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Introduction to *ARIEL*'s Special Issue on Global Pedagogy

When I was invited to be the guest editor of a special issue on global pedagogy I had to stop and think about it. "Global" and "pedagogy" are each such complex signifiers, pointing in so many directions at once, that my first reaction was dizziness. In what way could I, an African literature scholar, possibly be qualified to edit a special issue on such a wide-ranging subject? When I thought about it, however, I realized that my own path has been shaped by forces that, while experienced at the time as local, specific, and personal, can in retrospect be described as "global." I was born to British colonial parents and raised in Tanzania. My early exposure to literature was to children's classics—*The Once and Future King*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Jane Eyre*, Enid Blyton, and *Biggles*—which I read in a setting that had little relationship to Middle Earth or Yorkshire or upper-class English manners. Later, at my English school and university, I was introduced to the English canon; later still, studying for a Ph.D. in Nigeria, I was for the first time confronted with the realization that what I had been taught up to that point did not necessarily apply in my new context and I would have to shed assumptions and expectations about what constituted literary "excellence" and learn to read in a different way. Back in London, I found myself teaching both English and African literature to Japanese students before I took up a post at the University of the West Indies (UWI) and confronted yet another order of difference.

On one level it was no accident that I found myself at Cave Hill: the origin of UWI is identical to that of other colonial educational institutions, such as the African universities of Ibadan, Makerere, and Legon, in having started as a college of the University of London. Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, where I did my Ph.D., began as a satellite of Ibadan. The first UWI campus at Mona, Jamaica, was, like Ibadan, founded in 1948 to create an educated cadre to serve the colonial

administration. The humanities were therefore conceptualized in both cases as a way of introducing colonial subjects to the superior civilization of their colonial masters. A radical overhaul of this concept (such as I encountered at Ife) was intrinsic to the project of Independence and decolonization, and an important element of this at UWI was the recognition of the centrality of Africa to West Indian history and the construction of a West Indian identity. The introduction of African literature to the literary studies curriculum followed the same logic. But whereas in Nigeria I had been an aspirant and acolyte, learning from both peers and mentors how to read anew, in Barbados I found myself an anomaly in all sorts of ways: a white African in a race-conscious Afrocentric environment; a British expatriate in an ex-colony still deeply affected by colonial habits of deference and submission; an Oxford-educated English lecturer at an institution highly conscious of its decolonizing role in education; an Africanist scholar in a place where stereotypes of African primitivism and savagery alternate with myths of royalty and ancient ties of blood. I became, entirely unexpectedly, a cultural mediator, a deconstructor of negative preconceptions, and a messenger of modernity. If African literature, as read in Africa, is an exploration of cultural and material realities, in my context in Barbados it is a way of unsettling a reader's comfortable sense of being part of the western world and familiarizing an "Africa" distanced, exoticized, and conscripted for a romantic, ahistorical, and timeless relationship with the past.

When the abstracts started arriving and I read the curricula vitae of the contributors to this issue, I realized how routinely literary scholars in today's classrooms arrive there by complex routes and are the products of the global pedagogy they practice. Of the ten writers whose work comprises this special (double) issue, five are United States-based. One of these contributors is Indian, one has worked in Kazakhstan, one currently works in Beirut, and one has worked in Vietnam. Of the five other contributors, one is a Canadian working in Turkey; one a Singaporean teaching in Singapore; one an Italian teaching in Venice; one a Kenyan teaching Caribbean literature in Kenya; and one an Indian lecturing in India. Despite the "global" spread, the gaps are obvious: no Africans working in the US; no one from the Caribbean or Latin

America; no Europeans from a country other than Italy; no one based in China, Japan, or Australia. Yet the commonalities revealed by the essays are illuminating: global pedagogy, for one thing, is a pedagogy of the privileged. Students of literature are a privileged class, and one of their privileges is that of examining and questioning the global status quo from perspectives informed by their specific locations. The contributors to this issue expose how that privilege, and global pedagogy itself, are inflected by geographic, economic, and linguistic relations of power, prestige, and perceived position in a hierarchy of difference.

The predominance of the US on the "global" scene is not merely a matter of elements such as size, resources, or overseas campuses. An invisible signifier subsumed within "global pedagogy" is language—the spread of English as a lingua franca and the resulting prominence of literature in English in classrooms worldwide. Even within the limited parameters of this issue, it is evident that language assumes a higher profile the further the pedagogical scene is from the Anglophone world. Roberta Cimarosti, writing from Venice, interrogates the pedagogical piety that marginalizes literature within language teaching, which is underpinned, she suggests, by an outmoded class-based colonial model of spoken Standard English that overlooks the challenge posed by postcolonial Englishes and their literatures. Through a series of case studies focused on African and Caribbean writers such as J. M. Coetzee, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o', Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and Caryl Phillips, she reinterprets the meaning of "literacy" as a process of acquiring the linguistic tools to engage in what another contributor, Mary Jo Kietzman, calls "a broader global imaginary" (93). Donald Randall examines the problem of a dual class system in Turkish academia that privileges foreign-trained lecturers and argues that a lack of proper linguistic training and proficiency in English prevents Turkish-trained academics from succeeding either as teachers or in terms of publications. Like Cimarosti, he draws attention to the class dimension of language and its relationship to the valorization of English literature and, like other contributors, invokes Thomas Babington Macaulay's 1835 "Minute on Education" as a cornerstone of English studies as a tool of imperialism. Similarly, several contributors cite Gayatri Spivak as a key theoretician of global

pedagogy; Randall situates her belief in the transformative power of literature, which operates through the identification of the actual reader with the implied reader of the text, in an "uncannily close affiliation with Macaulay's model" (58). He confesses that he is seduced by Spivak's notion of literature as a site of contestation, brought about by the "alienating assent" of the reader to her implied subject position (Spivak qtd. in Randall 59). Yet he writes that he does not see this idea in practice in Turkey where, due to the linguistic handicap of students and lecturers for whom English is an additional language, literature is taught as a "domain of knowledge rather than a field of study" (60). Randall's essay thus provides a tangential gloss on Cimarosti's proposition: if Cimarosti maintains that language is most effectively taught through literature as a means of enquiry and challenging conceptual norms, Randall demonstrates that language is the essential prerequisite for engaging with literature in a spirit of discovery rather than acquisition. At stake in both cases is empowerment for those disempowered in a global context of unequal power relations.

When it comes to terminology, global pedagogy is not the only signifier under interrogation in this issue. James Hodapp contemplates what is taught under the rubric of global pedagogy and argues for "world literature" over competing terms such as "postcolonial" or "comparative literature" which, he suggests, are "ill suited for our new globalized world" (70). In following David Damrosch's definition of world literature as "all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language" (qtd. in Hodapp 71) and "a mode of circulation and of reading" (qtd. in Hodapp 71), Hodapp raises another key question for a global pedagogy: that of cultural and linguistic translation. Hodapp departs from Spivak and Emily Apter, who argue for the necessity of reading texts in their original languages, and instead views translation as a pragmatic answer to the problem of "worldliness" as well as intrinsic to the experience of all literature in any language once read outside its country of origin. In the first part of his essay, he situates world literature within US academia, noting the relative scarcity of access to world literature for some students as a result of the disparity of status and funding between institutions and

the competition for resources between disciplines even at well-endowed universities. As a result, he argues, world literature pedagogy has been figured almost exclusively in American terms, with little attention paid to what happens when the ground is shifted elsewhere. He then literally shifts elsewhere, relocating to the American University of Beirut, where he examines the changes in his own and his institution's pedagogical practice as a result of the need to engage a Lebanese student body. He argues that, in a context in which multiple languages are spoken (Arabic, French, and English) and "English is a part of Lebanon" (Hodapp 82), Spivak's and Apter's arguments about language origin become irrelevant. The upshot is a self-reflexive, critical, pragmatic approach to teaching literature in English that militates against Eurocentrism and an unquestioning acceptance of western epistemological frameworks.

Hodapp's essay highlights another commonality of the special issue contributions: the significance of the local within the global. The local operates as another repressed term that extends the meaning of "global" to something close to "cosmopolitan," as argued by Angelia Poon. Specificity of location within global pedagogy ensures that world literature will be read and understood simultaneously through local cultural codes and the consciousness of difference, in a continuous act of cultural translation. This may appear to be an aberration from the conventional wisdom that globalization, coming about precisely as a result of technological change, has resulted in "'time-space compression' wherein space somewhat loses its ontological integrity locality enters into obsolescence and deterritorialisation steps in as the very prerequisite of velocity" (Neagu 1). If the essays in the special issue are to be taken as evidence, however, location is an essential ingredient of the global such that the very concept of the "global" is constantly under pressure from diverse experiential, material, and geo-political perspectives within what Spivak calls the inevitability of "a transnational capitalist economy" as a shared environment (4).

Other examples of specific locations treated are Singapore (Poon), Hong Kong (Y-Dang Troeung), Kenya (Jairus Omuteche), India (Meena Pillai) and, of course, the US. Kietzman draws on insights and experience gained from a year teaching in Kazakhstan to lead her students

in Flint, Michigan into a new awareness of place. Kietzman is affected on a daily basis by Flint's deprivation in the aftermath of the loss of its industrial base and the consequent suffering of its inhabitants, and she wrestles with how to bring the anthropological perspective she adopted in Kazakhstan to bear on her immediate environment. She decides to use her teaching of William Shakespeare's *King Lear* as a vehicle for challenging her students' perceptions and calls the process "playing with intercultural insights" gleaned from Kazakhstan (Kietzman 89). Her description of her Kazakhstani students' passionate engagement with American texts that deal with experiences quite other than their own is reminiscent of Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003), another account of how literature in English becomes the ground of transcendence of a troubled materiality. One of Kietzman's secondary aims in Flint was to reinvigorate *King Lear* in the way she had seen *Romeo and Juliet* reinvigorated by her Kazakhstani students. To this end, she enabled her Flint students to translate *Lear* into a contemporary text about their own lives. The story of how she brought this about and the pedagogical lessons she learnt from it constitute one of the most inspiring case studies addressed in the special issue. Like Hodapp, Kietzman comes to understand that the most valuable quality she brought to the collaborative learning process was self-reflexivity. Along with many of the other contributors, she views literature as a survival tool for a globalized world. Meanwhile, in another part of the US (Austin, Texas), Charlotte Nunes uses her world literature classroom as a laboratory for exploring what the use of digital archives can add to students' understanding of literature and literary contexts. In a series of carefully detailed case studies, Nunes reports on how digital sources illuminated discussions of colonialism, pan-Africanism, and Onitsha Market Literature and deepened her students' understanding of "English-language literature as a tool of both imperial assimilation and anti-imperial critique" (130). She addresses the privileged situation of the US classroom in this regard as well as the global disparity of access to digital libraries and concludes with helpful, practical suggestions for anyone wishing to follow her example.

Many of the essays in this issue are, at least in part, practical case study-oriented essays that draw on personal experience, which are particularly

valuable in a discussion about global pedagogy given that classrooms are of necessity geographically distant from each other and practice is contingent on local conditions. Pillai embeds examples of course outlines and lists of thesis titles from different universities in her critique of literature teaching in India. Her essay uses Macaulay's "Minute" as a point of departure and she traces the gradual transformation of Indian literary studies from an imperial process designed to inculcate colonial values, through postcolonialism and a critique of caste, gender, and class by way of feminist and subaltern studies, to the present primacy of cultural studies. In the process of doing so, the essay demonstrates the ways in which the bifurcation of language and literature teaching has benefited literary study in India, the usefulness of comparative techniques in studying Indian literature, the importance of local specificity through, for example, students' appreciation of Indian aesthetics, and how Indian writing in English has brought about "new erasures and inscriptions in English literature" (Pillai 160). Interestingly, in light of Kietzman's use of *King Lear*, Pillai observes that Shakespeare, having served as imperial mask and icon, was dropped from the University of Kerala's curriculum in 1995 only to be reinstated ten years later. Pillai reads this reinstatement as evidence that "postcolonial academic praxis in India continues to be imbricated in a postcolonial double bind" (158–159). Yet she also shows, like Kietzman, how Shakespeare (in this case, *Othello*) may be read comparatively, through local codes provided by the ritual art form of the *Theyyam,* with its "radical subaltern aesthetic and polymorphic poetics" (Pillai 156). Pillai is in accord with several contributors in seeing this sort of move as symptomatic of the potential for the field of literary studies to be transformed into "one of interventionist cultural politics" (166).

The other Indian contributor, Rashna Singh, approaches global pedagogy from the angle of an Indian and US-educated migrant teaching in the US. She offers an illuminating perspective on student perceptions of her as one of "a changing cohort of professors female, people of colour, foreign-born, or [as in her case] all three" (Singh 176). An early abstract received from a Canadian-based Nigerian scholar, which regrettably did not make it to the essay stage, would have provided

a fascinating counterpoint to Singh by addressing the conundrum of being "an African teaching Africa" in a North American university and the nature of the scholar's "political" and "ambiguous presence" that requires him to "neutralize his presence in the classroom" to overcome resistance from students. Singh sees herself as part of a group she describes as "outside the lineage" of those perceived as qualified to teach the canon (176). She therefore brings a new dimension to the notion of the local, what she calls her "specific situatedness" as insider/outsider to the American academy, and uses this judiciously and self-reflexively to prompt new readings of canonical texts (177). She is the third contributor to refer to Macaulay's "Minute" and relates it to her own Indian education that, two decades after Independence, did not include a single Indian text (Pillai traces the subsequent changes to this curriculum). Singh uses this example of "epistemic violence" to convey to her US students how it has affected her personally and how it operates within a larger text of engagement with the world. Whereas Hodapp disavows the dialogic model of world literature—pairing western and non-western texts in a relationship in which the former is always the default term—Singh advocates dialogism as a way of creating a conversation between texts, with the aim of "destabilis[ing] our readings in the service of more open interpretations" (204). Like Pillai, Singh identifies the cultural studies matrix as the best future for a global literary studies; it is instructive that she feels the need to make the argument for cultural studies in the US, while for Pillai it is a fait accompli. Do universities in former colonies, with their explicitly decolonizing mission, have the advantage in this regard?

Certainly Caribbean literature has been the bedrock of literary studies at the University of the West Indies for at least two decades, where it is taught alongside the canon in a broadly postcolonial framework that valorizes a local historical and cultural perspective. That both my present department and the one at the then-University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo) in Nigeria, where I completed my Ph.D., followed Ngũgĩ's innovation at the University of Nairobi in the 1970s—renaming the "English Department" the "Department of Literatures in English"—suggests the power of the decolonizing impulse and its

continuing efficacy as an interpretive frame in territories as widely dispersed as Kenya and Barbados. Omuteche's essay addresses literature teaching in Ngũgĩ's former department some forty years later and offers a detailed case study of how familiarity with female Kenyan writers such as Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye and Margaret Ogola enables an appreciation of "black diasporic" (Caribbean) women writers like Dionne Brand and Erna Brodber. Like Singh and Pillai, Omuteche demonstrates the fruitfulness of a comparative approach; he invites students to discern the difference between the post-Independence era literature of Africa and the Caribbean and the "growing concern with gender dynamics" in literature produced after 1980 and the entry of a greater number of women into the literary world (215). To do so, Omuteche's class must examine Africa's relationship to its diaspora through vectors like language (the use of African pidgin and Caribbean creole to interrogate hierarchical norms) and economic and power relations. Invoking Françoise Lionnet's concept of the way specific texts provide evidence of "laws valid for all" (qtd. in Omuteche 230), Omuteche's preferred frame for his African and Caribbean textual examples is ultimately the "transnational and globalised" one of world literature (231). At the same time, his emphasis on place and the relationships between spaces reinforces the centrality of location to what he calls the "dynamic conversation about the world" that literature enables (Omuteche 231). The two final essays, by Troeung and Poon, respectively, take up this theme in connection to locations in Southeast Asia: Hong Kong and Singapore.

Troeung's essay is an exemplar of the ways in which self-reflexivity emerges in the special issue as a key trope of global pedagogy. Each author of necessity addresses his or her own subject position to a greater or lesser extent in relation to both students and texts. It appears that global pedagogues cannot help but be cultural mediators, opening up channels of vision and experience for those they teach, sometimes providing a new perspective on the old, and sometimes, as with Troeung, revealing what has hitherto been occluded and invisible. Troeung is concerned with the story of the Vietnamese Boat People as "an untold chapter of Hong Kong's national history" (240), a story she brings to light by means of a text in English by Vietnamese American writer, Andrew

Lam, who fled the Vietnam war as a refugee. Chinese in appearance but unable to speak the language, Troeung describes herself vis-à-vis her students in Hong Kong as embodying "a somewhat uncanny image" (242). While teaching a course on Asian American literature, she makes use of this unsettling similarity/otherness to turn her students away from "discourses of authenticity and purity" toward a new apprehension of the role of hybridity in constituting identity (242). Hong Kong's unique situation as a former outpost of the British Empire now reunited with mainland China, and its people's awareness of state silence on certain historical traumas, provides the ground for her students' appreciation of the buried history of Hong Kong's treatment of its Vietnamese refugees in the 1980s and 1990s. Troeung's essay offers a fascinating perspective on locatedness. Her question "What happens when Asian American literary texts travel from the United States to Asia?" raises further queries about embodiment, cultural and linguistic difference and mobility, and the politics of global visibility or invisibility (241). In terms of a global pedagogy, Troeung shows how, ironically, "[t]he neoliberal imperative to internationalize" the faculty at the City University of Hong Kong has enabled both her own and Lam's presence in the classroom and suggests that the teaching of Asian American literature at the City University of Hong Kong has unsettled the canonical status quo (252).

Poon's essay on her pedagogical experience in Singapore sits in an intriguingly dialogic relation to Troeung's work. Singapore also has a problematic relationship with China and neoliberalism and market forces have similarly driven its ascent to the status of a major financial hub in the region. Singapore therefore provides a peculiarly effective vantage point from which to view the impact of globalization on local populations. Poon's quest for an ethical educational stance appropriate to this context is answered by the idea of cosmopolitanism as "a willingness to engage with the Other" (Hannerz qtd. in Poon 259). She argues cogently for a revisioning of the global in terms of Edward Said's and Spivak's "worldliness" and replaces the implied universality of globalization's interests with an awareness of complexity and multiplicity. Examining the role of literature at the present historical juncture, she offers two concrete examples of how texts can be used to spur reflexivity

through the reader's experience of estrangement. Whereas Troeung suggests that Asian American literature "is encountered as an uncanny object of 'visceral dis/connection'" by Hong Kong students (242), Poon uses Mohamed Latiff Mohamed's *Confrontation*, a Malay text in translation, to uncover a buried history and point the way to a lost alternative for Singapore had it remained a part of a collective Malaysia instead of going it alone. Language is key to this lost opportunity, since by separating itself Singapore became predominantly Chinese and Malay became a minority language. The novel's availability in translation provides the entry point for its introduction to a course taught in English and recalls Hodapp's use of Swahili texts in translation as a way of teaching the Zanzibari writer, Abdulrazak Gurnah, from an East African perspective. The question of the legitimacy of translation, which recurs throughout the special issue, seems to find its answer in these examples that trouble the assumed identification of English with western interpretive codes. Poon's second text, Mohsin Hamid's English-language *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, enacts a similar displacement through its disorienting perspective on the western War on Terror and establishes an alternative system of meaning through defamiliarization.

Poon's conclusion that "the challenge of literature education today is nothing less than helping students imagine the world anew" (272) speaks plangently and directly to the central question faced by all the contributors to the special issue. Borrowing Spivak's words, this question is whether global pedagogy, in all its plenitude of opportunity, will be "[f]or good or for ill. As medicine or as poison" (qtd. in Randall 58). We must ask, along with US critic of postmodernism Michael Bérubé, "whether the global expansion of literature in English is as double-edged as the global expansion of capitalism." This is the question the special issue on global pedagogy explores unflinchingly, across a range of locations and from diverse perspectives. Collectively, the contributors perform what Fredric Jameson calls a "cognitive mapping" and Colin MacCabe glosses as "the model for how we might begin to articulate the local and the global. It provides a way of linking the most intimately local (our particular path through the world) and the most global (the crucial features of our political planet)" (124). Perhaps global pedagogy,

with its potential for both good and ill, can be remapped this way—as revealing through intimate particularities paths of resistance to a global political hegemony.

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