

LITE2X09: Frontiers of Writing

(2008/9, Autumn Semester)

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Module Description:

This module explores the borderline territory between creative writing and translation. It aims at broadening the understanding that all writing is a mode of translation, a rewriting or reworking of previous material. By looking at the crossovers between critical theory and theories of translation and creativity, students are encouraged to reflect on their own reading and writing practices as well as those of others. The seminars will consist of both critical discussions and practical workshops. Knowledge of a foreign language is desirable but not essential as the works discussed will be provided in translation or gloss.

The module will include scheduled class visits to the Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, where we will explore the intersection of the textual and the visual in a hands-on workshop, and the UEA Library's Special Collections room, where we will be introduced to some rare books and the unusual directions writing can take.

Timetable Slot:

C (C1-2) – Tuesdays 12:00-14:00

Textbook:

Kuhiwczak, Piotr and Karin Littau, ed. *A Companion to Translation Studies*.

Clevedon; Buffalo: Multilingual Matters, 2007. [Available in Waterstones on campus.]

The essays in Kuhiwczak and Littau provide a useful overview of how translation intersects with history, philosophy, gender, culture, and so on. It will be supplemented by numerous examples of writing and rewriting, as well as other texts that will aid in our discoveries of literary creativity and related issues.

Method of Assessment:

100% Coursework, as described below. Brief exercises and class presentations will be part of the Seminars from Week 2 onwards.

Coursework:

Two essays count for 40% and 60% of the total mark for the unit. These are due in Week 6 and Week 12, respectively. Topics are to be discussed in advance with the instructor.

First Assessment (40%):

An essay of approximately 2,000 words on one of the following topics:

- comparison of a source text/work and its published target text
- comparison of two or more published translations of the same source text
- discussion of a theoretical concept or issue arising from class readings and discussions

Second Assessment (60%):

An original translation/rewriting of a given text or excerpt, plus commentary, chosen by the student and offered as an experimental response to a specific aspect of reading/writing the source text. Please note that for many in the class, this will be an intralingual exercise (i.e. from and into English), so no knowledge of another language is assumed. Length is to be approximately 3,000 words in total, of which no more than 1,500 words will be the 'translation' itself. The source text is to be attached as an appendix.

SCHEDULE (subject to amendment)

Week 1

Introduction: rationale, method and purpose of unit; basic terms and concepts; multiple translations of a Japanese *haiku*

Week 2

Defining translation (especially issues of equivalence) and rewriting, and how they are bound up with culture

Reading: K+L 13-23

Week 3

The history of translation and translation in history

Reading: K+L 63-76; Borges ('1001 Nights')

Week 4

Literary Production and Re-production

Reading: K+L 77-91; Eco (*Mouse or Rat? Translation as Negotiation*) 123-45

Week 5

The figure of the translator and the theme of translation in works of fiction

Reading: Brodzki (*Can These Bones Live? Translation, Survival, and Cultural Memory*) 16-65; excerpt from Wilson (*Gaudí Afternoon*)

Week 6

***Class visit to Special Collections, UEA Library**

First Assessment: due by 3 PM on the Thursday of Week 6

Week 7

***Reading Week (class does not meet)**

Week 8

Politics and poetics: who gets translated, obscurity and discovery, translator as traitor, taboo in translation

Reading: K+L 134-147; Robinson (Preface)

Week 9

Gender: translating the woman's voice, reading as a man (as a woman), gendered translation

Reading: K+L 92-105; Chamberlain ('Metaphorics of Translation')

Week 10

Adaptation and imitation: literary genres; intersemiotic translation; film and/or visual-arts adaptations of a written text

Reading: K+L 120-33; Henitiuk ('Easyfree Translation')

Week 11

***Class visit to the UEA Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, with hands-on studio workshop**

Week 12

Presentation and discussion of projects being written up for the second assessment

Second Assessment: due by 3 PM on the Thursday of Week 12

Some useful references:

- Baker, Mona, ed. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. London and New York: Routledge, 2001 (1998).
- Bermann, Sandra and Michael Wood, ed. *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Damrosch, David. *What Is World Literature?* Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Dingwaney, Anuradha and Carol Maier, ed. *Between Languages and Cultures: Translation and Cross-Cultural Texts*. Pittsburgh and London: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995.
- Gentzler, Edwin. *Contemporary Translation Theories*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001.
- Henitiuk, Valerie. "'Easyfree translation?'" How the Modern West Knows Sei Shônagon's *Pillow Book*." *Translation Studies* 1.1 (2008) 2-17.
- . 'Going to Bed with Waley: How Murasaki Shikibu Does and Does Not Become World Literature'. *Comparative Literature Studies* 45.1 (2008) 40-61.

- . 'Translating Woman: Reading the Female through the Male'. *META* 44.3 (September 1999) 469-84.
- Hoffman, Eva. *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language*. London: Vintage, 1998.
- Kristal, Efrain. *Invisible Work: Borges and Translation*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002.
- Lefevere, André. *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Levine, Suzanne Jill. *The Subversive Scribe: Translating Latin American Fiction*. Saint Paul: Greywolf Press, 1991.
- Robinson, Douglas. *Translation & Taboo*. Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996.
- Simon, Sherry. *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 'The Politics of Translation'. Venuti's *Reader* 369-88.
- Tymoczko, Maria. *Translation in a Postcolonial Context: Early Irish Literature in English Translation*. Manchester: St. Jerome, 1999.
- Tymoczko, Maria and Edwin Gentzler, ed. *Translation and Power*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002.
- Venuti, Lawrence. *The Scandals of Translation: Toward an Ethics of Difference*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Venuti, Lawrence, ed. *The Translation Studies Reader*. Second Edition. New York and London: Routledge, 2004.

Journals of particular relevance:

Babel
Comparative Literature Studies
META
Modern Poetry in Translation
Target
Translation and Literature
Translation Review
Translation Studies
The Translator
TTR
World Literature Today