, encourage Indigenous youth in Canada to share their cultural narratives through graphic novels and raise in this way a collective voice in their classrooms. Thus, the creation of multimodal artifacts offers "students, especially those from non-dominant cultures, a chance to explore their identity" (p. 41). Similarly, Alford and Yousef (2023) see a picture book that re-stories and critiques common misconceptions about the wearing of the hijab as a resource for transforming socio-political realities at schools. A common thread among these works and many others is that using a wide multimodal range of tools beyond print-based responses seeks to provide children and young people "with opportunities to represent and communicate their lives and critically engage with the world" (Cappelo, Wiseman and Turner, 2019, p. 210).

However, multiliteracies are, occasionally, also taken to include other transdisciplinary cultural forms beyond those usually understood as multimodal, e.g. the development of dialogue and argumentation skills about cultural diversity (Garcia-Milà et al., 2020), the design of safe spaces in contested contexts (Kambunga et al., 2023), the effects of video games in acquiring intercultural skills and knowledge (Shliakhovchuk, 2019), the creation of affective atmospheres in playful learning (Skriver, 2024), or social drama as a site for ethnographic research (Rutten

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& Soetaert, 2013). These and manifold others are forms of expression that feed into meaning-making practices, which need in turn to be approached more often, however, as embodied pre-reflexive knowledge forming participants' ways of acting together. In other words, in such an understanding, multiliteracies is also taken to arise from collective lived experiences that are not always framed or recognized as such. Paraphrasing Bigé (2019), who calls into question the boundaries between a dancing state (for instance, within a party) and non-dancing (such as the movements when vacuum-cleaning an apartment), how do we really know when people enact multiliteracies in ordinary activities?

2.4.2 Multiliteracies as relational entanglements

In childhood studies, children's meaning-making does not necessarily come from multimodal texts nor can be easily explained through linear narratives fitting into adult's expectations (Hackett, 2021). Rather, it is "*what happens* among children and more-than-humans", meaning for instance that a 5-year-old child singing a lullaby in a school in Seville involves *hundred languages* materialized as an entanglement of actions, movements and sounds (Caetano-Silva, Guzmán-Simón & Pacheco-Costa, 2024, p. 2). Put differently, multiliteracies arise here from the encounter or intra-activity between the child's body – the lullaby emerging through the movements of a doll, hands, feet, and tongue – and a particular environment that is not merely a setting where this takes place but also a constituent element. "A whole world begins and ends" during this becoming (Caetano-Silva, Guzmán-Simón & Pacheco-Costa, 2024, p. 11). Therefore, what is at stake in this kind of approach is a new narrative of (multi)literacy as focused on multiple, pre-individual, situated relationships.

Through a phenomenological lens, Brinkmann and Giese (2022) delve into sports pedagogies and reflect on experiences of "practising" as embodied, meaningful formative processes; thus, contrary to "conventional perspectives on automatisation, memorisation and optimisation of motor skills" (p. 1). While practicing sports, both repetition and *not knowing how* become productive and potentially creative, challenging the relation to oneself and to the world. It is a "practical and a mental, a bodily and an ethical activity of subjectivation" (p. 3). Multiliteracies, then, rely on inter-corporeal dimensions (Fuchs, 2016) crucial to the understanding of social skills, and are grounded on concrete forms of interaction – or intra-action, if we follow Barad's (2007) perspective – rather than on text-based competencies. As Shusterman (2012) has noted regarding the body as our *somatic* reality,

> We develop ways of being with and reacting to certain other bodies, and these modes of relationship are incorporated into our muscle memory as habitual attitudes or schemata of action that are spontaneously recalled and repeated in the presence of those other bodies, with the appropriate contextual variations (p. 96)

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This *muscle memory* is crucial for understanding any practice, and practices are crucial for conceptualizing multiliteracies. Thus, instead of simply expanding classic text-based literacy to include multimedia, redefining multiliteracies requires attention to the relational entanglements of bodies and more-than-human forces in diverse meaning-making processes and situations. Following this line of argumentation, CCL cannot be about individuals making sense of multiple modes of expression within groups of other individuals. Rather, the focus is on how individuals and members of cultural groups come into being through their interactions with others, whether humans or not, with the diversity of cultural forms and practices in these interactions being key to understanding this process.

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2.5 Art-based research and community-based research

In this section, we examine the intersection between CCL, community-based research (CBR) and art-based methods (ABM). The reviewed studies provide insight into how participatory action research (PAR), youth participatory action research (YPAR), CBR and ABM can provide meaningful entry points to address the notion of CCL from a situated research perspective.

To scope the review, CBR and PAR were considered as methodological approaches where people directly affected by a problem under investigation engage as co-researchers. Similarly, ABM was understood as being directly connected to the use of art practices within educational, institutional, or informal transdisciplinary settings. These methods have the potential to suggest experimental approaches, anticipate future directions, and engage educators, practitioners, and learners (Chemi & Du, 2018). When researchers use tools from art practices across different disciplines at any phase of the research process, it is defined as art-based research (ABR) methods. When ABR incorporates participation, co-design or assembly activities, then is used the term Participatory Art Based Research (PABR) (Peters, 2021). It appears that specific concepts are not always used with strict definitions and can vary according to different researchers. At times, methodologies, processes, or results are mixed, leading to a lack of uniformity in their application.

Most of the literature on ABM and CMR does not directly address the notion of CCL; nonetheless, it tackles its constituent elements. From the review of the selected papers, we identified four main aspects that can guide reflection and practices regarding CCL in research based on participatory and creative methods:

16. The potential of combining collaborative and art-based research to value different perspectives on culture
17. Collaboration and arts as paths to challenge traditional power dynamics and structures.
18. The quest for epistemological pluralism to address complex challenges.
19. The notion of bridging frameworks as a key resource in research

In what follows, we will delve into these different aspects.

2.5.1 The potential of combining collaborative and art-based research to value different cultural perspectives

Several of the analysed articles (Williams, 2003; Pardue, 2005; Casanova et al., 2021; Hammond, 2018; Peter, 2021) stress the relevance and adequacy of collaborative and ABM to value cultural perspectives from diversity and discrepancy, challenging dominant narratives and creating spaces where marginalised voices can be heard. Often participatory-methods and art methods appear combined as a joint strategy. However, it is important to note that PAR and CBR, as well as ABM, do not inherently imply a critical stance. On the one hand, PAR and CBR can be run only under pragmatic premises. On the other hand, to connect ABM with CCL in this

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research, it must be integrated into a larger project or program that incorporates critical thinking. The goal of this process should be to foster change or transformation through situated social interactions within cultural institutions, educational institutions, or informal spaces. Here, critical thinking needs to be constructed in alliance with the ecology of the imagination. According to Garcés (2022), criticism is the art of limits, of inquiry, and of cautious discernment regarding human productions and their conditions of possibility. In this perspective, to imagine critically, one must be able to become strangers among strangers without seeking permission and without facing condemnation for doing so.

Stanton et al. (2020), for instance, describe two projects with rural Indigenous communities where student-led research and filmmaking brought Indigenous counter-narratives into the educational setting. This supported anti-colonial education and expanded intercultural dialogue and intergenerational understanding. Similarly, Burns et al. (2020) employ CBR and filmmaking with older adults who have experienced homelessness. This approach co-produces knowledge about homelessness and amplifies the voices of this collective. Song (2009) uses creative art-making with Korean families living in the US to overcome stereotypes, navigate their dual identities, and help them better understand their identities and origins.

Another example is Kambunga et al. (2023), who combine participatory approaches with design-based methods to propose the notion of *safe space* as a decolonial design practice. This practice aims to collaboratively design contexts that support mutual learning and the plurality of knowledge in politically contested contexts in Namibia. Similarly, Pillay & Wassermann (2017) use PAR to examine literary texts as catalysts for interrogating issues of race, class, and gender with university students in South Africa.

2.5.2 Collaboration and arts as paths to challenge traditional power dynamics and structures

CBR and PAR have in their roots an explicit commitment to recognize the local culture and local co-researchers as experts in their field (Jacobs, 2016). Furthermore, as methods that explicitly recognize the value of participation and look for change and transformation, they entail the epistemological effort to challenge traditional hierarchies between the researcher and those being researched. These notions resonate with the idea of CCL as the explicit effort to recognize and value the voices that have been placed in the margin or in a subaltern position (Bettencourt, 2020).

In this sense, relevant examples can be found both in ABM and CBR. For instance, the Youth Uncensored project (Conrad, 2015), a YPAR initiative with street-involved youth in Canada, uses ABM to develop a curriculum to reposition the youth as educators in the training of service providers, hence challenging traditional power dynamics and subverting who holds knowledge.

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Another example defined as community literacy, brought by Kalan, Jafari and Aghajani (2019), combines community art with an ABM and took place in Tehran from 2009 to 2014. During this period, a group of Iranian feminists embarked on writing a book critiquing the dominant narratives in Iranian hip hop. The researchers used a collaborative approach, involving discussions at various stages of the process with young underground Iranian rappers. By sharing their reflections, the writers underscored the sociocultural and relational power dynamics inherent in their writing process. This effort aimed to raise awareness among writing teachers about the often invisible social and political layers of writing. Similarly, research on CD covers by Brazilian hip-hoppers (Pardue, 2005) unveils an overlooked aspect of hip-hop's meaning creation and the formation of youth cultural identity. This research explores the production and consumption practices where young people learn new ways to build community and portray the realities and struggles of suburban peripheries. It exemplifies how cultural literacy is fostered through critical self-production, integrating methodologies based on visual art and music.

Tavin (2003) argues that integrating CPed with visual cultures through a transdisciplinary approach disrupts traditional power dynamics and structures. This combination acts as a countermovement against conservative ideologies, positivist theories, and undemocratic institutional frameworks. CPed is seen as a political practice that critiques popular culture to promote human agency and democratic public spheres, while visual culture analyses and interprets visual experiences, supporting art education practices. An example of using CPed and visual culture to represent a community to which we no longer belong is the project Puber by Tanit Plana (2020). This artistic project involves the challenging task of representing adolescents without being part of their community, actively involving them in their own self-representation. Similarly, Rachel Marie-Crane Williams' paper (2003) provides another example, this time working with people in prison. Using participatory action research, the article narrates the difficulties and experiences of an art educator working in a prison setting. These types of projects, highly interesting regarding the conceptualizing in CCL, help to transform traditional views of other communities.

2.5.3 The quest for epistemological pluralism to address complex challenges

Miller et al. (2008) proposed the term *epistemological pluralism* as a philosophical principle that recognizes multiple valid and valuable ways of knowing, in which a continuous process of negotiation occurs between different stakeholders. Although not all the analysed texts directly employ this notion, nonetheless its underpinning values are transversal to most of them as a crucial quest to address complex challenges.

In this context, for instance, several studies (Athayde et al., 2017; McRuer & Zethelius, 2017; Hatala et al., 2020; Casanova et al., 2021; Lopez, 2020) address the need for recognising Indigenous culture to find out other ways to tackle sustainability and well-being. Athayde et al. (2017) emphasise the importance of

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integrating Indigenous knowledge with scientific approaches to address sustainability and biodiversity conservation in the Amazon and stress how taking seriously culture from Indigenous communities can be crucial for ecological, economic, and cultural sustainability in a planet in crisis. Similarly, McRuer and Zethelius (2017) explore the significance of biocultural concepts such as *buen vivir* and *patrimonio biocultural* in a YPAR project with youth in Isla Grande, Colombia to support sustainable development. Hatala et al. (2020) explores the role of land and nature in the health and resilience of urban Indigenous youth in Canada and point out how the relational aspects of Indigenous ontology and epistemology, where knowledge is deeply connected to relationships with the land and community can allow a more holistic understanding of health and well-being.

From a slightly different perspective, Casanova et al. (2021) address the need for educators to recognize and value the cultural assets of Mexican Indigenous youth and through their study highlights how indigenous cultural knowledge can empower youth, enhance educational equity and countering the marginalisation often experienced in traditional educational settings. In a similar vein, Lopez (2020) applies this idea in the school context and involves teachers in community language and literacy mapping to understand the resources present in their communities in urban, rural, and suburban schools. In this way, according to the authors, throughout the project teachers built on their findings to create critical literacies units that embrace cultural complexity and consider multiple perspectives.

2.5.4 The notion of bridging frameworks as key resources in research

Deeply related to the quest for epistemological pluralism, several papers stress the importance of transdisciplinary approaches as key to supporting CCL. In this sense, researchers consider that transdisciplinarity would enable the appreciation of other ways of knowing and diverse ontological worldviews, contributing to raise awareness toward resolving issues of power and dominance of Western science over other knowledge systems (Santos, 2007).

In this sense, a relevant contribution is proposed by several of the papers analysed, which is building a bridging framework to tackle the challenges related to integrating different cultures and epistemological standpoints and how to address them. Athayde et al. (2017) for instance, highlight:

> the process of integration of academic research methods with learning-by-doing methods developed by indigenous peoples in the weaving workshops was challenging, because the ways through which knowledge is approached by science and by indigenous communities has fundamental epistemological differences. Thus, knowledge and learning needed to be explicitly negotiated and translated during the project activities. (p. 6)

To address these challenges, they build transdisciplinary frameworks to bridge between different cultural groups. A similar approach is also reflected in Casanova

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et al. (2021) who use the Critical Latinx Indigeneities (CLI) framework and Indigenous Heritage Saberes to address the need for educators to recognize and value the cultural assets of Mexican Indigenous youth. Similarly, Hatala et al. (2020) design the *two-eyed seeing* framework, which bridges Indigenous and Western knowledge to study the role of land and nature in the health and resilience of urban Indigenous youth.

Based on the review of the selected papers, there are substantial research articles focusing on the intersection of CCL, CBR, and ABM. The discussion highlights the significance of participatory action research and art-based approaches in addressing CCL by promoting collaboration, challenging power dynamics, embracing diverse perspectives, and empowering marginalised voices. The four main aspects identified serve as a reflection guide for incorporating participatory and creative methods in research on CCL.

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2.6 Cultural awareness

From its connection with arts education, CCL also plays a crucial role in addressing systemic racism and fostering cultural awareness in today's diverse societies. As communities worldwide become increasingly multicultural, the resurgence of monocultural ideologies and cultural purism presents significant challenges. Racism and xenophobia continue to be pervasive in many educational contexts, highlighting the urgent need for transformative approaches to teaching and learning. As one of the primary objectives of the EXPECT_Art project is to assess existing obstacles and opportunities for advancing CCL through the incorporation of arts education across Europe, this subsection explores how integrating CCL into curricula is also linked to enhancing empathy, inclusivity and the recognition of diverse cultural perspectives. Through this lens, CCL encourages students and educators to confront cultural biases and cultivate a more profound understanding of social inequalities.

Although multicultural education has often been co-opted through hidden curricula as a "'hegemonic device' that secures a continued position of power for dominant groups in society" (Jay, 2003, p.3), strategies and practices promoting cultural awareness can prevent this education from becoming "stagnant" (p.3). The following subsection encapsulates the key ideas derived from analyzing various articles, book chapters and books related to different forms of cultural awareness.

2.6.1 CCL and arts education surpassing racism

When examining literature about CCL crossed by cultural awareness, a prominent topic that emerges is racism. In today's diverse societies, the coexistence of multiple cultural and social identities has become more common. However, there is a resurgence of monoculturalist ideologies and cultural purism. In Western societies, there has been a rise in populist, nationalist, and extremist movements promoting xenophobic, anti-immigrant, misogynistic, racist, anti-Semitic, and Islamophobic beliefs and actions. Since youth often already possess knowledge of social inequality, educators who nurture sociopolitical consciousness do so by drawing on students' empirical knowledge of lived oppression and structuring opportunities for them to systematically use the various skills they learn to better understand and critique their social position and context rather than forcing a political agenda in the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

Although cultural pluralism is often recognized as a source of richness, the cultural practices of minoritized groups are still frequently disregarded or met with a lack of respect and understanding. Developing cross-cultural learning (CCL) is therefore essential in fostering tolerant, empathetic, and inclusive attitudes toward diversity. It raises awareness of the importance of culture for these groups in making sense of the world, even when their practices are often overlooked or not fully understood as cultural.

Toward that aim, some studies show that the perpetuation of unconscious racism and cultural insensitivity within privileged, White-dominated educational institutions

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can be disrupted through initiatives such as arts programs (Arao & Clemens, 2013). These kinds of proposals are considered to be able to help recognizing and taking seriously into account the diverse cultural capital present within the classrooms. By acknowledging and valuing cultural assets and implementing strategies to ensure equitable distribution of these resources within classroom environments, arts programs have the potential to enhance student learning outcomes and foster positive relationships between schools and marginalised and/or racialized communities.

In a similar vein, Delpit (2006) explains that art educators, particularly those belonging to the dominant White culture, should acknowledge that it is necessary to relinquish control when incorporating the visual dynamics of a colonized society and navigating cultural boundaries. That is to say, teachers must invest time in understanding the habits of a diversity of cultures through dedicated study and research, or enlist the guidance of a cultural expert to facilitate a significant learning process. With that aim, it is important that teacher educators find ways to not only introduce social justice to pre-service teachers but also to equip them with ways to accomplish it in their own future teaching (Anagnostopoulos et al., Smith, & Basmadjian, 2007; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981).

Arguably, embracing CCL can significantly raise cultural awareness, since CCL attempts to tackle more than just racism, encompassing an appreciation of diversity, ongoing self-reflection on cultural factors, awareness of the complexities of cultural differences, continuous learning about different cultures, and the ability to adapt service models to meet the needs of diverse populations (Miler & Bogatova, 2018).

This also means that, in a CCL approach to learning, students have the opportunity to respond to instances of injustice, expand the identities that they might take up and participate in communities in service of social change (Riley, 2016). This can be achieved through multimodal forms of expression. For instance, utilizing artistic projects like the creation of graphic novels (Griffith, 2010) can effectively bring these objectives together, making CCL an engaging and comprehensive component of arts education. Another example can be the use of objects in class to work as signifiers of history and culture, as agents of the social and political life of people or as reflecting aspects of ecology, economy, and lifestyle (Zanotti & Chernela, 2008; Velthem, 2003). Similarly, music education can be an opportunity to address multiculturalism (Bradley, 2015). In this perspective, by adopting a critical lens towards a diverse array of music cultures, the assumption is made that one can cultivate a community of interest characterized by a dynamic exploration that juxtaposes and analyzes concepts and practices across different music cultures.

2.6.2 Education and curriculum

Enhancing CCL through arts education to achieve cultural awareness requires a focus in the curriculum. As mentioned in Schiro (2008), there are hidden and unconscious aspects of the curriculum that affect school practices. For instance,

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school curriculum can reproduce a dominant culture, which can be significantly unfamiliar for some students, leading to feelings of discontinuity and disconnection. When the aims and objectives of the curriculum do not align with students' understanding of the world, feelings of alienation may arise, leading to a lack of motivation for learning. This sense of disconnection can also be interpreted as disempowerment within certain cultural groups.

Following Ball (2000), children are not merely passive recipients of their social and cultural environments, but active participants in shaping culture. That is the reason why the curriculum should be reviewed: in order to recognize students as competent agents who actively construct their knowledge and understanding; in order to understand knowledge as embedded in place and experiences; and learning models that represent action and sharing (Battiste, 2013); as well as to provide an array of support resources that serve to enhance students' cultural awareness, literacy, and competency. This revision is of particular importance to state administrators and educators who are committed to fostering diverse and international perspectives within the school curriculum.

2.6.3 Cultural awareness in research

With the goal of making CCL and arts education committed with cultural awareness, it is relevant to think about the research developed in this area. For instance, Jay (2003) discusses how researchers have often misrepresented the cultural practices of minoritized or marginalized groups, underscoring the need for meaningful engagement with their forms of meaning-making. Researchers that seek to collaborate with these communities must recognize first of all that ethical considerations, not just methodological ones, are fundamental to choosing research topics, recruiting research assistants and deciding how to share their findings. In this regard, some studies have embraced approaches like Community-Based Research (CBR) as an effective way to develop methodologies that avoid the typical expert-subject divide and the decontextualization often found in research projects led solely by academics.

The review of existing literature highlights the need for researchers to adopt approaches that facilitate meaningful interactions between marginalized communities and mainstream entities. This includes recognizing the communities' rights to determine outcomes regarding their children and families, as well as controlling how information is shared with researchers and the broader public. However, as noted by Hoecht (2011), many researchers and university research ethics committees (RECs) struggle to navigate research agreements with marginalized communities, adhere to cultural protocols, and address concerns regarding research practices. Despite this, an increasing body of literature (Dubois, 2004) demonstrates that more researchers are becoming aware of these challenges and seeking strategies to uphold ethical standards that respect the needs of these communities.

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Gordon da Cruz (2017) further emphasizes that integrating emancipatory strategies and worldviews into community-engaged research can enhance its impact, particularly concerning social justice. The review of his work stresses that institutions prioritizing community engagement should explicitly address social justice as a central aim to challenge the harmful effects of dominant cultural structures on marginalized communities. As Gordon da Cruz (2017) argues, a simple commitment to the public good is insufficient. A deeper focus on how university-community research collaborations can influence policies and cultural practices is essential to creating meaningful change for nondominant groups and fostering cultural awareness.

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3 CCL CROSSING COUNTRIES

Section 3 explores how CCL interacts with the unique contexts of each research partner in the EXPECT_Art project. It examines local perspectives from Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Spain, focusing on three main questions: 1) What challenges and differences (in knowledge, terminology or practical implementation) might occur when using CCL? 2) How does CCL enhance understanding within each specific context? 3) What particular issues does CCL engage with and aim to resolve?

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3.1 Denmark

In Denmark, the term CCL is apparently used very seldom. The term CL [Danish: *kulturel literacy*] is sometimes used, and, as we will show, appears to be an upcoming concept in education research. This can be seen against the background that the concept of literacy (used as the English word; not translated) has been widespread in Danish educational research for decades. It most probably started with the *literacy* concept becoming known through the PISA studies (from 2000 onwards) but has also been used in a broader sense in Danish research on reading, with the suggested translation into *text competence* [Danish: *tekstkompetence*] (Kjertmann, 2009). In recent years, other variations of literacy have emerged as concepts and themes in Danish educational research, such as media literacy (Stald et al., 2015), critical literacy (Daugaard, 2017) data literacy (Staunæs et al., 2021), and ecoliteracy (Elf et al., 2023).

To contribute with an answer to what the notion of CCL makes thinkable in a Danish context, we will present the only recent article, which we have been able to find, using the exact Danish term *kulturel literacy*. In an article with the title (translated into English) "Cultural literacy in the teacher education programme's Bildung disciplines", Danish teacher educator and cultural sociology scholar Rasmussen (2023) discusses the most recent curriculum of the Danish teacher education's so-called Bildung disciplines [Danish: *dannelsesfag*], among them Life Enlightenment, which was implemented as part of the latest teacher education reform in 2023.
Rasmussen's starting point is that "culture" has gained a more prominent place among the Bildung disciplines' central content areas. Thus, among the content areas are now topics as "cultural, value and religious pluralism" as well as "relationships between religion, culture, school and students". Furthermore, according to the new law, future teachers must, according to the also obtain "a reflected look at own teacher identity and questions about values, identity, power and authority" (LU 23, 2023).

Referring to the teacher education context, Rasmussen (2023) defines CL as "the knowledge and attitude one must have in order to act appropriately in cultural diversity" (p. 73). She thus writes a proposal for "what the teacher must know about culture and cultural literacy" (p. 74). According to Rasmussen, this is not only about "acquiring knowledge about cultures, but also about taking different angles on cultural hierarchies". (p. 74)

Without Rasmussen directly using the concept of CCL, her argument still points in this direction, as she argues that one must abandon an essentialist or classical concept of culture in favour of a newer, dynamic and complex concept of culture. To make this move, the argument is that students must become aware of cultural hierarchies and how they can be challenged analysing power relations.

To this end, Rasmussen (2023) highlights two approaches: post-colonial approaches and post-migration approaches. As for the first, she recommends that students

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relate to theorists such as Said, Hall and Spivak and Danish educational ethnographic studies, which use such theoretical views analytically to study and analyse patterns in Danish everyday school life.

Regarding the second, she refers to the Danish-German cultural researcher Moritz Schramm's introduction of the post-migration perspective in a Danish context, among other things through the research project Art, Culture and Politics in the 'Postmigrant Condition' (2016-2018) (Post et al., 2021), which she believes sets fruitful concepts on the relationship between art and diversity with e.g. the terms space-clearing, space-claiming and space-creating. An important feature of the postmigrant perspective is its origins in theatre and ongoing relations to art and artistic interventions (Schramm, 2023).

To conclude on this reference, Rasmussen focuses both on culture in an anthropological sense (as related to values and religious diversity, where the object of study may be human interactions) and points to culture as humans' cultural expressions (in forms of art), which is part of the original postmigration interest.
Another exemplary publication is the article "From reading to new literacies" which is an extract from the book *New Literacies: Everyday practices and social learning* (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011) that has been translated into Danish. The article is published on the site literacy.dk, representing the National Knowledge Centre for Reading, which is run in collaboration with Denmark's six university colleges where teachers and other welfare professionals are trained. This edition of the article is clearly aimed at student teachers, since work questions and additional facts about Denmark are added to the article in graphically arranged fact boxes.

The article describes the development of the concept of literacy from becoming part of the formal educational discourse in Anglo-Saxon countries in the 1970s onwards. In the 1970s, the term literacy was especially used for informal learning environments for adults, especially in the Freire tradition (including in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which, the article adds, was translated into Danish in 1973). From this tradition also critical literacy arose in the USA in the 1980s.

It is described how literacy became a relevant concept in the school system in connection with the literacy crisis of the 1970s and concern about "functional illiteracy" (USA: A Nation at Risk, 1983). In the Danish version of the article, it is added that a similar development has taken place in Denmark, especially from 2000 onwards in connection with the PISA examinations. This is also seen in a global tendency to link literacy with economic growth and social prosperity, and from the 1980s and 1990s literacy is increasingly associated with the emerging school efficiency trend.

Against this historical background, the article argues that: 1) The concept of literacy has replaced the concepts of reading and writing in the educational discourse 2) The concept of literacy has gained a high status among teachers 3) Literacy has become

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a collective term for an ever-increasing number of social practices 4) Literacy is now defined based on the word *new*.

Of relevance to the concept of cultural literacy in a Danish context is the article's mention of "The three-dimensional model" (Green, 1988) for literacy in a socio-cultural perspective, i.e. that literacy should be considered as having three interrelated dimensions of learning and practice: the operational, the cultural and the critical dimension. The operational dimension is about language and its elements (reading and writing in an appropriate way). The cultural dimension is about social practice: "understanding and insight into social, cultural and historical conditions as well as knowledge of what will be correct and appropriate in a given context" (p. 9), while the critical dimension is about attention to, that all literacies are social constructions and related to power relations.

Here, the *cultural* aspect is thus mostly referred to as social practice and not as, for example, cultural products or artistic creations. However, since a central object of study in EXPECT_Art is cultural expressions in different forms of art, the operational dimension could in the project be understood as *art and its elements* (and, obviously, in a decolonial sense).

Another relevant point is the description of the diversity of the concept of literacy:

> Today you hear terms such as oral literacy, visual literacy, information literacy, media literacy, science literacy or even emotional literacy. The use of these terms emphasizes the communicative and meaning-creating – when we are both producers and receivers – through the use of signs, signals, codes and graphic images. (p. 12)

The article ends with a section on new literacies, where a distinction is made between the paradigmatically new (New Literacy Studies' specific approach to research in literacy) and the ontologically new (new literacies, which are new types of literacies, i.e. with new content).

To conclude on this reference, literacy is obviously an important term in the Danish education context. However, despite an awareness of broader and newer understandings of literacy, a focus on language remains. Hence the definition of literacy on the National Knowledge Centre for Reading's website:

Literacy is the human ability to decode, understand and use signs such as letters, numbers, diagrams, graphs, drawings and pictures. A prerequisite for literacy is spoken language and pragmatic understanding. (Nationalt Videncenter for Læsning, n/d).

For this project, it will be relevant to explore whether a new *cultural* literacy on artistic expressions can be described in Danish content, both regarding research literature that we do not yet know of, practice-oriented literature, and the

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development of concepts and understandings to be used in practice by children, young people, teachers, etc.

3.1.1 Current opportunities for working with CCL in a Danish context

In the Danish context, there is – as mentioned – not a widespread use of CCL as a concept. As explained above, literacy is a well-known term, while critical literacy and cultural literacy are less used. From what we know now, CCL will therefore be an innovation in the Danish context. CCL will combine different fields and traditions in a Danish context.

The *critical literacy* part of the concept will, according to EXPECT_Art, be related to critical ethnography methodologies (Anderson & Irvine, 1993) that is, the approaches that inform the project's methodological approaches in fieldwork with children and youth.

Furthermore, regarding the study object: the cultural literacy that children always already have (DoA, part B, p. 3) the concept critical will be related to decolonial perspectives (DoA, part B, p. 6-7). Currently, such perspectives are increasingly informing Danish educational research (Padovan-Özdemir, 2020, 2022; Stage & Øland, 2021; Vertelyte & Staunæs, 2021) and the project thus fits into existing research. Also, there are signs of an increasing awareness of postcolonial, decolonial, anti-racist, norm critical and postmigrant perspectives in teaching and research on university colleges (Padovan-Özdemir, 2022; Tireli & Jacobsen, 2019), where teachers and social educators (*pedagogues* in Danish, working in kindergartens and schools) are trained. The above-mentioned study by Rasmussen (2023) is another example of the emerging awareness on CCL in teacher education.

3.1.2 Potential tensions and gaps in using and translating the CCL term in Danish

Whether tensions and gaps will emerge in Denmark will depend on the target group. When the target group is *researchers and the educational community*, it is the current assessment that it will be relatively unproblematic to use a term that is as close to the English term as possible. That is the Danish term *kritisk kulturel literacy*. The concept of literacy is known and recognized among both researchers and practitioners, and its ambiguities are not a disadvantage, as it also leaves room for interpretation and dialogue.

The term *critical* signals that it is not only about measurable competencies (the association with school effectiveness may thus be avoided). A challenge may be that some will perceive *culture* as exploring what people do together (the anthropological sense), while the object of study in this project is primarily art products, cultural expressions, and art activities in and beyond school. The project should explain this in more detail in the encounters with other researchers and collaboration partners.

When it comes to *children, young people, and adult research participants*, we are less sure if the term *kritisk kulturel literacy* is appropriate. The researchers in the

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project will have to go into dialogue with this group of participants to find concepts that they find meaningful and understandable. The hope could be that the project acronym EXPECT_Art can be useful in dialogues with children and young people, signaling that we encourage adults to *expect art* in children's everyday life, that is that all children always already understand, use and communicate art, and it is up teachers, researchers and other adults to learn to understand, decode and acknowledge this literacy.

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3.2 Germany

In Germany both CPed [*Kritische Pädagogik*] and cultural education [*Kulturelle Bildung*] are the subject of intense debate. However, the term CCL is not yet established in the German-speaking context. We entered the keywords "critical cultural literacy", "cultural literacy" and "Kulturelle Bildung" in the research literature database FIS Bildung[1] and in the database of the RPTU library and searched for results in German. Searching FIS Bildung for the keywords "critical cultural literacy" yielded two hits (Fileccia, 2016; Pfeifer, 2011); searching for "cultural literacy" returned 58+2 hits; searching for "arts education" led to 124+10 hits; and searching for "cultural education" resulted in 6609+21 hits. We also searched within the repository of KUBI-ONLINE – Knowledge on Research, Theory and Practice of Cultural Education (see www.kubi-online.de). When we entered "critical cultural literacy" in the search engine, we retrieved one hit (Menrath, 2023); entering "cultural literacy" resulted in an additional hit (Hübner, 2023).

Looking at the results of this search and considering what the concept of CCL makes thinkable, we realised that in the German-speaking discourse the concept of literacy is often associated firstly with alphabetisation, and secondly with the development of skills [*Kompetenzentwicklung*] such as media literacy. Literacy as alphabetisation refers to children, to migrants and to regions perceived as underprivileged as addressees. One of our lessons from the search is that we have often come across texts that indirectly resonate with the concept CCL. These were primarily texts that critically examined belonging, reflexivity, power relations, personal positioning, etc., from the perspective of a specific art form. Keywords that we continued to browse were for example "empowerment" (Aukongo & Damm, 2024; Stoffers, 2019), "spatial literacy" (Zenke, 2022), "self- and world understanding" (Fischer & Kolleck, 2023, p. 349), "cultural awareness" (Maine & Vrikki, 2021), "community music"/ "community arts movement" (de Bánffy-Hall, 2024), "agency" (Hadji, 2022), "critical diversity literacy" (Klingovsky & Pfründer, 2017; Mörsch, 2018), "cultural-pedagogical appropriation of spaces" [*kulturpädagogische Aneignung von Räumen*] (Gerdiken, 2020). These keywords give a first indication of the issues to which cultural education is related.

In Germany, the discourse on cultural education is highly developed, and there is an increasing awareness of the importance of cultural education (Scheunpflug et al., 2022, p. V) and its rhetorical and political ascendance (Liebau, 2018a, p. 1235)[2], but the research landscape is still underdeveloped (p. 1232). Moreover, the observed upward trend offers limited insight into the quality of cultural education, particularly

[1] FIS Bildung is the largest research literature database for educational science in the German-speaking world.

[2] For a more detailed description of the political and civil society initiatives and events that contributed to the topic of cultural and aesthetic education gaining a sustained political and public importance in Germany, please see Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends (2023), Keuchel (2013), Liebau (2018a & 2018b), Scheunpflug, Wulf & Züchner (2021 & 2022) and Steigerwald (2019).

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in relation to issues of social justice. In light of the pressing need for decolonisation of cultural education (Mörsch, 2021), we now present our review of the literature on the following topics: “Power-critical approaches to cultural education in Germany”, “Decolonial approaches to cultural education in German”, “Cultural education and teacher training in Germany”. These are explored below on the basis of selected studies and the national literature review for Germany. Despite the critique and potential for development shown, it should be emphasised that cultural education is seen as a powerful way to critically reflect on problematic understandings of culture and to motivate children, young people and adults to rethink social conditions, especially privilege and marginalisation and the construction of others (Battaglia & Mecheril, 2020).

3.2.1 Power-critical approaches to cultural education in Germany

Articles that take a power-critical perspective in the context of cultural education often refer to a post- or decolonial perspective (Klingovsky & Pfründer, 2018; Mörsch, 2018; Gloe & Oeftering, 2020). Also, some authors refer to a transformative perspective of education (Koller & Schnurr, 2020) and irritation as a condition of education (Schnurr et al., 2020; Höhne & Schäfer, 2023). We also found articles and concepts which are dealing with the same sources as the concept of CCL, like “critical media literacy” (Pranaitytė & Haus, 2023), “critical literacy” (Boban & Hinz, 2019) or “critical diversity literacy” (Klingovsky & Pfründer, 2017; Dankwa et al., 2021; Mörsch, 2018).

Menrath who discusses CCL explicitly in 2023 refers to classism and Cultural Studies. The author shows that the term of CCL, which she derives from Cultural Studies, opens a room to analyse and discuss how cultures and the cultural dimension of class do appreciation and devaluation processes (Menrath, 2023, p. 8). She also refers to the concept of “critical diversity literacy” (Mörsch, 2018) and argues for the need for programs of cultural education towards questioning hegemonic codes on a structural level with a self-reflective and empowering approach. Werner (2009) addresses “students with special needs” and refers to the UNESCO definition of literacy which is a narrow definition of literacy which includes writing, reading and mathematics (Werner 2009).

In addition to the texts that explicitly refer to CCL, there are many authors from the fields of cultural education, Education and Social Work who take a power-critical perspective and elaborate on it, e.g. by taking political education into account. Here, the idea of education for all (Ackermann, 2023) is omnipresent. Fuchs (2014) relates this to Comenius and supplements it with culture for all, referring to Hilmar Hoffmann. This is negotiated as the “democratisation of culture” (Sievers, 2014) and explicitly opposes the idea of high culture (Hammerschmidt et al., 2024). The concept of cultural education seems to be connected to a work assignment that sees certain groups as particularly educationally disadvantaged or with access to cultural education that is characterised by barriers and pursues the goal of dealing

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with these barriers – similar to CCL. This is also criticised by Boger and Simon (2023) or Menrath (2023), who argue with the danger of reproduction.

Culture of all (Sievers 2014) seems like an attempt to further develop culture for all (education for all). Bachmair (2010), Zirfas (2015), Becker (2015) and Lang (2023) work with the concept of participation of all. Also, Menrath (2022) and Liebau (2015) refer to this concept and designate this perspective to the UNESCO specifications of 1976. Participation is discussed as part of democratic principles that make reflection on one's own positioning relevant. At the same time, they criticise the fact that some cultural education projects fail to respond to representation, thereby missing out on opportunities for dialogue and important feedback and appreciation (Sturzenhecker, 2019). Künzli et al. (2010) see cultural education as a handling of educational inequality. Croll et al. (2017) and Jörissen et al. (2020) for example combine the idea of participation and digitalisation in Media Education [Medienbildung].

Another major strand in the discussion about cultural education is the link with political education (Battaglia & Mecheril, 2020; Dengel, 2020; Gloe & Oeftering, 2020). Flad (2014) for example rejects this linkage and argues for the independence of cultural education. Haus (2023), on the other hand, develops the term Critical Media Literacy from this link and refers to Critical Theory, Cultural Studies and democratic education according to Dewey. The question of impact and consequences, especially for minoritised and deprivileged groups, is also raised and criticised at the same time (Fuchs, 2014; Mörsch, 2016a; Mörsch, 2016b; Seeck et al., 2023; Timm et al. 2020). Brassat et al. (2019) take a stand against extremism in cultural education.

This raises the question of how culture is meant: aesthetic culture and the arts (Fuchs, 2014) or rather the combination of an art perspective and a social science perspective on culture (Menrath, 2022). This is where the discussion about the ambiguity of education in the context of art in relation to a democratic attitude comes in (Schnurr & Dengel, 2020). In the volume of Schnurr and Dengel, decolonial (Rodonò 2020), queer-theoretical, Freire's critical perspective, Maihofer's hegemonic (self-)critical, and decolonial perspective (Aktaş, 2020) are adopted. The importance of reflecting on the concept of culture and dominant views of it is then emphasised (Dengel & Kelch, 2020). Both Mörsch (2017) and Seeck et al. (2023) take a perspective in which they call for dominant views in cultural education to be reflected upon. They adopt feminist (Mörsch, 2019), decolonial (Mörsch, 2021) and classism-critical views (Seeck et al., 2023). These perspectives make ambivalences thinkable.

Another important term in the German discourse on cultural education is inclusion (Aktaş & Gläßler, 2019). Sauter (2017) refers to Bourdieu (2001) and Eribon (2016) and includes the capability approach. Gerland (2019) argues from the perspective of disability studies and takes an explicit look at research. Nagel (2020) sheds light on

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inclusive participatory arts projects, some of which are linked to the idea of community.3

The "discourse on 'social cultural work'", which is located in the tradition of the new social movements since the 1960s, articulates the strengths of cultural education in articulation, [the] creation of attention, [the] audio-visualisation" (Treptow, 2010, p. 46) and in being able to "'express experiences of disadvantage and discrimination in an artistic-symbolic way, to critically address them and make them public' (Josties, 2013, p. 356)" (Menrath, 2022, p. 436). These tie in with critical-emancipatory perspectives and pose the question of solidarity in cultural education (Treptow, 2016) and are supplemented by de- and postcolonial perspectives (Menrath, 2022).

3.2.2 Decolonial approaches to cultural education in Germany

Within the field of cultural education, a current turn to postcolonial theories can be observed (Castro-Varela & Haghighat, 2023, p. 16). This holds true for the development of arts education programmes and their thematic focus as well as for critical perspectives on arts education within academia, which are often linked to Stuart Hall's Cultural Studies (Meiers, 2019; Menrath, 2023).

Boger and Simon (2023) point out that arts education does not necessarily promote decolonisation (p. 391) – they problematise that the inclusion of *trending* postcolonial perspectives is often being utilised as an instrument of distinction to secure hegemonic positions in the arts (p. 388). Several authors stress that the target groups of arts educations are often constructed as deprivileged *others* who need integration and have to be given access to art in the first place, describing these difference constructions as deeply entangled in colonial and classist perspectives (Boger & Simon, 2023; Bücken, 2021; Castro-Varela & Haghigat, 2023; Meiers 2019; Menrath 2023; Mörsch, 2016a, 2016b, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2023; Niggemann, 2023). As a central phenomenon in this context, various authors point to a funding line of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research from 2013 entitled Culture Empowers [*Kultur macht stark* & *Kultur macht stark plus*], which has been continued in several funding periods up to the moment and contributed in a special way to a portrayal of the addressees of arts education as deficient and in need of support (Boger & Simon, 2023, p. 382; Meiers, 2019, p. 134): e.g. a discourse-analysis of 850 applications received within the aforementioned framework of the *Kultur macht stark* and *Kultur macht stark plus* programmes reveals the stereotypical addressing of refugees and the individualisation of social problems in the applications. Furthermore, cultural education was presented as a mediator of German, European

[3] Hinz and Boban (2019) present a pedagogical approach rooted in a human rights-based perspective, interpreted as inherently democratic and indirectly resonating with the concept CCL. The authors integrate elements of human rights-based, inclusive, and critical pedagogies to form a cohesive learning framework. They draw on Holzkamp's critical psychology, particularly his notion of expansive learning, and align their perspective with Paulo Freire's educational philosophy, emphasizing Critical Literacy and Critical Mathemacy.

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and dominant cultural values, while children from migrant and socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds were denied their own biographical artistic and cultural experiences (Bücken et al., 2018; Baitamani et al., 2020).

One key point of many discussions on postcolonial perspectives in arts education is the insight taken from Cultural Studies that arts education is never neutral but always embedded in patterns of domination and power (Castro-Varela & Haghigat, 2023, p. 16; Meiers, 2019, p. 132; Menrath, 2023, p. 5). In line with this decolonial perspective, some authors stress the importance of equity and justice in arts education, claiming for approaches that let participants decide for themselves about their cultural practices and involvement in artistic processes instead of teaching them how to consume and produce arts the *right way* (Gerards 2019, p. 93). We have also come across the concept *critical diversity literacy* in the German-speaking discourse, which is quite similar to the concept of CCL (Klingovsky & Pfründer, 2017; Dankwa et al., 2021) by taking up decolonial approaches by the South African scientist Melissa Steyn (e.g. 2012; 2015). Perspectives in the project are the Critical Race Theory according to Crenshaw et al. (1995) and the Critical Whiteness Studies according to hooks (1990). Mörsch (2023) also refers to the concept of *critical cultural diversity* according to Steyn (2007) in a critical review of the curriculum, offering a perspective critical of discrimination in cultural education. She demonstrates that this perspective must permeate the entire cultural education project, i.e. it must include the canon, methods and structures.

3.2.3 Cultural education and teacher training in Germany

For the field of teacher training, there are calls for cultural school development (Braun, 2012; Fuchs, 2017; Massek et al., 2021) and an interdisciplinary anchoring of professionalisation in the context of cultural/arts education (Massek et al., 2021, p. 94). This is already being implemented at some universities in Germany as part of pilot projects (Massek et al., 2021, p. 207). A particular focus should be placed on promoting a broad concept of culture that recognises and acknowledges the diversity of cultural experiences and production in the different environments in which children and young people live (Massek et al., 2021, p. 94). In teaching critical media literacy (Pranaityté & Haus, 2023, p. 6), the importance of teachers' perception of children's and young people's media environments, ideally in the context of co-learning processes, is emphasised, as this is what makes it possible to convey critical perspectives on them in the first place (Pranaityté & Haus, 2023, p. 8). In this context, the often-inadequate media education of the teachers themselves is problematised, since it is not anchored in the curricula and teacher training (Pranaityté & Haus, 2023, p. 7). The analysis of group discussions with student teachers as part of a BMBF-funded project on Culture in Teacher Training clearly showed that most of them do not understand cultural education as a participatory process of co-constructive negotiation of topics and readings that enables teaching cultural/arts education aiming at the development of CCL (Timm & Scheunpflug, 2020, p. 157), but rather adhere to a static and narrow concept of culture, which also prevailed in textbooks (Kühn et al., 2020, p. 222). The recommendations that are subsequently

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formulated for the further development of “cultural teacher education” (p. 158) are compatible with CCL, although the concept is not referred to in the project publications.

3.3.4 Conclusion

In relation to EXPECT_Art, the findings of our literature review emphasise the importance of cultural education projects offered by external cultural partners in schools in order to initiate processes of teaching CCL, as its content is currently not integrated into textbooks or teacher training throughout Germany. Here, and when using the terms like culture and literacy, it is important to discuss the use of these terms, as no standardised definition has yet been agreed. The historical contextualization of terms and the inclusion of different disciplines and perspectives can be helpful. In addition, Cultural Studies, classism research, critical whiteness studies, critical race theory, feminist approaches as well as democratic theory and critical theoretical approaches offer a good framework for taking a critical look at concepts. At the same time, these approaches offer a possible framework for reflection on cultural education and CCL programmes and projects: projects that address deprivileged groups in particular always harbour the risk of reproducing power and inequality relations. Against this backdrop, however, it is also important to ensure that current critical approaches, such as decolonial studies, do not de facto serve as mere placeholders in funding logics. Formulations such as *culture of all* can easily degenerate into a phrase and become meaningless if the concept of *all* is not clearly defined and the reasons for its inclusion in the context of culture are not made explicit. Power-critical perspectives can be enhanced by other approaches, leading to an intersectional and comprehensive framing of the concept of CCL.

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3.3 Hungary

The concept of cultural literacy has not been used in the Hungarian context, neither has its dialectic critique, CCL. Browsing academic papers, teacher training and other university course materials, as well as public websites, we found practically no appearance of these concepts.

However, indirect links can be established in various directions to: 1) critical pedagogy, 2) intellectual discourses on decoloniality and the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) positionality in global contexts, and 3) the positionality of Roma minority and the access to cultural literacy

3.3.1 Critical pedagogy

The concept of critical pedagogical thinking in Hungary was first mentioned in connection with the disadvantaged young people's lack of opportunities and compensation for opportunities (Mészáros, 2005). According to Mészáros, the Hungarian educational policy is based on a distributive model, which thinks of creating equality by simply redistributing opportunities, by ensuring equal access and participation. However, some international sociological literature on education is critical of this model. Lynch (2000) points out that this assimilationist perspective fails to take account of cultural differences, fails to deal with the problem of groups condemned to silence, fails to reflect on the interrelationships of knowledge, power and control, and in practice may reinforce inequalities in process and outcome. The main problem with this model is that it assumes that inequality can be remedied by simply changing the external social context and creating the right opportunities. However, its roots lie more in the discourses that construct the hidden racism, in the texts that carry a hidden complicity with injustice and in the praxis that builds on this. CPed, on the other hand, takes a very different approach, paying particular attention to cultural factors and discourses; reflecting on the problems of power, control and structural injustice; and favouring the emancipation of the silenced (Lynch, 2000). CPed is a radical educational philosophy and practice that takes on the hard work of questioning (Mészáros, 2005).

In Hungary, the emergence of CPed is much stronger in Sociology and Sociology of Education than in Educational Science. In the latter, at the most, the critical interpretation of educational inequalities is discussed (Tóth, 2016). It seems that in the reflection of Educational Science, which is squeezed between neo-conservative educational policy and the liberal hegemony of the opposition, which sees the West as a model, the moment of (system-) CPed has not yet arrived in Hungary (Mészáros, 2021). According to Mészáros, in a highly centralized education system where the core curriculum must be taught in the classroom and teachers have little freedom to choose their methods, it is questionable how much opportunity they have to teach using a CPed approach.

The School of Public life published a handbook on CP in 2022 entitled *The Pedagogy of Liberation* (Udvarhelyi, 2022). This collection of texts provides a historical

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overview of CPed and movement education in Hungary, drawing on the Hungarian movement's past. We can also read about the development of adult education in Hungary, about the workplaces and cultural actors of the 1920s, such as the Horányi-telep, the Gödi-telep, the workers' choirs or the work of Lajos Kassák, and about the People's Colleges that were started before the Second World War.

3.3.2 CEE in the global decolonization context

The central question of this section is regarding the role and relevance of decoloniality as a concept in the region (in CEE), and how it relates to various critical ideas and practical initiatives in CPed. When it comes to the applicability of the global colonial discourses and of decolonization as a political strive in CEE, we could identify two main streams of literature engaging with these questions. The first one reflects an outward directed gaze, which from a CE European perspective tries to understand its current positionality, often closely intertwined with historical legacies of the region. The second one (discussed in the next section) discusses internal (de)colonial perspectives directed towards ethnic groups and nationalities living within the current nation-states of the region, firstly and most importantly, towards the Roma. This second point is being discussed only in the Hungarian context.

Various authors (Mark & Betts, 2021; Scheibner, 2008; Petkovska, 2021; Grzechnik, 2019; Böröcz, 2006; Melegh et al., 2012) currently engage with the positionality of the region towards the rest of the world, and discuss the regions take on postcolonial/decolonial discourses in terms of its shifting relations to the global powers. This is not a new phenomenon; historically, it has been a recurring topic among social scientists, historians, and the intelligentsia in general. Here we lack sufficient place to discuss the historical dimensions of this debate in Hungary or the region. Rather, we focus more specifically on contemporary authors who try to understand CEE's position in the new world order after 1989. Some of the works introduced below remain on the more generic level of postcoloniality/postsocialism, other focus more specifically on the role of CPed in these new knowledge production mechanisms.

To start with more comprehensive works, Attila Melegh's *On the East-West slope: Globalization, nationalism, racism, and discourses on Eastern Europe* (2006) provides a detailed exploration of the complex positioning of Eastern Europe within global discourses, particularly those related to colonialism. The book examines how historical, political, and economic narratives have shaped and continue to influence perceptions and realities in Eastern Europe, offering a unique perspective on the region's role in the global context.

One of the key arguments in Melegh's work is that Eastern Europe has been historically constructed as the *Other* in Western discourses, much like colonized regions in the Global South. This construction has been perpetuated through orientalist narratives that depict Eastern Europe as backward, primitive, and in need

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of modernization. Such narratives have not only justified external interventions but have also influenced internal self-perceptions and policies within Eastern European countries. Melegh highlights how these discourses have been internalized, leading to a sense of inferiority and a perpetual striving to *catch up* with the West.

A central theme in Melegh's analysis is the concept of the East-West slope, which serves as a metaphor for the socio-economic and cultural gradient that characterizes the relationship between Eastern and Western Europe. It involves a complex set of local hierarchies in the form of collective perceptions about neighbouring nations and ethnic groups along categories like development, backwardness, good, bad, modern, archaic, etc. This slope is not merely a product of contemporary globalization but is deeply rooted in historical legacies, including those of colonialism and imperialism. Eastern Europe occupies a unique and often ambiguous position in these global discourses, one that challenges traditional binary categorizations of colonizer and colonized.

Melegh notes that while Eastern Europe was not a primary player in overseas colonialism, it experienced forms of internal colonization and exploitation, particularly during the periods of Ottoman, Habsburg, and later Soviet dominance. These experiences have left deep marks on the region's social, economic, and political structures, contributing to its complex identity within global hierarchies. Extending his analysis to the contemporary period, Melegh argues that the integration of Eastern European countries into the global economy has often been on unequal terms, with the region serving as a source of cheap labor and raw materials for more developed Western economies. This economic dependency is reminiscent of colonial dynamics, where the periphery is exploited for the benefit of the core.

Similarly to the previous, James and Slobodian's chapter "Eastern Europe in the Global History of Decolonization" (2018) offers a nuanced reexamination of Eastern Europe's significant but often overlooked role in the global decolonization narrative. Traditionally, the history of decolonization has been centered on the struggles of the Global South against Western European colonial powers. James and Slobodian challenge this narrow perspective by highlighting, similarly to Melegh, Eastern Europe's dual position as both a region subjected to imperial dominance and an active participant in the global decolonization movement.

The imperial subjugation positioned Eastern European nations as entities with their own anti-imperial struggles, paralleling the decolonization efforts seen in the Global South, they argue. These historical contexts provide a foundation for understanding Eastern Europe's unique perspective on and contributions to global decolonization. The text highlights Eastern Europe's active engagement in the global decolonization process during the 20th century, particularly under socialist regimes. Post-World War II, many Eastern European countries identified with the anti-colonial movements in the Global South, seeing their own liberation from imperial powers reflected in these

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struggles. This ideological alignment was bolstered by the Cold War dynamics, where Eastern European states, under the influence of the Soviet Union, sought to extend their anti-imperialist solidarity to newly independent nations.

And finally, Sanja Petkovska's work "Decolonial Emancipation on the Postsocialist Peripheries and the Future of Critical Pedagogy" (2021) offers a profound examination of the intersections between decolonial thought, postsocialist contexts, and CPed. The author embarks on a critical exploration of how the historical and socio-political conditions of postsocialist societies can be navigated through the lens of decolonial theory to foster emancipatory education practices. Petkovska focuses on Eastern Europe and the Balkans, a region transitioned from socialist regimes to capitalist democracies following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Central to Petkovska's argument is the idea that postsocialist peripheries have experienced a form of neo-colonialism. This neocolonialism is not characterized by traditional colonial domination but by the imposition of Western-centric neoliberal ideologies and practices. Such imposition has led to the marginalization of local knowledge systems, exacerbating socio-economic inequalities, and fostering a sense of cultural inferiority among the populations of these regions. The author sees CPed as a crucial tool for decolonial emancipation. She builds on the foundational ideas of Freire, who emphasized education as a practice of freedom and critical consciousness. Freire's pedagogical approach encourages learners to question and transform the conditions of their oppression. She argues that in the postsocialist context, CPed must be adapted to address both the legacies of socialism and the impacts of neoliberal globalization. She calls for a localized approach to CPed and argues that pedagogical practices must be rooted in the specific historical, cultural, and socio-political realities of post-socialist societies. This involves not only critically engaging with the past experiences of socialism but also resisting the homogenizing tendencies of neoliberalism. Educators are encouraged to create spaces where local histories, languages, and cultural practices can be reclaimed and rearticulated as sources of strength and resilience. Petkovska also emphasizes the need for solidarity between postsocialist peripheries and other marginalized groups globally.

3.5.3 Decoloniality and the Roma

In CEE countries, historical narratives and educational curricula have been shaped by various external influences, such as Soviet ideologies during the communist era. But also, nationalist narratives are very important in all CEE countries (Neumann, 2023; Górak-Sosnowska & Markowska-Manista, 2022). Decoloniality in education could involve critically reassessing and, if necessary, restructuring curricula to ensure a more accurate and inclusive representation of historical events, cultural contributions, and diverse perspectives within the region. It includes, for example, the inclusion of minority voices, perspectives, and in general, the history of minorities in national curricula.

Roma are the most numerous and most disadvantaged ethnic minority in Europe, and the majority of them live in CEE countries. Their socio-economic, political,

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social, and historical situation has been the subject of a large number of social science literature. Recent intellectual and academic approaches to studying Roma's position use a critical conceptual framework. The Critical Romany Studies program established at the Central European University offers a critical reflection on how the discipline of Romany Studies can fit into a decolonized curriculum that enhances and promotes emancipated, liberated Romani knowledge (Acton, 2009; Brooks et.al., 2022). Brooks et al. (2022) conceptualizes Romani Studies in a decolonial framework adapted to the CEE region and the Roma minority. As it is highlighted in their article, it is "evident that the teaching of Romani Studies must dovetail with broader decolonisation theories, methods and practices regarding issues such as curriculum content, assessment strategies, staff/faculty biographies and reading lists. Further, pro-active recruitment strategies that focus on both the pastoral and academic needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students" (pp.68-69). In other words, Critical Romani Studies (CRS) which are essentially based on decolonization theories, provide both the theoretical and practical basis for allowing the development of the inclusion of Roma experiences, critical thinking, and the challenging of dominant narratives and practices in teaching. CRS is also derived from critical race theory (CRT), which "played in helping direct and inspire thinking in current Romani Studies (...) This development of CRT, building on work in postcolonialism, decolonization studies, and intersectionality, has assisted Roma scholarship in Europe and beyond" (Brooks et al., 2022, p.76).

The significance of critical theories and the adaptation of the concept of decolonization regarding the Roma minority can be associated with the fact that in many CEE countries, as noted by Dunajeva (2022), national curricula have been drifting towards nationalism, xenophobia, and authoritarianism, rather than multinationalism and democracy. This has added to the already non-inclusive education. Regarding the Roma, the typical representation in textbooks and teachers' manuals (in Hungary and other 22 countries) either omits or represents them in stereotypical ways such as a homogenous, marginalized, impoverished minority group, who often live by backward customs and excel only in traditional skills, such as music and dance. This prevents the Roma minority from developing a positive identity which would enable them to challenge power dynamics and biases and the education system including the teachers to establish a truly inclusive environment.

There are Roma and pro-Roma organizations and institutions that generate an alternative narrative by incorporating the voices of the *invisible Others*. These initiatives align with the intellectual movement within Romani Studies of decolonizing knowledge. However, these voices are hardly coming through; they are not incorporated into the education system and curricula. (Dunajeva, 2022)

3.3.4 Tensions and gaps

Our local report points out some of the peculiarities of CCL related to the Central Eastern European region's positionality. Within the decolonial context, as some of

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the quoted authors articulate in detail, the deconstruction of the binary perspective (East-West, colonized- colonizer) is a novelty, pointing toward a more complex and nuanced understanding of postcoloniality informed by the CEE historic developments, and more specifically by the postsocialist experience.

Critical pedagogical thinking in Hungary, initially discussed in relation to disadvantaged youth (Mészáros, 2005), critiques the country's distributive educational model for merely redistributing opportunities without addressing deeper structural inequalities (Lynch, 2000). This model overlooks cultural differences and the power dynamics inherent in education. When it comes to decolonizing the curriculum, inclusion of minorities such as the Roma, it has been reconfirmed that Roma remain invisible or are stereotypically represented. Existing initiatives, pedagogical programmes reinforce the curriculum of majority culture, trying to integrate minority, Roma children into it, aiming at integration into the (Hungarian) middle class (which often goes with silencing authentic Roma voices, cultures). The EXPECT_art project aims at something else: it tries to include minority voices, to make them visible/heard – in other words, to valorise and legitimise them.

At the same time, the current Hungarian education system, social policy, and all related policy areas aim at (and cause) a hardening of the social hierarchy. In contrast, CPed, together with the notions of decolonisation and critical culture literacy, always questions existing structures and seeks to bring about change from inside. In today's Hungarian political regime, all educational projects (including those using CPed) can only work within a defined framework that does not challenge current social hierarchies and ideologies. Therefore, as a final remark to our local research, the following questions need to be asked: Is it possible to achieve change from within the existing frameworks and structures?

Is it possible to challenge the latter? And if so, to what extent? These questions will require careful methodological planning, reflexive project preparations, and a lot of informal networking while approaching individual schools, localities, and specific student groups.

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Appendix

There are several educational initiatives, which should be mentioned as part of this critical tradition. Not all of them are directly linked to CPed but have similar objectives. Here, we present a few of these initiatives. All of them are bottom-up, civil activities.

Forum theatre, theatre of the oppressed	https://www.szinhazineveles.hu/tudastar/forum-szinhaz/ https://www.szinhazineveles.hu/szervezet/ https://kavaszinhaz.hu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Juventas_II_Esettanulmanyok_forumszinhaz-fiatal-fogvatartottakkal.pdf https://szinhaz.net/2022/10/12/oblath-marton-boal-nyomokban/ https://www.szociopoly.hu/ http://www.sajatszinhaz.org/ https://kavaszinhaz.hu/tudastar/
Social circus	https://zsonglor.wixsite.com/mzse/szocialis-cirkusz https://hvg.hu/cimke/szoci%C3%A1lis%20cirkusz
Participatory action research	https://qubit.hu/2018/07/03/akkor-ismersz-meg-valamit-ha-megprobalod-megvaltoztatni https://bookline.hu/product/home.action?_v=Pataki_Gyorgy_Vari_Anna_Reszvetel_akci&type=20&id=1008435 http://kovasz.uni-corvinus.hu/2017/lakhatas1.pdf

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3.4 Poland

Problems in defining CCL in a Polish perspective are similar to what can be observed worldwide. The term appeared in the field of social sciences (Education, Art, Sociology) in works written by Polish authors relatively recently. However, the concept and the postulates of acting in accordance with what is defined as CCL can be traced even several decades sooner.

Tracing the use of precise term is challenging in sources written in Polish language due to lack of consensus regarding translation. Translations that appear in academic texts are:

- (krytyczna) alfabetyzacja kulturowa [eng. (critical) cultural alphabetization]. The word alfabetyzacja in Polish refers primarily to "popularization of reading, writing and numeracy skills", which makes it not perfectly equivalent translation, which is why when using this option Polish authors often make additional reference to the English origin and relevant literature (for example Kropiwnicka & Skalska, 1996; Starego, 2017; Kwieciński, 2007)
- (krytyczna) piśmienność kulturowa [eng. (critical) cultural literacy]. The word piśmienność is a derivative form of the verb pisać [to write] so albeit being a seemingly literal translation of the term, it leads to a narrow and therefore misleading understanding of the term as something associated with exploration of written texts.
- (krytyczna) kompetencja(/e) kulturowa(/e) [eng. (critical) cultural competence(s)] (Ratajczak-Parzyńska, 2013; Śliwa, 2021; Góralska 2021; Głowala, 2021).

The term *literacy* in each translation variant is applied in various contexts, e.g. media literacy (Ptaszek, Lysik, 2019), visual literacy (Dylak, 2012), health literacy (Cylkowska-Nowak & Magdalena Wiatrowska, 2010).

Problems in defining CCL are similar and often practices and notions which could be described under a CCL framework are named differently. Examples of defining CCL in Poland include critical thinking (Czaja-Chudyba, 2013), critical reflection (Mizerek, 2021) and critical self-knowledge (Nycz, 2017).

However, it seems that the issue of definition fades away in the course of practical application of CCL, especially in education, because the purpose and scope are the same regardless of the name. These include the ability to recognize and interpret meanings and messages, behaviours, information and cultural processes. This reflexivity is emancipatory, discursive, critical and requires a high degree of knowledge and experience in socialization and learning about the transmitted tradition, language and moral code of a given community (Dróżka, 2023).

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3.4.1 CCL and critical thinking in the social sciences

A constructive element of CCL is the category of critical thinking, which is defined differently in individual social science disciplines. In Psychology, this is understood as a set of metacognitive skills aimed at discovering and solving problems, making adequate decisions and reflective functioning in reality. In CPed, it is defined as the ability to recognize and overcome social injustice. It is a process that has been partially *appropriated* by CPed. It functions within other educational paradigms (Czaja-Chudyba, 2013).

In terms of the arrangements defining CCL, the related category of *critical competences* is also important, as one of the important learning goals (Kwiatkowska, 2013). It is also referred to as critical self-knowledge and sensitivity and as the causative creativity of individuals and communities (Nycz, 2017).

3.6.2 CCL and decolonization: historical context

Poland does not have colonial experience in the sense generally accepted in the world, i.e. as a state community it has not been involved in the colonial exploitation of African, Asian, both Americas and/or European countries. Therefore, the term *decolonization* in Poland has different associations than, for example, in the USA or other countries that had a *colonial past*.

However, from a historical and social perspective, it is possible to notice processes that correspond to the quiddity of colonization, although it has a specific local form, similar to the experiences of other societies in this part of Europe. It is related to historical and social processes (see Annus, 2011). Poland as a country (area and population) was exploited colonially for about 200 years due to the so-called Partitions [pl. *Rozbiory Polski*] (Healy, 2014). Poland gradually lost its territories and their inhabitants, which were taken over by Austria, Prussia and Russia, and finally lost its statehood. The invaders took actions that were colonial exploitation, both in economic and social terms. In the cultural area, it was the so-called Russification (in the area of Russian influence), Germanization (in the area of influence of the German Reich) and subordination to the administrative and cultural rules operating in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As a result, at a deep level of historically conditioned socialization, Poles were subjected to the colonizing influence of three different cultural, administrative, and political forces.

The partitions triggered spontaneous decolonization tendencies in society, thanks to which the unity of cultural identity was preserved. Religious and folk festivals were cultivated, and art was developed. Therefore, Poland has decolonization experiences that can be described as endemic, i.e. specific to our area. Culture has become a vehicle for decolonization. Thanks to it, their own specific cultural and social identity was cultivated and developed. A decolonizing cultural community was created thanks to artistic activities that were the basis for informal education conducted by writers, artists and poets who identified with Polish culture, regardless of their ethnic origin.

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Another aspect is the so-called *internal colonization* resulting from social relations in feudalism, which in Poland (where there were no anti-feudal revolutions) still remain in the (sub)consciousness. The position, or rather exploitation, of peasants is the subject of debate and analysis in publications, e.g. Pobłocki (2021), Janicki (2021) or in the gender context Kuciel-Frydryszak (2023).

Decolonization processes also took place after World War II. It was spontaneous resistance against the influence of the USSR, an example of which in art was the socialist realism, which tried to adapt cultural patterns developed in the Soviets to Polish conditions, which was not treated seriously in the general public opinion but was tolerated as an element that could not be influenced in given historical conditions.

To sum up, Poland has historical experience in the field of cultural decolonization in a specific local context, which took place spontaneously and informally.

3.4.3 Decolonization and epistemic justice

Epistemic justice, as a subject of discourse, concerns areas that have the so-called colonial past (Domańska, 2016). In Central and Eastern Europe, the problem of epistemic justice and injustice is related to, among others, the fact of *colonial* indoctrination and censorship during the periods of Partitions and then Soviet influence. The culture of the Eastern Bloc emphasized collectivism, reducing individualism, resulting in a premium on mediocrity, social attitudes of *holding back* and *blending into the background*. Nowadays, the unfavourable effect of these attitudes is the lack of critical public opinion and willingness to expose irregularities (Czaja-Chudyba, 2013).

However, a contrario, during the period of being subjected to the *colonial* influence of the invaders and then the Soviets, a very strong culture of resistance was developed, the phenomenon of which resulted, among others, from the involvement of society, regardless of the affiliation of specific individuals to a given social class (Smolar, 2010). An example was the Wrocław anti-communist movement Orange Alternative (Kowalczyk, 2015), which organized happenings and other forms of street art in response to the political reality.

In discussions about epistemic justice for knowledge creation centers located in Western Europe or the USA, we are a province that provides interesting case studies to test the theories created there (Domańska, 2016). Another barrier is the phenomenon of self-colonization of Central European countries, which is associated with a sense of inferiority (also cultural) and the need to catch up with the West. This process is particularly visible in the case of minorities: regional, ethnic, or national.

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In the case of the regional minority in Upper Silesia, the matter is complicated because the identification of the nationality of the inhabitants of this region was shaped in the context of territorial, political and economic references to the historical *large homelands*, i.e. Poland and Germany, and the *small* one, which is Silesia and its history with changing nationality (Rykała, 2014).

The phenomenon of epistemic injustice sometimes turns into epistemic violence, which in turn means that if we want to live in a more just and inclusive world, political and economic decolonization, but also cognitive decolonization of non-Western European sources or types of knowledge will be necessary (Domańska, 2016).

Epistemic justice can also be considered in a global context. Globalization, as Bauman noted, is something that has already happened to us and there is no point in fighting it (Bauman, 1998). Therefore, we propose a thesis of a contemporary approach to decolonization, which should take place in conditions of acceptance of global cultural trends while respecting local specificities. The effect of globalization is the cultural unification of societies, at the same time, in response to this phenomenon, processes involving the rebirth of various types of national, ethnic, religious, or linguistic identities are growing in the modern world with no less force (Rykała, 2014). Currently, a sensitive social problem in Poland is maintaining epistemic justice in the face of a huge wave of war refugees from Ukraine.

3.4.7 CCL and migration induced by war (Russian aggression in Ukraine)

The presence of a large number of war refugees from Ukraine requires an appropriate cultural approach both at the level of school education (curricula and learning process) and social literacy. Activities addressed to Ukrainians require cultural sensitivity and an appropriate cultural approach, which is not always feasible given the state of the Polish education system (staff shortages and financial issues). In the initial phase of the war, schools operated spontaneously, and administrative activities did not always have an appropriate cultural background. A kind of cultural buffer was the community of Ukrainians present in Poland from the times of earlier migration flows – it provided an opportunity for easier adaptation of refugees to cultural conditions, but could also pose a certain mental difficulty for teachers who may have had erroneous beliefs about the ethnocentrism of Ukrainians, not taking into account the fact that previous emigrations were voluntary, which resulted in the newcomers' tendency to adapt to local cultural conditions. The current arrivals had war experiences and felt their own culture and identity were threatened. A specific decolonization need in schools was to break the mental barrier regarding the presence of the Ukrainian language in the school space. Children who fled war talked about barriers such as a sense of alienation, stress and language barriers when entering a new environment. Another factor that creates certain barriers is the stereotype about the similarity of Polish and Ukrainian cultures, due to which important cultural differences are omitted and underestimated (Tędziagolska, et al., 2022).

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From the point of view of CCL, Polish-Ukrainian relations are, to some extent, conditioned by historical events, although the youngest generation is not fully aware of this. However, the social and cultural modernization of Ukraine over the last 30 years is a testimony to the tendency to accept cultural patterns of cultural individualism, which de facto corresponds to the so-called European values (pluralism, democracy, respect for the individual's right to affirm his or her own beliefs and means of expressing his or her views). This makes the education processes conducted in Poland somewhat easier.

3.4.8 CCL and gender

The local context of CCL is also related to the understanding of the issue of equal rights of women and men and their position (including cultural) in society. The issue of gender in Poland has strong political references (Tabernacka 2021), which affects both the curriculum and the motivation of teachers to discuss and present this phenomenon in classes, including those using art as an educational tool.

According to research (Helios, Jedlecka, 2021; Marody, 2021), women in Poland are more attached to Christian culture than men, demonstrating progressive attitudes, valuing bonds of friendship, demonstrating positive attitudes towards emigrants, having a high level of freedom aspirations, and trusting the European Union. A. Graff (2008), discussing the evolution of Polish society in the field of equality, refers to the concept of brave sacrifice and describes these changes as "retraditionalization" and not the creation of innovative attitudes regarding gender. The correlation between CCL and gender issues in Poland is primarily related to political and cultural CCL.

3.4.9 CCL from teacher's perspective

From the perspective of an active Polish language teacher, critical education needs to take into account several fundamental issues.

In terms of the range of topics chosen, young people need to be presented with a historical background to enable them to take a critical look at multiculturalism and political influences (e.g. Stomma, 2015; Janion, 1998) with which it is necessary to explain to them the tendency to create national myths and stereotypes reinforced from time to time by political propaganda (Koziołek, 2023).

Education should take into account aspects of regional culture (language, cuisine, customs, etc.), its influence on national culture, but also the right to distinctiveness, a break with the principle of inferiority (Słomczyński, 2021; Rokita, 2020). Therefore, a reinterpretation of the cultural heritage, considering feminist criticism, gender and postcolonial studies, is necessary during education. Regarding methods: the demand to move away from preaching and towards activating methods (discussion, debate, brainstorming, project, etc.).

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The scope and methods of CCL are influenced by the geopolitical situation, social tensions, climate change, global health situation, wars, mass migration, religious fundamentalism, global economy, pathogenic use of the Internet, and the media model of teacher competences, which turns out to be insufficient (Dróżka, 2023). These are factors that require a critical educational approach, not only education through art, but also education in general. This, in turn, requires a systemic approach at the level of curriculum development and educational management at the administrative and substantive level, both in the local and central context. However, another challenge for teachers is not only to reinterpret their roles, but also to become aware of a specific cultural syncretism.

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3.5 Slovenia

In Slovenia, the term CCL is a fairly recent notion and mainly not used. For example, in the national library information system COBISS+, there are only two articles written in Slovenian that contain the exact phrase “critical cultural literacy” [*kritična kulturna pismenost*]. The authors of both articles (Sedmak and Zadel, 2023, 2024) are researchers who are also involved in the present project. Both articles have been published in national journals and are intended to introduce the international project. Furthermore, in the Social Science Data Archive, which is a national social science database, under the term *cultural literacy* or *critical literacy*, we could not find any research (much less a concrete database or research project) dealing with this topic. The same applies to the four digital repositories; three belong to three largest Slovenian public universities (University of Ljubljana, University of Maribor and University of Primorska), while dLib (Digital Library of Slovenia) is a portal maintained and developed by the National and University Library. These repositories are used to store theses, dissertations, master's theses, doctoral theses, and other scientific research literature.

However, even if the exact phrase is not used, it does not mean that the principles or similar concepts are not used. The search was thus widened to include the notions of “critical pedagogy”, “inclusive pedagogy” and “culturally responsive pedagogy”.

3.5.1 School curricula

In recent years, Slovenian school communities have generally become more aware of cultural diversity and are more inclusive. More emphasis has been placed on respecting cultural diversity and inclusion, and more attention has been paid to the management of linguistic, religious and cultural diversity. A turn for the better is mainly attributed to the various recent interventions of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia. Several large-scale national projects have been launched to raise awareness among the educational community, about the presence of multiculturality, to promote intercultural coexistence and increase teachers’ competencies to better cope with the challenges of integration of migrant children. National projects launched by the ministry are thus making a difference. Currently there is still a significant gap between Slovenian education policy documents like the Strategy for integrating migrant children, pupils and students in the education system in the Republic of Slovenia (Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, 2007) or the Guidelines for integrating immigrant children into kindergartens and schools (National Education Institute Slovenia, 2012), which generally recognize the importance of interculturality in education, and the daily practices in schools (Bešter 2009; Sedmak 2017; Sedmak et al. 2020; Sedmak & Medarić 2017; Skubic Ermenc 2005, 2007, 2023; Vezovnik 2013; Vižintin 2018).

Moreover, textbooks, other teaching materials and curricula for primary and secondary schools rarely address cultural diversity, as observed also by other researchers (Štrajn 2008; Vrečer, 2012). The analysis of the primary and secondary

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school curricula (Slovenian language, Geography, History, Sociology, Ethics and Society) and school practices shows that CCL is practically non-existent in Slovenian schools.

3.5.2 Teachers and future teachers

Research shows that there is the lack of knowledge and competencies in relation to CCL as well as intercultural competencies in general. More specifically, the future educators/teachers receive almost no training related to the cultural diversity and interculturality during their study period (Dežan & Sedmak, 2020; Medarić et al., 2021; Milharčič-Hladnik & Kožar Rosulnik, 2021).

Looking at the faculties of education's programmes in Slovenia at the three national universities – the University of Ljubljana, the University of Maribor and the University of Primorska, not a lot of emphasis is put on the concepts of inclusive, critical and culturally responsive pedagogy. Nevertheless, at the study programmes of all three faculties there are some subjects addressing the issue, but not in all programmes and usually the courses are elective. A more detailed presentation is presented in Appendix.

No compulsory or regular training is organized for active teachers. The only organized activities are usually project-funded workshops and trainings on intercultural compteneces and intercultural education with voluntary participation of teachers or other trainings outside the school, which teachers attend according to their personal interest. Consequently, always the same teachers attend such courses. As a rule, the participants are educators who already have a special affinity for the issues of intercultural management of cultural diversity and challenges of integration of migrant children (Sedmak et al., 2020).

3.5.3 Academia

Only recently there have been ideas in the academic sector, however not yet implemented in practice that there is a need of a transformative approach, an inclusively designed education that takes into account the principles of interculturality which is evident at the systemic, organisational and relational levels, as well as in the field of education of professionals. As the focus is on transformative approach, this opens the space also for CCL.

On the general level we can observe that there are researchers dealing with notions similar to CCL, namely inclusive pedagogy (including migrant and marginalized children), CPed, culturally responsive pedagogy and cultural literacy. Klara Skubic Ermenc (2023) analyses challenges in the education of immigrant students with regard to the principle of interculturality, stressing that "adequate education of immigrant students is only possible in an inclusive education that takes into account the principle of interculturality, which is manifested at the systemic, curricular, didactic, organisational and relational levels, as well as in the field of educator education and training" (2023, p. 27). Olga Denac, Barbara Sicherl Kafol & Jerneja

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Žnidaršič (2023) in their study of 985 pre-school and primary school teachers found that a large proportion of teaching staff (more than 75%) felt that their work with young people regularly included the development of critical thinking skills, while less than 50% felt that it included tolerance of other cultures. An even lower proportion (less than 40%) of teachers included content that teaches young people about other cultures.

On the other hand, we find examples of CPed in areas we might not initially look for. For example, Slovenian political scientist Banjac (2023) explores the potential of CPed and intersectionality as approaches to teaching in the field of political science. The latter is of particular interest to him in relation to alternative insights into political themes such as power, authority, resistance, hybridity and identity politics, social inclusivity, and justice. In this regard, the author highlights the depoliticisation of higher education, which prevents creative power. Banjac argues that CPed allows for an opening up of the educational space, a critical evaluation of structures of power, knowledge and practices, which in turn allows for insight into the socio-political origins of forms of oppression and the transformation of the social relations that cause oppression. Similarly, in another article Banjac (2016) highlights the socially transformative forms of education in relation to CPed. However, it must be noted that the theoretical nature of the article: it is not applied to or draws from the concrete examples of Slovenian schools.

Furthermore, Majda Hrženjak already in 2004, from the Peace Institute emphasises the cultural heterogeneity of the society and the nationalistic and Eurocentric understanding of culture as well as applying the notion of *cultural literacy* and tying it to critical and radical pedagogy (2004, p. 11). Hrženjak stresses that cultural education should not be part of a subject or two, for example, language or art education, but should be one of the dimensions of all curricular areas (2004, p. 18).

It must be stressed that one of the main gaps is related to the lack of notion of CCL in the Slovenian context is also its introduction and implementation may pose practical challenges. Particularly, as the current experience shows that currently there does not exist a comprehensive transformative approach towards the issues that have been recognised as relevant, such as the management of cultural diversity. Addressing CCL would require systematic efforts to develop and implement training programs, curricula, and policies that promote CCL across all levels of education.

3.5.4 NGO sector

If a quick analysis suggests that Slovenian social science is not engaged largely in CCL, this is not the case for the non-governmental sector. As can be seen from Gregorčič's (2017) article, in 2009, the non-governmental organisation Infopeka developed workshops and seminars on critical literacy. (The project's webpage with its pedagogic model, instructions and examples is available at: http://www.kriticnapismenost.org.) The project was funded by the European Social Fund and managed by the Slovenian Youth Council. In setting up the programme,

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they teamed up with Vida Vončina Vodeb, a pedagogue and sociologist who has laid the theoretical foundations for the implementation of the critical literacy programme, and who has previously worked as a researcher in CPed. The motivation for the programme stemmed from various forms of intolerance towards Roma, refugees, migrants and the LGBT community in the local environment. At the time, the key questions in deconstructing and reconstructing texts were questions related to who wrote the text, what is their background, which voices are not represented, which ones are and why. In addition, the seven steps of critical literacy were applied (Gregorčič, 2017; see also Infopeka, n. d.), such as entering through the senses, knowledge for action, activating knowledge, entering into dialogue, creativity and production, acting in the world and reflection (Gregorčič, 2017; see also Infopeka, n. d.). During the workshops, participants also learnt about different methods (e.g. incorporating body movement, analysis of visual materials, role-playing, pictorial theatre, etc.) (Gregorčič, 2017).

It was crucial for the implementation of the workshops to enter different (secondary) school spaces, as students from different programmes have different curricula and are exposed to different degrees of critical thinking and addressing stereotypes and prejudices (Gregorčič, 2017). An important finding from the evaluation of the programme is that the method requires a great deal of personal commitment from youth workers in the form of reading, deepening and studying the concept, which is not always compatible with the bureaucratic demands of the workplace. Therefore, these types of programmes are not as successful as they could be. Nevertheless, the workshops still run today in the form of individual seminars for primary and secondary schools, faculties, NGOs and other organisations, combining elements of CPed, media literacy and digital literacy (Infopeka, n. d.). The three-day workshops, which last 18 teaching hours, are also included in the KATIS catalogue (Ministry of Education, 2024a), a catalogue of continuing education and training programmes for professionals in education, which is redesigned each year by the Ministry of Education.

3.5.4 Arts education

At national level, the National Committee for Cultural and Arts Education (Ministry of Education, 2024b), established in 2014, is responsible for cultural and arts education in Slovenia. It is composed of representatives from the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education, the National Education Institute Slovenia, the Centre for Vocational Education, the Andragogical Centre and the Office for Youth. The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education are also involved in the Arts and Cultural Education European Network (ACEnet), which produces documents enabling the identification of good practices and the exchange of experiences in the field of arts and cultural education at EU level. For example, the Cultural Awareness and Expression Handbook (European Commission, 2016) was produced within the partnership network, which highlights international and transnational perspectives and intercultural awareness.

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In 2023, the National Committee for Cultural and Arts Education prepared Guidelines for the implementation of cultural and arts education in educational institutions (Ministry of Education, 2023). They include, for example, the preparation of cultural projects in various fields of arts and culture for different age groups, cooperation with the local community and cultural institutions, and the co-creation of cultural offerings in the local environment. The guidelines themselves do not directly imply a focus on CCL. The National guidelines for cultural and arts education in educational institutions, accepted in 2009 (Tome & Markun Puhan, 2009) specifically emphasise that Slovenia should pay particular attention to maintain cultural identity while it should also encourage cultural diversity. In addition, the document points out the importance of knowing and respecting different cultures. Among its 8 goals, the first goal grants participation in cultural life to everyone, while the fifth goal emphasises the development of critical approach towards culture and arts. The sixth goal promotes expression of cultural diversity by encouraging sense of own culture, learning about other cultures, building tolerance in relation to diversity and contributing to intercultural dialogue.

The National Committee for Cultural and Arts Education is also responsible for the Cultural Bazaar project (more about it: https://kulturnibazar.si/en/), which has been running since 2009 as a one-day training for professionals from educational and cultural institutions and the general public. Additionally, in 2023, the national Radio Slovenia (ARS programme) launched a monthly podcast on cultural-arts education called Grafoskop (more about it: https://ars.rtvslo.si/podkast/grafoskop/173251558), which presents reflections on cultural-arts education. For example, one of the broadcasts was dedicated to art as a generator of social change and innovation.

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Appendix

University	Study programme	Programme	Course
University of Ljubljana, Faculty of education	Undergraduate	(Lower) Primary School Teaching	Multilingual and Intercultural Education (elective)
			Intercultural Youth Literature" (elective)
			Intercultural Slovenia in Multicultural Europe (elective)
		Art Pedagogy	Multicultural Art Education (elective)

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		Teacher (Combined Bachelor Programme)	Migration, Minorities and Multiculturalism in Educational Work (elective)
	Master One-year programme Teacher	(Lower) Primary school Teaching	Intercultural Youth Literature (elective)
			Language and Intercultural Awareness (elective)
		Art Pedagogy	Multicultural Art Education (elective)
		(Higher) Primary School Teaching	Language and Intercultural Awareness (elective)
	Master Two-year programme Inclusive pedagogy	Inclusive Pedagogy	Inclusive Pedagogy in a Global Society
		Social Pedagogy	Minorities, Inequality and Intercultural Dialogue (core course)
	Doctoral	Only a specific module	Teaching Intercultural Youth Literature
University of Maribor, Faculty of education	Master One-year programme	Music Pedagogy	Multicultural Music Pedagogy (core course)
	Master Two-year programme	Inclusion in Education	Multiculturalism and Marginalized Groups (core course)
	Master Two-year programme	Pre-school Education	Interculturality in Preschool Education”
University of Primorska, Faculty of education	Undergraduate	Pedagogy	Interculturality in Education
		Pre-school Education	Inclusion in Kindergarten
			Education for Diversity and Social Justice (elective)
		(Lower) Primary School Teaching	Interculturality in Education (elective)

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		Social Pedagogy	Intercultural Understanding (core subject)
			Immigrant Children in Education (elective)
	Master	Early Learning	Diversity and Equal Opportunities in Education (core subject)
			Interculturality in Education (elective)
	Doctoral	Educational Sciences	Interculturalism and Social Justice in Education (elective)
			Multilingualism and Intercultural Communication in Education (elective)
		Early Learning and Teaching	Multicultural Education in Pre-school Institutions" (elective)
			Intercultural Didactics of Language and Literature" (elective)

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3.6 Spain

The English term literacy lacks a direct equivalent in Spanish, often leading to a split into the notions of *alfabetización* (Freire & Macedo, 1989; Ferreiro, 1998; García Carrasco, 2009) and *literacidad* (Cassany, 2005; Grup de Recerca en Didàctica de les Ciències Socials, n.d.; Hernández Zamora, 2019). While some scholars tend to use these terms interchangeably (Lorenzatti et al., 2019; Riquelme Arredondo & Quintero Corzo, 2017), Cassany (2005) has highlighted that this terminological choice also reflects conceptual differences, sparking ongoing debates among Spanish-speaking authors from both sides of the Atlantic. Although this report primarily focuses on the Spanish context, acknowledging these discussions is also crucial as they significantly shape the scope and meaning of CCL in Spain. Furthermore, it's important to recognize the impact of academic perspectives from other linguistic areas on how the notion has evolved within the country. In this regard, the New Literacy Studies initially emerged in the Anglo-Saxon academic contexts but have also played a meaningful role in shaping Hispanic thought about this matter. (Grup de Recerca en Didàctica de les Ciències Socials, n.d.). As seen in most of the hispanic literature reviewed, Anglo-Saxon scholars are constantly referenced.

Concerning the Spanish-speaking scholars who translate literacy into *literacidad*, their contributions not only draw from Anglo-Saxon traditions but also from Freire and Macedo (1989), who popularised the term *alfabetización* and significatively influenced the birth of the New Literacy Studies. However, as Riquelme Arredondo and Quintero Corzo (2017) note, for most Spanish speakers "it is not clear that the term 'alfabetización' fully captures the meaning attributed to the term literacity in the Anglo-Saxon world" (p.102). Indeed, *alfabetización* still refers to the entrenched idea of acquiring writing and reading skills, pointing very often to the term illiterate and its corresponding social stigma (Hernández Zamora, 2019; Riquelme Arredondo & Quintero Corzo, 2017; Zavala et al., 2004). Because of this,

> Zavala et al. (2004, 2002) consider that it is necessary to distinguish between 'alfabetización' and 'literacidad'. While the former limits its meaning to the mechanical and technical aspect of encoding and decoding graphic symbols in the educational sphere—a technical concept linked to formal education—the latter refers to the social practice of the literate in any sociocultural context. (Lorenzatti et al., 2019, p. 4)

3.6.1 The term 'literacidad'

Although the term *literacidad* in Spanish is "relatively recent and of limited scope" (Riquelme Arredondo & Quintero Corzo, 2017, p. 94), we stand for its use since it helps subvert the colonial and instrumental trend associated with *alfabetización* (Méndez Cota & López Cuenca, 2020). *Literacidad* seeks to go beyond understanding reading and writing as a neutral activity, and delves into a sociocultural approach to see these actions as practices "in which people use texts, sociohistorically situated, within particular contexts, to perform specific functions within established institutions, with specific power relations" (Cassany, 2005, pp. 2-3).

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Despite this understanding, these contributions still link literacies too closely to the processes of reading and writing (for instance, you can see the studies of García Ruiz & González Milea, 2019; Lorenzatti et al., 2019). In recent years, steps have been taken toward other terms such as "multiliteracidad" (Cassany, 2005), "literacidad digital" (Cantamutto, 2015), "literacidad electrónica" (López-Valero et al., 2011) or "literacidad mediática" (Dongo-Mejía et al, 2022), thereby diversifying the meaning of literacy and pointing to expanding "their semantic limits to respond to the educational need to instruct in these new and diverse languages" (Prado Aragonés, 2001, p.163). Additionally, it is relevant to note that these types of literacies are usually associated with the acquisition of human capital, meaning that they are aligned with the interests of a country's socio-economic growth (Riquelme Arredondo & Quintero Corzo, 2017). Therefore, it is necessary to also promote *critical* literacy.

3.6.2 'Literacidad' becoming critical

With the adjective critical, *literacidad* goes a step further. It still refers to the ability to read and understand critically but also encompasses the process of decoding social, cultural and political problems. This includes the capacity to evaluate the reliability of sources, develop counter-hegemonic discourses or make decisions for social action, among others. Put differently, it is no longer a set of skills to be learned or measured (Hull, 1997) but rather a social practice leading to "an eminently political and participatory learning" and enabling vulnerable populations "to be able to face social problems, based on debate and argumentation, to form one's own judgment and make decisions to intervene socially" (Grup de Recerca en Didàctica de les Ciències Socials, n.d.). This is especially important in contexts like Latin America, where the project of *literacidad* has been sustained

> for a population whose lives are fundamentally dominated by criminal and state violence, fear, and economic, political, educational, and cultural exclusion. At best, the result of culturally focused efforts is the production of poor but literate people (Hernández, 2005 in Hernández Zamora, 2019, p. 3)

As Gregorio Hernández Zamora (2019) points out, *literacidad* also links to decolonial thought when questioning the policies and discourses that do not consider "the cultural practices of non-dominant groups in society" (p. 6), thus subverting the idea of "'bringing culture' to those who 'lack' it" (p.7). In addition to this, Hernández Zamora argues that "forming literate subjects means forming authors and actors of their own place in the world" (Hernández 2010, p. 9 in Hernández Zamora, 2019, p.15). This shift strongly resonates with and prompts a discussion about CCL.

From a Hispanic perspective, CCL is focused on "the interaction between different cultures in various contexts" (Alcocer et al., p.3). More specifically, it serves to avoid "being simply about the knowledge of culture" and emphazises dialogic practices supporting "constructive encounters about what it means to be different from each

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other" (Garcia-Mila et al., 2021, p.1). This process includes negotiating power relations, cultural models and meanings, and potentially involves identity conflict (Hernández-Zamora, 2019). In the words of Alcacer et al. (2021),

> literate practices should lead to connections that enable questioning of a socially accepted order of beliefs and values [...] the potential to foster a culturally empathetic and democratic human exchange, as well as an understanding of cultural difference outside the dichotomous construction of superior/inferior or dominant/dominated. This perspective accompanies a literate subject capable of questioning their own concepts and meanings and being open to new meanings that arise from cultural contact (p. 4)

3.6.3 Some research about CCL

In the Spanish-speaking context, several studies are in tune with the notion of CCL without explicitly naming it. For instance, Gómez-Estern et al. (2010) conducted research within a literacy adults program offered by the government of Andalusia, showing "how cultural identity is constructed through discourse and is tightly linked to cultural activity settings" (p.231). This project understood cultural identity not from an essentialist perspective but by "attending to how members of a given community use it to construct a relatively coherent image of themselves in a given social setting" (p.234). Similarly, the research by Alcocer et al. (2021), conducted with trainee teachers, explored the ability to construct and renegotiate meanings collectively yet diversely regarding the concepts of the border and the Other, through the visit of a Chicano writer and certain activities around that conference. In so doing, cultural literacy worked as a bridge "that enable new understandings and spaces that united the personal stories of all participants around themes that became common and served as points of identification, [...] for the recognition and construction of cultural, social, affective, and personal ties" (p.14).

Without referring again to CCL, Carou's (2023) study focuses on the construction of a sex-gendered gaze through photography in a high school Literature class in Argentina. The aim was to challenge pre-established cultural discourses by rethinking the hegemonic beauty mandate that regulates women and feminized bodies.

From the south of Spain, significant insights are being made into thinking about literacy through a posthumanist lens. The work of Caetano-Silva et al. (2024, 2024a) helps us understand that if the world is not representational, literacy is something relational. In other words, there is no lack of literacy; instead, literacy is affective, it emerges in the relationship between human and more-than-human bodies and goes beyond words and prefixed meanings. From posthumanism, literacy creates meanings in the encounters. That is, "literacy practices can be understood as occurring as a result of people, places, objects, and things being caught up together

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in particular ways through affective flows and circuits" (Caetano-Silva et al, 2024a, p.5).

We conclude by highlighting the work of Méndez Cota and López Cuenca (2020), one of the few works from Spanish-speaking contexts that explicitly uses the notion of CCL. Situated in Mexico, the article reflects on the notion beyond European pespectives. From a decolonial standpoint, the authors explain that "before the 1990s, Latin America had developed its own critical resources for studying literacy as socially embedded, politically charged, and multiple" (p.3), although possibly under a different name and genealogy. Further, they propose understand CCL as a dynamic concept that foregrounds "the tending of common affairs through unique exercises in social relations, and these changing notions as new spaces of politics in relation to prior notions of self" (Méndez Cota & López Cuenca, 2020, p.8). In other words, they advocate for generating new practices less focused on problem-solving and more on political gestures aimed at creating diverse and diversified communities.

Finally, working on CCL in the Hispanic context requires activating critical imagination, in the sense of opening possibilities for thinking literacy beyond its limits and imagining how this concept can reconfigure cultural relations through a critical thought. As the Spanish philosopher Marina Garcés (2022) says,

> Being able to imagine doesn't, then, mean limitless fabulation but being able to situate ourselves without fear at the limits of the known and the recognized, both by ourselves and the systems that can legitimately do so. Imagination opens the door to worlds and temporalities other than our own. Critical imagination is not, therefore, a way of escaping what there is, but rather an ethical and political requirement to broaden the limits of definitions to the strangeness that constitutes them. This means that, in order to imagine critically, we need to be able to make ourselves strangers among strangers without having to ask permission to be, and without being condemned to not being." (p.6).

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CONCLUSIONS

According to the EXPECT_Art DoA, the overall objective of WP2 is to create a robust interlinking foundation in the conceptual, data and policy frameworks through a cross-disciplinary approach to ensure conceptual equivalence in relation to arts education and cultural literacy. This also aims to provide an overview of data and policy across the studied contexts that will enhance the academic, educational and methodological rigour of all related WPs in the project. The cross-national analysis has uncovered gaps in data availability and potential barriers to knowledge mobilisation across national contexts.

The findings in WP2 provide twin outputs as key research deliverables (D 2.1 and D 2.2) and as a solid theoretical base for the fieldwork packages (WP3–WP4). The content of this literature review report will be discussed during WP3 (Researcher ArtEx) of the EXPECT_Art project, which aims to ensure that all the researchers of the consortium promote CCL as a basis for (meta)reflexive methodology. This is also a prerequisite for undertaking the EXPECT_Art project's fieldwork component (WP4: Community-based ArtEx). Thus, sharing a theoretical and methodological robust framework on CCL among all partners is crucial for planning and conducting the fieldwork with schools and local communities. To this end, this report offers an extensive overview of data and policy across Global and European contexts that will serve to enhance the academic, educational and methodological rigour of all related WPs in the project.

The genealogical approach to CCL in section 1 provides the EXPECT_Art partners valuable insights into the foundations and precedents of this notion. Moreover, it is suggested that CCL can be perceived as a patchwork of possibilities and tensions linked to an inclusive and relational vision of cultural expressions in a society characterized by diverse social classes, ethnicities, religions, genders, dis/abilities, ages and marginalities. Therefore, it will work as an invitation to consider that EXPECT_Art will take place in an epistemological and political matrix that goes beyond the dualisms between majority-minority and marginalized-hegemonic, fully entering the power relations that organize society and cross-cultural practices.

The objectives of WP3, which include critically studying, discussing and refining researchers' understandings of cultural literacy and their positionalities, as well as designing a framework of core concepts for exploring cultural literacy during fieldwork, are particularly connected to the six segments outlined in Section 2. The literature review on arts-based and community-based research in segment 2.5 is especially relevant to WP3's tasks 3.3 and 3.4. These tasks aim to test, discuss and reflect on conceptual, methodological and meta-methodological issues related to community-based explorations of cultural literacy and arts education in schools and local communities, both at the national level (task 3.3) and within the consortium (task 3.4). Additionally, this needs to be carried out before, during and after conducting the field research. This report will thus work as a route map of this

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journey, helping partners and participants to discuss understandings of cultural literacy from a critical perspective and define reflexive questions.

In sum, this report establishes the theoretical and methodological starting point of the EXPECT_Art fieldwork. It also contributes to examining and discussing the complex interplay between the concept of CCL and various contexts across Europe, with the expectation that this relationship will further evolve in the next phases of the EXPECT_Art project.

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