

The Role of Translation in Post Colonial Discourse

Professor Ryan J. Kernan
Murray Hall 024

Course Objectives:

To help you read texts at a graduate student level. “Read,” in this sense, means a deep engagement with the text where you not only recognize what is explicit on the page, but also formulate your own understandings of how the work conveys meanings. You’ll better learn to think of each work both in terms of its parts and as a whole. This requires a lot of careful re-reading and brainstorming on your part.

To write papers quickly and efficiently at a graduate student level. Writing essays, especially in an exam setting, demands a mastery of standard written English, an understanding of the accepted form for a composition, and the ability to present, within that form, a well-reasoned argument based on one’s reading of the text. A great handbook to buy is the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.

Close Reading :

This is the “meat and bones” of what we’ll be focusing on all quarter. A close reading pays detailed attention to the particular elements of a text’s language and relates those elements of language to the larger issue of how the text conveys meanings to the reader. The elements we will look at include things like word choice, sentence construction, imagery, narratology, prosody, and other figures of language. Examining these elements helps us to arrive at a deeper understanding of a text, and helps us to explore how the author uses language to convey nuanced understandings of the text’s crucial issues (social, political, philosophical, familial, etc.).

Discussion :

Your discussion section is a place for exploration, a space where—if we come prepared— we can all benefit from each other’s insights and backgrounds. You should never be afraid to ask a question during a lecture or discussion. Exploring texts can be difficult, and fascinating exchanges about literature depend on a variety of opinions. Discussion is meant to clear up any confusion you might have about our texts or assignments, and should also (ideally) promote insightful and inflammatory debate! Most of the time, I’ll be able to stay after class to answer questions that we don’t get to during lecture, and you should also (in all of your classes for the rest of your academic life) take advantage of office hours! Office hours allow you to get one on one help with any difficulties you encounter. The most important thing—during lecture, during discussion, and during office hours—is to create an atmosphere of mutual respect between you and your classmates so that everybody has an equal chance to participate and learn. *And lastly, don’t interrupt or talk over your peers; and shouting down someone else’s argument doesn’t make yours more convincing.*

Class Schedule (*Allows for two weeks of studying and testing*).

Week 1:

Langston Hughes, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain”

George Schuyler, “The Negro Art Hokum”

W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Criteria for Negro Art”

And “Preface” to *The Souls of Black Folk*

Alain Locke, “Introduction” *The New Negro*

Lawrence Venuti, Introduction to Translation Studies Reader

Jorge Luis Borges “The Translators of a Thousand and One Nights”

Week 2:

Langston Hughes *The Weary Blues*

Langston Hughes *Fine Clothes to the Jew* Zora Neale Hurston “The Characteristics of Negro Expression”

Walter Benjamin “The Task of the Translator”

Week 3:

Claude McKay “Harlem Shadows”

Jean Toomer *Cane*

Roman Jakobson “On the Linguistic Aspects of Translation”

Week 4:

Jacques Roumain *Masters of the Dew*

George Steiner *After Babel*

Week 5:

Claude McKay: *Banjo*

Kate Baldwin: *Beyond the Color Line* and *The Iron Curtain*

George Steiner “The Hermeneutic Motion”

Week 6:

Nicolás Guillen- *Cuba Libre*

Langston Hughes, “My Adventures as a Social Poet”

Selections from Suzanne Jill Levine’s *The Subversive Scribe*

Week 7:

Jean Paul Sartre, “Black Orpheus”

Andre Breton, “The Surrealist Manifesto”

Sigmund Freud, Selections from *Civilization and Its Discontents*

Abiola Irele “Negritude Literature and Ideology”

Aimé Césaire *Discourse on Colonialism*

Selections from Lawrence Venuti’s *The Translator’s Invisibility*

Week 8:

Aimé Césaire *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*

Week 9:

The Negritude Poets: An Anthology of Translations from the French
Selections from Léopold Sédar Senghor's *Négritude and Humanism* parts I and II
Franz Fanon *The Wretched of the Earth* Black Skin, White Masks
Gayatri Spivak "The Politics of Translation"

Week 10:

Stephen Henderson "Introduction" *Understanding the New Black Poetry*
Addison Gayle "Cultural Strangulation"
Larry Neal "And Shine Swam On..." and "Some Reflections on the Black Aesthetic"
Kwame Appiah "Thick Translation"

Week 11:

Amiri Baraka *Dutchman* and *Slave Ship*
Larry Neale and Amiri Baraka *Black Fire: An Anthology of African American Writing*
W.F. Feuser *Afro-American Literature and Negritude* (1976)
Nagueyalti Warren *Pan-African Cultural Movements: From Baraka to Karenga* (1990)
Langston Hughes *Panther and Lash; Ask Yo' Mama*
"Selections for Susan Basnett's *Post-Colonial Translation*
Harlem: The Twenties and Its Negritude"
"Black Writers in a Troubled World"
Selections from "An African Treasury" and "Poems from Black Africa"

Week 12:

Ishmael Reed *Mumbo Jumbo*
Selections for Susan Basnett's *Post-Colonial Translation*