

Topics for Essay # 1

1. Many people, including protesters at the G-20 conference in Pittsburgh today, claim that globalization = Westernization and the crushing of the poor—culturally and economically. Choose one of the following cultural expressions and show how its transnational impact proves or disproves this claim: music, language, architecture, or religion. Set out your argument using Sen and any of our readings; make a clear case based on the cultural expression you choose.
2. Chanda's essential thesis is that globalization is “a process that worked silently for millennia without having been given a name” (xi). Choose some of the phenomena we have examined in our readings, lectures and discussions and discuss how they relate to Chanda's thesis. Limit your discussion to three phenomena at the most—and be sure to include music.
3. Think about the transnational flow of music described by Garofalo in his article and the transnational exchange of a material good—cotton or coffee—described by Chanda. Does the flow of culture differ from the flow of material goods? How? Choose one—or at most two—of the many theories examined by Garofalo to explain the transnational flow of music, and argue that it can or cannot be applied to cotton or coffee.
4. Chanda notes that “coffee, cotton and the microchip” have “the world inside.” Why does he make that claim? Argue that the accordion, or a single musical style, also has “the world inside.” Compare and contrast the “world inside” of an instrument or musical style to one of the “world inside” products examined in Chanda. Come up with a thesis that accepts or rejects the notion of the “world inside” as applied to the cultural phenomenon.

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