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THE RISE OF GLOBAL ANGLOPHONE

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Postcolonial

global anglophone

World literature

While providing an overview of the essays that make up this special issue, this "Introduction" considers the relationship between the field designators "postcolonial" and "global anglophone". Although the global anglophone has emerged as a result of the institutional commodification of diversity, this essay looks at ways in which it might be repurposed as a framework to think with, a framework within which new collaborations between various fields can be instigated and sustained. The essay's main purpose is to offer ways by which to push past various organizational rubrics that prevent us from grasping the less obvious but nevertheless consequential transformations that are restructuring English departments in the USA and beyond.

The potentialities of global anglophone

When it comes to engaging the global anglophone, location matters. Unlike all the contributors to this special issue, I do not live and teach in the United States. I am writing this introduction in Hong Kong, where I am an Assistant Professor of English at The University of Hong Kong. A majority of my undergraduate students are local, and I sometimes teach a course on

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Postcolonial Literature (Anglophone, mainly) in the School's Master of English Studies Program. In this programme, most students hail from Mainland China, and my course on postcolonial literature and theory is always overenrolled. As a term, "postcolonial" is not outdated, which is hardly surprising, given that Hong Kong's handover took place in 1997. Navigating the legacies of colonialism in Hong Kong via the study of postcolonial literature has me rethinking and revising my syllabi constantly, but never is the term "postcolonial" lost or replaced.

The "global anglophone" and the "postcolonial" are not fundamentally at odds in my department. There is of course a strong "global" and "cross-cultural" focus in research and teaching, but this focus has developed less in response to academic discourse than to Hong Kong's historical position in the British Empire and later in global financial markets. As Simon Gikandi reminds us in his response to this special issue, academics have "over several decades of teaching literature[,] taught the same texts under the rubrics of Commonwealth, postcolonial, and now Global Anglophone without missing a beat". While, as Gikandi adds, "[n]ames do, of course, matter", their deployment in linear narratives of disciplinary history can suggest rupture where continuity is in fact the dominant note. In my academic world in Hong Kong, the names "postcolonial" and "global anglophone" are closely intertwined. Even my straightforward postcolonial studies courses here are inflected by the terms and geographies of what institutions have come to call "global anglophone literature" (2023, this issue).

A global anglophone approach is inherent to the structure of nearly all the classes I teach at HKU. In contrast to the hackneyed East/West comparative paradigm that has structured my students' negotiations with and studies of literatures in European languages, the global anglophone, as a paradigm for organizing the study of literatures in English, helps to dissolve many of the imperial and geopolitical binaries that have been crucial to the development of literary studies outside the USA. For instance, one strategy that my students often employ in my courses is to read the Chinese translations of assigned English-language readings in order to "save time" (so they tell me). Furthermore, in small-group discussions, my students will switch to Cantonese or Mandarin to complete close-reading worksheets I assign them, although their written answers on these worksheets are in English. Although such acts are primarily pragmatic, by shuttling between two critical, although unequal, linguistic nodal points (English and Chinese), they often serve to challenge the East/West divide that is now structuring our global order anew. In the context of a multi-lingual and cross-cultural learning environment, my students not only translate but also "inflect" or "bend" (to reference Aimé Césaire, who said he "inflected"/"bent", [*infléchir*, French] in his poetry[1]) English toward Chinese and vice versa. So if English circulates with a hegemonizing vigour in the global market, as Rosemary Salomone

1 See Davis's essay (2016, 459).

demonstrates in *The Rise of English* (2021), it can only do so by being shaped, undone, and remade through the other languages it comes into contact with. Although power dynamics and patterns of unequal distribution cannot be ignored, what I want to emphasize is that when English circulates outside of its monolingual enclaves, it does not remain one with itself (if it really ever was to begin with).

But what happens when linguistic issues that fuel the unequal distribution of resources enter the literary studies classroom? I ask this question because the very formulation of global anglophone is a result of an institutionalized commodification of diversity in the university directly shaping hiring practices. A previous special issue that *Interventions* published in 2018 entitled "South Asia from Postcolonial to World Anglophone" enabled us to address this transformation more fully. This special issue took the study of South Asian literatures in English as a case study, given this body of literature's centrality among global world anglophone literature, as well as its special relationship to the formulation of many of the theories of postcolonial studies (Srinivasan 2018, 311). Ragini Tharoor Srinivasan points out in the "Introduction" that "we might say that the global is the artist formerly known as the postcolonial; the world has supplanted the third world; discourses on shared literary heritages and futures including the planetary, now stand in for what once was the commonwealth; and Anglophone as a social and cultural system is increasingly replacing English-language literature as an object of critique" (2018, 309). Given this situation, Srinivasan asks: "who are we, if we are to be global Anglophonists and not postcolonialists?" (2018, 310).

The question, she clarifies, is a "generational" one most relevant to scholars who trained as postcolonialists after and in response to pronouncements on postcolonial criticism's purported end (see Yaeger 2007). If institutions look to hire more "global Anglophonists", what knowledge, training, methodological strategies, and expertise do they expect this Anglophonist to offer students in English as well as in Comparative Literature departments? In order to answer this question, the contributors to this 2018 special issue, although not entirely in agreement with each other, ground their investigations in two main claims: that the postcolonial is turning into the global anglophone and that, to quote from Akshya Saxena's contribution, "the 'world' of the Anglophone exists separate from another world, that of British and American Literature" (2018, 318).

This special issue, "The Rise of Global Anglophone", is a collection of thought experiments that attempts to problematize both these claims. First, it moves away from the South Asia–postcolonial axis by looking at other fields slowly being absorbed into the world/global anglophone category. Srinivasan herself anticipates such a method of inquiry when she writes that the global anglophone might help to remedy "the postcolonial–South Asia

conflation" (2018, 313). Although South Asian literature remains essential to the "world of the Anglophone", the premise of this special issue is that the global anglophone is not replacing the postcolonial but transforming literary studies as a whole. Second, the essays in this issue show us that while many of the routes of the global anglophone are inscribed within what we still might refer to as postcolonial cartographies, others do indeed pass through the more "traditional" terrains of British and American literature. The essays in this issue thus enable us to trace some of the itineraries that have received less scholarly attention and provide us with provisional maps to navigate the seeming amorphousness of the global anglophone. What appears on an institutional level to be the inevitable shrinking of the study of literature can be seen, from a different vantage point, as providing the ground for assembling new alliances and instigating collaborations that extend to places as unlikely as my linguistically rich courses in Hong Kong.

In a way, then, all the essays engage anew, and with diverse points of inflection, one of the central questions Alexander Beecroft asks in his *An Ecology of World Literature*: "What is *A* Literature?" (2014, 14, emphasis added). His answer to this question is to argue that "[i]t is … in the world of audiences or readers that the notion of a literature emerges" (2014, 16). Furthermore, he adds that "[l]iteratures … are techniques or practices of reading texts, and specifically of linking texts together through a series of relationships that usually begins with language and/or polity, but also include questions of genre and influence, among other criteria" (2014, 16). Hence why he uses "ecology" and not "economy" as an organizing metaphor for his study of world literatures. This is not to say that he completely ignores the fact that there is competition amongst texts as authors promote and sell their books to readers. After all, as he points out, "economy" and "ecology" in fact "share a great deal, from their etymological derivation from the Greek (*oiko-nomos* vs. *oiko-logos*), to their shared interest in the invisible processes that regulate and manage scarcity" (2014, 18). But unlike economy, ecology is not about finding perfect commensurability in value but rather about beginning with "the distinct and mutual interactive nature of … various inputs, so that changes in the external environment … can have complex and shifting impacts on the various species found in a given context" (2014, 18). Beecroft thus seeks to look for a way to comprehend literature via its "ecological relationship to other phenomena – political, economic, sociocultural, religious – as well as to other languages and literatures with which it is in contact" (2014, 19). Thinking in terms of "ecology" also enables us to consider scarcity and competition within a broader context, one not limited to the circulation of texts, authors, and Anglo-dominated literary prizes alone. So what kind of "ecology" might thrive within the global anglophone when we ask from within it, "what is a literature?"

In her contribution to the previously mentioned special issue of *Interventions*, Roanne Kantor anticipates such a reformulation of the global anglophone when she writes that "for good or for ill, Global English emerges not just as a renominalization of the same disciplinary space, but also a potential reorientation to what can be included therein" (2018, 350). For Kantor, the practice that would facilitate this reorientation is Natalie Melas's theorization of "incommensurability" (2018, 350). Becoming attentive to the incommensurabilities that shape and transform the ecology of literatures that get tangled up with the global anglophone, we could join Kantor in her hope that "[g]lobal English may move forward by embracing the challenges of that uneven ground, rather than using a misplaced sense of rigour to smooth them away" (2018, 350). If we would like to experiment with the global anglophone as a tool for thinking and teaching, then the "notion of literature" that emerges will require us to reconsider not only the global anglophone's relationship to postcolonial literature but also how we establish links and construct "incommensurable" rubrics for collaboration. All the essays in this special issue provide a reader with examples of new methods and scenes of reading the global, ones that can serve as templates for future studies.

In his introduction to this special issue, entitled "The Global Anglophone: An Institutional Argument", Jeffrey Lawrence, the issue's co-editor, studies broader hiring trends in English departments in the United States to argue that far from replacing postcolonial studies, job listings in "Global Anglophone/Postcolonial" have in fact increased in comparison to those in "modern American/British literatures" and "Ethnic Studies". "Whatever else we might say about the Global Anglophone", writes Lawrence, "its emergence has coincided with a deep restructuring of the priorities of English departments in the United States – at least at the level of hiring" (2023, this issue). Using as an example the institutional history of American literature's development into a field of study from the nineteenth century onwards, Lawrence demonstrates how we might learn from this particular institutional history to create a "coherent Global Anglophone framework" for the present.

Such a project is not without risks, but there is much to learn from Lawrence's innovative utilization of the Global Anglophone as a framework for literary scholarship. Through his reading of James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* (1963), Lawrence tracks the workings of what he calls "the internal coding" of the text itself, which actively invites the reading methods of multiple and productively uneven frameworks – "ethnic, Global Anglophone, and comparative" (2023, this issue). In doing so, he makes a compelling argument for attuning ourselves to the various national, linguistic, and political contexts a single text moves within and across, contexts that are not immediately obvious and sometimes need to be

reconstructed. Most importantly, though, in order to structure his capacious but keenly discerning framework of the Global Anglophone, Lawrence shows us that the "rise" we are here and now registering, as both event and effect, is in fact a part of a longer institutional and national history, one that requires further study if we are to revitalize our understanding of what is owed to the literary objects around which any given field is structured.

In a similar vein, Debjani Ganguly argues in her contribution that however much hand wringing we might do in the face of the global anglophone, its "rise" is an old problem. She writes: "[i]f the term anglophone is commonly understood as the history of the English language outside England since the rise of modern mercantilist capitalism, it has never *not* been global". Furthermore, she claims that "while contemporary globalization has led to increasing linguistic homogenization, the rise of global anglophone does not herald the end of postcolonialism nor is it a force bent on erasing the cultural and linguistic diversity of literatures of the world" (2023, this issue). Indeed, Ganguly suggests that the hegemony of English is often overstated and that its continuing status as the global *lingua franca* is by no means a given.

Furthermore, Ganguly asserts, whatever English's global value may be on the market, it is simply one node in a vast multilingual and multinational complex. She urges us to "disaggregate English from imperial models of the past" and to recognize the dynamic relationship between postcolonialism and the world anglophone; it is never, in her conception, an either/or proposition. Pace scholarship like Aamir Mufti's *Forget English! Orientalism and World Literature* (2018), Ganguly's purpose is to "illuminate new zones of anglophone transculturation" by offering us "capacious" and "polycentric" frameworks that can be used to multiply the conversations between literary fields of study that often remain separate due to geopolitical divisions (2023, this issue).

Daniel Kim's contribution to this issue offers an example of how such a polycentric framework could work. In his essay, he addresses the need for reassessing the geopolitical divisions that fuel disciplinary insulation by "spell[ing] out potential resonances between [the] fields" of Asian American studies and global anglophone. Kim's objective is to bring to the surface alliances that the institutional drive to package difference often erases or undermines. Recognizing that his previous work focused on the disciplinary concerns of American and Asian American studies, Kim has articulated a "more explicit alliance" with global anglophone and postcolonial studies in his current research. He argues that the global anglophone might "facilitate the emergence of a more coalitional awareness of how seemingly distant strains of *antiracist* as well as anticolonial scholarship" (2023, this issue) can be brought together. Having recently published *The Intimacies of*

Conflict: A Cultural History of the Korean War (2020), a book that reads the regional, unfinished civil war between North and South Korea through its connections with "more global histories of war and empire", Kim makes visible "various modalities of world making" in the literary and cultural objects he studies. Kim's new consideration of world literature, which makes it possible for him to engage Korean-language texts and films in translation as well, allows his scholarship to thrive in a zone of "intimacy", so to speak, as he "reterritorialize[es]" English by re-reading imperial histories across the postcolonial/world literature/American Studies divide.

It is important to note, though, that refashioning such world-making histories does not nullify or replace the need for overtly political analysis. In fact, we need urgently to rearticulate the political in relation to literary fields. This is what Michaela Bronstein encourages us to do in her essay. From her location within modernist studies, Bronstein opens with the question "what happens when a field is no longer the site of a shared political mission? (2023, this issue)" To answer this question, she moves between modernist and postcolonial studies, showing us how the shift towards the "global" affects *both* fields. In finding a way out of those stalemates that debates concerning the "global" versus the "local" end up in, i.e. that the global erases the particularities of the local, or that the local cannot be constituted without the global, Bronstein instead emphasizes the "shared theoretical commitments" that postcolonial and modernist studies can build on. Rearticulating the political is key to this project, and it begins, so Bronstein contends, with careful attention paid to the tensions that arise between "hospitality" and "conquest" when fields expand and restructure themselves. By revealing the relationship between linguistic and political contexts in what she calls "the Russian connections" of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* (1977), Bronstein discloses how we might envision a politically informed "solidarity to come" between postcolonial and modernist studies *as* global anglophone.

Close reading the ending of *Petals of Blood*, Bronstein shows us how Ngũgĩ seems to "appropriate and reimagine" Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880). To rethink the global anglophone through Ngũgĩ's reading of Dostoevsky in English translation is a bold move, particularly given Ngũgĩ's rejection of English. At the heart of Bronstein's innovative reading therefore is the critical argument that "linguistic solidarity" does not necessarily lead to political change, particularly in regards to the individual's fraught relationship to society, even, and perhaps especially, when everyone speaks the same language. But it is only once read in the "Russian context", through Ngũgĩ's "intimacy" with Dostoevsky, made possible through translation, that we can understand the complexities of the "incommensurability" between the individual and the social in a new light. For, as Bronstein shows us, *Petals of Blood*, through its conversation with *The Brothers Karamazov*

in English, dramatizes "the difficult labor of bringing new collectivities into being" (2023, this issue). But it is by navigating this incommensurability that Ngũgĩ creates, so Bronstein shows us, a hitherto unexplored solidarity between Kenyan and Russian literature. In this way, Bronstein actually confronts the limitations of solidarities built on linguistic uniformity alone. Indeed, this "difficult labor" that Bronstein draws our attention to through the "Russian context" of *Petals of Blood* is the very definition of what Ngũgĩ would call "decolonization".

While Bronstein works at the intersection between modernist and postcolonial studies, Amatoritsero Ede seeks in his contribution to find a more stable literary ground for the study of African literature. The problem, as Ede sees it, is not that African literature is being drawn into the global but that it has always been studied within Western disciplinary matrices – postcolonial, commonwealth, for example – with little understanding of local contexts. Working with Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's scholarship on disciplinarity, Ede argues in his contribution that a "privileging of the global dimension" has enabled "a *euphemised* delegitimation of the local" in studying African literature. This "euphemised delegitimation" occurs through "disciplinary onomastics" or speech acts with "locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary … agency that legitimate imperial domination" (2023, this issue). Although it is not without challenges, Ede suggests that "Afropolitanism" might in fact serve as a cohesive ground for the study of African literature.

Because Afropolitanism finds its beginnings in a "subjective experience" that is discussed, shared, and consumed in cyberspace, instead of as an institutionalized discipline, Ede sees potential for the term to work as an organizing rubric for the study of anglophone African literature. Even though there has been, as Ede warns us, a co-opting of the term in the university as well as in the book publishing industry, at its core, Afropolitanism emphasizes "African worldliness" without absorbing Africa too quickly into the global. To study African literature as Afropolitan literature would enable a shift in focus, one that would direct itself to local aesthetic, cultural, and linguistic transformations. This would mean undoing some of the apolitical elitism associated with Afropolitanism and considering how "a revolutionary and redemptive" politics could be infused into the concept (2023, this issue).

Ede presents the Afropolitan as an opportunity to organize the kind of decolonization Achille Mbembe envisions in his "Decolonizing the University: New Directions". In this essay, Mbembe opens with the question: "[i]s decolonization the same as 'Africanization?'" (2016, 29), and he reminds us that Frantz Fanon was "extremely critical of the project of 'Africanization'" as it was often the name given to neocolonialism (2016, 33). Ngũgĩ, on the other hand, Mbembe tells us, turns Africanization into a "project of re-centering", which, without rejecting the West, turns Africa into the new centre (2016, 35), one that "extends well beyond the nation-state", and

names not the globalizing of Africa but its worlding. Ede uses "Afropolitan" in the way that Ngũgĩ has used "Africanization", that is to name the process of recentering Africa in literary studies. It is within this project of decolonization that we must then read Ede's critical take on the "global anglophone" as the term is, for him, yet another instantiation of the Anglo-American university's disciplinary onomastics.

Global anglophone literature and the contemporary

The routes for thought that these essays pursue offer some hope for the present, which seems to be marked by the new mediums of immediacy through which we consume, discuss, and distribute literature, global anglophone or otherwise. How then do we read the global anglophone in relationship to broader trends in contemporary literary production? Mark McGurl calls our age the "Age of Amazon" and, in *Everything and Less*, paints a somewhat desolate picture of the relationship Amazon is orchestrating between authors, their fictional works, and readers. McGurl asks: "[d]oes the spirit of innovation now reside in new ways and means of textual distribution rather than of either content or form?" (2021, 2). McGurl explains how "textual distribution" creates new "rules" that writers need to follow in regards to the kinds of stories they tell and the forms these stories take as "social relations" increasingly turn into "customer relations" (2021, 11). In McGurl's account, there is very little political and social value to the fields we create to study literature for "literature's residually sacral significance as a repository of higher values" is now being absorbed into "its everyday function as commodity" (2021, 11). All the novels we currently read can, after all, be bought on Amazon.

In order to track the way in which Amazon's distribution platform, especially its self-publishing platform for genre fiction – like romance novels, quaint murder mysteries, and unwieldy epic sagas – is affecting the form that literary fiction takes, McGurl creates a "World-Scaling" system, through which he tracks the capitalist-driven dialectic between "overloading novelty" and "banalizing redundancy" that defines the writing and consumption of books online. In McGurl's system, the poles of "epic" and "romance" organize the orbits of genre fiction, while those of "minimalism and maximalism" organize those of literary fiction. By creating this system, McGurl presents one of his central claims, which is that the "function of the contemporary novel" has become "the *therapeutic processing of information*" (2021, 200, emphasis in original). By this he means that "the idea of literature as either an arbiter of cultural values, or engine of cultural capital formation, or equipment for moral improvement recedes before a

conception of reading as everyday self-care" (2021, 206). What then happens to the force of "world making" that Kim mentions and that Pheng Cheah (2016) has elsewhere theorized as an essential activity of postcolonial literature?

One novel that traverses the scholarship on contemporary world and global anglophone literature is Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* (2008), the first novel of his Ibis Trilogy. Both McGurl and Beecroft read the novel in order to illuminate the particularities of literary works that rethink the political, economic, and linguistic proportions of the world. In McGurl's reading of Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies*, Ghosh's multiplication of Englishes, his way of turning the monolingualism of English into a polyphonic anglophony, becomes "a strong example of the state of the art of 'world literature' in the Age of Amazon, where trilogies abound, where the affordances of the novel in its classic dimensions are so often either too much or … not enough to achieve a given aesthetic end" (2021, 213). For even Ghosh's "seeding of standard English with various transformations and accretions that have clung to it as a result of trade" are made possible by capitalism's rapacious search for more markets. If attempts such as Ghosh's to make English other to itself are not immune to commodification, then when we teach global anglophone literature, are we merely creating a "safe space" within which students can consume "linguistic otherness" as palatable eccentricity? Does the global anglophone in fact work to neutralize difference in bringing into comparative equivalence both literatures and languages?

McGurl is not wrong when he exposes through his reading of *Sea of Poppies* what he calls "the problem of *historical complicity* as an adjunct of *affective community*" (2021, 217, emphasis in original), which Ghosh brings to the forefront through his representation of the opium trade. My issue with McGurl's "world-scaling system" is that we glimpse nothing of what is going on in the margins. So powerful is the core of Amazon that it draws into it both "everything and less". I therefore agree with Lisa Gitelman, who, in her review of *Everything and Less*, contends that "McGurl's tendency to read novels as allegories of the industrial conditions of their own production" erases the ability of novels to resist being completely reducible to the economic and technological conditions that enable their creation (2022, np). John Marx made a similar claim for the Anglophone Novel when he argued in *Geopolitics and the Anglophone Novel, 1890–2011* that "novels succeed or fail as commodities *in* the global market. But fiction has also long been a medium for commentary *on* the market" (2012, 12).

Contrary to McGurl, Beecroft, in his reading of *Sea of Poppies* and *River of Smoke* (2011), which is the second novel in the trilogy, finds Ghosh formulating strategies for bringing into view dimensions of the world that the

market tends to diminish. Beecroft argues that Ghosh formulates a “plot of globalization”, whose structure is fashioned using “the narrative device of *entrelacement*”, or “multi-strand narration”. According to Beecroft, by using *entrelacement*, Ghosh “project[s] onto the level of form the paranoiac interconnectedness of life in a globalized era”, and “offer[s] a networked model of social and economic interaction, one in which globalization, for good and for ill, is no longer simply equivalent to Americanization (or even Westernization), in which the links between former peripheries are as significant, and potentially as disruptive, as more familiar patterns of North–South” (2014, 283–284). For example, Ghosh is not interested in the history of the nation but in its prehistories, in identities shaped by forces, languages, and ideas that cannot be neatly fitted into the theoretical concepts of “hybridity” and linguistic purity (Beecroft 2014, 293–295).

Key to Ghosh’s experimentation with form is his repopulation of standard English with the voicing of other tongues, and, for Beecroft, this linguistic *entrelacement* “reminds us that English has always been Global English, that the decades of the 1580s and the 1590s when modern English literature emerges as a continuous tradition very nearly overlap with the settling of Jamestown and the founding of the British East India Company” (Beecroft 2014, 295). Clearly, languages and literatures need markets; Ghosh himself sends his books out into these markets to generate profit and instigate literary scholarship. But these marketing constraints do not completely limit the novel’s capacity to undo standard language, as Ganguly’s reading of Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies* in this issue demonstrates. Ganguly reads *Sea of Poppies* alongside Mauritian writer Abhimanyu Unnuth’s *Lal Pasina* (Crimson Sweat, 1977), a novel that has not been translated from the original Hindi into English. By placing the de-standardization of both English and Hindi in the same context, Ganguly demonstrates that what drives the narratives of both novels is destructuring the hegemonizing tendencies of standard language.

To elaborate further, let me turn to Kathy Park Hong’s recent *Minor Feelings: A Reckoning on Race and the Asian Condition* (2020), a text that cannot be read unless the “reckoning on race and the Asian Condition” be studied within, minimally speaking, American, Asian American, and Postcolonial frameworks. Of particular relevance to this special issue is Hong’s episode entitled “Bad English”. If a previous generation of writers labelled “anticolonial” considered the manipulation of the “master’s tongue” as a form of “writing back to empire”, Hong shows us that “bad English” need not always be a defensive stance in order for non-standard strategies of poetic expression to be envisioned. If McGurl reads the accumulation of languages in *Sea of Poppies* as mirroring the mercantile accumulation of capital, Hong makes a case for a poetic “collecting [of] bad English”, that is less an accumulation than a piecing together of “heritage” and “literary

lineage" (Hong 2020, 97) via the various displacements effected by imperial wars and their geopolitical aftermaths. In order to assemble her lineage, Hong must travel through the English of her family, who, like other Korean immigrant families, "borrowed" English "from hip-hop to Spanglish to *The Simpsons*" (2020, 93), the incorrectly translated English signs and phrases spotted in East Asian countries and posted on "Engrish.com" (2020, 95), as well as through the poetry of Nathaniel Mackey and Amiri Baraka.

What Hong's lineage exposes is not only the "unequal distribution" of language but also, at the same time, "the value of cultural exchange in what [Lewis] Hyde calls the gift economy" (Hong 2020, 102). Hong's consideration of the "gift economy" is carried out as a way to interrogate how "we have internalized market logic where culture is hoarded as if it's a product that will depreciate in value if shared with others; where instead of decolonizing English, we are carving up English into hostile nation-states" (2020, 102). And so, using Trinh T. Minh-ha's concept of "speaking nearby" culture, Hong, instead of writing a lyric poem, which she argues requires a universal subject unmarked by identity, writes the "modular essay" in order to "'speak[] nearby' the Asian American condition, which", for her, "is so involuted that [she] can't stretch [herself] across it" (2020, 103). Hong's work resonates with the kind of scholarship that the essays in this issue experiment with. They all, in some way, ponder the *form* of fields and wonder what English we would encounter once we begin to read "nearby", that is, to read one field next to another.

This is why renewed attention to literary form is crucial to the study of global anglophone literature. Here, Caroline Levine's work on forms might be helpful to us because she considers the "affordances" of forms in relation to other forms and not in relation to content alone. Levine's argument for "a new formalist method" begins with a call to attend to "patterns of sociopolitical experience" that trouble the distinction between "the form of the literary text and its content and context" (2015, 2). In order to navigate the new space that the troubling of this distinction creates, Levine asks us to think about a form's "affordance", a term she borrows from design theory. Forms, like glass, steel, and cotton,[2] "afford" themselves to the creation of certain structures, "patterns", and "arrangements" (Levine 2015, 6). "The sonnet", for example, "best affords a single idea or experience" (2015, 6). We often stress the amorphousness of global anglophone as a category; its "affordances" seem frighteningly capacious. But what if we paid attention to the global anglophone as a form instead of a grab bag of ever-expanding proportions? What are the global anglophone's "affordances" as a literary form for thinking about the relationship between languages and literatures?

2 These are Levine's examples.

Nasia Anam's contribution to this issue provides us with one answer. Having edited *Post45*'s special issue on the global anglophone and

contributed to the 2018 special issue of *Interventions*, Anam now takes up the question of literary form, something not yet considered in the context of the global anglophone. She argues that there is in fact a generic particularity to contemporary global anglophone novels. Through her close readings of Zia Hader Rahman's *In the Light of What We Know* (2014) and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017), Anam contends that the formal concerns of the global anglophone novel, when compared with postcolonial or multicultural novels of a previous generation, have transformed in response to the geopolitical shifts affected by the consequences of 9/11. Instead of "writing back to empire" or reforming and recovering the universalist values of human rights that underpin the novel's spaciotemporal progression, the global anglophone novel instead "portray[s] … the decadence and failure of universalism in content and form alike" (2023, this issue). In their efforts to combat literary realism, both Rahman and Shamsie "*disassemble* rather than replace universalist narratives" (2023, this issue). This force of "narrative fragmentation" leaves behind copious remains: of canonical English literature, of Enlightenment philosophy, and promises of decolonization. Yet it does so in a way that departs significantly from the "postmodernism, maximalism, magical realism, encyclopedism" that structured the works of Salman Rushdie, Zadie Smith, and Hanif Kureishi (2023, this issue).

Anam contends that what Rahman's and Shamsie's novels lay bare is the failure of "literary projections of a multicultural twentieth century" (2023, this issue). In these novels, it is not "the West" or the "colonizer" that menacingly haunts the present but an English-educated, diasporic South Asian elite that has gained access to the transnational networks of power. Their mastery of the English canon enables them to neutralize "world-making" and to use their "universalist" education to "*negate … humanity*" (2023, this issue) (emphasis in original). Anam arrives at a conclusion quite different to that which Marx arrives at in *Geopolitics and the Anglophone Novel*, where he argues that fiction "refurbishes government as well as criticizes it" (2012, 1). Beginning with the analysis of "imperial fiction", which starts to appear at the onset of the twentieth century, Marx writes that this tendency to want to remake while at the same time critiquing government is a thread that runs through the anglophone novel, from the colonial – Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* – to the postcolonial – Soueif's *The Map of Love* (1999) and Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* (2000).

Marx argues that postcolonial novels, though not "derivative of 'Heart of Darkness,'" are "committed to reimagining the colonial dynamics Conrad portrayed" (4). They do this, so he says, by "rewrite[ing] colonial history and undo[ing] myths of total European dominion" (5). Poking holes in the narrative of empire's "total domination", the postcolonial novels he reads "treat[] governance as a thematic bridge between the global and the imperial", revealing to us that the novel's processes of "worlding" are not that

different to those of "governing" (10). Anam's essay demonstrates that a shift has occurred in the global anglophone novel since at least 2011 (where Marx's study ends), for instead of offering frameworks within which to imagine governing as worlding, these novels highlight the fractured remains of the ideologies and canons they disassemble. How, then, does this new take on the inheritance of canonical English and its networks of power shape the imaginative writing of postcolonial authors? This is one of the central questions that Anam seeks to answer, and she provides us with a way to theorize the formal experimentation in contemporary global anglophone novels.

As a whole, then, the essays in this issue offer us ways to study the global anglophone institutionally, linguistically, formally. They all look to push past various organizational rubrics that prevent us from grasping the less obvious but nevertheless consequential transformations that are restructuring English departments in the USA and beyond. That said, postcolonial theory has some tools that we might use in our restructuring of the global anglophone as a critical and more hospitable space to think, learn, and teach in. By way of a conclusion, let me turn to the "Epilogue" Leela Gandhi adds to the second edition of her *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*, which is inventively entitled "If This Were a Manifesto for Postcolonial Thinking". In this "Epilogue", Gandhi proposes that we consider postcolonial thinking as "a contemporary philosophy of renunciation, with a unique proposal for uninjured life and noninjurious community" (2018, 177). In the "seven subsections" that constitute the "Epilogue", assemblage, injury, exit, ontology, renunciation, ethics, and advice to kings, Gandhi elaborates "pertinent field developments" that, taken together, assuage fears concerning the replacement or disappearance of the postcolonial. In fact, the key concept of "assemblage" offers us a way to work through the conundrums that the global anglophone presents to us. "Postcolonial thinking", as Gandhi reminds us, "is made up of heterogenous elements with no internal hierarchies of genre (such as representation/event, semiotic/material, or even theory/practice)" (2018, 177). This process of assemblage-making that postcolonial thinking has been involved in might then help us to transform global anglophone into a framework for studying literatures in English. It could also further enrich Beecroft's metaphor of an "ecology of world literature".

As Lawrence warns us, creating such "assemblages" are precarious, so we must, as Gandhi herself advises us, pay attention to what is going on when "[s]hifts of mood and population keep generating new meanings" (2018, 178). To explain her statement, Gandhi uses "the colloquial Hindi word *jugaad*, which can refer to a makeshift vehicle or style of frugal engineering that uses all the limited resources at hand". An assemblage figured as *jugaad* "will likely disaggregate once the job is done", but in its use of often odd-fitting parts to make itself, such an assemblage will provide new forms in

and through which to think, forms whose appearance often cannot be forecast. The three *jugaad*-assemblages that Gandhi discusses are: "Western self-critique, anticolonial liberation, and planetarity" (2018, 178). Of these three, it is planetarity that is most promising in terms of guiding the global anglophone toward becoming an assemblage of sorts. "Planetary perspectives", according to Gandhi, "conceive the world as an integral whole rather than a sphere to be divided up for resource extraction and by the profit calculus of modern capitalist globalization" (2018, 183). Resisting division and extraction, the planetary as an assemblage thrives through "intersectional" thinking (Gandhi 2018, 183) . In this way, it can help us form new (and perhaps inventively makeshift) frameworks, organizational principles, and networks of scholarly inquiry that we could nominally call global anglophone. Whether trained as postcolonialists or not, the authors of the essays gathered here perform the difficult work of thinking within "assemblages" that are not necessarily welcoming or homely. Most importantly, they teach us that planetary thinking is best done at intersections, in spite of all of the risks that come with "speaking nearby" such locations.

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