

fellow citizens. And to that degree, the discourse in which it is written functions—paradoxically—to maintain the Eurocentrism that it ostensibly denies by narrowing the path that a writer travels to reach the podium in Stockholm from locations to the east.

## ORHAN PAMUK WINS THE NOBEL PRIZE

### The Cases of Orhan Pamuk and Mo Yan

The problem at stake in the theorization of literary inequality, then, is not whether peripheral writers “borrow” from the center, or whether or not literary traffic flows from center to periphery; it is the restitution, to the subordinated of the literary world, of the forms, specificities and hardships of their struggles.

—PASCAL CASANOVA, “LITERATURE AS WORLD”

The Nobel Prize for Literature speaks for a critical consensus that claims to belong at once to Sweden, to Europe, and to the world. Clad in formal dress, it recommends one writer annually as necessary reading, and it circulates that recommendation widely through a transnational literary elite. The strength of its authority ensures that the new laureate’s oeuvre circulates, too, in translations that appear with the Nobel stamp on the cover, and a global canon expands to include them. The inevitability of that expansion makes the Nobel Prize interesting as an index of something larger than itself: of the ways that literary value works across cultures and over time, amid the structural inequalities that trouble our relations with each other in the present. I draw on a growing body of scholarship about literary prizes in this chapter to look critically at the ways the Swedish Academy strains against the Eurocentrism of its history, stating good intention to globalize the canons it creates. It hones the criteria it wields to recognize the best writers from traditions it has historically neglected, and it valorizes those writers quite often for defying the repressive machineries of their states. But that investment it makes in the political heroism of the writers it anoints takes shape in the vocabularies of social justice and human rights that are foundational to the literary cultures of the West. The canonization of writers like Orhan Pamuk hinges on their cultivation of adversarial relationships not only to their governments but to vast swaths of their

### WHAT A NOBEL PRIZE MEANS

The global import of the Nobel Prize is hard to appreciate from the metropolitan centers of the United States and Europe, where the announcement of the latest laureate is audible only in the reading classes, among people who could compile a list of ten or twenty likely laureates to win in the years to come. But those announcements also reach a wider audience in the nations at the historical margins of the “world republic of letters”—in China, for example, and in Turkey—and for good reason. Like “emerging markets” in monetary terms, these nations pay close attention to the valuation of their cultures on a global market, and they tally their successes in terms that also have broad political implications. The Nobel Prize is coveted by states and citizens who perceive it as an enhancement to the value of a national culture in “the economics of prestige,” as James English suggests, condensing “a whole range of historically distinct aims and functions, thereby inspiring widely divergent forms of competitive emulation and antagonisms.”<sup>1</sup> It assumes meaning far beyond the literary.

And economic metaphors are ripe in these analyses of precisely what it means, because they fit. Like money, the Nobel Prize translates local values for trade across all manner of borders. Primary among the transnational literary prizes that a writer can win, the Nobel serves as “the greatest proof of literary consecration in the world republic of letters,” as Pascale Casanova writes, “bordering on the definition of literary art itself.”<sup>2</sup> And in that definitional capacity, it becomes an object of desire for nations that are particularly interested in increasing their visibility on a global stage. As it demonstrates the competitive strength of a nation and its people, it testifies also to some value that runs deeply through their cultural heritage. In that sense, the Nobel is primary among the literary prizes that function as an “instrument,” according to James English, “for negotiating transactions between cultural and economic, cultural and social, or cultural and political capital—which is to say that they are our most effective institutional agents of *capital intracconversion*.<sup>3</sup> Literary prizes make a nation’s assets

not only visible but fungible all over the world; they redistribute cultural capital that becomes available for translation into economic and political terms. And the Nobel Prize is the biggest of them all, by every measure. So it makes sense that the Nobel Prize commands the highest value in the nations that have laureates in the shortest supply. Speakers of Mandarin Chinese, for example, have coined a phrase to name “the Nobel Complex” (*Nuobeier qingjie*)—the anxieties that policy makers and intellectuals express about the relative dearth of Chinese literary laureates.<sup>4</sup> And those anxieties spread through the national culture at large, as sinologist Perry Link observes: Nobel Prizes are tallied in Chinese media “like Olympic gold medals as signs of the world’s respect—which, over recent centuries, many Chinese [people] have felt to be less than it ought to be.”<sup>5</sup> A Nobel Prize for Literature is coveted in China as proof that in the nation’s economic and political power is underwritten by a culture that is equally rich.<sup>6</sup> Its authorizing power makes it efficient as a mechanism for the redistribution of cultural capital on a global scale, so it is most closely watched by the nations that have the most to gain from that redistribution.

And as non-Western nations watch the movements of the Swedish Academy with close attention, the academy returns the gaze. Processes of globalization teach even the most casual observer of cultural history in the twentieth century that institutions relegate themselves to the past when they ignore the global dimensions of the work they do. The Swedish Academy has worked to ensure its currency by expanding its reach to the South and East, and that expansionary project demands a reappraisal of the criteria by which Nobel Laureates are selected. Academy spokespeople have been compelled to speak publicly on matters of importance for literary critics, including me: what kind of literature becomes recognizable as “good” beyond all local and national traditions—and what does “good” mean in this impossibly transcendent context? More broadly still, what good can the best literature do—aesthetically and politically—in the nonfictional world?

The annual selection of the Nobel Laureate for Literature answers these questions provisionally by entering a new name in the canon of world literature it constructs. That name aggregates with all that precede it to yield a sustained answer to the critical dilemmas that bedevil the contemporary debates about world literature that I analyze more fully in the next chapter. With those debates in mind, I read Pamuk’s case in the context of other

non-Western laureates to develop an argument about the terms and conditions of their canonization. My argument operates from the premise that the Swedish Academy goes against the intention it states to promote a literary culture that works on a global scale by the investment it makes in writers who behave like good citizens of participatory democracies even if they are not. That assumption of the universality of the cultural and political legacies of the European Enlightenment secures the enduring Westerness of world literature while it also enables the inclusion of the non-Western writers that literary institutions need to survive in the twenty-first century. To show how this works and what it means for the world literature of the future, I turn here to the cultural processes surrounding Orhan Pamuk’s entry to the Nobel pantheon, and I compare it to the controversies that attend China’s Mo Yan.

Mo Yan’s Nobel Laureate for Literature in 2012 was received in ways that were symmetrical but opposite to Pamuk’s. Where Pamuk is understood in the West as a dissident to an oppressive state, Mo Yan is known for complying with the Chinese regime. That compliance polarized Western critics, much as Pamuk’s refusal of a national taboo polarized his Turkish publics. And in Mo Yan’s case as in Pamuk’s, the novelist’s worthiness for a Nobel Prize was judged by his willingness to speak against a state that would silence him: Pamuk was read as a logical extension of the tradition by which the Nobel rewards writers who speak truth to power, and Mo Yan was read as an exception to that rule. These cases that seem diametrically opposite fit together in my analysis, which traces the ways non-Western writers find their canonization contingent on the political work they do, as they are canonized by their willingness and ability to advance the Western cultural logics in the East—and, more particularly, to advance the cultural logic that renders the artist a good citizen of a democratic state.

#### THE PRIZE AS A CULTURAL ARTIFACT

The discourse of the Nobel Prize strains toward universality, but it is an artifact of nineteenth-century Sweden. The prize was the second major invention of the chemist Alfred Nobel, and it has been described as atonement for the first. Nobel inherited a family business in weapons manufacture, and he compounded it by inventing dynamite. His biographers describe the literature prize as his effort to write his own obituary after he read one that

was published prematurely by mistake when he was quite alive. After the death of his brother, Ludvig, in 1888, a French newspaper mistook one Nobel for another and announced the passing of “a Merchant of Death . . . who made his fortune by finding a way to kill the most people in the shortest time possible.” This unflattering portrait of the scientist seems to have spurred Alfred Nobel to write a counternarrative by constructing the Nobel Prize for Literature as corollary to the Nobel Prize for Peace. He left a chunk of his legacy annually to one writer “who, during the preceding year, shall have conferred the greatest benefit on mankind.” The greatness of a literary work was reduced to the good it would do, since every laureate for literature would author “in the field of literature the most outstanding work of an ideal tendency.”<sup>7</sup>

But what kind of literature is that? The “ideal” that Nobel imagined was wholly free of any national or cultural bias, as evidenced by his admonishment to the judges that “no consideration whatever shall be given to the nationality of the candidates, so that the most worthy shall receive the prize, whether he be a Scandinavian or not.”<sup>8</sup> This concern that the laureates might come with excessive frequency from the Scandinavian corner of the literary world may seem quaint today, but that semblance only testifies to the academy’s subsequent efforts to make Nobel’s cosmopolitanism manifest. Over the course of the past century, the Swedish Academy has extended its judgments farther away from Stockholm in every sense, consolidating its authority by convincing literary publics of its ability to discover literary texts of an “ideal tendency” wherever such “outstanding work” might reside in the world.

That claim to universality is not universal at all. Historically specific to the cultures that descend from the European Enlightenment, it tethers literary value to a writer’s ability to act like a good citizen in very Western terms by critiquing a regime that is transitory, calling attention to flaws in a state that will refuse to fix them. That assumption of the perfectability of the state is built into the mission statement of the Swedish Academy, where it underwrites a corollary assumption of the essential desirability of a participatory democracy populated by citizens who act freely, through processes of inquiry, protest, self-expression, and self-reflection. The good citizen the academy imagines as an author of world literature resembles the nation-state in this sense: imperfect but trying to become better, she works toward perpetual peace on a global scale. But as that globality be-

comes imaginable only in distinctly Western terms, it affords little space to writers like Orhan Pamuk, who claim their citizenship in states that reject some if not all of these claims for the good that world literature can do.

#### HOW TURKEY RECEIVED ORHAN PAMUK’S PRIZE

That rejection persists unevenly throughout Turkish culture, where it is unconfined to organs of the state. When the news of Pamuk’s his Nobel Prize hit his nation’s mainstream media, the Turkish people pondered what they had gained and lost, and agreement extended only as far as the conclusion that they had a stake in the matter. Pride at the sight of a Turk’s ascent to the podium in Stockholm was matched with worry over what he might say there, and how the Turkish people would appear to the world through him. Beyond the bookish subcultures of Turkey where Pierre Bourdieu—and, for that matter, Orhan Pamuk—is actually read, his cultural currency in a global market was tracked with the close attention that an emergent company might pay to track data about the success of its brand. The prevailing assessment of the data was mixed, as the daily *Milliyet* discovered by asking Turks around the country whether they felt “happy” to hear the news of his Nobel Prize. The 26 percent who found cause for celebration were dwarfed by the 36 percent who did not, combined with the 21 percent who said they couldn’t describe how they felt.<sup>9</sup> The magnitude of Orhan Pamuk’s celebrity among them makes their silence less audible as evidence of apathy than as the expression of an ambivalence that is profound.<sup>10</sup>

Domestic responses to Pamuk’s Nobel Prize were shaped by a broad recognition of the scarcity of Turkish writers in Western literary canons. A blog poster to the *Guardian* questioned whether Orhan Pamuk should be—as he inevitably would be—the sole representative of his national culture abroad: “While trying not to drop into nationalist bias,” the poster writes,

I must say that Western intellectuals love Pamuk since his style reflects the Orientalist representation of the East from a Turk’s eyes. Actually, that’s an image of the East many Western readers [are] seeking to read, the fantasies and obscurity of the Eastern geography. As Said, “the representation of East from the Orientalist East.” I don’t think [Pamuk] gave a new style to the Turkish literature; he is not an activist political figure, [either]. That’s the way his identity was advertised in

Western circles. [His Nobel Prize is a] big injustice to many strong writers in contemporary Turkish literature.<sup>11</sup>

This post captures a wide array of the concerns that are expressed in Turkey's public sphere about Orhan Pamuk and his Nobel Prize—about Pamuk's persona as “an activist political figure,” and about the degree to which that figure satisfies Orientalist desires when it appears in the West. Those concerns are exacerbated by the prospect that Pamuk is the victor in a zero-sum game that only one Turkish writer can win, as the *Guardian* comments attest. When the original poster frames Pamuk's victory as “a big injustice to many strong writers” who vie with him for the job of representing the Turkish people to the West, another poster chimes in to name the names: “Readers who are wondering about better Turkish writers would be advised to check the works of Leyla Erbil, Tahsin Yucel, Yashar Kemal, Murathan Mungan and Aslı Erdogan among others.”<sup>12</sup> It is unlikely that many of the *Guardian's* readers would take that suggestion, since so few of these writers are available in English translation at all. The poster's impulse to mention them, anyway, suggests the depth of the wish that the readers who embrace Pamuk as the harbinger of a more global literary culture might read more Turkish writers than one.<sup>13</sup>

#### WHAT DO WESTERN PUBLICS WANT FROM A NON-WESTERN LAUREATE?

Notoriously monolingual, Anglophone audiences read very little literature that was not written in English, even in translation, and the narrowness of our reading stands in sharp contrast to the broad access that new media—social and otherwise—provide to people and places all over the world. The parochialism of technology's users stands in contrast to the globality that technology affords, and the discourses of world literature gain new currency in this moment when humans lag behind the machines that we have created, as I argue in the next chapter. The Nobel Prize serves a useful purpose for readers with this limited attention, too: distilling a whole national tradition into a single name, the judges for the Swedish Academy extend the promise of a text that looks through a “window onto a foreign world,” to invoke David Damrosch's phrase, and compresses what it sees. World

literature becomes legible as a humanistic supplement to the data that are readily available in an information age.

As the Swedish Academy certifies the consensus of professional literary critics, it also produces the broader literary public it addresses when it broadcasts its verdicts across two different species of distance at once. It states its claim to span the circumference of the globe while it also travels the less mappable geography that exists within every nation: the distances of class and culture that separate literary institutions from the publics that surround them. On that scale, the Nobel Prize communicates the meaning of the literary within and beyond the nation, and it articulates the value of a national culture to the world, generating the imagination of a more transnational literary public. Its symbolic power at both of these registers seems unlikely to diminish in an era of increasing globalization.

In the context of that *longue durée*, it seems particularly significant that Pamuk's strained relationship to his state and its citizens is more epitomizing than unique among other Nobel Laureates for Literature like him, who travel from the margins of the canon that the Swedish Academy creates. As I have suggested, the small cadre of non-Western laureates—which includes J. M. Coetzee, Imre Kertész, Naguib Mahfouz, and Gao Xingjian—have generally found their warm welcome in the West coincident with a chill that grew around them in the national cultures to which they were born, and the historical specificity of each case does not obscure the pattern.<sup>14</sup> Each was the first writer from his or her nation to become a Nobel Laureate for Literature, and each found that honor linked temporally if not causally to measurable degrees of alienation from home.

The repetition of that grand narrative implies that Pamuk's problems are at least as structural as they are circumstantial. Non-Western Nobel Laureates have frequently found it difficult to bring their literary honors home, which suggests to me that the inverse degrees of warmth that Pamuk receives at home and abroad reflect conditions that are deeply embedded in the processes of world literature. That is also to say that they reflect the conditions by which Western canons expand their reach to the South and East at the turn of the twenty-first century. The animosities that Pamuk elicited from his fellow citizens took shape in nationalist discourses that have a long history in Turkey, but they were inflamed by the very Western discourse in which the Nobel Prize is given. My project here is to analyze that

discourse that precedes and produces the announcement of Pamuk's Nobel Laureate and to ask: What do Western critics want from a non-Western writer of world literature? Who is he expected to be, and what is he expected to do?

The sacrificial rhetoric I discussed in chapter 3 is surely not intended to make non-Western writers pay elevated prices for their entry to the Anglo-phone publics they need to attain canonical status, but that is precisely what they do. And Western critics work against their stated purpose in much the same way when they hold Pamuk accountable for the representation of the Turkish publics who hold him accountable, too, to an equal and opposite extent. But if those effects are unintended, they follow directly from the cultural logics that make world literature work, which makes it incumbent on Western critics to ask: what is it about the ways that our institutions honor non-Western writers of world literature that so frequently jeopardizes their security as well as their harmonious relations with their fellow citizens? It seems obvious to me that, as Western critics learn to read non-Western literary traditions and to think on a more global scale, the writers we value most should always retain their ability to leave our company and go home. So it is with that goal in mind that I look critically at the theoretical models and institutional processes that Western critics use to balance our aesthetic, intellectual, and political commitments, including the protection of the writers we value most.

tension to call my verses poetry," claiming that he wrote literature only as a means to other ends: "to relieve depression, or to improve my English."<sup>16</sup> That denial of any specifically literary ambition might be the self-deprecation of a scientist straying beyond the limits of his expertise, but it also expresses a belief that Nobel expressed often: that great literature always does some good in the world, and its primary value lies in that extraliterary benefit.

That primacy is assumed and described in a tragedy Nobel wrote under the title *Nemesis* (1896). Writing in the last year of his life, Nobel imagined the lady Beatrice Cenci's reflection on the proper development of a child, who "grew and developed into a thinking, sentient being with an inner world of poesy that no tyranny could extinguish."<sup>17</sup> The poem works polemically to assert poetry's centrality to the education of a "thinking, sentient being," who is defined in turn by his imperviousness to tyranny, thanks to his engagement with literature. Fostering the interiority that makes individuals sufficiently strong to assert their will in a participatory democracy, poetry serves a political function even if it lacks overtly political content. To the degree that it is good, it turns its readers into good citizens of a nation that relies on literature to do its cultural work.

Nobel assumed the necessity of that connection between the literary and the political in ways that are historically particular to his moment. Citing the Romantic poets as inspiration, he constructed the Nobel Prize by the same discursive logic that Percy Bysshe Shelley used to assert that "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." This assumption that every good poem functions like every good law is inscribed throughout the founding documents of the Nobel Prize, which guides literary readers toward better behavior by identifying the authors who contribute to world peace by writing well. This direct relation between good literature and good citizenship is easy to read as a buttress for the grand narratives of the European Enlightenment, but it also speaks soothingly to the personal anxieties of Alfred Nobel. By resting the tools for peace in the hands of every individual, it holds the inventor of dynamite no more responsible for war than anyone else. Literature enjoys full autonomy from the political while at the same time promising a better world in political terms.

The Swedish Academy has maintained this Romantic construction while it also checks the parochialism of its early history. For the first five decades that Nobel Laureates were named, the vast majority came from

#### THE POLITICS INSCRIBED IN THE PRIZE

These are not entirely new concerns in the history of the Swedish Academy, which has always made explicit its activist intentions, although it has not always made the contours of its politics so clear. The Danish critic Georg Brandes noted the ambiguity of Alfred Nobel's mission statement, so he asked a friend of Nobel's what the founder meant when he wrote that the laureate should be the writer who confers in that year "the greatest benefit on mankind." Nobel "was an Anarchist," the friend noted, so, "by idealistic he meant that which adopts a polemical or critical attitude to Religion, Royalty, Marriage, Social Order generally."<sup>18</sup> The committee inquired further into this necessary relationship that Nobel saw between the literary and the political, and they found it drawn also in the literature that he wrote. An unpublished but productive poet, Nobel disavowed "the slightest pre-

Europe, and a small minority came from the United States. A handful came from the global South and East, like Rabindranath Tagore (1913), but most of the laureates in that category also had meaningful ties to Western nations, like Rudyard Kipling (1907) and Pearl S. Buck (1938). The academy's failure to appreciate deserving writers from outside the United States and Europe became a matter of public record in 1986, when Kjell Espmark expressed the committee's intention to "intensify its own investigations of the growth points of literature in various parts of the world."<sup>18</sup> That intensification has happened incrementally since then. Between 1993 and 2013 more than half of the literary laureates were citizens of the European Union, North America, or the United Kingdom. And the "parts of the world" that remain underrepresented among laureates cohere in terms of gender as well as geography, as only six of those who were chosen over those twenty years were women.

The persistence with which white men from Western nations remain overrepresented among laureates—even after decades littered with critics' calls for a canon that is more truly and inclusively global—testifies to the profundity of the problem.

"The slim quantity of non-Western laureates is matched historically by the poor quality of the recognition they gain. As the Swedish Academy has worked to expand its view around the world, it has also asserted the cultural particularity of literary taste, as in the rationale for the selection of W. B. Yeats in 1922, when the academy's Anders Österling included an admonishment to a cosmopolitan public that is imagined in the second-person plural:

We must be careful to judge literary works that are to us more or less strange, not according to our own standards, but against their proper background and according to what we may infer that they mean to the people of the country where they were produced and whose local traditions and national culture make it easier for them to appraise both the content and the form of such works.<sup>19</sup>

This cautionary note is striking in many ways, but not least for its emphasis on audience. Österling describes an institution that relies heavily on national publics to reconcile the disproportion it sees between its members' expertise, which is necessarily limited, and the infinite range of literatures from all over the world.<sup>20</sup> If Österling is to be believed, then the Swedish Academy binds itself into illogic when it claims to work by two opposite criteria at once, declaring its authority over a global literary consensus while it

the work elicits in its national culture—to the degree that the academy "may infer" that. Gathering those inferences from all over the world, the academy works like a court of law to arbitrate the cases nations make for their greatest writers, and it chooses the most compelling. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say that it functions like a representative democracy to count the votes of local constituencies and amplify their consensus on a global scale. Clearly, that is not how world literature works.

#### THE SWEDISH ACADEMY AS AN ARBITER OF LOCAL VALUE

Orhan Pamuk's case suggests that the Swedish Academy is neither willing nor able to depend on the democratic method that Österling describes. If the academy had begun to estimate Pamuk's literary value by trying to "infer" what his novels "mean to the people of the country," his candidacy for laureate would have ended there. An editorial from 2005 by Ayşe Özgun might have convinced the academy that the Turkish people would reject Pamuk as their representative in Stockholm if they were given the choice. "He wants to tell the whole world how horrible Turkey and the Turkish people are," Özgun lamented.

That is his one and only message. He gets this message out through his books and speeches. He must write those words with drooling pleasure at his keyboard. He must get so carried away while writing that some nights he forgets to sleep. That's how I imagine Pamuk at his keyboard writing his world-famous books.<sup>21</sup>

This portrait of the author as a venomous monster is extreme—overwrought, antiliterary, and perhaps also paranoid—but it is hardly anomalous in Turkey's public sphere.<sup>22</sup>

And it has had no discernably negative effect on Pamuk's reputation in the West. In fact, the animosities that he has elicited from his domestic audience have only heightened his value in Western literary canons, contradicting the logic that rests his literary value on his ability to represent Turkish culture reliably to the world. It is this definition of literary value that I aim to challenge here, noting how it serves the interests of Western critics and institutions at the expense of the non-Western writers they prize. The academy binds itself into illogic when it claims to work by two opposite criteria at once, declaring its authority over a global literary consensus while it

also amplifies a judgment that is crucially local to the West. There is little wonder that the Swedish Academy cannot—and will not—fulfill both of those mutually exclusive promises. And students of Western history will not be surprised to discover that the cost of our institutions' relative failures is born disproportionately by the most recent entrants to them—in this case, writers like Orhan Pamuk, who are canonized by discourses that leave them little room to move.

The academy has excluded its non-Western laureates from the transcendental scale they need to establish their superlative greatness. Western writers are acclaimed for producing work of such value that it transcends any mark of their locality, as when France's Claude Simon won his Nobel in 1985 for creating work that showed no traces of its author's Frenchness, combining “the poet's and the painter's creativeness with a deepened awareness of time in the depiction of the human condition.” Such universality is the privilege of the centrally located, and François Mauriac had it, too. He won his Nobel Prize in 1952 “for the deep spiritual insight and the artistic intensity with which he has in his novels penetrated the drama of human life.” By contrast, non-Western literary laureates have won their Nobel Prizes by embodying their particularity rather than transcending it. When Yasunari Kawabata won the prize in 1968, it was for “his narrative mastery, which with great sensibility expresses the essence of the Japanese mind.”<sup>23</sup>

Through that essentializing language, the Swedish Academy asserts the value of Kawabata's literary work as a commodity, but it also asserts the value of its own institutional work as an importer. It contends that Western readers enrich themselves when they gain access to the non-Western world through writers that the Swedish Academy discovers, locating its value in its purchase on essential truths that are hard to find. That hard binarism between Western universality and Eastern particularity softened as the cultural logics of multiculturalism took hold in the West over the second half of the twentieth century, but the particularity of non-Western writers remained central to their canonization. Wole Soyinka won his Nobel Prize in 1986, for example, for “fashion[ing] the drama of existence” that every human experiences, and for doing that aesthetic work in “wide cultural perspective and with poetic overtones.” Central to his achievement was this representation of a universal experience in an aesthetic vocabulary that is distinctly Nigerian, harmonizing the local with the global with the strength of his literary craft.<sup>24</sup>

And if Soyinka's ceremony was in his honor, it also congratulated Western cultures on their ability to overcome the racialized prejudices that secure the pantheon of Nobel Laureates as a pantheon of whiteness. By integrating that canon incrementally, the academy advances on a global scale the “geopolitical race narrative” that Jodi Melamed describes as a product of U.S. multiculturalism, which maintains that “African American integration within U.S. society and advancement through equality, defined through a liberal framework of legal rights and racially inclusive nationalism, would establish the moral legitimacy of U.S. global leadership.”<sup>25</sup> The Swedish Academy extends that narrative on the scale of the globe by legitimizing Western hegemony, culturally and politically, as an agent of progress for all. Defining progress along the contours of the grand narratives of the European Enlightenment, the academy voices the minority position of humanists in the age of global capital, as I argue in the next chapter, while it also speaks implicitly as an organ of Western nation-states. The imbalance of power that structures those relations is both dramatized and temporarily obscured by the ritual embrace between blackness and whiteness on stage in Stockholm.

And as the annual announcement of a new Nobel Laureate consolidates Western power in racialized terms, it also extends the hegemony of the West over a “world literary space,” as Pascale Casanova terms it.<sup>26</sup> As the Swedish Academy recognizes the need to expand its jurisdiction farther beyond the borders of Europe, it produces that globality by logic that follows Descartes': the world republic of letters *thinks* demonstrably whenever it rationalizes the selection of a new laureate, and that very public act of thinking demonstrates that *it exists*. And as it confirms that *it thinks, therefore it is*, it also answers the ontological question of *what it is* by altering the shape of a global literary canon with every laureate it selects. Seen through this lens, the history of the Nobel Prize in the twentieth century becomes a legible as an account of the changing values of Western cultural institutions and the literary canons they produce as they reach beyond the geographic border between East and West. As the Swedish Academy fulfills its stated intention to honor more writers who claim their citizenship in nations that are neither North American nor European, it cultivates its legitimacy as an institution for the West and the world. When the academy praised Naguib Mahfouz in 1988 for creating “works rich in nuance—now clear-sightedly realistic, now evocatively ambiguous, who has formed

an Arabian narrative art that applies to all mankind,” the announcement testified explicitly to the cosmopolitan tastes of this institution that resides in the northernmost corner of Europe. It staked a claim also for the global scale of the literary community for which it speaks, asserting the authority of the Swedish Academy over the whole literary world in the emergent discourses of multiculturalism, postcolonialism, and *globalisme*.

#### PARTICULARITY, REPRESENTATION, AND QUALITY

But as the academy announces its commitment to a criterion for literary value that favors no particular race, gender, or nation, it protests too much. The announcement for Mahfouz addresses an implied reader who cannot be trusted to assume that the greatest practitioners of “Arabian narrative art” exert universal appeal; this has to be said. In saying it, the academy renders the canonization of non-Western writers contingent on their cultural particularity and, moreover, on their utility as instruments to advance the grand narratives of the West. That contingency is captured succinctly in the narrative that Pascale Casanova tells about V. S. Naipaul’s Nobel Prize in 2001: the prize “completed the process of [Naipaul’s] assimilation” from Trinidad to England, Casanova writes, “by giving his literary and national transmutation its highest and most perfect form in him.” His Trinidadian history became essential to his celebrity as “an English writer who has now become universal,” a writer for the whole world. The “supreme recognition” of his laureate “allowed him to ‘justify’ the ambiguities of his position, on the strength of which he claimed to be able to state the truth about the disenfranchised peoples of the earth with greater authority than others, while at the same time taking advantage of his membership in both worlds to adopt the least favorite view possible of these peoples.”<sup>27</sup> The Nobel Prize gave Mahfouz new access to literary publics beyond his nation while it also authenticated his relationship to the local constituency that was presumed to stand behind him, and it imagined that locality in impossible global terms. Affirming the novelist’s ability to represent his people without asking for their consent, the prize certified him as a speaker for the “disenfranchised peoples of the earth”—a voice for the subalterns all over the world who could not speak in Stockholm for themselves.

That system of valuation is applied also to writers who occupy marginal positions within Western borders, as the announcement of Toni Morri-

son’s Nobel Prize in 1993 attests. It is as carefully coded as the announcement of Pamuk’s, and it also works from the assumption that the best literature salves wounds of the political and historical variety. Honoring Morrison in those terms, the Swedish Academy welcomed the first African American writer through its doors by praising her for writing literature of “visionary force and poetic import [that] gives life to an essential”—presumably, African American—“aspect of American reality.” By this description, Morrison’s literary craft is valuable *because* she uses it as a tool to foster cross-cultural understanding. The aesthetic quality of novels like *Beloved* (1987) and *Jazz* (1992)—their “visionary force and poetic import”—becomes inextricable from its political utility in the imagination of an implied reader who has no other access to the histories to which Morrison refers. This implied reader needs a literary text to vivify the lives of African Americans, which would otherwise be dead spots in the nation’s historical imagination.

Morrison anticipated how her canonization would depend on her utility to a reader whose imagination is limited in precisely this way. She marveled in her Tanner Lectures of 1988 at the frequency with which she was “amazed by the resonances, the structural gearshifts, and the *uses* to which African-American narratives, persona, and idiom are put in ‘white’ literature” (*italics hers*).<sup>28</sup> Here, Morrison extends a long lineage of American writers of color who have resisted the reductive strategies of readers who interpret their work primarily as a source of information about the marginalized histories from which they come. But as Morrison asserts her literary autonomy against that instrumentalization, she does not replace it with a criterion for judging the value of a text autonomously from the entanglements of race and culture. “Of what use is it to go on about ‘quality,’ being the only criterion for greatness” she asks, “when the definition of quality is itself the subject of much rage and is seldom universally agreed upon by everyone at all times?”<sup>29</sup> This is a document of the culture wars of the 1980s and 1990s in the United States, where writers of color gained canonicity among white readers who struggled to learn how to read them. Morrison speaks to that effort by proposing categories for literary judgment that are bound up in racial difference but not beholden to it; she contends that every great work of literature speaks to historical realities while it also remains legible as an end in itself.<sup>30</sup> The literary value that she describes is culturally relative and universal at once, with aesthetics and politics that

are entwined but distinct. These oppositions exist in tension with each other to structure literary experience as Morrison describes it.

This understanding of the relation between the literary and the political remains salient in Pamuk's moment, when writers from the East are valued less often than their Western counterparts, and in terms that are severely straitened. The Swedish Academy might make more progress in its efforts to find more great writers in nations it has neglected if it developed a new vocabulary for honoring writers like Pamuk, and that would require revisiting rather than merely extending the problem of "Quality" that Morrison names. Morrison was right to identify its stultifying effects on writers who come from marginalized groups in hegemonic nations, and the cultural processes she describes operate with a specific toxicity when they cross national lines, as they do in Pamuk's case. Gayatri Spivak has been making this argument for decades, and Pamuk's case demonstrates one reason why Spivak is right, too—about critics working not only in the United States but also in Europe.<sup>31</sup> The Swedish Academy provides evidence to that effect whenever it cloaks aesthetic value in foreign policy, with effects that run diagonally if not wholly contrary to the activist purpose it states.

The academy conceded the difficulty of reconciling political activism with aesthetic judgment after Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn won the Nobel Prize in 1980, when committee member Artur Lundkvist conceded that the laureate for the year wasn't "a very big artist." But that concession was not an argument against the academy's decision, which Lundkvist praised as a parry against an adversary that was chilling: "We helped a man in danger, who had important things to say, [so that he would be] able to say them much later."<sup>32</sup> Thus weaponized for use in the Cold War, the Nobel Prize lent Western support to anticommunist insurgencies it embodied in the author of world literature.

This discourse instrumentalizes non-Western writers as tools for the promotion of democracy around the world, and it is updated in the announcement of Pamuk's Nobel Prize in 2006. As the U.S. national media absorbed Samuel Huntington's language of clashing civilizations into a grand narrative of the way the world would work after the terrorist attacks of 2001,<sup>33</sup> the academy honored Pamuk for his discovery of "new symbols for the clash and interlacing of cultures."<sup>34</sup> The reparative potential of that discovery was underlined in Horace Engdahl's accusation—framed as praise—that Orhan Pamuk "has stolen the novel, one can say, from us

westerners and has transformed it to something different from what we have ever seen before." Engdahl made that statement on behalf of Western people broadly defined, investing Pamuk with singular authority to "take our own image and reflect it in a partially unknown and partially recognizable image."

As a criterion for literary value, this is strangely narcissistic, honoring the non-Western writer for his representation of Western people, primarily. His literary quality becomes evident in his reflective function; like the protagonist of *Snow* on the streets of Frankfurt, the author of world literature shows Europeans what they really look like, as described in chapter 2. That expectation that world literature should mirror the West back to itself with the addition of insight from outside leads Engdahl to a claim that is patently false: that Pamuk writes with the wide vantage because he has "roots in two cultures." In fact, Pamuk's "roots" lie squarely in Turkey, which is his native country, and from which he did not travel much until he was an adult. In the course of his work, he travels significantly now, and he spends portions of every year at an apartment in New York. He also reads widely in Western literary traditions, and his cultural formation is global in scope. But if that hybridity seems negligible in biographic terms, it is more worrying when it is promoted as a criterion for literary value.<sup>35</sup> Engdahl locates Pamuk's credential for entry to world literature in his identity as a Turk, which is configured here to be ontologically double, reconciling cultures that are opposite if not mutually exclusive.

That configuration obscures the ways East and West have always been intertwined, in literature as in everything else; the poets Anglophone readers recognize as Victorians developed their aesthetics through sustained engagement with translation from Swahili, as Annmarie Drury has shown.<sup>36</sup> That network of connections is erased in Orhan Pamuk's representation as a traveler from a very foreign land, which exoticizes him in ways that are familiar to any reader of Edward Said. And as it is factually and politically wrong, the figuration of Pamuk as a legible text from a region that is otherwise inscrutable is also bad for any conception of world literature that is yet to come. It ensures the centrality of the Western literatures that enable a writer to reflect the West back to itself in a new light from a position that seems, impossibly, rooted in two distant locations at once.

An aspirant to global literary status might balk at that prescription,

which grows logically out of an instrumental understanding of the good

that literature can do in the world: to the degree that literary texts are judged by the transparency of the windows they offer on people and places that are otherwise hard to see, their value grows exponentially by the size of the view they offer; two cultures yield more to see than one. The literary value of the non-Western writer becomes contingent on the political utility he serves, and that utility is defined in Western terms. The writers who follow Orhan Pamuk across the Bosphorus are expected to operate at the highest levels of achievement in the political sphere, and to reassure Western publics that literature retains extraliterary relevance somewhere in the world.

#### MARKETING WRITERS TO GUILTY TOURISTS

This portrait of the non-Western novelist as a peacemaker between cultures at war advances imperatives that are as commercial as they are political. The Nobel Laureates who promote Western values around the world provide a service that is commodified along with the alterity of their literary texts. The welcome that Anglophone publics extend to Pamuk as the spokesperson for moderate and humanistic Islam reveals the depth of their anxieties about the Islamic world. And as they worry explicitly about the threats of Islamic terrorism, they also harbor less readily expressible worries about the security of the privileged place they inhabit in a globalizing world. Sarah Brouillette makes the convincing argument that a new complicity emerges around the turn of the twenty-first century between “the author and the reader, as both producer and consumer work to negotiate with, if not absolve themselves of, postcoloniality’s touristic guilt.”<sup>37</sup> Cultural institutions like the Swedish Academy are as deeply embedded in the inequities of global capital as the readers and writers that Brouillette describes, so it is with some inevitability that they too, express Western literary critics’ ambivalence about the cultural, political, and economic processes that structure the globe to work to their broad and collective advantage.

The discourse of the Nobel Prize helps the reading classes manage the “touristic guilt” that attends an armchair engagement with people who are relatively poor. The announcement of Orhan Pamuk’s award provides a case in point, demonstrating how Western institutions use non-Western writers to imply the good world literature can do by promoting European

values all over the world. And if its quick succession after his acknowledgment of the Armenian genocide fulfilled the grand narratives of Turkish nationalists, who suspected that anti-Turkish Europeans sought a ventriloquist’s dummy to utter the insults they said in private about Turks, the Swedish Academy contributed to that effect inadvertently by honoring Pamuk in terms that are so overtly political that they undermine his efforts to claim the autonomy of the literary. His canonization became dependent on the political good he might do, and it packaged his literary oeuvre and his celebrity as new commodities from an exotic place. The good of world literature became part of its brand, guaranteeing absolution for any prurient pleasure a Western reader might take in the reading experience.

This discourse surrounding contemporary world literature recuperates for the twenty-first century—and for a global economy—Alfred Nobel’s faith in literature’s peacemaking effects, and it is neatly compressed in Orhan Pamuk’s reception. He appears to his Anglophone publics as a Middle Eastern man<sup>38</sup> who defies the Islamophobic stereotypes that would render him a zealot if not a terrorist, offering reassurance with his arrival about fears that secularism and enlightenment exist in the Islamic East. And as he provides evidence of that existence in his person, he bridges the gap that his readers perceive between themselves and his native city and country. He also fills the temporal space between the present that has its problems and the future where they are diminished. Promising an era of greater geopolitical peace, as his reviews so often attest, he enables a discourse that repeats the errors it is designed to correct: it protects the universality of Western standards of judgments by reducing the paths for literary circulation from East to West and back again.

#### THE NOBEL PRIZE REWARDS ART THAT SERVES THE PEOPLE

To consider that parochialism and what to do about it, I want to trace it also through the controversies that surrounded Mo Yan’s Nobel Prize in 2012. The first Chinese laureate who is neither in exile nor in jail, Mo Yan fails utterly to conform to the history and the trope that cast the Nobel Laureate as a speaker of truth to power. His passivity as a citizen is perhaps most evident in his silence on the subject of the state’s ill treatment of writers more activist than he is—most notably, the writer and activist Liu Xiaobo. Liu was arrested in 2009 on charges of “inciting subversion of state

power" with his work as the publisher of a prodemocracy magazine and the president of the Independent Chinese PEN Center from 2003 to 2007. After Liu won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2010, the state prevented him or any proxy from accepting the award, and dozens of writers and artists protested Liu's imprisonment. Mo Yan was notably absent among them, and his silence prompted the artist Ai Weiwei to conclude that Mo Yan had "no involvement with the contemporary struggle."<sup>39</sup> That impression was reinforced by Mo Yan's participation in a state-sponsored ceremony in 2012. Along with other writers who had won state sanction, he copied excerpts from Mao Zedong's "Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art" and lent his implicit support to the Maoist doctrine that puts that literature in the service of the people.<sup>40</sup>

Mo Yan's submission to that doctrine made him unworthy of the Nobel Prize in the eyes of many Chinese dissidents, who took risks that Mo Yan did not and suffered accordingly. Ai Weiwei declared that "giving the award to a writer like this is an insult to humanity and to literature,"<sup>41</sup> and the writer Yu Jie agreed, comparing his compatriot to "German writers [who lavished] praise on Hitler and Goebbels."<sup>42</sup> The metaphor is inflammatory, perhaps by intention, but the point stands even without it. While other artists were harassed and imprisoned for their insistence on their autonomy from the state, Mo Yan's silence made him an instrument for the regime that renders art an instrument of the state.

That Maoist description of literary value sounds doctrinaire in English, but it echoes in a different context the expectation written throughout Anglo-American literary publics, which also hold a great writer responsible for political good. That definition of literary greatness finds expression through the cultural legacies of the European Enlightenment, where it is assumed that literature occupies a helpfully critical relation to the nation-state as imagined by John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, and Maximilien Robespierre.

A good citizen in this tradition is an individual who represents herself meaningfully in the public sphere, and a good writer facilitates that act of representation—by rendering visible people and places that might otherwise go unseen; and, perhaps, by engaging in political activities that also illuminate those marginalized spaces in the cultural landscape.

The announcement of Alice Munro's Nobel Laureate in 2013 displays this logic by which Western writers gain canonical status for putting literary form and content to new use. When the Swedish Academy honored

Munro as a "master of the contemporary short story," it located her relevance in her mastery of content as well as form. "Set in small town environments," the academy declared, her stories shed light on corners of the world "where people's struggle for a decent life often result in difficult relationships and moral conflicts."<sup>43</sup> Giving institutional contours to the activist credo that the personal is political, the Swedish Academy assumes the broad significance of Munro's revelation of "cultural nooks that are obscure," and that assumption is made plainer elsewhere. Michiko Kakutani praised Munro in the *New York Times* as "one of the foremost practitioners of the [short story] form" while she also noted Munro's contributions to the literary representation of her gender by "mining the inner lives of girls and women."<sup>44</sup> Munro's ability to pull those gendered experiences to light from the depths of the earth lends political utility to her aesthetic achievements, affirming this truth that works axiomatically in the contemporary West: the texts that are canonized as world literature innovate existing genres and forms to widen the space that marginalized peoples occupy in the public sphere.

The Swedish Academy's description of Munro's oeuvre might apply to Mo Yan's as well if he and his characters lived in Canada rather than China. Like Munro, Mo Yan attends closely to "small town environments, where the struggle for a socially acceptable existence often results in strained relationships and moral conflicts."<sup>45</sup> And as Munro brings her readers into the lives of people who are marginalized by their geography and their gender, Mo Yan fosters his readers' identification with characters who live far away from the metropolitan centers of his national culture; they are humble people in rural locales that are rarely seen in Western media. Like Munro, Mo Yan is rarely seen performing political work outside of his literary texts; like Munro, he lives in a nation and a world in which there is political work to be done. But Mo Yan is judged much more harshly for his myopic focus on the literary at the expense of the political, prompting Salman Rushdie to call him "a patsy for the regime."

#### EVERYBODY IS A PATSY

Rushdie was not alone in that judgment, but he has singular authority to issue it publicly. His "blasphemous" portrayal of the prophet Mohammed in his *Satanic Verses* (1988) prompted Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini to issue a

fatwa that called pious Muslims to impose the death sentence on him. Rushdie went into hiding in London as his publisher and booksellers confronted the threat, and writers all over the world spoke in his defense. As his security expanded to allow it, U2 invited him onstage at Wembley Stadium in a “gesture of solidarity.” The Irish *Independent* described the event as a meeting between “the most infamous author on the planet and the most famous singer in the world.” The rock photographer Anton Corbijn captured an image of the pair trading glasses and mugging for the camera,<sup>46</sup> and Rushdie ascended to celebrity status in his new home in New York City,<sup>47</sup> although his name remained on an Al-Qaeda hit list as late as 2010.<sup>48</sup>

In that context, Rushdie’s judgment of Mo Yan implied an unfavorable comparison to himself with a strain of self-promotion, but it seems credible, too, by widely held standards. In the history of the Nobel Prize, Mo Yan’s political reticence stands in contrast to laureates like Harold Pinter, who became known for the confrontations they stage with the excesses of their states. Pinter had become a prominent figure in British opposition to the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan when he won the Nobel Prize in 2005, and some critics suspected that the academy selected him to represent that position that was widely held in literary circles. And Pinter spoke as a proxy for others who held that view—whether or not that service was actively sought—by using his acceptance speech to call the world’s attention to the huge numbers of civilians killed in the military conflict. Quoting a poem by Pablo Neruda to render the violence of war more vivid, Pinter sought to bring the leaders of the United States and Great Britain to trial in the International Criminal Court, and he volunteered to write the speech that George W. Bush could give to clarify the foundations of his foreign policy: “You see this fist? This is my moral authority. And don’t you forget it.”<sup>49</sup> Announcing the good that world literature can do against a geopolitical bully, his speech was amplified by the microphone that Alfred Nobel bought a century earlier with an inheritance gained in munitions.

Pinter concluded his remarks by turning his audience’s attention away from the war and toward the playwright on stage, declaring himself pain-fully exposed. But he also contended that such exposure is unavoidable in “a writer’s life,” which “is a highly vulnerable, almost naked activity. We don’t have to weep about that. The writer makes his choice and is stuck with it.” By Pinter’s analysis, protection is afforded to a writer only through the

unsavory alliances he makes with the powerful forces he should oppose. Of the rest, Pinter says, “it is true to say that you are open to all the winds, some of them icy indeed. You are out on your own, out on a limb—unless you lie—in which case of course you have constructed your own protection and, it could be argued, become a politician.”<sup>50</sup> The writer becomes recognizable by his difference from politicians like George Bush and Tony Blair, but also by his direct and dangerous confrontation with them.

But this Harold Pinter who has become an elder statesman of British literary culture and a vocal critic of his government bears little resemblance to the youthful Pinter, who was much more like Mo Yan. Disavowing political commitments altogether, Pinter claimed Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco as his early influences, and he was received among the least overtly political in that school. Martin Esslin—who coined the term “the theater of the absurd”—observed that Pinter “has occasionally wanted to create the impression” that he had no politics at all.<sup>51</sup> And that impression was arguably desirable for Pinter at the time, when he jockeyed for position among modernists who posited “absurdism” and “engagement” as mutually exclusive opposites.<sup>52</sup> In that binary division, Pinter aligned himself with Beckett’s absurdism and against the “didactic and moralistic theater” he saw in writers like Peter Brook. He affirmed in 1961 that he “was not committed as a writer, in the usual sense of the term, either religiously or politically,”<sup>53</sup> because his primary commitment was to his art, and that commitment was understood to be exclusive.

Nearly twenty-five years later, Pinter described that exclusivity as an attempt to write literature that transcended “politicians and political structures and political acts,” which he saw “with detached contempt.”<sup>54</sup> The contempt endured longer than the detachment, however, as Pinter’s political engagements grew increasingly direct over the course of his career. In 1979 he unearthed a play that he wrote in 1958 but suppressed, apparently because the bluntness of its politics contrasted too sharply with the aesthetic subtlety to which he aspired. *The Hothouse* narrated the suffering and subsequent uprising of inmates in a “rest home,” and it was received as a representation of the ways that individuals suffer under the pressures of authoritarian institutions. It is also read as the mark of a transitional moment between Pinter’s early “comedy of menace” and his later works, which consistently staged scenes of domination and victimization. And, as his plays turned with regularity to nonfictional abuses of human and civil

rights, the playwright became more confrontational in his public appearances. He spoke in his interviews as an ardent critic of Tony Blair, and that position was acknowledged tacitly in the announcement of his Nobel Laureate, which honored him as a writer who “uncovers the precipice under everyday prattle and forces entry into oppression’s closed rooms.”<sup>55</sup>

That announcement typifies Pinter’s Anglophone reception in recent years, when his early disengagement from politics is largely obscured by his reputation as an energetic activist for the marginalized and oppressed.<sup>56</sup> But it is significant that Pinter waited until his career was established before he made those oppositional gestures, and his more attentive critics have asked what changed to prompt them. Mark Taylor-Batty speculates that the “domestic stability” Pinter found with Lady Antonia Fraser gave him the energy and motivation to confront institutional power directly,<sup>57</sup> while Charles Grimes suggests that Pinter never “objected to political art per se but rather its obviousness, its tendency to reduce complexity to slogans and clichés.”<sup>58</sup> Whatever the cause, it seems that the early Pinter concurred with Mo Yan about this: a writer has a primary obligation to maximize the greatness of his art, and any political work he might do should be subordinated to that effort—if it is done at all.

But that subordination of the political to the aesthetic registers differently when non-Western writers assert it, particularly when they speak as citizens of states that represent some economic or cultural threat to Western hegemony—like China, for example, or Turkey. A writer from North America or Europe might gain canonicity through the same trajectory that enabled Harold Pinter to spend the early portion of his career gaining the literary credibility he needed to make his politics audible to a national public in his later years. Alternatively, she might gain canonicity as Alice Munro did, by innovating a literary form to give new representation to people and cultures that tend to go unseen. In either of those cases, she might spend decades of her career without any overtly political engagements at all. She might spend the bulk of her days learning how to write better books, leaving others to do the labor of improving the world in which literature appears. And if she writes sufficiently well to gain a global audience, she might ascend a podium to express a humanist’s predictable—and predictably neglected—critique of her state, whatever it is.

The nations that grow out of the French Revolution marginalize writers and outlaw their imprisonment, but those legal protections are less indica-

tive of any ethical or political superiority than of the comparative history that enables them to construct state power in different ways. The global currency that China and Turkey seek through their literary writers gives national prominence to Mo Yan and Pamuk that is structurally unavailable to writers like Morrison, Munro, and Pinter. In nations that already figure hegemonically on a global stage, literary writers voice a critique of the center from the margins with predictable regularity and predictably scant result. They lack the status and the agency that Margaret Atwood attributed to Pamuk when she described him only somewhat correctly as “the equivalent of rock star, guru, diagnostic specialist and political pundit” in Turkey.<sup>59</sup> Lacking that centrality to the dominant culture, writers in Western nations gain the privilege of safety: they know that there is nothing they can say that would jeopardize their ability to go home from an awards ceremony and write.

The political speeches of Western laureates are effectively silenced by the cacophony of the culture industry; no trial is necessary to prevent them from mounting an effective subversion against the state. Orhan Pamuk’s words prove more audible in his national culture, and his freedom is proportionally less. But he is obligated by the conditions of world literature to advocate for freedom of speech and human rights while he also devotes his life to his art. He becomes functionally obligated to do two very demanding jobs at once: while he produces literary work that demonstrates the aesthetic quality of a masterpiece, he also engages in political action that is unambiguously on the side of right against his state—and those abstract nouns work as they do in the lexicon of Western humanism, extend to fit the scale of the globe.

#### LITERARY AUTONOMY AND THE FREEDOM TO BE SILENT

Mo Yan has frequently noted that political critique exists in terms that are relative, not absolute. “Many of the people who have criticized me online are Communist Party members themselves,” he observes. “They also work within the system. And some have benefited tremendously within the system. . . . I am working in China. I am writing in a China under Communist Party leaders. But my works cannot be restricted by political parties.” Locating his clearest statement of his politics in his literary work, Mo Yan argues—as Pinter did, too, decades earlier—for the autonomy of the

literary *sui generis*. Mo Yan has reiterated that assertion throughout his career, as in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize, when he urged his readers to ignore his interviews and public appearances, contending that “you will find everything I need to say in my works.”<sup>60</sup> This removal resembles the early Pinter’s “detached contempt” for the political as such, and it also squares easily with the modernist trope of the writer who locks himself *dans le grenier*, far away from worldly demands.

That figuration of the solitary writer is easy to read in this context as a defensive gesture, rationalizing Mo Yan’s silence to make it appear more principled than it is. And his silence may or may not be principled, but its intentionality seems clear. Mo Yan suggests it with his adoption of a pen name that means “don’t speak.” Every enunciation of his name—莫言—reiterates that command, and journalists have asked him to interpret its meaning in this context. Born Guan Moye (管谟业) to a family of farmers, Mo Yan explains his chosen name very differently to his domestic and foreign interlocutors. To Chinese journalists, he says that he wanted to hide himself perpetually toward greater productivity, so he urges everyone around him to repeat the injunction to speak less—to turn away from the clamor of everyday life, toward literary experience; to write more.

The decision has a more political valence as he explains it to Western journalists by locating it the Chinese culture of his birth.<sup>61</sup> At that time, Mo Yan observes, “people’s lives were not normal. So my father and mother told me not to speak outside. If you speak outside, and say what you think, you will get into trouble. So I listened to them and I did not speak. When I started to write, I thought every great writer had to have a pen name. I remembered my mom and my dad telling me do not speak. So I took Mo Yan for my pen name. It is ironic that I have this name because I now speak everywhere.”<sup>62</sup> So, by Mo Yan’s description, he responds to every injunction not to speak—that is his name—by speaking “everywhere.” The irony of that command lies perhaps in its defiance of the rules for literary writers who are beholden to a multinational publishing industry, which makes press junkets and literary speeches integral parts of their job. But that irony is compounded in Mo Yan’s reception, where his detractors contend that he may speak frequently, but he doesn’t say much. Against that criticism, he locates the political outside of his job description, contending that a writer should create art for art’s sake and leave the rest to others.

Mo Yan is exceptional in the history of Nobel Prizes for renouncing political engagement so explicitly and consistently, and the exception marks a notable revision to the standards for canonization in world literature. In the West as in China, many observers lamented the Swedish Academy’s deviation from its mission statement as it is generally understood—to honor writers who speak on behalf of marginalized peoples who are unable to speak for themselves. That lament was phrased most pointedly and perhaps most effectively by Salman Rushdie, whose criticism of Mo Yan as “the Chinese equivalent of the Soviet Russian apparatchik writer Mikhail Sholokhov”<sup>63</sup> was cited by other critics who also asked why the Swedish Academy honored a writer known for his compliance with a state that tramples its citizens’ human rights, and what that selection means for the Nobel Prize and the global culture it constructs.

Some critics have argued that Mo Yan’s Nobel Prize means less in this context than it seems because he exerts greater resistance to his regime than his detractors allow. The Chinese scholar Chengzhou He, for example, contends that Mo Yan “performs rural Chineseness” in his literary texts as “a counterdiscourse to subvert, revise, and supplement if not subvert, the dominant grand discourse of modern China in a reflective or corrective manner.”<sup>64</sup> Comparatist Sabina Knight agrees, asserting that “astute readers recognize [Mo Yan’s] veiled yet clear political critiques” throughout his literary oeuvre. For Knight, Mo Yan’s subversive potential becomes evident precisely in the reticence that he explicates in his essay “To Defend the Dignity of the Novel,” which locates the value of literature in its full autonomy from other social and political forces: “A great novel has no need to roll around like a pet,” Mo Yan writes, “or to howl with the pack like a hyena. It has to be like a whale, roaming alone and breathing resonantly in the depths of the sea.”<sup>65</sup>

With fins rather than feet, the writer that Mo Yan depicts exists outside of human society, but that is not to say that he is apolitical. As Knight suggests, Mo Yan’s characters “don’t generally exhibit the uncorrupted core of individual selfhood common in U.S. fiction,” and “the characters who qualify as heroes evince an almost libertarian allegiance to personal freedom.”<sup>66</sup> They are by this account like the writer as Mo Yan describes him, enjoying an ontological distance from human society. This rhetorical construction of the writer who lives outside of politics altogether enables the novelist to represent himself traveling through a politicized world without being

touched by it, and without touching it in return. Like the early Pinter, he stands apart from the political altogether and views that detachment as a useful condition for his aesthetic work. But if the novelist locates himself outside of politics, his critic sees politics inherent in that stance. Knight describes Mo Yan's rejection of the political as "libertarian" and uses the German word *realpolitik* to suggest that his politics are among the most "liberal" available to a working writer in China. The context of her argument on Mo Yan's behalf implies that she does not intend the negative connotations these words carry for many U.S.-based critics, who associate *realpolitik* with Henry Kissinger's justificatory usage. By contrast, Knight locates literary value in historical contingencies to agree with Chengzhou. He that Mo Yan's subversion of state-sanctioned discourses is more slyly disruptive than openly adversarial, and that might be the best world literature can do under the circumstances.

#### THE BULLY PULPIT IN STOCKHOLM

The Swedish Academy seemed to take that position when it brought Mo Yan into the company of the more directly oppositional laureates who precede him, and he responded in kind. The day after his reception ceremony, he was asked to comment on the continued imprisonment of Liu Xiaobo, and his response was much more pointed than any he had given before: he expressed his hope that Liu would "get his freedom as soon as possible—get his freedom in good health as soon as possible—and then be able to study his politics and study his social systems as he likes."<sup>67</sup> That gentle criticism of Liu's imprisonment prompted celebration among Chinese dissidents like Ai Weiwei, who saw it as a departure from Mo Yan's prior refusal to comment, and he said that he wanted "to welcome Mo Yan back into the arms of the people. If this sort of courage is the result, I hope more Chinese writers will be given Nobel Prizes."<sup>68</sup> The dissident Hu Jia concurred, and he located the cause of Mo Yan's shifting position in his recent reception of the Nobel Prize: "What has happened in the last 24 hours has changed him. A Nobel Prize, whether for peace or for literature, bestows on one a sense of wrong and right."<sup>69</sup>

The prize's enlightening effects on its winners are less evident than the material support it lends to good causes that need it—not least, to the dawning recognition of the Armenian genocide in Turkey. Just three years

after Pamuk was charged with the crime of "insulting Turkishness" for speaking of that history, thousands of Turkish people signed a petition that said approximately the same thing he did.<sup>70</sup> And as the national culture broached the subject discursively, the state broached it officially, too, by building a rapprochement with Armenia in the wake of Pamuk's prize.<sup>71</sup> The Swedish Academy's relative influence on that political progress is finally unknowable, but it is also presumed to exist, and not only by Alfred Nobel.

After Orhan Pamuk's Nobel Prize was announced, the executive director of the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity urged the Turkish people to use it as a tool for progressive reform in open letter published in the daily *Hürriyet*. Conceding that the prize might be interpreted as "a rebuke" from a domineering neighbor, David L. Philips proposed that it could also function as "a meaningful catalyst" for change that Turkish people want. Progressive Turks could claim ownership of the prize in that context, Philips suggests, and take it as a tool to "strengthen democracy in Turkey and address European concerns."<sup>72</sup> They could, in other words, use the Nobel Prize to move the Turkish people closer to genocide acknowledgment by reframing that political position in strategic terms, noting the material benefits that the nation would gain by following the EU's guidelines for freedom of speech. This argument empties the Nobel Prize of literary significance altogether, and it also empties genocide acknowledgment of its ethical content by rendering it newly compatible with the discourses of Turkish nationalism that genocide enabled in the first place. Creating a rhetorical position from which Turks could find new agreement with the EU in its national interest, this argument typifies a general tendency to receive every Nobel Prize as an instrument for political change and to ask: what good can it do?

#### MO YAN'S LITERARY QUALITY AND POLITICAL GOOD

That question about the utility of the prize as a bully pulpit underwrites the debate between Mo Yan's defenders and detractors about his worthiness as China's second literary laureate. The opposing arguments in this debate are encapsulated by the critics Charles Laughlin and Perry Link, who wrote dueling polemics about three distinct but related hypotheses: that Mo Yan was complicit with his state's ill treatment of other writers; that his political

complicity mars his aesthetics; and that this weakness—which traverses the political and the aesthetic—renders him unworthy for canonization in world literature.<sup>73</sup> Link contended that Mo Yan has recourse to no language except that which has been eviscerated by his state, so he is unable to write honestly about all manner of “sensitive subjects.” Cloaking them in layers of jokes because he cannot address them directly, he writes with “a kind of daffy hilarity,” no matter what he writes about. His narration of the famine that devastated rural China in *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* (2009) is stripped of any account of human suffer, and it produces inversions of expected reality that are less painful than funny.<sup>74</sup> An absurd chain of events concludes with interspecies breeding, as a rabbit is inseminated with the sperm of a sheep, and the characters collapse in giggles at the thought of the result. Link acknowledges as counterargument the critics who read a salutary “black humor” in this representation of the devastating effects of Mao’s agricultural policies during the Great Leap Forward, but he contends that the novel works ultimately to serve the state that aims to put the famine under erasure entirely.

Link is right to observe that Mo Yan leaves a lacuna in the text where the suffering of Chinese citizens under Mao goes unrepresented, because either it is too terrible to recall or the description is too threatening to write. For Link, the difference becomes semantic: “From the regime’s point of view, this mode of writing is useful not just because it diverts a square look at history but because of its function as a safety valve.” By this reading, Mo Yan commits a grievous political error by alluding to state violence without representing it—even indirectly—because that allusion supplies evidence of Chinese literary life that the government can use against its critics. In its sheer existence, Mo Yan’s oeuvre implies to Link that the Chinese writer enjoys sufficient freedom to speak out about his history and supports the statist position that Chinese citizens don’t have much to say. Mo Yan’s writing is bad by this assessment because it lends itself so well to bad politics.

The critic Anna Sun refines the argument that Link makes more obliquely: that Mo Yan does not deserve a Nobel Prize because his writing exhibits an aesthetic weakness that is causally related to his complicity with the regime. Where Link catalogs Mo Yan’s failures in the realm of literary content, Sun describes them as a problem of form: “The discontent lies in Mo Yan’s language,” she writes. “Open any page, and one is treated to a jumble of words that juxtaposes rural vernacular, clichéd socialist

rhetoric, and literary affectation. It is broken, profane, appalling, and artificial; it is shockingly banal. The language of Mo Yan is repetitive, predictable, coarse, and mostly devoid of aesthetic value.” This linguistic impoverishment is for Sun the inevitable result of Mo Yan’s cultural education in the age of Mao. “No matter how sincere a critic Mo Yan might be of the social and political regime,” Sun argues, “his language is a language that survived the Cultural Revolution, when the state deliberately administered a radical break with China’s literary past. Mo Yan’s prose is an example of a prevailing disease that has been plaguing writers who came of age in what can be called the era of *Mao-ti*, a particular language and sensibility of writing promoted by Mao in the beginning of the revolution.”<sup>75</sup> Sun traces Mo Yan’s deficiencies as a writer to his fluency in this language that serves literature poorly because its primary aim is political. As “a child of the revolution,” Sun writes, Mo Yan was educated in a historical moment when “a new literary language was invented” and alternative literary languages were obscured, rendering the nation’s cultural history illegible. Along with his contemporaries, the nascent laureate was schooled to read no Chinese literature except “social realist work written between 1949 and 1966 that bore a strong influence of Mao’s political aesthetic doctrine.”<sup>76</sup> The rest of his nation’s literary traditions became as inaccessible to him as literatures written in other languages, just as literatures written in Turkey before Ataturk’s language reforms became inaccessible to Orhan Pamuk. Both writers were severed as readers from the texts that their ancestors wrote because both learned new languages that were artificially constructed to serve the needs of the state.

#### TRANSLATING CRITIQUE

Like Pamuk, Mo Yan is said to be extraordinarily indebted to his translator, and particularly to the translator who conveys him into English. Anna Sun echoes an argument that is made about Orhan Pamuk, too,<sup>77</sup> when she proposes that Mo Yan might have his English translators to thank for his international success because “the English translations of Mo Yan’s novels, especially by the excellent Howard Goldblatt, are in fact superior to the original in their aesthetic unity and sureness.” To describe that superiority of the English translation to the Mandarin original, Sun cites a positive review of Goldblatt’s translation of Mo’s *The Republic of Wine* (1992/2000) in

the *Washington Post*. The reviewer who praised "Mo Yan's shimmering poetry and brutal realism as work akin to that of Gorky and Solzhenitsyn" was praising the translator, Sun contends, rather than the writer: "Only the 'brutal realism' is Mo Yan's. The 'shimmering poetry' comes from a brilliant translator's work." And by Sun's analysis, that limitation is shared widely among writers of Mo's time and place, since the only language available to them was a language that is "diseased." "This is perhaps the ultimate tragedy of the fate of contemporary Chinese writers," Sun writes. "Too many of them can no longer speak truth to power in a language free of the scars of the revolution itself."<sup>78</sup>

Sun's argument points to broader questions about the ways that Western cultural and educative institutions expand their reach to include the literatures of the rest of the world: tethering literary greatness to freedom of speech in the public sphere limits our access to writers in states that make that kind of political activism so dangerous that it is hard to reconcile with intellectual life. This limitation seems worth noting as a problem for Western literary institutions, particularly since it sets two of their stated intentions in conflict with each other. On one hand, the Swedish Academy aims to anoint more laureates who come from non-Western locations, while, on the other, it selects its laureates by their likeness to the ideal citizen of a participatory democracy.

It seems incumbent on Western critics to observe that this contradiction serves Western writers from Toni Morrison to Harold Pinter at the expense of non-Western writers like Orhan Pamuk and Mo Yan. All of them live and write in a world where the strong tend to dominate the weak, and all of them look critically in their work at the governmental and economic structures through which that domination is maintained. But their relations to those structures in their lived experiences vary greatly, and those variations shape the terms on which they enter a global literary culture. Pamuk and Mo Yan live in states that threaten to imprison them and exacerbate their literary language, while the only silencing effects that Morrison and Pinter experience come from their relative and unequal access to microphones in their media-saturated cultures. As U.S.-based literary readers wage broad resistance to creeping authoritarianism at home and abroad, we overlook how the exigencies of authoritarian states are suppressed in the critical discourses we use. Placing the greatest burden for activist work on the writers who come from the states that are farthest from

Europe, the critical discourse surrounding the Nobel Prize builds a literary world on the very wrong assumption that writers in the West have less political work to do as if the states and institutions to which they belong do less than their share of harm.

#### COMPLICITY IS A UNIVERSAL BUT RELATIVE CONDITION

The critic Pankaj Mishra traces this assumption and its consequences in his polemic against the Western critics who deemed Mo Yan unworthy of the Nobel Prize. Mishra did not dispute Mo Yan's complicity with the communist regime; he agreed with Salman Rushdie that Mo Yan has often held silent while his state has abused its power over its citizens. But he placed that reticence in the relative context of Anglophone writers—Martin Amis, for example, Salman Rushdie, and John Updike—who are held to a much lower standard for political activism. As examples, Mishra cites the moment when Salman Rushdie supported George Bush's military foray into Afghanistan after the terrorist attacks of 2001, and when John Updike detailed the quotidian lives of white suburbanites during the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War. Those moments may not be wholly forgotten, as Mishra argues, but nor are they are overdetermining, because "we almost never judge British and American writers by their politics alone."<sup>79</sup> Their relative lack of accountability for their politics suggests to Mishra—and to me—an "unexamined assumption" that persists throughout Western literary cultures, and it has broad implications: that the writers who are culturally most proximal to Western democracies are "naturally possessed of loftier virtue" because they "stand along with their governments on the right side of history."

That ontological rightness is assumed to inhere in Western humanism and the nation-states it creates, freeing writers in the United States and Europe from the expectation "to take a public stance against their political class for waging catastrophic—and wholly unnecessary—wars." The Western writer gains the luxury of literary autonomy by living in a nation and culture aligned with the highest aims of Western humanism. Bound by the perimeter of the Western nation, any oppositional gesture that a writer like Toni Morrison or Harold Pinter makes is understood as something like a quibble among friends, and one that need not occupy the writer throughout her career. More sustained opposition is demanded, however,

from writers who belong to states and cultures that represent a threat to Western values and Western power—a nation in the Islamic East, perhaps, or with the economic might of China. That unevenness underwrites the humanism that is the cultural legacy of the Swedish Academy in the age of neoliberal globalization, where it works to contrary purposes. As it asserts explicitly a less Eurocentric imagination of the world, it limits the entry of writers from the East by holding them to a standard for political work that they are unequally able to do.

This contradiction is not easily addressed because it rises out of two assumptions that run deep through the discourses of world literature in the West: first, that European humanism is fundamentally correct; and, second, that literature does political good as humanism agent and promoter. These assumptions work together to oblige Nobel Laureates to hold their nations accountable to the values of the European Enlightenment; a great writer with bad politics becomes a contradiction in terms. And that contradiction is an artifact of the contemporary West, where it becomes hard to imagine a non-Western laureate who devotes as little time and energy to activism against her state as Alice Munro, Harold Pinter, and company. That inequality is written into the discourses by which the Swedish Academy leads Western institutions in the construction of a literary canon that purports to be global.

And it will not be easily dispelled. Its authorizing power in Western cultures is evidenced in Perry Link's rebuttal to Pankaj Mishra, written under the title "Politics and the Chinese Language: What Mo Yan's Detractors Got Wrong." Link reasserts his argument that Mo Yan's literary achievements are limited by his reliance on *Mao-ti*, but he remains less interested in literary craft than in its political consequence. Imagining that he and Mishra agree about matters of importance unrelated to literature, he writes in a speculative mode: "My guess is that Pankaj Mishra, if you could shake him by the shoulders, would say (as I would) that any citizen of any country should be free to criticize any government anywhere that oppresses anyone. But his article does not leave that impression."<sup>80</sup> This critique leaves unexamined the possibility that Mishra distinguishes more sharply than Link does between *what is best for China* and *what Mo Yan should do to advance that goal*. Pankaj Mishra might wish the Chinese people had more freedoms without holding Mo Yan accountable for orienting his working days toward that result.<sup>81</sup> After all, Alice Munro is not well

known for her activism against the myriad conditions that structure the wealth and poverty on which every Canadian's privilege depends, and the early Harold Pinter spent his time writing plays rather than protesting against his state's behavior in the Middle East. Life in the twenty-first century renders every writer—indeed, every person—compromised while it also ensures that the pressures that are put on those compromises are relative indeed.

To suggest otherwise is to imagine the world as if it is a nation, and to hold the writers of world literature to the standards of political engagement that Western critics would hold the citizens of participatory democracies. Gayatri Spivak has been articulate about the tendency of North American critics to project our imagination of the nation on the world, and I analyze the construction of that imaginative projection more fully in the next chapter. But the events surrounding Pamuk's Nobel Prize demonstrate that we are not alone in this error, and Spivak's analysis is illuminating about that, too. She takes pains to say that she is not "against the tendency to conflate ethnics of origin and the historical space left behind with the astonishing constructions of multicultural and multiracial identity for the United States." Rather, she is against the tendency to use those constructions as "the founding principle for a study of globality. In the most practical terms, we are allowing a parochial decanonization debate to stand in for the study of the world."<sup>82</sup> This parochialism that Spivak sees in the United States persists in more general terms throughout European institutions, too, as the events surrounding Pamuk's Nobel Prize attest: the enduring Westernness of "world literature" is protected by the cultural logic of the nation as we know it.

When Alfred Nobel instructed the Swedish Academy to reward literature of an "ideal tendency," he assumed a definition of the ideal that collapses the literary with the political in the discourse of the nation that is imperfect but trying to be better. It guarantees freedoms but distributes them unequally, and the humanities teach its citizens how to make that wrong right. That cultural legacy laces literary work tightly with political good, which is a happy thought for a critic. But it is hard to think at the turn of the twenty-first century, when the networks of global capital diminish any value that can't be monetized, and the rantings of literary writers and critics sound faintly in the maw of that machine. That was the context in which Harold Pinter used his Nobel speech to inveigh against British

involvement in the Iraq War, knowing—for better and for worse—that his government would not flinch.

Literature is subordinated to politics and economics in most of our national cultures, all over the world, but that subordination works in very different ways—and the cultural logic of the Nobel Prize works against some kinds of subordination better than others. By honoring non-Western writers for behaving like good citizens of participatory democracies and representing freedom of speech even if they don't have it, it places an undue burden on those writers who already have a significant job to do. It advances a standard for literary merit that consolidates Western hegemony around the world by rendering canonization contingent on political activism that is much riskier in some regions of the world than in others. For consistency's sake and also for the good of a more global literary culture, Western institutions might make more transparent the criteria by which they work, so that national publics like Orhan Pamuk's would not have to speculate how or whether the prize was laced with political interests. And if Philip Roth wins the Nobel Prize in 2019, or Karl Ove Knausgård in 2020, somebody should lament his reluctance to spend his days doing anything other than living, writing, and selling books.

## WORLD LITERATURE AS AN ARTIFACT OF THE UNIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES

### The Part About the Critics

The key institution in the creation of World Literature has not been the literary festival, or even the commercial publishing house, but the university.

—EDITORS OF *n+1*

How do Western institutions convey non-Western writers to their Anglophone publics—under what pressures, by what logics, with what effects that are intended and not? I took up those questions in the preceding chapter by looking critically at the high honors that Orhan Pamuk wins in the West, including the Nobel Prize, while I also affirmed his worthiness to win those honors more fairly by better criteria. In this chapter, I further that line of critique by turning from the cultural institutions that have historically housed a “world republic of letters” in Europe<sup>1</sup> to universities in the United States, where the critical discourses that circulate through the rarified air of the Swedish Academy grow more terrestrially. That is to say that they grow more publicly, out of debate that traces their relative merits with as much precision and nuance as possible.<sup>2</sup> That debate unfolds in Departments of English and Comparative Literature in the United States, among other places, where literary critics like me argue over the best ways to understand literature transnationally from the institutional location we share.<sup>3</sup> That location is tiny relative to the national culture that contains it, but it exerts influence beyond the audience for conference papers, journal articles, and monographs. The scholarly debate over world literature shapes the curricula that teach sizable Anglophone publics how and what to read, which means that it also conditions the shape of the literary world to come. I began this book by asking what a writer has to do to travel from the margins

8. Edward W. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 16.
9. Seth Lerer, *Error and the Academic Self: The Scholarly Imagination, Medieval to Modern* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).
10. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*.
11. Well before Emily Apter, George Steiner also made figurative use of exile to assert a new system of literary value. See, for example, George Steiner, *No Passion Spent: Essays 1978–1996* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997).
12. Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 174.
13. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, 8.
14. Ibid., 88.
15. Apter, “Global Translatio.”
16. Konuk refers to a lecture that Auerbach gave to his students in Germany in which he demonstrated how the West grew out of a Greco-Roman past with distinctly Egyptian, Babylonian, and Persian features; he suggested the global dimensions of a “Völker- und Mythen gewimmel” or “throng of peoples and myths” that made East and West enmeshed.
17. Konuk, *East-West Mimesis*, 156.
18. Ibid., 162.
19. Ibid., 164.
20. Hatice Bayraktar, “The Anti-Jewish Pogrom in Eastern Thrace in 1934: New Evidence for the Responsibility of the Turkish Government,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 40, no. 2 (2006): 95–111, doi:10.1080/0031322060634238.
21. Aysun Akan, “A Critical Analysis of the Turkish Press Discourse Against Non-Muslims: A Case Analysis of the Newspaper Coverage of the 1942 Wealth Tax,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 47, no. 4 (2011): 605–21, doi:10.1080/00232062011589987.
22. Konuk, *East-West Mimesis*, 173.
23. Konuk, *East-West Mimesis*, 166.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., 134, 137.
26. Ibid., 137.
27. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, 8.
28. Aamir R. Mufti, “Auerbach in Istanbul: Edward Said, Secular Criticism, and the Question of Minority Culture,” *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 1 (October 1, 1998): 106.
29. Apter, “Global Translatio.”
30. Louis Menand, *The Marketplace of Ideas: Reform and Resistance in the American University* (New York: Norton, 2010).
31. Lerer, *Error and the Academic Self*, 255; emphasis is his.
32. Ibid., 224.
33. This is a very conservative number, including only those refugees who meet the United Nations’ definition. That excludes the much larger number of people who enter into states of exile through poverty and other difficulties that do not meet legal criteria. “Refugee status precedes its recognition,” as the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigration reports, noting that “most of the world’s refugees do not receive

formal determinations of their status under the 1951 Convention.” U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, “World Refugee Survey 2009,” n.d., <https://grupa484.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/WRS-2008-Statistics.pdf>.

34. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, 137.

35. This does not diminish the necessity of Pamuk’s flight under duress in 2006, nor does it diminish the suffering he endured as a result of that pressure in the months and years that followed. See the introduction and chapter 3 for a more detailed account of Pamuk’s persecution by nationalist extremists.

36. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*.

37. See introduction; Orhan Pamuk, *Other Colors: Essays and a Story* (New York: Vintage, 2008).

## CHAPTER FIVE: ORHAN PAMUK WINS THE NOBEL PRIZE: THE CASES OF ORHAN PAMUK AND MO YAN

1. The Nobel Prize dominates the hierarchy of literary prizes that James English analyzes, so its operations epitomize the effects that he describes. James F. English, *The Economy of Prestige: Prizes, Awards, and the Circulation of Cultural Value* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), 54.
2. Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 147.
3. English, *The Economy of Prestige*, 54.
4. In China during the 1980s, as Julia Lovell argues, “the quest for a Nobel Prize was promoted to the level of official policy and Nobel anxiety evolved into a ‘complex,’ (*Nuobeier qingjie*).” Julia Lovell, *The Politics of Cultural Capital: China’s Quest for a Nobel Prize in Literature* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 3. I discuss the Chinese case at greater length later in this chapter.
5. Link observes that “the insecurity that underlies this quest for respect appears in especially sharp relief in the case of the Nobel literature prize, where China in essence hands over judgment of its cultural achievement to a committee of Swedes.” Perry Link, “Does This Writer Deserve the Prize?,” *New York Review of Books*, December 6, 2012, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2012/dec/06/mo-yan-nobel-prize/>.
6. Domestic anxieties about the Nobel Prize have grown in tandem with China’s GDP and its political might, which sparks other anxieties in the West. See, for example, G. John Ikenberry, “The Rise of China and the Future of the West,” *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 1 (February 2008): 23–37.
7. Espmark, *The Nobel Prize in Literature: A Study of the Criteria Behind the Choices*. Boston, Mass: G. K. Hall, 1991.
8. “Full Text of Alfred Nobel’s Will,” accessed January 28, 2016, [http://www.nobel-prize.org/alfred\\_nobel/will/will-full.html](http://www.nobel-prize.org/alfred_nobel/will/will-full.html).
9. “Türkiye Nobelle sevindi mi?” *HaberTurk*, December 4, 2006, <http://www.haberTurk.com/gundem/haber/7916-turkiye-nobelle-sevindi-mi>
10. Ayşe Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 2.

25. Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Imperial Capitalism*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 53.

26. Pascale Casanova describes the Nobel Prize as "a prime, objective indicator of the existence of a world literary space." Pascale Casanova, "Literature as World," *New Left Review* 2, no. 31 (February 2005): 75.

27. Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, 212.

28. Ronald Dworkin et al., *Tanner Lectures on Human Values* 11, ed. Toni Morrison (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), 136.

29. Ibid., 124–25.

30. Cf. Ross Posnock, "The Dream of Deracination: The Uses of Cosmopolitanism," *American Literary History* 12, no. 4 (2000): 802–18.

31. Spivak takes care to say that she is not "against the tendency to conflate ethnoscene of origin and the historical space left behind with the astonishing constructions of multicultural and multiracial identity for the United States." Rather, she is against the tendency to use those constructions as "the founding principle for a study of globality. In the most practical terms," she argues, "we are allowing a parochial decanonization debate to stand in for the study of the world." Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 87.

32. Quoted in Lovell, *The Politics of Cultural Capital*, 63.

33. As the historian Ervand Abrahamian observes, American media "automatically, implicitly and unanimously adopted Huntington's paradigm to explain September 11." Ervand Abrahamian, "The US Media, Huntington and September 11," *Third World Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (June 1, 2003): 529–44.

34. "The Nobel Prize in Literature 2006," Nobel Foundation, October 12, 2006, [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/2006/press.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2006/press.html). As I suggest in the introduction, broad gestures toward Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" structure this description of Pamuk's achievement, which rests on a paradox that is politically fraught: the Islamic East and the Judeo-Christian West clash and interface simultaneously at the specific location where Orhan Pamuk sits. He stands in metonymically for Istanbul and its frequently cited bridge between East and West. His infrastructural function lends new urgency to his literary work in its historical moment, which needs someone like him: a novelist who can repair the severed halves of the geopolitical world in himself.

35. Annmarie Drury, *Translation as Transformation in Victorian Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

36. Engdahl attributed Pamuk's transformative power to the fact that he has "roots in two cultures," but it would perhaps be more accurate to say that two cultural paradigms inhere in the singular culture of his native Turkey, giving him the vantage of an outsider with the access of an insider in Europe." Ian Traynor, "Nobel Prize for Hero

11. For ease of reading, I have corrected only the largest and most straightforward of the typographical and syntactical errors that characterize the blogging occasion. Other errors remain because they suggest meanings that are less certain. Richard Lea, "Orhan Pamuk Wins Nobel," *Guardian*, October 12, 2006, [http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/cultureculture/archives/2006/10/12/orhan\\_pamuk\\_wins.html](http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/cultureculture/archives/2006/10/12/orhan_pamuk_wins.html).

12. Ibid.

13. Lawrence Venuti brought this problem of access to the attention of comparatists in 1999, when he wrote that "British and American book production increased four-fold since the 1950s, but the number of translations remained roughly between 2 and 4 percent of the total—notwithstanding a marked surge during the early 1960s, when the number of translations ranged between 4 and 7 percent of the total. In 1990, British publishers brought out 63,980 books, of which 1625 were translations (2.4 percent), while American publishers brought out 46,743 books, including 1380 translations (2.96 percent). Publishing practices in other countries have generally run in the opposite direction." Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), 11.

14. It is notable that this character is usually but not always a "he." We might add to this list Guatemala's Rigoberta Menchú, whose autobiography is studied in the context of world literature by David Damrosch, among others. But she won the Nobel Peace Prize, not the Nobel Prize for Literature, and it is worth noting that the representation of women is much higher in that category, particularly over the course of the past century.

15. Quoted in Espmark, *The Nobel Prize in Literature*, 4.

16. Åke Erlandsson, "Alfred Nobel—The Poet," Nobel Prize.org, accessed July 18, 2014, [http://www.nobelprize.org/alfred\\_nobel/biographical/articles/erlandsson-2/](http://www.nobelprize.org/alfred_nobel/biographical/articles/erlandsson-2/).

17. Ibid.

18. Richard Jewell, "The Nobel Prize: History and Canonicity," *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 33, no. 1 (January 1, 2000): 168, doi:10.2307/1315120.

19. Anders Österling, "The Literary Prize," in *Nobel—The Man and His Prizes*, ed. H. Schuck R. Söhlman (n.p.: Grizzell Press, 2007), 88.

20. The problem of expertise is captured succinctly in Franco Moretti's confession that he works "on West European narrative between 1790 and 1930, and already feels like a charlatan outside of Britain and France. World literature?" Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature," in *Debating World Literature*, ed. Christopher Pendergrast (New York: Verso, 2004), 148–49.

21. Ayşe Özgür, "Orhan Pamuk vs. Michael Moore," *Hürriyet*, February 25, 2005, <http://www.hurriyettodaynews.com/h.php?news=aye-orgun-orhan-pamuk-vs-michael-moore-2005-02-25>.

22. As Erdağ Göknar argues, "media polemics" about Pamuk "encapsulate Turkish Republican logic. Not only do they reveal the political landscape, they delineate the struggle over representation that pits discourses of state against dissidence of authors." Erdağ Göknar, *Orhan Pamuk, Secularism and Blasphemy: The Politics of the Turkish Novel* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 8.

23. All press releases are available at Nobelprize.org. Julia Lovell insightfully describes the categorical differences among the releases for Western and non-Western winners. See Lovell, *The Politics of Cultural Capital*, 68–69.

24. Over the same historical period, literary critics in the United States struggled to describe how that harmony between the local and the global was grafted onto the

- of Liberal Turkey Stokes Fears of Nationalist Backlash,” *Guardian*, October 13, 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/oct/13/books.turkey>.
37. Sarah Brouillette, *Postcolonial Writers and the Global Literary Marketplace*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 7.
  38. The “Middle Easternness” of Turkey is arguable, since the Turkish Republic claims few allegiances to Arabic and Persian cultures, and it is described by some experts (as well as many nonexperts) as an intermediary cultural space between the Middle East and Europe. In Western cultural imaginations, however, Turkey is easy to see as a Middle Eastern culture. More than 99 percent of its citizens declare Islam as their official religion, which makes Turkey visible from the United States and Europe as the westernmost location in the Muslim world.
  39. Nick Clark and Clifford Coonan, “Ai Weiwei Brands Nobel Prize for Literature Decision an ‘Insult to Humanity’ as China’s Mo Yan Named Winner,” *Independent*, October 11, 2012, <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/news/ai-weiwei-brands-nobel-prize-for-literature-decision-an-insult-to-humanity-as-chinas-mo-yan-named-winner-8207109.html>.
  40. Chenzhou He, “Rural Chineseness, Mo Yan’s Work, and World Literature,” in *Mo Yan in Context: Nobel Laureate and Global Storyteller*, ed. Angelica Duran and Yuhua Huang (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2014), 79.
  41. Clark and Coonan, “Ai Weiwei Brands Nobel Prize.”
  42. “Mo Yan’s Silence on Liu Xiaobo Angers,” *News24*, December 7, 2012, <http://www.news24.com/World/News/Mo-Yans-silence-on-Liu-Xiaobo-angers-20121207>.
  43. “The Nobel Prize in Literature 2013—Prize Announcement,” accessed December 1, 2014, [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/2013/announcement.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2013/announcement.html).
  44. Michiko Kakutani, “Alice Munro, Nobel Winner, Mines the Inner Lives of Girls and Women,” *New York Times*, October 10, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/11/books/alice-munro-mining-the-inner-lives-of-girls-and-women.html>.
  45. “The Nobel Prize in Literature 2013—Prize Announcement.”
  46. Barry Egan, “Rushdie: How Bono Annoyed the Gardai by Taking Me for a Pint,” *Independent.ie*, September 23, 2012, <http://www.independent.ie/woman/celeb-news/rushdie-how-bono-annoyed-the-gardai-by-taking-me-for-a-pint-2812957.html>.
  47. His celebrity has worked against his literary reputation, which has diminished in proportion as his fame has grown. The critic Graham Huggan describes Rushdie as a “celebrity minor” writer who consolidates “commodified perceptions of cultural marginality,” and Rüdiger Kunow writes of the “Americanization” of Rushdie: “Such a move to the U.S. has taken the trajectory of Rushdie, a voice from the margin, to a new domain. His subject position is no longer grounded in the postcolonial terrain organized around the center/margin-dichotomy; instead, he has in significant and signifying ways written himself into the center.” Graham Huggan, *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (New York: Routledge, 2002), xxii; Rüdiger Kunow, “Architect of the Cosmopolitan Dream: Salman Rushdie,” *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 51, no. 3 (January 1, 2006): 369. See also Ana Cristina Mendes, *Salman Rushdie in the Cultural Marketplace* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2014).
  48. Scott Stewart, “Fanning the Flames of Jihad,” *Stratfor*, July 22, 2010, [http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20100721\\_fanning\\_flames\\_jihad](http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20100721_fanning_flames_jihad).

49. Harold Pinter, “Nobel Lecture: Art, Truth & Politics,” accessed December 2, 2014, [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/2005/pinter-lecture-e.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2005/pinter-lecture-e.html).

50. Ibid.

51. Charles Grimes, *Harold Pinter’s Politics: A Silence Beyond Echo* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005), 16.

52. Ibid., 15.

53. Mark Taylor-Batty, *The Theatre of Harold Pinter* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen, 2014), 162.

54. Grimes, *Harold Pinter’s Politics*, 17.

55. “The Nobel Prize in Literature 2005.”

56. Grimes, *Harold Pinter’s Politics*, 17.

57. Taylor-Batty, *The Theatre of Harold Pinter*, 162–63.

58. Grimes, *Harold Pinter’s Politics*.

59. Margaret Atwood, “Headscarves to Die For,” *New York Times*, August 15, 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/08/15/books/headscarves-to-die-for.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>.

60. Mo Yan, “Nobel Lecture: Storytellers,” December 7, 2012, [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/2012/yan-lecture\\_en.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2012/yan-lecture_en.html).

61. Sabina Knight, “The Realpolitik of Mo Yan’s Fiction,” in Duran and Huang, *Yan in Context*, 94.

62. “The Real Mo Yan,” *Humanities* 32, 1 (January/February 2011), <http://www.neh.gov/humanities/2011/januaryfebruary/conversation/the-real-mo-yan>.

63. David Daley, “Rushdie: Mo Yan Is a ‘Patsy of the Regime,’” *Salon.com*, December 7, 2012, [http://www.salon.com/2012/12/07/rushdie\\_mo\\_yan\\_is\\_a\\_patsy\\_of\\_the\\_regime/](http://www.salon.com/2012/12/07/rushdie_mo_yan_is_a_patsy_of_the_regime/).

64. He, “Rural Chineseness.”

65. Knight, “The Realpolitik of Mo Yan’s Fiction,” 100.

66. Ibid., 103.

67. “Nobel Laureate Mo Yan Hopes for Liu Xiaobo’s Freedom,” *China Digital Times*, October 2012, <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2012/10/nobel-laureate-mo-yan-hopes-for-liu-xiaobo-freedom/>.

68. Ibid.

69. Michael Martina and Maxim Duncan, “China Nobel Winner Mo Yan Calls for Jailed Laureate’s Freedom,” *Reuters*, October 12, 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/10/12/us-china-moyan-idUSBRE89jBoF120121012>.

70. The “I apologize” campaign of 2008 stopped short—as Pamuk did, too—using the word “genocide,” but it acknowledged the violence that the Turkish government committed against its Armenian minority. By 2014 more than 32,000 Turkish people became signatories to this document, which reads: “My conscience does not accept the insensitivity showed to and the denial of the Great Catastrophe that the Ottoman Armenians were subjected to in 1915. I reject this injustice and for my share, I empathize with the feelings and pain of my Armenian brothers and sisters. I apologize to them.” “Özür Diliyorum [I Apologize],” n.d., <http://www.ozurdiliyoruz.com/default.aspx>.

71. Aybars Görgülü, “Towards a Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement,” *Insight Turkey* 11, no. 2 (April 2009): 19–29.

72. Chiefly, Phillips suggested that Erdogan might “leverage Pamuk’s Nobel to press the Turkish Parliament to reform Article 301 [and] also assuage critics by encouraging Turks and Armenians to discuss their shared history and explore practical strategies fostering contact and cooperation.” David L. Phillips, “Using the Nobel Prize to Leverage Reforms in Turkey,” *Hürriyet*, November 3, 2006, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=using-the-nobel-prize-to-leverage-reforms-in-turkey-2006-11-03>.

73. Perry Link, “Why We Should Criticize Mo Yan,” *NYRblog*, December 24, 2012, <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2012/dec/24/why-criticize-mo-yan/>; Charles Laughlin, “What Mo Yan’s Detractors Get Wrong,” *ChinaFile*, December 11, 2012, <https://www.chinofile.com/what-mo-yans-detractors-get-wrong>.

74. Link, “Does This Writer Deserve the Prize?;” Link, “Why We Should Criticize Mo Yan.”

75. Anna Sun, “The Diseased Language of Mo Yan,” *Kenyon Review Online* (Fall 2012), <http://www.kenyonreview.org/kr-online-issue/2012-fall/selections/anna-sun-656342/>.

76. Ibid.

77. I discuss Pamuk’s perceived indebtedness to his translators, particularly Maureen Freely, in the preceding chapter and the coda.

78. Sun, “The Diseased Language of Mo Yan.”

79. Pankaj Mishra, “Why Salman Rushdie Should Pause Before Condemning Mo Yan on Censorship,” *Guardian*, December 13, 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2012/dec/13/mo-yan-salman-rushdie-censorship>.

80. Link, “Why We Should Criticize Mo Yan.”

81. “It would be wrong for spectators like you and me, who enjoy the comfort of distance, to demand that Mo Yan risk all and be another Liu Xiaobo. But it would be even more wrong to mistake the clear difference between the two. Link, “Does This Writer Deserve the Prize?”

82. Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, 87.

## CHAPTER SIX: WORLD LITERATURE AS AN ARTIFACT OF THE UNIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES: THE PART ABOUT THE CRITICS

1. The Eurocentrism of Pascale Casanova’s analysis is widely noted and symptomatic of the culture she inhabits as a literary critic working in French institutions today. 2. This is by contrast to the states of the European Union, which have historically allocated many more public resources to cultural and arts organizations that construct the literary world outside of the university as well.

3. This chapter expands on earlier work; cf. Gloria Fisk, “Against World Literature: The Debate in Retrospect,” *The American Reader*, April 9, 2014, <http://theamericanreader.com/against-world-literature-the-debate-in-retrospect>.

4. Wendy Griswold, Terry McDonnell, and Nathan Wright, “Reading and the Reading Class in the Twenty-First Century,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 31 (2005): 127–41.

5. This chapter benefits from Alexander Beecroft’s account of “an emergent global literary ecology,” and I find that metaphor instructive. My purpose here is to describe

the ecological conditions for Orhan Pamuk’s arrival in the West. Alexander Beecroft, *An Ecology of World Literature: From Antiquity to the Present Day* (New York: Verso, 2015).

6. Zhang’s career demonstrates the global influence of the U.S. university, too: with an M.A. degree from Peking University and a Ph.D. from Harvard, Zhang currently holds a post at the City University in Hong Kong. Cf. Longxi Zhang, *From Comparison to World Literature* (SUNY Press, 2014), 1.

7. See, for example, *America Latina en la literatura mundial*, edited by the U.S.-based critic Ignacio Sanchez-Prado and published by the Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana at the University of Pittsburgh. The volume gathers critics within and beyond the United States to debate the ways that Latin American literatures operate in *la literatura mundial*. Ignacio M. Sanchez-Prado, *America Latina en la literatura mundial* (Pittsburgh: Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana, 2006).

8. Many of the contributors to this scholarly debate work in the United States as immigrants or expatriates by some definition, like workers in many other sectors of the U.S. economy. Many others fly in for conferences and submit their work to journals from institutional locations outside of the United States: Jacob Edmond at the University of Otago in New Zealand; Jale Parlat at Bilgi University in Turkey; and Mads Rosendahl Thomsen in Denmark, among many others.

9. As New Critics devised new methods that worked like levers to open up a text, contemporary critics devise new ways to understand the relation between literature and this uneven world. See, for example, the theme for the 2016 MLA Conference, which invites participants to “consider the public face of all our objects of attention: literature and other kinds of texts, as well as film, digital media, and rhetoric,” and “to discuss how these objects move among the arts and how our field engages other intellectual disciplines; to reflect on literature’s past publics and speculate on its future publics; and to think about media, reception, commentary, translation, and adaptation—and more—as ways of connecting to a public.” Modern Language Association, “2016 Presidential Theme: Literature and Its Publics: Past, Present, and Future,” accessed January 1, 2016, <https://www.mla.org/Convention/MLA-2016/2016-Presidential-Theme>.

10. Eric Hayot, *On Literary Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 30.

11. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Welles Library, *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

12. As Terry Flew observes, neoliberalism was “rarely used” as a rhetorical object “prior to the early 1990s,” and “it has become a ubiquitous concept in critical discourse” less than two decades later. Flew cites the “inclusiveness and apparent interdisciplinarity of the term.” Terry Flew, “Six Theories of Neoliberalism,” *Thesis Eleven* 122, no. 1 (June 1, 2014): 49–50, doi:10.1177/07253614535965.

13. Pieter Vermeulen, “On World Literary Reading: Literature, the Market, and the Antinomies of Mobility,” in *Institutions of World Literature: Writing, Translation, Markets*, ed. Stefan Heggesson and Pieter Vermeulen (New York: Routledge, 2015), 79.

14. Henry Giroux, “Neoliberalism, Corporate Culture, and the Promise of Higher Education: The University as a Democratic Public Sphere,” *Harvard Educational Review* 72, no. 4 (December 1, 2002): 428, doi:10.17763/haer.72.4-0515nf62324n7p1.

15. A whole corpus of work exists to critique this logic in other contexts. “In academia,” as Lauren Berlant suggests, “reputation is gossip about who had the ideas,” so the rhetorical forms of that “gossip” have determining effects over which kinds of ideas gain value within it. Lauren Berlant, “Affect Is the New Trauma,” *Affect Is the New Trauma*, “Minnesota Re-