Cultural hybridity in Asian-American Literature and Soviet American Literature

Niveau d'étude
Bac +4

Composante
Lettres et langues

Présentation

Description

This seminar will examine and compare the various forms of hybridity which a number of contemporary Asian-American and Soviet-American writers represent and explore in their novels and short stories. This class will therefore focus on literary representations, cultural hybridity (as opposed to biological hybridity). Cultural hybridity involves the mélange or blending of different cultures, in the wide sense of the term “culture” including language, history, memory, values, religion, ethical beliefs and practices, food habits or practices, etc.

Hybridity must be understood as *métissage*, a cross-cultural interweaving which connects and transforms the individuals and the forms of life involved in this interweaving. Interweaving is an essential metaphor to preclude the perception of hybridity as a house divided against itself, as a compound in which differences are absolute, immutable, and irreconcilable. The metaphor illustrates the idea that hybridity is a bond, a relationship which can be productive and transformative and cannot be reduced to mere heterogeneity or multiplicity.

Objectifs

This approach enables the observer and the reader to see hybridity not only as a predicament or problem but also as an asset, an instrument of emancipation and subversion.

The seminar will concentrate on two novels, Gish Jen’s *Mona in the Promised Land* and Gary Shteyngart’s *The Russian Debutante’s Handbook*, together with short stories by Chang-Rae Lee, David Bezmozgis, and Lara Vapnyar.

The students will be expected to have read the two novels, *Mona in the Promised Land* and *The Russian Debutante's Handbook, b*efore the beginning of the seminar.

Heures d'enseignement

Cultural hybridity in Asian-American Literature and Soviet American Literature - CM	CM	12h
Cultural hybridity in Asian-American Literature and Soviet American Literature - TD	TD	6h