

Editor's Notes

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Among the last words Michel Foucault wrote is the remark that “the truth is never the same; there can be truth only in the form of the other world and the other life” (356). In Foucault’s view, the truth of the world never remains fixed or self-identical; it is always open to revision; it is historical in that it changes with the changing history; it has to come from those whose voices have been hitherto unheard or repressed. In other words, to offer the truth is to open up a new perspective on the state of things in the present world. In this sense, Foucault’s definition of truth obviously recalls the Heideggerian notion of truth as unconcealment or disclosure of the concealed state of things, or Slavoj Žižek’s claim that “*truth is partial*, accessible only when one takes sides and is no less universal for this reason” (*First as Tragedy* 6; emphasis in original). For to speak truth from the perspective of an other world or an other life is to cut an opening in the dominant system of knowledge and thought, in which we can re-view and rethink the world, or, to reveal the “partial” truth from the standpoint of the repressed or oppressed of the earth.

Then what is the truth of the world’s present? In a lately presented paper critical of developmentalism, Arif Dirlik sketches ten crises or contradictions of the global present, among which stand out the world’s deteriorating environment, everyday economic life destabilized by the proliferation of capital and market, colonialism in its various covert or informal forms, war geared towards hegemony, social and global inequality, corporatized higher education, and false universalism. In a different context Žižek describes the global present in terms of four major antagonisms: namely, the eco-environmental crisis, the challenge to the established parameters of intellectual property, the unethical potential of biogenetic technology, and contemporary forms of “social apartheid—new walls and slums” (“How to Begin from the Beginning?” 53). In his estimate, the fourth antagonism, the confrontation between “the

included and the excluded,” is to be taken as the most crucial and subversive one.

What is the bearing of the truth of the global present as such on *ARIEL*? Beginning as a commonwealth literature journal and recasting itself first as a journal for postcolonial studies during the 1980s and 1990s and then again as a forum for debates on issues in the field of globalization and postcolonial studies in the new millennium, *ARIEL*'s itinerary of evolution is evidence enough for the necessity of its or any academic journal's constant shift in focus to adapt itself to the global present, to commit itself to the truth of the moment. What new adaptations or frontiers does *ARIEL* need to make on account of this truth? In his *ARIEL* 40th anniversary special issue essay “What Is the Postcolonial?” Robert Young defines postcolonialism as being able to offer “a language” for “those who have no place, who seem not to belong, of those whose knowledges and histories are not allowed to count” (14). In his view it is “this preoccupation with the oppressed, with the subaltern classes, with minorities in any society, with the concerns of those who live or come from elsewhere, that constitutes the basis of postcolonial politics and remains the core that generates its continuing power” (14). Young's (re)definition of postcolonialism, though somewhat continuous with what he writes in his previous works, seems to propose a pronounced difference or change in the critical and political agenda of postcolonial critique, for it not only revises its previously known parameters, but can be taken as suggesting new tasks postcolonialism is to perform in a new historical moment when the world is faced with newly emergent crises or antagonisms. In this sense, the editors of *ARIEL* take Young's (re)definition of postcolonialism as a gesture towards reinventing postcolonial studies as well as a call for broadening the scope of *ARIEL*'s concerns.

While continuing to publish articles exploring commonwealth literature, postcolonial writings, and the impact of globalization on nations, communities, and individuals, or the interaction between the global and the local, we welcome, from now on, contributions dealing with issues of eco-environmental crisis, uneven geographical development, human rights, cultural or cross-cultural translation as a strategy of negotiating international democracy and genuine universalism, displacement and

diaspora studies, and various situations of (neo)coloniality internal or integral to the ongoing processes of globalization, as long as they are framed in terms of literary or cultural studies.

Works Cited

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