

English 6/75432-001—Fall 2002
Graduate Seminar:
Contemporary Ethnic Novelists: Multiculturalism and Multilingualism
Professor Martha J. Cutter
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Office Hours: Tues., Thurs 12:00-1:30 & By Appointment

This course will focus on Ethnic Literature--or more specifically, literature written by individuals from African American, Chinese American, Mexican American, and Native American backgrounds. Particular attention will be paid to how these texts are not only multicultural (i.e., reflecting the multiple ethnic and racial cultures these individuals draw upon) but also multilingual (how these texts reflect and shape the complex linguistic heritage of the United States). Debates over "Ebonics" and "English Only" policies illustrate how complicated issues of multilingualism are. We live in a multilingual country and many of us came from multilingual backgrounds at some point. Yet often we fail to acknowledge the linguistic diversity that is contained within the language we speak, the language we call "English." These writers make us aware of our multicultural and multilinguistic heritage--of how English is a language composed of other languages and cultures, a language that is not and has never been "pure."

Particular attention will also be paid to how linguistically diverse texts (texts that in explicit or implicit ways draw upon more than one language or dialect) connect to various formulations of identity. We will investigate linguistic practices such as code-switching, translation, "Ebonics," use of vernaculars, and radical bilingualism. Can such innovative linguistic practices be correlated with innovative formulations of Ethnic Identity? In other words, we will test the assumption that texts that point to the multiple languages or dialects contained within English move towards new formulations of Ethnic identity. When a person or text blends languages (rather than attempting to keep them separate) does this reflect an attempt to create a blended (or perhaps hybridized) identity? If so, multilingual texts give us a way of moving beyond a binary conception of the relationship between "the Ethnic" and "the American" to understand how these categories can enrich, interanimate, and finally recreate each other.

I. Readings

A) Books (Available for Purchase at the Bookstore)

Maxine Hong Kingston, <i>The Woman Warrior</i>	Ruth Ozeki, <i>My Year of Meats</i>
N. Scott Momaday, <i>House Made of Dawn</i>	Leslie Marmon Silko, <i>Ceremony</i>
Sherman Alexie, <i>Indian Killer</i>	Toni Morrison, <i>Beloved</i>
A.J. Verdelle, <i>The Good Negress</i>	Richard Rodriguez, <i>Days of Obligation</i>
Cherríe Moraga, <i>Loving in the War Years</i>	Sandra Cisneros, <i>The House on Mango Street</i>

B) Other Readings (Available on Electronic Reserves from the Library)

- Louie, David Wong. "Pangs of Love." *Pangs of Love*. New York: Plume, 1992. 75-98. (Handout)
- Cutter, Martha J. "Translation as Transmigration." *A World of Words: Translation and Multilingual Identities in Ethnic American Literature*.
- Ang, Ien. "On Not Speaking Chinese: Postmodern Ethnicity and the Politics

of Diaspora." *Feminism and Cultural Studies*. Ed. Morag Shiach. New York: Oxford, 1999. 540-564.

- Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator." 1923. *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*. Ed. by Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. 71-82.
- Mehrez, Samia. "The Subversive Poetics of Radical Bilingualism: Postcolonial Francophone North American Literature." *The Bounds of Race: Perspective on Hegemony and Resistance*. Ed. Dominick LaCapra. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991. 255-277.
- Krupat, Arnold. "Postcoloniality and Native American Literature." *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 7 (1994): 163-180.
- Smitherman, Geneva. "How I Got Oveh: African World View and Afro-American Oral Tradition." *Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977. 73-100.
- Sale, Maggie. "Call and Response as Critical Method: African-American Oral Traditions and Beloved." *African American Review* 26 (1992): 41-50.
- Smitherman, Geneva. "Introduction to Ebonics." *Talkin That Talk: Language, Culture and Education in African America*. London: Routledge, 2000. 19-40.
- Rickford, John. "Holding on to a Language of Our Own: An Interview with Linguist John Rickford." *The Real Ebonics Debate: Power, Language, and the Education of African-American Children*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1998. 59-65.
- DeBose, Charles E. "Codeswitching: Black English and Standard English in the African-American Linguistic Repertoire." *Codeswitching*. Ed. Carol Eastman. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1992. 157-167.
- Swigart, Leigh. "Two Codes or One? The Insiders' View and the Description of Codeswitching in Dakar." *Codeswitching*. Ed. Carol Eastman. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1992. 83-101.
- Heller, Monica. "Code-Switching and the Politics of Language." *One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Code-Switching*. Ed. Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. 158-173.
- Poplack, Shana. "Contrastive Patterns of Codeswitching in Two Communities." *Codeswitching: Anthropological and Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. Ed. Monica Heller. New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1988.
- Poplack, Shana. "Sometimes I'll start a sentence in Spanish y termino en español: toward a typology of code-switching." 1980. *The Bilingualism Reader*. Ed. by Li Wei. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Bruce-Novoa, Juan. "Dialogical Strategies, Monological Goals: Chicano Literature." *An Other Tongue: Nation and Ethnicity in the Linguistic Borderlands*. Ed. Alfred Arteaga. Durham: Duke University Press, 1994. 225-245.
- Dasenbrock, Reed Way. "Intelligibility and Meaningfulness in Multicultural Literature in English." *PMLA* 102 (1987): 10-19.
- Sollors, Werner. "After the Culture Wars; or, From 'English Only' to 'English Plus.'" *Multilingual America*, ed. Werner Sollors. New York: NYU Press, 1998.

- Anzaldúa, Gloria. "How to Tame a Wild Tongue." *Borderlands/La Frontera*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1999.

II. Course Schedule

- Unit One: Translating Across the Borders: Chinese American Identities
- Aug. 27: Introduction to the Course; Course Policies and Requirements
- Aug. 29: Translation in Ethnic American Literature:
Reading: Martha J. Cutter, "Translation as Transmigration" (handout);
Reading: David Wong Louie, "Pangs of Love" (handout).
- Sept. 3: The Perils of Translation: The Woman Warrior
Reading: Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior* (1-109).
- Sept 5: Questions of cultural and linguistic (I)dentiy in *The Woman Warrior*
Reading: Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior* (111-209)
- Sept 10: Writerly and Readerly Translations in *The Woman Warrior*
Ien Ang, "On Not Speaking Chinese: Postmodern Ethnicity and the Politics of Diasporic
Feminism and Cultural Studies. Ed. Morag Shiach. New York: Oxford, 1999. 540-56
(handout).
- Sept. 12: Cross Cultural Feminism and the Question of Voice: *My Year of Meats*
Reading: Ozeki, *My Year of Meats* (pp. 1-121)
- Sept. 17: Translation and Feminine Identity in *My Year of Meats*
Reading: Ozeki, *My Year of Meats* (pp. 121-245)
- Sept. 19: Politics, Art, and Performance in *My Year of Meats*
Reading: Ozeki, *My Year of Meats* (pp. 245-366)
- Unit Two: Radical Bilingualism and "Pure Language" in Native American Literature
- Sept. 24: Pure Language and Linguistic Authenticity in *House Made of Dawn*
N. Scott Momaday, *House Made of Dawn* (1-86 or all);
Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator." 1923. *Theories of Translation: An Anthology
Essays from Dryden to Derrida*. Ed. by Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet. Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, 1992. 71-82 (handout).
- Sept. 26: Multilingualism in *House Made of Dawn*
Reading: N. Scott Momaday, *House Made of Dawn* (89-136 or all).
- Oct. 1: The Ending of *House Made of Dawn* and the Beginning of *Ceremony*: Intertextual Re
Reading: N. Scott Momaday, *House Made of Dawn* (137-212);
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (1-63).
- Oct 3: Tayo's Search for the Language and the *Ceremony*
Reading: Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (64-153 or all).
- Oct 8: Betonie and Tayo as Translators in *Ceremony*
Reading: Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (153-262);
Arnold Krupat, "Postcoloniality and Native American Literature," *The Yale Journal of
Criticism* 7 (1994): 163-180 (handout).
Samia Mehrez, "The Subversive Poetics of Radical Bilingualism: Postcolonial Francophone
North American Literature." *The Bounds of Race: Perspective on Hegemony and
Resistance*. Ed. Dominick LaCapra. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991. 255-277 (handout).
- Oct 10: Violence and Silence: What happens when the language is Lost?

- Reading: Sherman Alexie, *Indian Killer* (1-165 or all).
 Oct 15: Legal and Literary Violence in *Indian Killer*: The Role of the Law as Language
 Reading: Sherman Alexie, *Indian Killer* (166-318 or all).
 Oct. 17: Finding Voice from Beyond the Grave: Will the Real Indian Killer Please Stand Up?
 Reading: Sherman Alexie, *Indian Killer* (318-420).

Unit Three: Silence, Voice, and Ebonics in African American Literature

- Oct. 22: The Silenced and the Spoken in *Beloved*
 Reading:

- Oct. 24: Oral Traditions in *Beloved*
 Smitherman, Geneva. "'How I Got Ovu': African World View and Afro-American Oral Tradition." *Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977. 73-100 (handout).
 Sale, Maggie, "Call and Response as Critical Method: African-American Oral Tradition in *Beloved*." *African American Review* 26 (1992): 41-50.

- Oct. 29 Re-Resolution? Conclusion to *Beloved*

- Oct. 31: "Learnin' to Speak the King's English": The Language of Mastery in *The Good Negro*
 Reading: A.J. Verdelle, *The Good Negro* (pp. 1-125 or all);
 John Rickford, "Holding on to a Language of Our Own: An Interview with Linguist John Rickford." *The Real Ebonics Debate: Power, Language, and the Education of African American Children*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1998. 59-65 (handout);
 Smitherman, Geneva. "Introduction to Ebonics." *Talkin That Talk: Language, Culture and Education in African America*. London: Routledge, 2000. 19-40 (handout).

- Nov 5: Code-Switching and Hybrid Languages in *The Good Negro*
 Reading: A.J. Verdelle, *The Good Negro* (pp. 126-225 or all);
 Charles E. DeBose. "Codeswitching: Black English and Standard English in the African-American Linguistic Repertoire";
 Leigh Swigart, "Two Codes or One? The Insiders' View and the Description of Codeswitching in Dakar"; both in: *Codeswitching*. Ed. Carol Eastman. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters (pp. 83-101 and 157-167) (handouts).

- Nov. 7: New Forms of Identity in *The Good Negro*
 Reading: A.J. Verdelle, *The Good Negro* (pp. 226-299).

Unit Four: The Reader as Translator in Mexican American Literature

- Nov. 12: Refusing to Translate: The Politics of Language in *Hunger for Memory*
 Reading: Richard Rodriguez, *Hunger for Memory* (pp. 1-40, 113-139);
 Wallace E. Lambert, "The Effects of Bilingualism on the Individual: Cognitive and Sociocultural Consequences." *Bilingualism: Psychological, Social, and Educational Implications*. New York, Academic Press, 1977. 15-28 (handout).

- Nov. 18: Sherman Alexie Reading—*The Kiva*, KSU (7:30?)

- Nov 14: Bilingualism and Ethnic Identity in *Hunger for Memory*
 Reading: Rodriguez, *Hunger for Memory* (pp.143-195).

- Nov. 19 Hybrid Forms: *Loving in the War Years*
 Reading: Cherríe Moraga, *Loving in the War Years* (pp.i-88).

- Nov. 21 Bicultural and Multicultural Identity in *Loving in the War Years*

- Reading: Cherríe Moraga, *Loving in the War Years* (pp. 88-149).
 Reading: Cherríe Moraga, *Loving in the War Years* (pp. 49-88);
 Monica Heller, "Code-Switching and the Politics of Language." *One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Code-Switching*. Ed. Lesley Milroy and Muysken. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995: 158-173 (handout);
 Shana Poplack, "Contrastive Patterns of Codeswitching in Two Communities." *Codeswitching: Anthropological and Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. Ed. Monica Heller. New York: Mouton de Gruy 1988: 215-242. (handout).
 Nov. 25 Naming and Ethnic Identity in *The House on Mango Street*
 Nov. 28 No Class--Thanksgiving Break
 Dec. 3: Circular Forms, Storytelling, and the Role of the Writer in *The House on Mango Street*
 Reading:
 Dec. 5: Course Conclusion: The Function of Multiculturalism and Multilingualism
 Dasenbrock, Reed Way. "Intelligibility and Meaningfulness in Multicultural Literature in English." *PMLA* 102 (1987): 10-19.

III. Course Policies and Requirements:

- A) Class Participation (10%). This class will be centered on discussion of texts by students, and as necessitates that all students participate on a regular basis. Class participation is a requirement for successful completion of this course.
- B) Short Response Papers (30%).
 Each week students will write a short response paper (1-2 pages, single or double-spaced) commenting on secondary or primary texts. Some weeks I will assign the topic and other week topic will be open. These papers can be somewhat informal and will be graded only with a check plus, or check minus. However, these papers must be typed or word-processed. If appropriate I may xerox some of these papers for class discussion.
 Generally these papers will be due in class every Thursday. (Please note: no papers are due the first and last weeks of the semester, as well as on the Thursday during Thanksgiving week). However, you may skip two weeks during the semester. Choose these weeks carefully, as I will accept any late response papers. I may also switch the assignment to Tuesday once in awhile works out better with our reading schedule.
- C) A Seminar Paper (15-20 pages) (60%). This paper can evolve out of one of your short papers or can be on an entirely new subject. You will be given freedom to choose your own topic, but I expect you will make use of some of the work on language, translation, multilingualism, and multiculturalism that we have studied. I will be collecting drafts of these papers on Nov. 28 and the final version will be due Dec. 13. I will probably set up conferences to discuss first drafts of the seminar paper so it is imperative that you get your first draft in on time. Also, it will be difficult for me to give useful feedback on papers that are still in the very earliest stages of development (i.e., no argument, poorly organized, no textual support, etc.). Therefore, please do make every attempt to hand in a draft that reflects your "best effort" and that is actually ready for commentary and feedback. And feel free to show me drafts of your paper or discuss the topic with me prior to the Nov. 28 date. (I have e-mail at home and will be happy to comment on paper topics that you email me. However, please do not send me drafts as attachments.)

D) Attendance is mandatory in this class. Frequent absences will harm your final grade.