Studies in Commonwealth and Postcolonial Literature.

Post-multiculturalism; Immanent Cosmopolitanism.
Sneja Gunew

Whether through global warming or economic meltdown, the world is currently experiencing its acute inter-connection in many aspects but what are the conceptual terms that can help us understand this everyday reality? Recent debates in cosmopolitanism offer a political theory that attempts to deal with economic risk management in “a world of global interdependence” (Ulrich Beck). As a political theory cosmopolitanism grounds itself in universal individual rights but there may be tension with the forms in which neo-cosmopolitanism has been taken up in cultural theory where the emphasis is on a cultural legibility that links individuals with group identities. Such a conceptualization of groups and their relations to nation-states has to some degree been framed by (flawed) notions of multiculturalism. In the face of emphatic statements by world leaders that “multiculturalism has failed” the seminar will examine the ways in which multiculturalism has been transformed within frameworks of globalization. A post-multicultural analysis takes the ‘post’ in Lyotard’s sense of a going back to look at what elements were left out in various incarnations of multiculturalism (a future anterior). The seminar will pose the question of whether a version of “vernacular cosmopolitanism” can help us reconceptualize outmoded multicultural cultural formations in a dynamic that connects nation-states in new ways to globalization via diasporic ties. For example, the term ‘vernacular cosmopolitanism’ acknowledges the global interdependence identified by the new debates in cosmopolitanism at the same time that it recognizes that these are always rooted in and permeated by local concerns attached to minority groups competing within the nation—a complex politics that includes indigeneity. The seminar will look at a range of theoretical writings in conjunction with fictional texts and films.

Text

Course Package:


Highly Recommended:


http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/01/magazine/01cosmopolitan.html?_r=1&pagewante d=print


