

The Local and the Global: Poetry, Philosophy and History

Jonathan Locke Hart

School of Foreign Languages, Shanghai Jiao Tong University

No. 800 Dongchuan Road, Minhang District, Shanghai 200240, China

Email: jonathanlockehart@hotmail.com

Abstract In literature, the fictional worlds of William Faulkner, Margaret Laurence and others are about local places but seem universal to readers of different places, cultures and later times. The poetry of Homer and the Greek tragedians like Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides are rooted in their time and place, but have had a “universal” appeal in the West despite all its changes in culture, beliefs and language. Homer wrote about heroic Greece, and Socrates and Plato questioned his universal appeal, his knowledge, his wisdom, partly because of mimesis or representation or imitation. Though he agreed with Plato that philosophy is more universal than poetry, Aristotle analyzes the work of Greek tragedy and epic poetry and also discusses history; he finds poetry inferior to philosophy precisely because poetry is more particular. Not only William Blake, but also many literary critics from the 1960s onward in the West, have rebelled against universals and, in an age of globalization, have often sought particulars or a rhetoricization or historicization of philosophy and poetry to try to act against grand narratives, universals and idealism. Jean François Lyotard is a case in point. By analyzing the relations among poetry, philosophy and history, this article will examine the ground of this dispute between the local and the global, the particular and the universal, and will show the importance of both.

Key words local; global; poetry; philosophy; history

Author **Jonathan Locke Hart**, is Chair Professor, Creative Writing, Comparative Literature, Theory, and Literature in English and Director, Centre for Creative Writing and Literary Translation and Culture at Shanghai Jiao Tong University. He is also Core Faculty in Comparative Literature at Western University and Life Member, Clare Hall, University of Cambridge. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, he is a poet, writer of other genres, literary scholar and historian who studied at Toronto and Cambridge and has held visiting appointments at Harvard,

Cambridge, Princeton, Toronto, the Sorbonne Nouvelle (Paris III) and elsewhere. The author of many articles and over twenty books, including *Theater and World* (1992), *Northrop Frye: The Theoretical Imagination* (1994), *Representing the New World* (2001), *Contesting Empires* (2005), *Interpreting Culture* (2006), *Empires and Colonies* (2008), *Shakespeare: Poetry, History and Culture* (2009), *Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (2010), *Literature, Theory, History* (2011), *Fictional and Historical Worlds* (2012) *Textual Imitation* (2013), *From Shakespeare to Obama* (2013), and *The Poetics of Otherness* (2015). He has two books under contract and a number of articles or chapters on Ted Hughes, comparative literature, world literature, translation, poetics, theory and other topics. His most recent book of poetry is *The Burning Lake* (2016).

Introduction

When William Blake speaks of seeing the world through a grain of sand and about “minute particulars,” and asserts that “To generalize is to be an idiot” (Blake, *Annotations to Sir Joshua Reynolds’s Discourses*, Erdman 630), he is flying in the face of a universalism that is at the foundation of Western philosophy, planted by Socrates, cultivated by Plato and consolidated by Aristotle. Blake’s *Auguries of Innocence* begins: “To see a world in a grain of sand, / And heaven in a wild flower, / Hold infinity in the palm of your hand, / and eternity in an hour” (ll. 1-4, Erdman 481). Blake speaks about the minute particular opening world, heaven, infinity and eternity. In *Jersusalem*, Blake writes: “He who would do good to another must do it in minute particulars; / General good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite, and flatterer: / For art and science cannot exist but in minutely organized Particulars” (Blake Ch. 3, plate 55, line 60; see Erdman). For Blake, the particular is good, the general, not. Blake also says: “To Generalize is to be an Idiot. To Particularize is the Alone Distinction of Merit — General Knowledges are those Knowledges that Idiots possess” (Blake, *Annotations to Sir Joshua Reynolds’s Discourses*; Erdman 630). These lines amplify his view and particulars and generalizations. This article assumes that Plato and Aristotle on the one hand and Blake on the other can be combined in another insight: the particular and the universal are like the local and the global, and we need both to know and to thrive. We know through our local time and place and generalize from that into something more global and universal, something that helps us to understand but something that is fraught with dangers, as Blake warns.

In literature, the fictional worlds of William Faulkner, Margaret Laurence

and others are about local places but seem universal to readers of different places, cultures and later times. The poetry of Homer and the Greek tragedians like Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides are rooted in their time and place, but have had a “universal” appeal in the West despite all its changes in culture, beliefs and language. Homer wrote about heroic Greece, and Socrates and Plato questioned his universal appeal, his knowledge, his wisdom, partly because of mimesis or representation or imitation. Though he agrees with Plato that philosophy is more universal than poetry, Aristotle analyzes the work of Greek tragedy and epic poetry and also discusses history, although he finds poetry inferior to philosophy precisely because poetry is more particular. Not only Blake, but also many literary critics from the 1960s onward in the West have rebelled against universals and, in an age of globalization, have often sought particulars or a rhetoricization or historicization of philosophy and poetry to try to act against grand narratives, universals and idealism. Jean François Lyotard is a case in point.

It may be, then, that as a reaction against the Enlightenment, which often held up general truths, and against European expansion and industrialization — important to globalization — Europeans and European descendants in other places turned to the local, the individual, and the historical specifically to challenge Western universalism. By analyzing the relations among poetry, philosophy and history, this article will examine the ground of this dispute between the local and the global, the particular and the universal and will show the importance of both.

Mimesis, imitation or representation are creative and active, not a reflection of the world. Interpretation is part of that mimetic process or imitation¹. Poetry travels from location to location, is transcultural and transnational². Aesthetic and ethics are dimensions of this debate over imitation, of the particular and the universal, of the true, the good and the beautiful as represented by philosophy, according to the Platonic Socrates, as opposed to the poetry of Homer. Book 2 of Plato’s *Republic* stresses the ethics of representation³. Misrepresentation is the lot of Homer and the poets, so their universals are false. In Book 8 of *Republic*, Socrates refers to the poets of tragedy as not being admitted to the city as they sing the praises of tyranny (568B). In Book 10, Plato has Socrates view poets as beautiful liars who appeal to passion and not reason, and whose imitation is at several removes from reality.

Reality in *Poetics* is apparently more empirical. Aristotle’s mimesis involves copying and creating. *Poetics* spends a good deal of space on genre or types of

1 See Hart, *Textual Imitation* 2 and Halliwell.

2 See Ramazani.

3 Plato, *Republic*, 601A–B.

poetry even if, with Plato, Aristotle considers philosophy the most universal way to truth. Aristotle discusses the particulars of history even if it is less universal. Aristotle seems to give the poet a place in knowing that Plato had denied him.¹ In addressing Plato and, perhaps, the likes of Stephen Gosson, Philip Sidney defends poets against the charges that poetry is not universal; he actually elevates poetry above philosophy because it is concrete and not abstract and its images can move the reader to virtue². Still, Sidney, like Aristotle, places historians behind philosophers and poets because historians are particular.

England or Europe, for the English and various Europeans, respectively, was the local in a globalizing world. Recognition or *anagnorisis*, as Aristotle had discussed it in *Poetics*, was important not simply in tragedy but also in the encounter between cultures, as in the voyages and settlement of Europeans in the Americas and other parts of the world³. This recognition could also be a misrecognition amidst changing expectations, from the fantastic that endured from antiquity. Cannibals and Amazons persisted from works such as those of Herodotus, Pliny and others. Elements of imitation travel over space and time. The particular becomes the universal, and the local and the global are closely intertwined.

Locally and globally, texts represent and misrepresent and are read and misread, interpreted and misinterpreted, often at the same time. In some ways, an exploration of the local and the global is an exploration of the ways that texts misrepresent, show misrecognition or reveal the dangers of representation. Exploration and interpretation are related to theory, which is linked to sight — vision, recognition, blindness, myopia and misrecognition. These terms are connected to the Greek root of *theoria*, a way of seeing⁴. The expansion of Western European powers to various parts of the globe intensified from 1415 onward.⁵ Local views could seem global, particulars universal. The uncovering or “discovery” of the New World involved misrecognition and recognition, and this nexus also applied to coming across other cultures across the globe. The individual soul affects his local place as well as elsewhere. Admonishing against greed, power and poetry for the soul of the person and the republic, Socrates recommends the knowledge and reason of philosophy. Michel de Montaigne thought it would have been better had the ancients discovered the New World, but instead, the Spanish conquest of the

1 See Aristotle, and Hart, *Textual Imitation* 27–32.

2 See Sidney 102.

3 See Pagden 10.

4 See Hart, *Textual Imitation* 103.

5 See Said, Todorov, De Certeau.

New World descended into avarice, violence and lust. The person affects politics, the private the public, the local, the global.

The Europeans found that their local identities underwent change when they encountered peoples from other cultures. Their universals might be particular and their absolutes relative. The indigenous peoples of the Americas were from cultures that the Europeans did not know, their very existence challenging European identity at home and in the western Atlantic, and making the Europeans attempt to fit them into their familiar, home or local frameworks¹. Columbus, in his first contact with aboriginal peoples in the New World, was an aspect of an intricate representation, interpretation and response. In part, Columbus was receptive to tales that seemed to corroborate ancient expectations of Amazons and cannibals². Another instance is the debate between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda over the treatment of the indigenous peoples in the New World. Las Casas and Sepúlveda represented two ways of coming to terms with the New World, that is, for Europeans to try to grapple with the otherness of the discovered lands. For Las Casas, the contact and conversion of the “Indians” fulfilled Christian universal history. Sepúlveda wanted to see the Spanish monarchy and empire augmented while not considering the Natives to be entirely human and so not apt for conversion. Las Casas defended the humanity of the Natives while Sepúlveda applied Aristotle’s theory of natural slavery to them. Montaigne also criticized European abuse of the Native peoples in “Des Cannibales” (“Of the Cannibals”); he compared the aboriginals and Europeans and questioned the stereotype of barbarism³. Oviedo, Thevet and Hakluyt in Spain, France and England, respectively, used this connection between European and indigenous peoples to define identities, national and imperial, so that self and other, home and away, the local and the global constructed each other⁴. Ancients and moderns imitated examples, negative and positive, in texts and cultures, and this affected notions of identity and otherness, of here and there, now and then.

I

William Shakespeare imitated classical examples and was not entirely local. He did not follow the dictum of creative writing classes to write from what he knew. There are no plays and poems about making gloves with his father or walking by the River

1 See Elliott, 48–59.

2 See Trigger; Hart, “Images of the Native.”

3 Montaigne I: 405, Livre 1, ch. 31.

4 See Hart, “Strategies of Promotion,” “Portugal and the Making of the English Empire.”

Avon to fish, or strolling to the Arden house in Wilmcote (his mother's family), or a quick visit to Anne Hathaway's cottage. Nor did he write about his neighbourhood in London by Blackfriars or in Southwark, where his younger brother, Edmund (1580–1607), lies buried in the cathedral, or about the stews and bear-baiting pits that were in the area of the Globe Theatre. Shakespeare's local may have been his keen eye for people and for nature in all his plays and poems, a paradoxically universal performance across time and space, a globalization of the local.

Shakespeare wrote of the classical world in his narrative poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, the first about a goddess in love with a mortal from Greek mythology, and the second about the last Roman king who raped the wife of one of his nobles and was expelled, thus creating the Roman republic. Shakespeare's comedy is often romantic comedy derived from the New Comedy of Plautus and Terence, and some have classical locales like *The Comedy of Errors*, in which Shakespeare multiplies the twins from his model, Plautus's *Menaechmi*, and *Troilus and Cressida* represents an aspect of the Trojan War in a manner far more comic than in Homer's epic rendition in *The Iliad*. Shakespeare also goes to Plutarch as sources for *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, about the fall of the Roman republic and the rise of the Roman empire, plays that complement the earlier Roman history of *The Rape of Lucrece*. *Coriolanus* rounds off the Roman plays and, in *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare represents relations between imperial Rome and its colony in Britain. *Titus Andronicus* and *Timon of Athens* are tragic and mythical visions, and *Pericles* a comic representation of classical stories, *Titus* being inspired by the closet drama of the Roman philosopher Seneca in its theatre of blood or, to adapt Artaud's term, theatre of cruelty¹. Shakespeare's classical world is epic, comic and tragic, so he moves across genres as he moves across time and location. Like Columbus and Montaigne, Shakespeare looks back to the classical world, but does so in his own vernacular and in the context of his own culture.

One example from these Shakespearean texts with classical subjects should provide a sense of how Shakespeare, who knew Latin and Greek, chooses to use Thomas North's translation as a way into his sources for *Antony and Cleopatra*. Rather than give the whole of Enobarbus's speech about Cleopatra, I shall provide the breathless opening only:

I will tell you.
The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold;

1 See Artaud, *Le Théâtre, The Theatre*.

Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
 The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver,
 Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
 The water which they beat to follow faster,
 As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,
 It beggar'd all description: she did lie
 In her pavilion – cloth-of-gold of tissue –
 O'er-picturing that Venus where we see
 The fancy outwork nature: on each side her
 Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,
 With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
 To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
 And what they undid did. (*A&C* II.ii.)¹

Shakespeare uses North's translation to make a moving example of Cleopatra, exotic and erotic, outdoing even the goddess of love, Venus herself. Cleopatra is Egypt whereas Antony is Rome, the Orient and Occident. Shakespeare uses an English translation of a classical Greek text (Plutarch's *Lives*) to yoke past and present, home and away, in the representation of the meeting of East and West, as recounted by Enobarbus, a Roman captain. The translation of study and of empire occur through the translation of language and literature. The double vision or typology of here and there, now and then takes the exotic rhythms of the Nile and puts them into English to be spoken and staged on the banks of the River Thames. Self defines other and other self, and Shakespeare via North makes Plutarch's Cleopatra, represented in Greek, his in one of Shakespeare's two homes, his two locales, London (Stratford being the other, where he was born and would later be buried). There are pasts recalled and possible futures (see Lyne, Barret). Shakespeare's mimesis, imitation or representation depends on North's translation (1579) of Jacques Amyot's French translation of the Greek of Plutarch (1559–1565), which he used to portray Cleopatra. Shakespeare takes the biographical work of Plutarch and dramatizes it, makes the drama of his prose into the dramatic poetry of a theatre teeming with people in the audience.

The exotic is a way to make the local reader or audience yearn for difference and otherness, partly as a way of expression of their selves, themselves. Shakespeare does this in many places, but two will suffice here to make this point: a speech Othello makes about the Anthropophagi and one Caliban makes about the

1 All quotations and citations in Shakespeare are from the online MIT edition.

island. Travel literature can bring the exotic, the strange, the other home. Othello is a Moor in Venice, a general in the great city that fights the Turks and trades and acts as a go-between between East and West. Once more, Shakespeare, who rarely devised his own plots or stories, went to a source, but this time in the original, “Un Capitano Moro,” in *Hecatommithi* or *Gli Ecatommiti* (1565), a collection of stories by Cinthio (Giovanni Battista Giraldi), so that Shakespeare turns this Italian prose fiction into English drama. Another travelling text, which relied on translation, was also a possible source for Shakespeare’s *Othello*, written by Richard Hakluyt’s friend John Pory, who translated the English edition published in London in 1600, *A Geographical Historie of Africa written in Arabicke and Italian by John Leo a More...*, a translation of a text published in 1556 by Hasan Ibn Muhammad Al-Wazzan Al-Fasi, known in the West as Leo Africanus. A Moor from Granada, as Michael Graves-Johnston has noted, Leo Africanus travelled in Western Africa between 1512 and 1517 before being captured by Christian corsairs in the Mediterranean. Presented to Pope Leo X, Leo became a Christian (taking the pope’s name) and wrote his *Description of Africa* sometime in the 1520s. Ramusio first published this work in Italian in 1550, and it was issued as *De totius Africae descriptione, libri IX* in Antwerp in 1556. The book, as Graves-Johnston says, went into many editions and was a standard treatise¹. Even if Pory’s translation of Leo Africanus is more part of a context for *Othello* or reflects the interest in African and Moors at the time rather than a direct source, it also shows the importance of translation in Europe and England, and how translating helped to form local and national identities through texts and literature. As with Hakluyt, with Shakespeare we can observe the building of English and English identity through translation and explorations of travel and the exotic. Between the local and the global lies the national.

The exotic and unknown are part of Othello’s speech and character in Shakespeare’s play. Speaking to the Duke, Othello says of his wife, Desdemona:

Her father loved me; oft invited me;
 Still question’d me the story of my life,
 From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes,
 That I have passed.
 I ran it through, even from my boyish days,
 To the very moment that he bade me tell it;
 Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,

1 See Graves-Johnston; see Black.

Of moving accidents by flood and field
 Of hair-breadth scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,
 Of being taken by the insolent foe
 And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence
 And portance in my travels' history:
 Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,
 Rough quarries, rocks and hills whose heads touch heaven
 It was my hint to speak, – such was the process;
 And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
 The Anthropophagi and men whose heads
 Do grow beneath their shoulders. This to hear
 Would Desdemona seriously incline:
 But still the house-affairs would draw her thence:
 Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,
 She'ld come again, and with a greedy ear
 Devour up my discourse: which I observing,
 Took once a pliant hour, and found good means
 To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart
 That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
 Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
 But not intently: I did consent,
 And often did beguile her of her tears,
 When I did speak of some distressful stroke
 That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,
 She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:
 She swore, in faith, twas strange, 'twas passing strange,
 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:
 She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd
 That heaven had made her such a man: she thank'd me,
 And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
 I should but teach him how to tell my story.
 And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake:
 She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,
 And I loved her that she did pity them.
 This only is the witchcraft I have used: (*Othello* I.iii.)

Othello, in the tradition of Herodotus and Pliny, speaks a story of travel and

natural history, his exotic diction calling up cannibals and Anthropophagi. The very rhythm of the speech, the breathlessness of the syntax, is like Enobarbus's speech about Cleopatra, in which the hearers within the report or those listening to it are caught up, if not seduced, by the words. Once more, Shakespeare imports the exotic for his English stage, translating translated prose into arresting theatre in the English tongue. Travel and otherness come home to help create a local theatre in London, which, being the centre of England, becomes a national theatre. Like Hakluyt, Shakespeare uses translation to forge a national language, culture and literature. The localization of the global creates the national. The national mediates between the local and the global. All three circulate and overlap in their interplay. Agrippa and the Duke, like Antony and Desdemona, are seduced by Cleopatra and Othello, respectively. The expansion of England overseas at that time also meant a redefinition of what England and Englishness meant¹.

In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare combines a classical Virgilian echo of an island in the Mediterranean with allusions to Bermuda, to the New World, where there was a shipwreck on an English ship, *Sea Venture*, en route to the fledgling colony in Virginia. Shakespeare travels to the classical Old World and the contemporary New World in his comedy, a play with epic and travel in it, a gesture toward past and future in a vanishing present of identity. The otherness of the past, Rome, and the future, English America, helps to define London and England, the local and the national, in this theatre. Once more, Shakespeare transforms other genres, alluding to the poetry of Virgil in *The Aeneid*, and to prose in the pamphlet by William Strachey about the shipwreck, which Shakespeare may have seen in manuscript. Not only did Shakespeare employ Strachey's account of Bermuda but he also associated with members of the Virginia Company like Christopher Brooke, Dudley Digges, Southampton, Pembroke and others.

In this play, Shakespeare's language includes the exotic as a way of stretching and making English in this London stage and national theatre. Caliban shows ambivalence over the gift of language on this once vacant island in the Mediterranean (just as Bermuda had been empty of people). He says to Prospero: "You taught me language; and my profit on't Is, / I know how to curse. The red plague rid you / For learning me your language!" (I.ii.). Thus, this gift of language from the dominant magician who is an exiled Duke is a means that the subjected Caliban can use to swear and to fight back against what he perceives to be his oppression. Even though the island is in the Mediterranean, it has, owing to the allusion to Bermuda (to what Ariel calls "the

1 On *Othello*, see Bassi, Kerrigan, Kuzner.

still-vex'd Bermoothes"), also been interpreted as a colony. Edmund Malone was apparently the first to mention utopia and the New World in regard to commentary on *The Tempest*¹. In this anti-imperial and postcolonial reading, which seems to have begun with Daniel Wilson's social Darwinist interpretation in 1873 and W. T. Stead's analysis of empire and indigenous peoples in 1904, Caliban, the colonized, has learned the language of Prospero, the colonizer, and uses this weapon against him (Kermode lxxxix). This colonial and postcolonial reading gathered force from the independent movements of period after the Second World War, most especially from the late 1950s², England had become the English Empire, then Britain and the British Empire, and then, after the decolonization of its empire, began to shrink back to itself. After the Brexit side won the referendum on whether to remain in or leave the European Union, in which Scotland and Northern Ireland (along with London) voted to remain, England might end up on its own or with Wales (as the Tudors brought England and Wales closer together). The local, national and global (international) are all unstable and in flux.

Caliban's ambivalence occurs not just in his expression of learning to curse but also in the beauty of his speech about the island on which he lives. He tells Trinculo and Stephano:

Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises,
 Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
 Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
 Will hum about mine ears, and sometime voices
 That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
 Will make me sleep again: and then, in dreaming,
 The clouds methought would open and show riches
 Ready to drop upon me that, when I waked,
 I cried to dream again. (*Tempest* III.ii.)

These noises, instruments, voices, riches and dreams animate Caliban and reveal his poetic soul, complicating any notion that he is simply a monster to fear, abhor or subject³. Nor is Caliban alone in his utopian dreams. Gonzalo speaks a well-known speech that is even more explicit on this theme of Utopia. The play is more than about animals and humans (see Raspa). To Sebastian and Antonio, he begins his

1 See Orgel 31–36.

2 See Brockbank, Hulme, Nixon.

3 on ecological aspects of the play, see Martin.

speech (and I will not go into the whole speech here):

I' the commonwealth I would by contraries
 Execute all things; for no kind of traffic
 Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
 Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
 And use of service, none; contract, succession,
 Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
 No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
 No occupation; all men idle, all;
 And women too, but innocent and pure;
 No sovereignty;— (*Tempest* II.i.)

The ideal commonwealth or utopian land echoes earlier work, showing once more Shakespeare's intricate way of creating identity from otherness and difference, a London and an English theatre or perspective from many sources, English and foreign, present and past. Gonzalo's utopian speech here (II.i. 145–162 in Kermode's Arden edition of *The Tempest*) is a case in point. Two prominent editors, Kermode and Orgel, in the Arden and Oxford editions, respectively, note that this speech comes almost verbatim from John Florio's translation of Montaigne's "Of the Cannibals" and echoes Renaissance thought on the connection between Europe and the New World. Shakespeare's *The Tempest* presents many contesting visions of the island and of how it was originally. There are, then, many opposing views on the island's state of nature or what its politics might be, as well as about general notions of the political, expressed in the views of Prospero, Miranda, Ariel, Caliban, Gonzalo and others. This local island has symbolic or allegorical meanings in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic as well as the island of Utopia that Thomas More described in his eponymous work. The Virgilian echoes and the site of colonization and revolt against that coexist. This island is local and global and has implications for the nation — England.

Shakespeare also writes about the local and the national, places in England and England itself. The comedy, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, is located west of London in the environs of Windsor –town, park, and castle – and the name of the place is repeated more than a dozen times throughout the play¹. The local is a famous locale, and Shakespeare transports Falstaff and his friends from the Boar's Head Tavern in *1 and 2 Henry IV*, English history plays, into this comedy. Shakespeare

1 On ecology in this drama, see Martin.

wrote the history plays backwards, writing the first tetralogy of *1, 2, 3 Henry VI* and *Richard III* before the second tetralogy of *Richard II, 1, and 2 Henry IV* and *Henry V*, representing the end of the story of the War of the Roses before the beginning. The history plays — as John Heminge and Henry Condell, friends and co-sharers in the King's Men with Shakespeare, classified them in the *First Folio* (1623) — were plays only about the past of England, and not of Scotland, Britain or any other country. The suffering hero of these histories, as well as those of *King John* and *Henry VIII*, is England. The locale in *Merry Wives* is a location of national significance, but in these history plays, the national, the story of England, as if in an epic, is the key.

In *Richard II*, John of Gaunt, speaks of England with a kind of personification that imbues the land with a power as his nephew, Richard II, is sapping the country of its very life:

This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
 This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
 This other Eden, demi-paradise,
 This fortress built by Nature for herself
 Against infection and the hand of war,
 This happy breed of men, this little world,
 This precious stone set in the silver sea,
 Which serves it in the office of a wall,
 Or as a moat defensive to a house,
 Against the envy of less happier lands,
 This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England, ... (*RII* II.i.)

This paean to his native land is old Gaunt's warning against the decline of England from a happy land to a miserable kingdom, sapped and riven. England is a place that nature has made as a fortress, and it is many things, including an "other Eden." In this catalogue, Shakespeare represents England in comparison but also in terms of itself. The focus is on England and not on Greece, Rome, Egypt, Italy or any other distant or exotic land. These history plays are a national epic and thus suggest that Shakespeare could shift among the local, national and international or global depending on the situation. These plays were about the kingdom where Shakespeare lived, a country that had not yet formally joined with Scotland, although James was king of both realms.

Shakespeare mixed the local and the national, as can be seen in the figure of

Justice Robert Shallow, who is a character who appears in Windsor at the start of *Merry Wives*, but who had been at his house in Gloucestershire, in III.ii., the heart of this history play, *2 Henry IV*. Shallow also appears at his house and orchard in V.i. and V.iii. In III.ii., Shallow, despite being in a play about national history, gives a most detailed and local speech with an appeal to the memory of his youth at the Inns of Court:

By the mass, I was called any thing; and I would
have done any thing indeed too, and roundly too.
There was I, and little John Doit of Staffordshire,
and black George Barnes, and Francis Pickbone, and
Will Squele, a Cotswold man; you had not four such
swinge-bucklers in all the inns o' court again: and
I may say to you, we knew where the bona-robas were
and had the best of them all at commandment. Then
was Jack Falstaff, now Sir John, a boy, and page to
Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk. (*2HIV* III.ii.)

These are specific friends from long ago, part of Shallow's own private world, another indication of Shakespeare bringing together the great theme of private and public, individual and state. As much as Gaunt's prophetic paean to England, Shallow's nostalgic personal reminiscence makes the nation. Just as England is defined in comparison to other places and with its expansion to empire in an expanded globe, so too does this nation find that it is made up of different locales or discrete places. Paradoxically, the very local flavour of England as expressed by Shallow, and even the patriotic mood that was built up by Gaunt, through their very power to evoke, make Shakespeare more global and universal. Through the local and national as well as through the very power of his poetry in English, Shakespeare appeals internationally. As England expanded, so did English, and by now English is global and so too is Shakespeare.

All this Shakespeare did in helping to create a powerful London and English stage. None the less, he also combined local, national and global or international elements in his non-dramatic poetry. Earlier, I alluded to the classical nature of *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, which are epic in scope. Here, I wish to emphasize their dedications. They are rare instances of Shakespeare locating himself, taking personal care over publications, addressing someone he knows by name. Speaking of *Venus and Adonis*, Shakespeare dedicates his "unpolished

lines” “TO THERIGHT HONORABLE HENRY WRIOTHESLY, EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON, AND BARON OF TICHFIELD.” Talking of *The Rape of Lucrece*, Shakespeare also dedicates his “untutored lines” to Southampton. Despite the classical themes, or perhaps because of them, Shakespeare addresses his friend and patron, his own unpolishedness and untutoredness helping to forge an English poetry, whose debt is to the classical world for theme and poetic technique, but also a rival to that ancient treasure. In the Sonnets, a form that owes its existence in English to Wyatt and Surrey, who translated and transformed Petrarch from the Italian, and also owes something to the work of French sonneteers like Du Bellay, Shakespeare speaks to a young man (who might or might not be Southampton) and a dark lady (whose identity is also a mystery) in an exploration of love, lust, time, death and many other themes in a locale that is not local, national or global in any specific way. The specifics of the poetry may have reached a global audience, but there is no sense of any location like Shallow’s house in Gloucestershire or Gaunt’s England as an “other Eden” or any kind of forest, castle or town in Windsor. It is another way to create English identity through character, language and action. In Shakespeare, the local, national and global mix in various ways in different genres or works, in the theatre or in non-dramatic poetry. Shakespeare borrows from ancients and moderns inside England and out to represent the universals of the particulars of English history, or the peculiar psychology of love and lust in the sonnets, narrative poems and comedies.

II

Like Shakespeare, Ezra Pound and Ted Hughes also bring together the local, national and international (global). Even within a language or culture in English, there are local, intercultural and transnational aspects. Pound and Hughes can illuminate this point. Pound was an American poet who lived in England for a time, and Hughes was an English poet who lived in the United States for a while. Both were influenced by those experiences. Both Pound and Hughes also benefitted from translating poetry from other cultures, so they took themselves out of the local within the Anglosphere and across cultures, literatures and languages.

T. S. Eliot, whose *Waste Land* benefitted from Pound’s editing, wrote an important introduction to Pound’s *Selected Poems* in which he says that Browning and Yeats, and not Whitman, an English and Anglo-Irish poet respectively and not an American poet, were “the first strong influences upon Pound” (Eliot 8). Then Eliot, himself an American who became British, says the next influences were the English poets, Swinburne and William Morris. Other influences on Pound are,

in Eliot's view, Dowson, Lionel Johnson and Fiona (Eliot 8–9). Eliot shows how Pound innovated verse in English: "One of Pound's most indubitable claims to genuine originality is, I believe, his revivification of Provençal and the early Italian poetry" (11). It is the other or the foreign that Pound, like Hakluyt and Shakespeare, uses sometimes to remake English culture, language, literature, what we now say in English rather than English. Eliot is perceptive in seeing the universal in the particular, which is one of the main points of my article, and that echoes William Blake's idea of seeing the world through a grain of sand. Choosing between universals and particulars, as in Aristotle's ranking of philosophy, poetry and history, may, in some ways, be beside the point. In fact, there are many permeations of the universal and the particular, and, more specifically, in the relations among the local, national and international or global, as I have been arguing. Eliot says of Pound that he sees Italy and medieval Provence "as contemporary with himself" and that "he has grasped certain things" in them "which are permanent in human nature," being much more modern, for Eliot, when he treats of them "than when he deals with modern life" (Eliot 11)¹. Thus, Eliot sees in Pound's earlier poems the influence of poets in English and in Provençal and Italian. Quite rightly, Eliot thinks that these influences prepare the way for Pound's version of the Anglo-Saxon poem, "The Seafarer," and what Eliot calls in Pound's *Cathay*, "the paraphrases from the Chinese" (12). Speaking of Pound as a translator, Eliot has high praise: "And good translation like this is not merely translation, for the translator is giving the original through himself, and finding himself through the original" (13). The self defines the other, the other the self, the original and translated poem defining each other in a new light.

When discussing Pound, Eliot has much to say about translation that is germane to the notion of local culture and the transcultural as they are expressed in literature: "As for *Cathay*, it must be pointed out that Pound is the inventor of Chinese poetry for our time" (Eliot 14). Eliot addresses illusions about translations; for instance, when a foreign poet is well translated into the idiom of our language and time, we think the translation gives us the original. The Elizabethans, according to Eliot, thought they got Homer through Chapman and Plutarch through North, but "we see that Chapman is more Chapman than Homer, and North more North than Plutarch, both localized three hundred years ago" (14). Eliot predicts that Pound's *Cathay* will be called magnificent poetry from the twentieth century more than a translation, something I have also said about Pound's Chinese poems. For Eliot,

1 On Pound and Provençal, see Capelli.

Pound invented Chinese poetry in English for his generation, and Eliot says that each generation needs to translate for itself and that Pound's poems and translations should be considered as one accomplished whole, all of which makes good sense. (Eliot 15)¹.

A few examples from Pound show the range of his creation and translation from within English and from without, from the local beyond the national to the international or global and back. The opening lines of Pound's rendition of "The Seafarer," from the Anglo-Saxon, a language that is a stranger unto modern English, although its ancestor, suggest that Pound's ear for poetry brings us lines of beauty that are not the original but that will lead us to enjoy them for themselves and perhaps seek the original, as we did in university: "May I for my own self's song's truth reckon, / Journey's jargon, how I in harsh days/Hardship endured oft" (Pound 77). The inversion of word order, alliteration, assonance and consonance all contribute to a sense of the Anglo-Saxon of the original while being poetry of high order itself. The "harsh" and "hard" echo with a difference that moves but builds the sense of the toughness of the journey.

In *Cathay*, Pound calls Li Bai (白, Li Po, Li Bo, Ri Haku), by the name Rihaku. Pound's poetry is great in and of itself, making the reader wonder about the greatness of the original Chinese, but never being identical to it or its equivalent. The opening of "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter" is a case in point: "While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead / I played about the front gate, pulling flowers" (Pound 129). There is nothing strained in these lines, reaching for the original in such a way as to turn the English from itself. Pound uses plain English, an analytical word order, and, through this simplicity and directness, achieves poetry. In "Leave-Taking Near Shoku," Pounds also creates lyrical lines in his rendition of the Chinese: "The walls rise in a man's face / Clouds grow out of the hill / at his horse's bridle" (Pound 136). The assonance of "a" in "walls" "a" and "man's" and the consonance in "walls," "rise," "man's," and "face" and the internal off-rhyme of "rise" and "face;" the play of assonance and almost assonance of short and long "o" in "Clouds grow out of;" the consonantal off-rhyme of "walls" and "hill" (although one is plural); the alliteration of "hill / at his horse's" (including the assonance in the first part); the buzz sound of the plural "s" in each of the three lines from "walls" to "his;" the short and long "i" sounds from "rise" to "bridle" all bind the lines together with a music of which the reader may not be conscious. Pound weaves this apparently simple English with a formal mastery. The poetry of Pound, as Eliot says and as I have said to audiences and classes, works as poetry

1 On Pound's relation to Homer, see Flack; on his *Cantos*, see Pollack.

even if some call it translation. It is not an easy thing to write fine and enduring poetry, so if the Chinese original inspires Pound to do so, then he has done his job. Like Eliot, I urge us to remember that translation is something that allows us to gain as well as lose, but that it also can never attain the original. Pound takes the “local” Anglo-Saxon or the regional Germanic realm of that language of his ancestors and mine, but also takes the Provençal, Italian and Chinese, the intercultural or transcultural and transforms English poetry. He may transmogrify the poetry of England, but Pound also goes beyond the national to the United States and all places that are Anglophone or study literature in English, even in the space of comparative literature and world literature, and takes poetry in English into a new space over time. As soon as other literatures, including those of France, Italy and China, are considered in relation to texts by Pound, then his poems transform them as they did his, so that text and context find themselves in ever-new configurations. The local, national and global (international or intercultural) act on one another and transform one another.

Like Hakluyt and Pound, Ted Hughes was keen on translation. Hughes saw translation as vital to expanding English poetry, as can be observed in his work on Miroslav Holub, Zbigniew Herbert, Vasko Popa, Yehuda Amichai and Samuel Beckett¹. Daniel Weissbort and Hughes edited the first ten issues of *Modern Poetry in Translation* (1965–71)². When Seamus Heaney reviewed Hughes’ *Wodwo* in 1967, he commended Hughes for the “quest for the father country of the mind” (“Book Review” 50–52). Heaney also regarded Hughes as being like W. B. Yeats because they both connect people to the land through feeling and myth as the creators of the ancient Greek dramas had done³. Hughes tried to use translation and crossed cultures in his work in drama. For instance, in 1959, Hughes worked with the composer Chou Wen-chung on a libretto of the *Bardo Thödol*, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Hughes also adapted Seneca’s *Oedipus*, which, in 1968, Peter Brook directed at the Old Vic Theatre in London. In 1971, Hughes also collaborated with Brook to create *Orghast*, a dramatic representation of the Prometheus myth for a festival in Iran. The language of *Orghast* is a new language that Hughes invented to explore transnational or transcultural mythology. Hughes wrote a great deal for the theatre as a powerful translator and adapter of poetry and drama, ancient and modern⁴. In his later years, Hughes translated Wedekind’s *Spring Awakening*,

1 See Roberts 81–82.

2 See Weissbort 7–14.

3 See Heaney, “The New Poet Laureate” 46.

4 See Bassnett 82.

Lorca's *Blood Wedding*, Racine's *Phèdre*, Aeschylus's *The Oresteia* and Euripides's *Alcestris*, so that this very English poet was, paradoxically, given to translation and to expanding the boundaries of his poetry and of English poetry with this intercultural and international exchange past and present.

The letters of Ted Hughes suggest that this figure who became the poet laureate of Britain was immersed in the local, national and international or global. Some of that range can be found in his interest in ecology. As a child, Hughes had a sense of place in Yorkshire and later settled in Taunton in Devon, and his sense of nature, whether he was at Cambridge or on London or in the United States or western Canada remained. His relation to nature and the ecosphere or biosphere grounded Hughes in the local, made him cry out to the nation to seek a clean environment and to engage with nature in Britain and North America. The natural world imbues Hughes' poetry and concerns his prose.

The Calder Valley, where Hughes grew up, appears in his letters, for instance to Fay Godwin, in which he said: "What grips me about the place, I think, is the weird collision of that terrible life of slavery—to work, cash, Methodism – which was an heroic life really, and developed heroic virtues — inside those black buildings, with that wilderness, which is really a desert, more or less uninhabitable" ("To Fay Godwin," 4 July 1976, *Letters* 379). Later, Ted Hughes recalled his "early experience of Methodist puritanism in the Calder Valley" ("To Nick Gammage," 7 April 1995, *Letters* 681). To Glyn Hughes, Ted Hughes referred to his own *Moortown* as "my Calder Valley book" after thanking Hughes for his own book about the region in *Best of Neighbours* (1979) ("To Glyn Hughes," [November 1979] *Letters* 430). In April 1997, Hughes was diagnosed with cancer. In his letters afterward, he revisited familiar themes and places, including the place of his childhood: "And where are the foxes of the wild Calder Valley?" ("To Keith Sagar," 15 August 1997, *Letters* 690). In writing to Herbert Lomas about his book of poetry, *A Useless Passion* (1998), about the death of his wife, a volume Hughes admired and with which he saw parallels in his own book of poems, *Birthday Letters*, about the death of his wife Sylvia Plath, Hughes said, referring to his favourite painter Cranach, "Calder Valley foliage always seems to me the model for Cranach's" ("To Herbert Lomas," 1 October 1998, *Letters* 732). Here nature and art connect between the local and the universal of mimesis. In one of his manuscripts, Hughes wrote about the lifelessness and acidity of the Don River, in the heart of the coal belt (Add Ms. 88918/6/12 Unbound 4074A, p. 44, British Library). Dennis O'Driscoll asked Seamus Heaney whether Ted Hughes and his fishing friend, the painter Barrie Cooke, had an influence on Heaney concerning environmental issues, and Heaney

replied thus: “Pollution, especially of rivers, was an obsession with the pair of them, and it was something I myself knew about from childhood. [...] So I was an apt pupil” (O’Driscoll 336)¹. Ted Hughes’s concern about nature is something local, national and global.

In addition to Pound and Hughes, there are other instances of the mixing of the local, national and international in the realm of culture, something discussed briefly in what follows. At some point, there seems to be no local and global culture, but a mixture of the two in some liminal space, sometimes within the same person or writer. Sometimes the local and the global can complicate or even occlude the national through transnational or transcultural instances or examples that are dual or multiple in culture, what we sometimes call multicultural now. Asia and the Asian are also keys to the local, national and global.

Here, I shall speak briefly of Western contacts with China about the time of Shakespeare or the Renaissance, and two writers of Asian background writing in North America, one in English in Canada and the other in Chinese in the United States. Nicola Trigault and Louis Gallagher translated Matteo Ricci (利瑪竇, 利瑪竇 *Lì Mǎdòu*, *Li Ma-tou*, *Li Madou*; 西泰 *Xītài*), an Italian Jesuit who lived in China and studied the culture even as he represented the church in Rome. Father Ricci was a Jesuit who cofounded the mission in China with Father Valignano. He wrote his diary in Italian, and it was translated into Latin and published in 1615 by Father Nicola Trigault. It was Trigault brought from Macao to Rome, along with an account of the death and burial of Ricci. About three hundred years after Marco Polo, Ricci was responsible for reopening the door to China. In the years following this publication, the work had four Latin editions; three in French; one each in German, Spanish, and Italian. Excerpts appeared in English in *Purchas His Pilgrim* in 1625. Three centuries after Ricci’s death, Father Tacchi Venturi published the original diary in Italian. In 1953, Father Louis J. Gallagher’s more complete English translation of the diary of Trigault’s Latin version appeared (see Hart, *Poetics of Otherness* 73–82).² Ricci was of both Italian-Latin cultures and of Chinese culture, and was himself translated across languages and cultures. Actual and cultural translation play a key role in making one locale global, in the meeting and changing of cultures. He was a go-between or mediator who explained one culture

1 On related themes in Hughes, see Gifford, Armitage, Whitley, Wormald.

2 In Ricci, see Gallagher, “Translator’s Preface,” xvii–xviii. The “Foreword” is by Richard J. Cushing, Archbishop of Boston, written 1953, ix–x. “Trigault to the Reader,” dated January 14, 1615, from Rome is on xi–xv. Gallagher’s “Translator’s Preface” is on xvii–xxii. Ricci’s main text begins on page 3.

to the other, but also rekindled a cultural exchange between Europe and China that changed each sphere.

All local cultures become global in some senses and all global cultures are rooted in the local. Two writers, Joy Kogawa and Bei Dao, also show a duality or multiplicity of places, times and cultures. Kogawa's lyric poetry represents the moment, which can never just be itself. In *Jericho Road* (1977), Kogawa uses a title that alludes to Jericho, which God promised to Joshua, but the road was that of the Good Samaritan, and this collection of poetry has a typology of then and now, here and there, a natural and supernatural road. On this way, strangers turn out to be friends and the unexpected happens, so identity and otherness, the local and the world beyond define each other¹. Japan is the other place in Kogawa. The different locale also exists for Bei Dao (Zhao Zhenkai), a Chinese poet, who creates local and faraway places in his lyric moments. In translation, we also experience a movement from the location of Chinese to the world of English. In *The Rose of Time: New and Selected Poems*, Eliot Weinberger presents a bilingual edition, including translations of poems from 1972 to 2009 by Bonnie S. McDougall, Weinberger and others. Bei Dao, in English translation, gives a vision of Asia and America, something that Kogawa also evokes in her poetry². Comparative literature is open and encourages comparison, such as of these poets and their multiple worlds³. Asia and the world encounter and change each other, and Asian countries developed a diaspora globally, including an important one in North America. The local seeks a new locale. Across the globe, people bring their local cultures to new places. The particular becomes universal, the local, global, and each affects the other, so the universal is made of particulars and the global of different local cultures

III

Socrates, Plato and Aristotle all valued universals, but did so from the particular vantage of Athens of their time. Paradoxically, the success of their argument for the universality of their philosophy and its precedence over poetry or what we might now call literature spread to Rome, and then to modern Europe and beyond with the expansion of western Europe to the New World and globally. Greek philosophy became Western philosophy and, in some ways, a significant strain of world philosophy. So this very local Greek philosophy of this polis was used for state or national and imperial means on a European and then a global scale. Plato and

1 See Ricci; Hart, *Textual Imitation* 121–133.

2 See Kogawa; Dao; Hart, *Textual Imitation* 133–136.

3 See Bessière, "Comparative Literature," *Qu'est-il arrive*; and Rorty.

Aristotle were also keys to the development of Christian theology, and Christianity was the religion of European states and empires, including the Russian Empire. Thomas Aquinas, for instance, found Aristotle to be a principal source for his thought. Thus, from a secular and religious point of view, these Greek philosophers spread from a city state to empires and states or nations.

In *Poetics*, Aristotle placed philosophy above poetry and both above history because universals were more important than particulars. Ironically, Aristotle was analyzing tragedy, epic and other genres of poetry in Athens and Greece, which were culturally and temporally bounded, but valued universality above the specific historical context. What Plato and Aristotle talk about as keys to language, literature and others subjects is mimesis, imitation or representation. The Platonic Socrates seeks to displace Homer as the centre of Greek education, seeing in the poet and his poetry an imitative way that is at three removes from reality, unlike philosophy which considers reality and the balance of soul and state in terms of beauty, justice and truth. Homer, however, has stuck around and was part of literary and rhetorical training from the Greeks to the present in Western culture, and that spread globally with the expansion of the European nations and empires. The rivalry of different disciplines such as philosophy, literature and history has not gone away, although it can often be counterproductive as fields overlap. Aristotle was used to argue that the indigenous peoples of the New World were natural slaves and not quite human. Sepúlveda took this position and Las Casas argued against it, showing the contention or *agon* of ideas beyond the original contests within Athens. Montaigne also criticized the Spaniards and Europeans for their abuses in the New World. Philosophy and poetry could, through modes of interpreting mimesis or other ideas, be abused within European nations and beyond with globalization, but this abuse was also resisted. Interpretations varied and vied.

Shakespeare represents the local, national and intercultural (transnational) in his poems and plays. He imitates and reconfigures the classical world of Greece and Rome, revisits their history and stories in different genres of epic, tragedy and comedy. In the history play, as well as in the comedy *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shakespeare stages the local and the national, that is, England. In the *First Folio*, his friends Heminge and Condell had decided to call histories only those plays about the nation, and in Shakespeare's day that was England and not Britain, Scotland or anywhere else. Like Hakluyt before him (as Hakluyt's *Discourse on Western Planting* was completed in 1584 even if it was not printed until 1877) and Pound and Hughes after him, Shakespeare used translation and other cultures to help to make the identity of English and England. The exotic could remake the local or

national culture. Shakespeare blends Englishness with otherness to make something new, as Pound and Hughes did. Like Homer, Shakespeare became a centre of his people's education. Shakespeare became the heart of English literature and then of literature in English, and with the spread of British and American power, of Comparative literature and world literature.

Pound, an American, and Hughes, an Englishman, help to make literature in English even more international and, to use Pound's dictum, make it new. Poetry, for Pound and Hughes, cannot be sealed from the world and finds enrichment with other European and Asian cultures. Through Matteo Ricci, Joy Kogawa and Bei Dao, I briefly suggest that there is a whole vast field concerning the local, national and global in relation to European contacts in Asia and Japanese and Chinese writers writing in Canada and the United States (and elsewhere in English, French and other languages). The particular and the universal are like the local and the global, and we need both to know, and sometimes they are mediated through states and nations and even, in the past, empires. The movement can be both ways because we know through our local time and place and generalize from that into something more global and universal, but the operation can be mutual. In other words, the local and the global modify each other. In fact, they are often bound up in a dynamic operation over time and space that involves an intermediary polity, often the state or nation. The local, national and global are often inextricable and to favour one over the other is to miss that inextricability, which can be seen as much through literature as through philosophy and history. We write and read locally, nationally and globally as we are specific and general beings in thought, imagination and action.

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