

**Project #1**  
**Prof. Rego**

## **Writing 20: Translating the Culture Shock**

### **Intercultural Encounters in Works of Fiction**

Your assignment for Project #1 is to discuss a fictional depiction of an intercultural encounter or conflict (your primary source) in light of the materials we have covered so far in the course (your secondary sources). You may choose the work of fiction you would like to discuss -- it can be a novel, a short story or a film. The primary source does not need to be in English, but if you translate a quote from the original, make sure to indicate that it is your own translation. You will have a chance to discuss possible choices with the class before deciding whether they would yield interesting and intelligent uses of your secondary sources. I have posted a few short stories under "Course Documents" with title word "FICTION," for those of you who prefer not to choose your own. We will also read the short story *Odd Tippling*, by Kurt Kusenberg, and think together about ways to make sense of it using our secondary sources.

As you frame the discussion on your chosen piece, I would especially like you to use Lewis and Jungman's "On Being Foreign," which proposes theories of "cultural shock" and describes phases of cultural adaptation. This does not mean that I expect you to show how your story or characters "fit" the theory, necessarily. Rather, it means that you should use the concepts and vocabulary offered in the reading to talk about the situation depicted in your story. You may find that the story focuses on one particular phase or aspect of cultural adaptation, or that its protagonist "skips" a phase or two. You may have to extend the culture shock theory by proposing a variation of its phases, or even propose a new phase. Or you may highlight an aspect of cross-cultural encounters not covered by the theory. Remember that your primary source is a work of fiction, so it might be relevant to comment on that, too. Sometimes a fictional depiction can seem very realistic; other times it may exaggerate, distort or create situations with the objective of emphasizing a feeling or situation, or conveying a message.

You may also use any of the other sources we have read for our course so far (but, again, don't feel like you need to use them all!). If your story features a language issue, a non-verbal communication conflict, a world traveler, or a case of extreme ethnocentrism, you'll know which texts to draw from...

You should not assume that your reader is familiar with your work of fiction, even if it is widely known. This means that you will have to strategically include plot summaries and/or character descriptions when illustrating a point or presenting evidence for your claim(s).

Please post a COMPLETE DRAFT (4-6 pages) to Blackboard by Thursday, February 26, and bring 4 hard copies with you to class. We will be doing small-group workshops, so these copies will be crucial. Please do not wait until the last minute to print them, as printers always jam when they're most needed!!

Have fun! I really look forward to reading your work!