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Contemporary Literature, Volume 59, Number 1, Spring 2018, pp. 1-30 (Article)

Published by University of Wisconsin Press



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Global Provincialism: Orhan Pamuk and William Faulkner in the Age of World Literature

In a 2012 interview, the Nobel Prize-winning Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk cites a declaration by John Updike, who claims that many global writers owe a literary debt to the parochial subject matter of William Faulkner's fiction. Agreeing with Updike's claim, Pamuk explains that Faulkner showed how a writer's "subject matter may be provincial, away from the centers of the West and politically troubled, yet one can write about it in a very personal and inventive way and be read all over the world" ("By the Book"). Pamuk's avowed debt to Faulkner centers on their common investment in literary provincialism as the cornerstone for global engagement. To write for the world, begin with a narrow corner of it. Or, as Faulkner put it in a 1956 interview with the *Paris Review*, "Beginning with *Sartoris* I discovered that my own little postage stamp of native soil was worth writing about and that I would never live long enough to exhaust it. . . . It opened up a gold mine of other peoples, so I created a cosmos of my own" (*Lion* 255). Based on the sentiments expressed by Pamuk and Faulkner, two seemingly mutually exclusive scales—the provincial and the global, the marginal postage stamp and the world itself—become deeply interconnected, such that the smaller scale operates as a route to the much larger one.

Archival research for this essay was supported by a Faculty Study and Research grant from Davidson College. An earlier version of this argument was presented at the 2017 MLA Conference in Philadelphia, PA. I would like to thank the MLA panel's chair, Ted Atkinson, and the anonymous readers at *Contemporary Literature* for their comments.

Following on these connections, this essay considers how fiction concerned with its own provinciality functions within the discourse of “world literature.” This essay argues that Faulkner and Pamuk employ the provincial in order to justify self-referentially the literary value of provincial texts. The discourse surrounding the provincial is thus a later permutation of the values entailed in what Goethe termed *Weltliteratur*. For Goethe, these values centered on a form of cultural secularism that ostensibly transcends nationalism. The aspiration of world literature was to connect nations, not to remain rooted in the minor concerns of minor locales. As Goethe put it, the modern literary world would become “a market where all nations offer their goods,” thereby facilitating a “general intellectual commerce” (qtd. in Casanova 14). Indeed, as Eric Hayot observes, Goethe’s use of the term was itself a response

to the far larger cultural strain of world-orientedness that produced Hegel’s lectures on the philosophy of world history (*Weltgeschichte*) in Berlin in 1822 (and 1828 and 1830), Kant’s theory of cosmopolitanism, and indeed so much of the thought of the Enlightenment. These authors, along with all their . . . descendants, point to the importance of the term “world” and its variants to conceptualizations of modernity.

(38)

To contribute to world literature was, during the nineteenth century, to discourse on the ostensibly universal themes of the modern age. This conceptualization of literature refused to be mired in the small-town concerns that fell far outside the emerging centers of global cultural exchange. The “world” of world literature was therefore not only an affirmation of cosmopolitan literary capital, as Pascale Casanova argues, but also a statement about space within the discourse of modernity. In early conceptions of *Weltliteratur*, parochial locales and rooted marginality were not among the spaces that mattered.

Goethe’s view of *Weltliteratur* was also important for how it presented the nation as a route for higher-order cultural exchange. While Goethe’s late writings often subordinate the national to cosmopolitan values, Aamir R. Mufti argues that these very values were rooted in the increasingly standardized cultural logic of particular national literatures. As Mufti explains, the concept

of *Weltliteratur* “emerged precisely alongside the nation-state and nation-form, rather than as a sign of their overcoming” (217). At this stage, world literature was a national idiom posing as a cosmopolitan lingua franca. Yet Faulkner’s work establishes a different vein of thought during the twentieth century. In particular, Faulkner’s place in world literature hinges on his fiction’s investment in the parochial or provincial as an avenue for an ostensibly universal vision of human experience. I describe this view of writing for the world through the universalizable aspects of marginal provinces as “global provincialism.” According to this influential form of literary thought, writers arrive at the “world” of world literature by attending to the particular conditions of minor locales. However, this essay shows that the Faulknerian template for provinciality dresses the norms of Western democracy and liberal humanism in the garb of eternal truths. Faulkner’s place within the intellectual history of world literature thus comprises one especially influential pattern for the fictional representation of liberal political values as an expression of universal human values.

To identify the contours of this curiously parochial transformation of *Weltliteratur*, the first section of this essay looks to Faulkner’s world-literary gestures in his work on behalf of the federal government of the United States and his diplomatic speeches during the Cold War era. I extend this analysis in the second section of the essay by working backward to Faulkner’s figures for literary writing during the era of the Second World War, especially those presented in *Go Down, Moses* (1942). I argue that these figures for literary writing are representative of Faulkner’s view of the relation between provincialism and the discourse of world literature. Understanding the sentiments informing Faulkner’s figures for literary writing—particularly given the geopolitical anxieties of the moment and his post-1945 status as an American emissary to a newly transformed global literary marketplace—provides an additional layer to the history of world literature as an idea. Faulkner’s later fiction and Cold War-era activity for the U.S. government further illustrate how writers use the seemingly particular conditions of remote locales to assert a form of universal thinking. This globalizing of provinciality elides the contingency of the cultural values integral to the production and circulation of world literature. What is more, while the

“universality” of Faulkner’s fiction trades on the rhetoric of liberal humanism, its conditions of possibility were Cold War-era geopolitics and the rise of a global market for fiction.

The third section of the essay compares the Faulknerian variety of *Weltliteratur* with analogous figures in Orhan Pamuk’s work. As recipients of the Nobel Prize for Literature, both authors represent institutional judgments of world literary value. The fiction of both authors also represents a tradition of literary investment in provincialism as a kind of globalism. In Faulkner’s form of this investment, the intersections of provinciality and *Weltliteratur* occlude the mediating work of the nation by universalizing what are distinctively national literary forms and sensibilities. Pamuk’s fiction employs a related form of this discourse to depict the local as a theater for staging the meaning of world literature itself. Pamuk’s work also employs provinciality as a figural repository for representing what he calls “Third World Literature,” such that even cosmopolitan urban centers like Istanbul become at least partially legible as provincial locales. Unlike Faulkner’s work, however, Pamuk’s fiction distances itself from some of the more universalizing assumptions put forward in the earlier variety of global provincialism. This comparison brings into relief a template for representing provinciality in global literary production. According to this template, the provinces are refracted through universalizing narrative gestures in order to make ostensibly minor locales legible for consumption by a global reading public.

Will and the “World”

Many elements of the global dimensions of Faulkner’s reception and self-stylization are well known. For example, beginning in the 1930s French intellectuals like Jean-Paul Sartre took an interest in Faulkner’s work. Sartre sought to identify forms of American violence that, in turn, would complement his own interests in nihilism and existential philosophy (228–29). Similarly, Casanova argues that Édouard Glissant, Patrick Chamoiseau, and many other writers “have embraced the Faulknerian model in the hope of escaping French supremacy” (125). According to Casanova, Faulkner’s experimental form elevates his parochial subject matter and thus

provides writers on the so-called cultural peripheries with a model for “creative liberty.” This is a version of John Updike’s assessment of Faulkner’s influence on “third world writers” (“By the Book”). Indeed, in an interview with *Paris Review*, Pamuk explains that Faulkner provided him with a model for breaking with his predecessors in Turkish fiction, who “wasted their talent on trying to serve their nation” (*Other Colors* 357). In Pamuk’s coming-of-age as a writer, Faulkner and Virginia Woolf were his “heroes” (363). He explains that these modernist writers helped him break with the narrow “social-realist model of Steinbeck and Gorky” that, according to Pamuk, had influenced the preceding generation of Turkish novelists (357). Faulkner’s work thus provided many “world” writers with a creative model for ostensibly escaping the patterns of their national literatures.

Yet Faulkner’s view of world-literary engagement developed as a self-characterization later in his career, particularly in his speeches, work for the federal government of the United States, and fiction written at the same time as the mounting conflict in Europe during the 1930s and 1940s. Indeed, the Faulknerian model of “creative liberty” for writers of world literature arose during the period not only of the Second World War but also the birth of the United Nations, the global threat of nuclear war, and the Marshall Plan.¹ These twentieth-century scales of global urgency recast cultural production and literary publishing, often by employing the rhetoric of the universal as a theater for contesting global disagreements. In other words, many national institutions in the West posited “universal” or world-literary value not as an abstract affirmation of

1. Rey Chow shows that depicting the “world” as such became a cultural and political demand from the conflicts, anxieties, and conditions of possibility for global war during the post-1945 moment. As Chow puts it, “[t]he universalist concept of all the literatures of the world being held together as a totality” became part of the terrain of global conflict (71). The scales of the world and the universal were thus features of an aspiration to achieve a “world picture” or totality. “Even in its inception,” Chow says, “the notion of a world literature, one that transcends national boundaries, emerged in a historical context in which thinkers were attempting to address and mediate the conflictual, warring political situation within Europe” (79). However, this mediatory function was never actually neutral or conciliatory, for defining the value of the universal fit within the geopolitical contests between nations and forms of political organization.

cosmopolitanism but as a front in the global contest between communism and liberal democratic values.

During the 1950s, Faulkner travelled widely as an American representative to nearly a dozen nations, often on behalf of the U.S. State Department. In particular, Faulkner served as a spokesman and ambassador to Greece, Venezuela, Brazil, Japan, the Philippines, Iceland, and several other countries (Blotner 200, 219). Faulkner's modus operandi during these speaking engagements was to universalize his ideas to establish connections between his work and the cultural situation of his host nation. For example, Jay Parini recalls how Faulkner gave a speech in Cleveland in May 1952 and then left the next day for an international congress of writers in Paris. In the Cleveland speech, Faulkner's politics "moved in the direction of libertarian individualism, with a strong distaste for any kind of federal intervention. He praised 'courage and endurance,' much as he had done in Stockholm" during his Nobel Prize acceptance speech (346). As Parini explains, Faulkner's politics thus "mirrored that of many middle-class Southerners." Notions about human self-reliance through "courage and endurance" formed the ligaments connecting Faulkner's Stockholm speech to the cultural politics of Cleveland and then to a conference facilitating the idea of world literature itself. The rationale for Faulkner's service as a kind of cultural trustee on behalf of Americanism was based on his emerging status as one of the preeminent world writers from the United States. The State Department, not just the institution of the literary conference, identified value in Faulkner's cultural status in the world.

Faulkner's role as a cultural ambassador for Americanism was virtually never explicit propaganda about the supremacy of American democratic capitalism. Instead, he represented liberal democratic values as eternal features of the human condition. For instance, in a 1955 speech titled "To the Youth of Japan" delivered in Tokyo and then published as a pamphlet by the U.S. Information Service, Faulkner says,

We think of the world today as being a helpless battleground in which two mighty forces face each other in the form of two irreconcilable ideologies. I do not believe they are two ideologies. I believe that only one of them is an ideology because the other is simply a human belief that no

government shall exist immune to the check of the consent of the governed.

(*Essays* 84)

Democracy—political rule sanctioned by a particular *demos*—becomes a universal human belief, an aspiration of Man writ large. The proclamation of this belief takes on a timeless quality, becoming situated instead within the scale of what Faulkner in the same speech terms “universal truth” rather than the particulars of “Japanese truth” or the values of an American literary culture (84). As Faulkner put it a few years earlier in his Nobel Prize address, a writer ought to “leav[e] no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart, the old universal truths lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed” (*Essays* 120). In Stockholm, Faulkner presented narrative as being built upon the sediment of timelessness, while American values demarcated the parameters for universality.

During this late period in his career, Faulkner even began to participate in the federal contours of his literary status on a world stage, as his peculiar work for President Eisenhower’s People-to-People Program in 1956 and 1957 suggests. In this underappreciated intersection of Cold War anxieties and the idea of a world literary marketplace, Faulkner visited a White House Conference in 1956 at the invitation of President Eisenhower to learn more about a program called the People-to-People Partnership. Most of the record of Faulkner’s participation in this program remains unpublished, but it is available in the archives at the University of Virginia. According to one of the conference documents, the People-to-People Partnership was intended to “encourage American citizens to develop their contacts with the peoples of other lands as a means of promoting understanding, peace and progress” (“Conference Program”). Ed Lipscomb, a public relations businessman who also attended the program at the White House, offered a less euphemistic description of Eisenhower’s People-to-People Partnership: “The basic need for this program goes back to the fearsome and familiar subject of world-wide war. . . . It is called a cold war,” Lipscomb says, and “whether we like it or not, [it] above all else is a public relations war” (“Manuscript for Speech”). President Eisenhower had summoned a

wide range of American businessmen, cultural figures, and political elite to wage war on the poor image of the United States in countries under the shadow of communism.

Faulkner's part in this program attests to the appeal of the global to an ostensibly provincial writer, while his activity also provides an almost comical anecdote about midcentury American literary culture and its relation to political institutions. Faulkner became the chairman of the short-lived writers' committee in Eisenhower's program. He reached out to dozens of other writers to solicit their support for spreading American literary culture to the world. After some deliberation, the committee recommended that the Eisenhower administration "disseminate books, plays, and moving pictures through our Government, at least to match what the Russians are doing" ("Undated Letter"). The literary presence of the United States in the world became an avenue for spreading democratic values over and against threats posed by communist political systems. However, as Caroline Henze-Gongola and Jeb Livingood explain, "some of the writers Faulkner contacted were more cynical, viewing the effort mostly as a way to spread Eisenhower propaganda" (51). Saul Bellow, for example, responded to the questionnaire Faulkner sent him by answering, "The attitude of our President & his government towards literature and the other branches of culture cannot be concealed. Business and war are at the top of the heap. Science is in the middle. We are at the bottom. Shall we celebrate this condition before the world? No ideology. No bunk. Let us write our books and leave ideology to the advertising people" (qtd. in Henze-Gongola and Livingood 73). Like Bellow, many of the writers who participated in Faulkner's committee work were critical or dismissive of the endeavor; many were hard to work with, even petulant at times; many others doubted whether the United States could match Russia's global efforts.

Faulkner's modest aspirations as committee chairman in 1956 and 1957, as well as his service for the State Department and the U.S. Information Service following the Nobel Prize ceremony in Stockholm, represent a conscious effort to deploy his so-called little postage stamp of literary soil within a global marketplace of cultural exchange. These midcentury speeches and federal activities suggest how Faulkner regularly used the vocabulary of human nature and

the scale of the universal as signposts for staking out global literary claims. These episodes also signal the infiltration of Cold War anxieties into Faulkner's strain of American modernism. Indeed, as Greg Barnhisel argues, "Faulkner was almost certainly the most significant figure in the exportation of American modernism to the rest of the world and likely had more direct influence on foreign writers . . . than any American writer since Poe" (125). On the other hand, Faulkner's universalizing gestures are also features of his implicit self-stylization as a world writer rather than a minor word-smith from Mississippi. They are part and parcel of the rhetoric of "world literature," a recurring motif in the generation of the writer of world-historical importance. The universalizing gesture is therefore one of the principal literary techniques of global provincialism.

Go Down, Moses and the Problem of a Provincial Literature

The authenticating function of provincialism informs the tortured reflections of Ike McCaslin, who stands in for the Southern, provincial writer at certain key moments in *Go Down, Moses*. One of the recurring plot tensions in the novel centers on Ike's vexed relationship to his inheritance, a large plantation bequeathed him by his grandfather, old Carothers McCaslin. The issue of inheritance has both regional and sexual connotations throughout Ike's anxious meditations. Neil Watson observes that sexuality "is the wellspring from which much of the novel's dramatic and symbolic force flows" (200). Indeed the repression of sexuality—and the recognition of slavery as a sexual system, not just a means of exploiting labor—animates many of the book's narrative strands. These issues of sexuality and inheritance provoke the characters' convoluted meditations on the legitimacy of occupying a place or region established through a history of violence. For instance, while Ike is the only child of the oldest son of the McCaslin family and thus the "true heir," the actual "inheritor" is Ike's elder cousin, McCaslin Edmonds (Faulkner, *Go Down, Moses* 103, 3). Much of the mystery and gravity of the novel orbits around Ike's reasons for repudiating the plantation and thus in some degree the history or cultural heritage of his provincial origins. As another character puts it, Ike "retained of the patrimony . . . only the trusteeship of the legacy" (103). He disavows his family's

material wealth and tries to redistribute it to the descendant of his grandfather's former slaves.

Ike functions as a figure for the Southern writer not only because he is consciously preoccupied with the burden of the plantation legacy but also because he reads and adds to a ledger kept by his grandfather, father, and uncle. This ledger is a crucial nodal point in a network of symbols in *Go Down, Moses*. Books hold magisterial weight in the novel as records of ideas, and they also often function as metonyms for the idea of literature itself. For example, Ike cites "the Book"—that is, the Judeo-Christian scriptures—to critique the legacy of his grandfather (246). As a countervailing authority, McCaslin Edmonds cites the plantation's ledger kept at its commissary store. Faulkner thus depicts a world in which books inscribe authority and extend the competing claims of power into the present. As McCaslin ruefully reminds Ike, the plantation and its chattel slaves were in "revokeless thrall to this commissary store and those ledgers yonder during your grandfather's life," as if the written record constitutes the reality and carries weight long after the Civil War (247). These ledgers include transactions and records of the purchase of slaves, often through dialogic entries written between Buck and Buddy McCaslin, Ike's father and uncle, respectively. The narrator explains that the ledgers also narrate how "the slaves which Carothers McCaslin had inherited and purchased" (252) "took substance and even a sort of shadowy life with their passions and complexities too as page followed page and year year" (254). Whether scriptures or property ledgers, *Go Down, Moses* depicts the power of books to institute—and continually constitute—the texture of reality with a seemingly "revokeless thrall." These books have an almost sacred function of bestowing life and meaning by narrating "passions and complexities" that would otherwise fall outside the eye of history.

Faulkner's earlier work had established a pattern related to this literary subtext in *Go Down, Moses* and the gestures toward world-literary importance in his post-1949 speeches. Unlike this later work, however, his work from the 1920s through the mid-1930s often frustrates universal intelligibility, holding up the ideal of the individual standing in for the whole only to undermine it. In *Absalom, Absalom!*

(1936), for instance, Mr. Compson says to his son Quentin that “our ancestors born in the South” are “like a chemical formula exhumed along with the letters from that forgotten chest, carefully, the paper old and faded and falling to pieces” (80). He mixes chemical and literary metaphors, reading Sutpen and others as if they were books. This reading in turn depicts Compson’s forebears as representatives of the South. However, during the attempt to decipher this writing of the regional past, Compson explains,

you re-read, tedious and intent, poring, making sure that you have forgotten nothing, made no miscalculation; you bring them together again and again nothing happens: just the words, the symbols, the shapes themselves, shadowy inscrutable and serene, against that turgid background of a horrible and bloody mischancing of human affairs.

(80)

Compson’s Southern ancestors become exemplary of “human affairs,” yet the type of universal experience is here coded as the frustration of intelligibility. The representatives don’t fully represent: even when “you bring them together again and again,” this universalizing gesture only attests to the universal inadequacy of representative systems of language. The “words, the symbols, the shapes themselves” become eerily and calmly “inscrutable.” *Absalom, Absalom!* therefore fits within the modernist set of tropes that Michael Levinson describes as “experiments with a nonsignifying language” (98). The book of the South aspires to a world-literary and existential scale, but Compson renders such a universal aspiration as yet another “bloody mischancing” in the collective folly of humanity (Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* 80). The only common experience in the novel is the collapse of a shared communicative order.

In contrast to this earlier use of individual cases as universally representative, the ledgers in *Go Down, Moses* represent a turn in Faulkner’s career toward world-literary intelligibility. It standardizes a local corner of human experience by making it stand in for the essence of the whole. That is to say, rather than being a “horrible and bloody mischancing of human affairs,” the ledgers signal human systems of sexual violence and exploitation while at the same reinstating the intelligibility foreclosed in Faulkner’s earlier modernist

writing (*Absalom, Absalom!* 80). The ledgers serve a practical diegetic function, providing narrative life for the McCaslin plantation and even shadowy glimpses into the “passions and complexities” of the slaves (*Go Down, Moses* 254). Yet the narrator also generalizes these pages: “all there, not only the general and condoned injustice and its slow amortization but the specific tragedy which had not been condoned and could never be amortized, the new page and the new ledger.” The ledger stands in for the system of chattel slavery more generally. What is more, it extends (through the financial metaphor of “amortization”) into the post-bellum generations of the South. The debt pays forward, even as the ledger records the “general and condoned injustice” through the details of the “specific tragedy.” While the book read by Ike narrates a family genealogy of violence, the plantation-ledger-as-master-narrative also gives birth to a kind of midrash. It is a narrative of the region’s genesis, which justifies its own re-reading. This is exemplified in the commentary of the two readers who surround the ledgers. Ike McCaslin and McCaslin Edmonds debate the justice of what the ledgers record, and they even discuss in a clearly metafictional way the power of cultural narratives—that is, whether the power of these books can indeed be revoked.

Reading and writing, books and their provincial subjects, are therefore recurring tropes in *Go Down, Moses*. This literary landscape functions in a self-referential way to justify the cultural representation of the life of the American South. This self-referential justification is most potent in the chapter “The Bear.” Before Ike disavows his inheritance and leaves the Southern plantation, he discovers that the McCaslin genealogy includes not only old Carothers McCaslin’s two white sons and daughter but also the mixed-race children from McCaslin’s rape of his slave named Eunice. Ike’s reading of this plantation book leads to the discovery that prompts his disavowal of the McCaslin heritage (258). Ike discovers that old Carothers McCaslin bought the slave Eunice as sexual chattel and that a daughter named Tomey was born as a result. But Ike reads between the lines of the ledger to discover that Carothers McCaslin then raped his own daughter, the slave Tomey, thus fathering a third generation of slaves in the person named Tomey’s Terrel. The formal

aspects of this discovery take on a notably literary cast, as Ike learns that his grandfather

travelled three hundred miles and better to New Orleans in a day when men travelled by horseback or steamboat, and bought the girl's mother as a wife for

and that was all. The old frail pages seemed to turn of their own accord even while he thought *His own daughter. His own daughter. No No Not even him*

(259)

The aperture that splits the paragraphs in this passage signals how the reading of the book of the South momentarily unseats Ike's narrative voice. The violence and incestuous rape at once generates and interrupts literary production. The reading and writing of this plantation book leads Ike to repudiate the McCaslin patrimony as his inheritance. However, Ike also recognizes that the "yellowed pages in their fading and implacable succession were as much a part of his consciousness and would remain so forever, as the fact of his own nativity" (259). Rather than undermining narrative progress, reading the history of his postage stamp of native soil inspires literary production. The particularities of the plantation book lead Ike to translate an instance of seemingly incomprehensible violence into a universally legible literary event. By further insisting that the "yellowed pages" would "remain" in his consciousness "forever," this recognition scene becomes a self-reflexive gesture justifying a provincial literature. For Ike to understand himself—that is, in order to uncover the hidden truth that is on the same order of existential significance as "his own nativity"—he needs the "fading and implacable succession" of the plantation legacy in its written form.

This moment in *Go Down, Moses* provides a metafictional pattern for provincial letters. In Faulkner's case, this provincial literature is based in the American South and must account for its institution of chattel slavery and its cultures entangled with the plantation tradition. On one hand, then, the fact that the "yellowed pages" become an indelible part of Ike's "consciousness" provides a cultural logic justifying a literary career based on consuming and producing the history of post-plantation Southern life. On the other, Ike's logic entwines disavowal with an abiding literary burden: the Southern

writer retains “only the trusteeship of the legacy,” and not the patrimony itself, such that reading the book of the South justifies its future writing but does not champion or mitigate the violent legacy (103). Ike, in other words, becomes in *Go Down, Moses* a figure for the writer whose differentiation from his legacy justifies self-reflexively his ongoing obsession with the post-plantation provinces. As a cultural trustee, the Southern writer therefore bears the responsibility and burden of telling about the South, yet at the same time he occupies a position of ostensible distance from the privileges that would follow from being a direct inheritor of the legacy. Indeed, Fred Hobson describes the literary activity in the South prior to the Second World War as a “Southern affliction,” which “assumed epidemic proportions in the three decades thereafter” (297). Ike’s peculiar affliction takes the form of renunciation, but this gesture becomes only another host for the South’s infectious obsession with explaining itself.

What is more, as McCaslin Edmunds’s comparison of the plantation ledgers to the Bible might suggest, the discussion about the ledgers elevates these texts as representatives of universal human experience. The analogy allows the ledgers to become perversely sacred: although recounting the story of a particular people, they also represent and help constitute deeply held beliefs and wider truths. McCaslin again makes a similarly universal gesture with another textual object when he instructs his cousin about bear hunting and the moral lessons contained therein. After Ike explains why he hadn’t killed the bear named Old Ben when he was close enough to see “*a big wood tick just inside his off hind leg,*” McCaslin responds by reading several lines from John Keats’s “Ode on a Grecian Urn” (*Go Down, Moses* 283). Ike answers dully that the poet is “*talking about a girl,*” to which McCaslin says:

He had to talk about something. . . . He was talking about truth. Truth is one. It doesn’t change. It covers all things which touch the heart—honor and pride and pity and justice and courage and love. Do you see now?

Ike doesn’t follow his cousin’s point, but McCaslin explains again that “*what the heart holds to becomes truth.*” McCaslin depicts local cases of sentiment (“*pride*” and “*love*”) and moral judgment (“*justice*” and “*courage*”) as “*something*” to talk about in order to arrive at

matters of universal import. For McCaslin and Ike, these truths are the virtues and vices of the human spirit, much as the ledgers attest to the moral life of Man writ large.

The metafictional contours of this episode—its discussion of writing, its citation of a famous poem by John Keats—affirm the value and even necessity of the particular “*something*” that is available to any given writer. The dialogue between McCaslin and Ike presents the parochial as a justifiable subject matter for the Southern writer because, like “*a girl*” or a particular family’s plantation ledger, the parochial is the “*something*” that links up the individual’s experience with human “*truth*” (283). Ike initially views the stanzas by Keats as referring merely to “*a young man and a girl he would never need to grieve over because he could never approach any nearer and would never have to get any further away*” (284). As the narrator depicts it, Ike wrongly assumes that he can escape the text, as if it had no bearing on his person. However, McCaslin and the narrator come to see texts as speaking to the recesses of the human heart. The shared and universally intelligible “*truth*” pursues Ike, much like he hunts the old bear in the wilderness. The “*old verities and truths of the heart,*” as Faulkner put it in his Nobel address, are never dead, for they seem instead to hunt down Ike through a variety of textual mediums (*Essays* 120).

It would be easy to provide a biographical explanation for this turn in Faulkner’s work from the nonsignifying language of *Absalom, Absalom!* toward the universal rhetoric that justifies provincial letters in *Go Down, Moses*. Faulkner wrote most of the chapters published in *Go Down, Moses* as short stories from 1938 to 1940, revising and expanding this material for the novel during 1941. (The exception was his story “*The Bear,*” which he wrote during the summer of 1941.) As Parini explains, many of these stories were written with Faulkner’s “*finances dwindling and the war in Europe widening every day*” (251). In fact, after receiving an advance for the novel from Random House, Faulkner explained to Harold Ober, his agent, “*When I wired you I did not have \$15.00 to pay electricity bill with, keep my lights burning*” (qtd. in Parini 252). Faulkner’s turn toward universal themes may easily be read as a commercial decision, one justifying the difficulty of the prose and subject matter by reference to the difficulties of the human heart. According to this reading,

the texts in *Go Down, Moses* serve as self-referential objects with a commercial logic: they are texts that justify the selling of other texts. Indeed, despite his financial situation, Faulkner was at the time trying to expand and develop his landholdings in the South (250). It is hard to dismiss the possibility that Ike's repudiation of his inheritance may in part be a sublimation of Faulkner's desire for reconstructing a different kind of southern plantation: Ike signals the rejection of privilege but an abiding commitment to life in the provinces, despite the fact that the accumulation of land in the region still depended on racial property relations. One can certainly imagine how rejecting the South's legacy but benefiting from writing as its trustee might assuage the conscience.

Yet this biographical explanation isn't complete, for the scale of the "human spirit" had also garnered wider cultural currency during the 1940s. Indeed, the "old verities and truths of the heart" were touchstones in the first significant wave of American criticism on Faulkner's work, and the shift from *Absalom, Absalom!* to *Go Down, Moses* and the Cold War-era speeches may also be explicable in these terms. In other words, the shift in Faulkner's work from high literary experimentalist to universal-moral humanist is best read not only as a result of the author's self-branding and financial commitments but also as a constitutive force within the changing intellectual life of post-1940 America. Lawrence Schwartz shows that Faulkner held a position among critics in the late 1930s as a "writer's writer" (16). During the postwar dominance of "the New Critical interpretation of Faulkner," though, Schwartz argues that the "universality of the novelist's message" replaced the earlier judgment about Faulkner's niche appeal (19). These critics retrospectively identified the universal in Faulkner's work, rather than reading this same fiction as an expression of finely tuned craft according to the evaluative criteria of a literary coterie. In short, Faulkner's work began to garner a new cultural currency less because of its provinciality than the global resonances of its particularity.

These critical shifts are explicable in terms of the crisis of Americanism within postwar intellectual life, for Faulkner's post-1940 reception relied heavily on the universal and global dimensions of his

particular American experience.² To borrow from Stuart Hall, “the global is the self-presentation of the dominant particular,” which is to say that the post-1940 discourse surrounding the universality of Faulkner’s message was a feature of intellectual concerns about defining and then exporting Americanism (67). As Hall argues, accounts of the global tend to “naturalize” the particular by placing it on the register of human experience as such. In keeping with this naturalization of a “dominant particular,” Faulkner’s drift toward global provincialism resonates with the political concerns and cultural anxieties at the dawn of the “American century” that Henry Luce famously called for in 1941. According to Luce’s view of the geopolitical situation, the Second World War created a moment in which Americans ought to embrace a “vision of America as a world power which . . . will guide us to the authentic creation of the 20th century—our Century” (Luce 65).

Building on Schwartz’s scholarship on the politics of Faulkner’s reception, Mark Greif similarly situates the rationale for the post-1940 revival of interest in Faulkner’s work among American intellectuals as centering on a widespread discourse concerning the “crisis of man” (Greif 16). The notion of the human as an analytic category became common cultural and intellectual fare beginning in the early 1930s, and as such Greif says the critical vocabulary surrounding Faulkner’s reception increasingly relied on casting his parochial fiction as an expression of “man” himself. As Greif puts it, “Faulkner had been valued, at home and abroad, for elements in the prewar period . . . that were magically changed in the postwar period to signs of indomitable human spirit and American tradition” (117). Faulkner’s universal rhetoric in Cold War-era speeches and his wartime interest in human verities therefore resonated, almost recursively, with his own reception history. Such rhetoric patterned a transition from the Southern writer’s writer to the novelist of world-literary importance. To write about the provincial became a means for Faulkner’s fiction to link up with the global, for this literary gesture fashioned the text as a “worlded” object through the markers of universal humanism.

2. See, for example, Wall 63–100.

Orhan Pamuk, Global Provincialism, and the Politics of Literary Universalism

Much like the self-referentiality of Faulkner's later fiction, the register of world-literary engagement in Orhan Pamuk's work is typically scaled to the provincial. Indeed, citing Pamuk's *Snow* (2002), his untranslated novel "Cevdet Bey and His Sons" (1982), and *Silent House* (1983), Nergis Ertürk argues that the "journey to the *taşra* [provinces]" is "an organizing schema of Pamuk's entire body of work" (637). Yet, in contrast to the types of literary discourse that characterize Faulkner's career beginning around 1940, Pamuk's fiction also interrogates the notion of a world literature in its connections to provincial letters. Pamuk's interest in the provinces is complicated, however, by the importance of Istanbul to his work, as seen particularly in *The Black Book* (1994) and the memoir *Istanbul* (2003). What is more, *The Black Book* was written in New York while Pamuk held a position as a visiting scholar at Columbia University and his then-wife was completing a graduate degree. Thus, while the provinces are an organizing schema, they were most often schematized in the author's urban homes.

The Faulknerian pattern not only inflects Pamuk's fiction but also resembles his understanding of national identity. As Pamuk explains in an essay on the notion of third world literature, "the range of the literatures on the margins" often achieves its originality through metaphors of distance, such as the novelist who "knows he is writing far from the world's literary centers and he feels this distance inside himself" (*Other Colors* 168). In interviews Pamuk similarly expresses the importance that being "so far away from Europe" has had on his work (377). In a turn on these metaphors, he characterizes certain varieties of world fiction as "somehow remote from the centers where the history of [the writer's] art—the art of the novel—is described" (168). In other words, Pamuk associates certain nationalities as marginal and provincial within a global literary marketplace. This view is consistent with Casanova's account of world literature. According to Casanova, the period of decolonization during the middle of the twentieth century marks "the entry into international competition of contestants who until then had been prevented from taking part" (48). While Turkey was never

colonized by the West, its literature still forms part of what Pamuk calls “Third World Literature,” which he says enters late onto the world-literary stage. As a result of this position far from the centers of Western literary value, Pamuk argues the novelist inevitably “reflects this distance in his work” (168). He explains that to be Turkish is, in at least this sense, to feel provincial.

The spatial topography that makes world literature a fragmented and uneven concept helps explain how Pamuk’s recurring concern not only with the provinces but also Istanbul itself continues to employ and adapt Faulkner’s pattern. Given the arrangement of global and political power, Pamuk presents Turkey’s ostensibly provincial status as a source of frustration, which he directs at his national culture and the “Western Eyes” that scrutinize it (*Other Colors* 239). For example, responding to a line of questioning about Turkish nationalism, Pamuk says that his country has “such a parochial, nationalistic culture” (374). On the other hand, he also laments that “the canon is in the hands of Western scholars. That is the center of distribution and communication” (371). Such remarks signal Pamuk’s keen awareness of being subject to what Rebecca L. Walkowitz describes as the “globalization of publishing,” in which book tours, interviews, academic appointments, and the institutions of Western literary culture become a necessity for reaching a readership outside one’s home nation (533).

Pamuk’s view of the provincial identity of third world literature takes the fiction of Mario Vargas Llosa as an exemplary case. Pamuk identifies with the “sorrow” that punctuates Vargas Llosa’s work—a sorrow that is “unmistakably that of remoteness from the center, a state of mind that people like us understand all too well” (*Other Colors* 173). Even in *Istanbul*, Pamuk describes this feeling of remoteness as central to the city’s identity: it is “a city that has been in decline for a hundred and fifty years” (42). For this reason Pamuk places *hüzün* or melancholy at the heart of the city. This melancholy is communal, Pamuk explains, and consequently “the fragility of people’s lives in Istanbul, the way they treat one another and the distance they feel from the centers of the West, make Istanbul a city that newly arrived Westerners are at a loss to understand” (101). If the “world” of “world literature” is in part a statement about space within the discourse of modernity, Pamuk queries that spatial arrangement by

probing the types of distance experienced by readers, writers, and their characters. His work suggests how even major urban centers can become sites of provinciality as a result of their history and cultural status.

Pamuk's novel *Snow* is a long meditation on these issues, for its protagonist is a poet named Ka who returns to an isolated, provincial town called Kars. Before his visit to this border city, Ka was a political exile in Frankfurt, Germany, for several years. While in Frankfurt, Ka was unable to write poetry—he merely recited his old poems for the Turkish community in Germany and slowly acquired minor literary acclaim. However, after becoming trapped in Kars during a snowstorm, Ka writes nineteen poems in a burst of inspiration across the span of a few days. Returning to the provincial thus generates the literary production of the novel—not only in Ka's output but also at several other levels. For one, the novel's narrator, a fictional character named Orhan Pamuk, begins to write the book when he later visits Kars to research the life and poetry of Ka, who had been a longtime friend (*Snow* 388). What is more, Pamuk the writer (not the character in the novel) paid a similar visit to the town of Kars in preparation for writing *Snow*. As Pamuk explains in an interview, Kars "is notoriously one of the coldest towns in Turkey. And one of the poorest" (*Other Colors* 372). The novelist's visit paralleled many of Ka's activities in *Snow*: Pamuk conducted interviews, appeared on television, and posed as a journalist inquiring into the upcoming municipal elections (372–73). Indeed, Pamuk even "went to Kars with a camera and a video recorder. I was filming everything and then going back to Istanbul and showing it to my friends" (373). The trip to the provinces thus generates the novel's literary production; such a process of composition also orients those margins by reference to literary production at an urban center. Even as the narrator Orhan "imagine[s him]self as a character in a provincial novel from the 1940s" by its end, *Snow* uses provincial life to dress up what nonetheless remain distinctly cosmopolitan literary figures (429).

Pamuk also uses the provincial to stage a conflict between Islam and secular Western political culture, between literature and politics, between masculine revolutionary authority and the agency of Turkish women, and between regional realities and the more

general idea of Europe itself. These conflicts are quite literally staged because a troupe of dramatists collaborates with a military colonel to begin a coup in Kars during a night at the local theater. The upheaval becomes known after the fact as a “theatrical coup” (415). As Mary Jo Kietzman argues, this theatrical staging alludes to Shakespeare’s and Thomas Kyd’s revenge dramas, which enables Pamuk “to address an international audience and to create a ‘global imaginary’ context in which a liberal democratic Turkey may successfully emerge” (327). In addition to signaling this “global imaginary,” the dramatists also stage the coup to preempt the victory of a moderate Islamic political party in the local elections. In contrast to the cultural and political vision of the Islamists in Kars, the military coup aspires to reaffirm Atatürk’s vision of a secular Turkish state and the establishment of deeper ties with European culture. But this vision predictably devolves into the slaughter of those who dissent, along with Kurds and other minority groups that happen to be in Kars at the time. The aspiration of the universal, secular community—the desire to fashion provincial communities after a global pattern—becomes theatrically absurd and politically violent.

As Pamuk’s visit to Kars in preparation for the book suggests, *Snow*, not unlike *Go Down, Moses*, is a novel that examines novel writing. However, *Snow* offers a critical turn on this self-referentiality, for it interrogates the idea of the urban writer who retreats to the provinces in order to find inspiration for world-literary engagement. This tension between cosmopolitan and ostensibly parochial values is evident not only in the narrator Orhan’s views but also in the poet Ka’s conversations. For instance, Ka explains to the Islamic political figure known as Blue, “since coming to Kars, all the roads on which poetry travels have reopened” (334). And despite the fact that Ka is an atheist, he adds, “I attribute this to the love of God I’ve felt here.” Often the voice of disillusionment and realpolitik, Blue replies, “I don’t want to destroy your illusions, but your love for God comes out of Western romantic novels. . . . In a place like this, if you worship God as a European, you’re bound to be a laughing stock.” Rather than being a shared feature of the human spirit, Ka’s provincial aesthetic manifests the poet’s abiding commitment to European values. The mode of literary production that turns toward the provincial as a route to the wider world becomes deeply suspicious

from the vantage point of those outside Western cultural centers. Both the novel's protagonist and its narrator often espouse dubious cultural sentiments.

One of the novel's most telling uses of the idea of the provincial is to make universalizing gestures based on its provincial setting—and then to undermine those gestures. As a result, Pamuk identifies one of the political subtexts for the global marketability of the provinces: such uses of provinciality constitute a field of signs deployed within a global marketplace of culture to assert configurations of universally shared values over competing configurations. For example, the narrator Orhan Pamuk often explains Ka's behavior by reference to examples from "world literature": Ka is "like those Chekhovian characters so laden with virtues that they never know success in life" (4); Ka felt "like the sad romantic hero of a Turgenev novel" (31); and Ka even writes a poem titled "All Humanity and the Stars" based on the premise that "our small city might one day have a role to play in world history" (277). Ka thus at first stands in contrast to the "bearded provincial reactionaries" of Kars by virtue of his characterization as an (admittedly minor) world-literary figure (99). In other words, connections between provinciality and world literary figures serve as a prophylactic to the critique of a Kurdish youth: "When they write poems or sing songs in the West, they speak for all humanity. They're human beings—but we're just Muslims. When *we* write something, it's just ethnic poetry" (286). The narrator's characterization of Ka—and his stylization of the novel through figures borrowed from an international literary scene—works against the default marginalization of Turkish literature. The narrator's technique places both Ka and the narrative world on the same register as other exemplars of global literary value. Therefore, at first blush, *Snow* is Faulkner's pattern for provinciality redux.

Yet with this recognition of the contests over universality in representations of the provincial, the novel uses the *taşra* as an occasion for questioning the conditions of possibility for world-literary value. This scrutiny occurs as Ka's poetry increasingly turns toward the provincial, and the similes between Ka and Chekhov's or Turgenev's characters drop away. Indeed, in contrast to the view of the provincial as the locus of world literature, the "provincial" as a set of tropes becomes less coherent by the end of the novel. The

importance of this shift in the uses of provinciality becomes clear by the novel's end, when Orhan interviews a survivor of the theatrical coup. This citizen of Kars, named Fazıl, agrees to answer Pamuk's questions only if the novelist includes a direct address. Fazıl, who is a kind of embodiment of the provincial culture of the town, says in the closing pages of the novel, "If you write a book set in Kars and put me in it, I'd like to tell your readers not to believe anything you say about me, anything you say about any of us. No one could understand us from so far away" (435). The novelist-narrator from Istanbul objects that "no one believes everything they read in a novel," prompting Fazıl to respond,

Oh, yes, they do believe it. . . . If only to see themselves as wise and superior and humanistic, they need to think of us as sweet and funny, and convince themselves that they sympathize with the way we are and even love us. But if you would put in what I've just said, at least your readers will keep a little room for doubt in their minds.

As this figure of the provincial speaks in the novel, he demands a type of sympathy from the novel's readers that preserves a sense of misunderstanding. Fazıl demands not to be understood fully, as if being subsumed under the auspices of a flattened world literature would be analogous to the theatrical coup that preserves European-style cultural freedom.

Moments such as these in *Snow* suggest that the novel preserves elements of the global provincialism patterned in Faulkner's work, but Pamuk does not unambiguously subsume his novel's postage stamp of native soil within the structures of international understanding or universal intelligibility. Instead, there is an important paradox to Fazıl's posture: his insistence, and its place within the provincial orientation of *Snow*, seems at once to affirm the aspiration to *write for the world* while also disarticulating Goethe's metaphor of "a market where all nations offer their goods." The "goods" being sold in *Snow* are a refusal to sell a fully penetrable commodity, yet the fact of the address—that is, the fact that Fazıl speaks to "readers" who "convince themselves that they sympathize with the way we are"—affirms the novel's place within a global marketplace for literature. By agreeing to speak to the narrator Orhan, a representative of provinciality does not withhold his voice for the

sake of some kind of impenetrable alterity. Instead, Fazıl speaks to say what cannot be said, thus becoming a novelized participant in “world literature” to display its fantasies of collapsed and universally accessible distance.

As Fazıl’s statement implies, the rendering of distance comprises one of the central tensions of “world literature” as a form of literary discourse. In his analysis of what he terms “township modernism,” Ian Baucom similarly identifies “canceled” or “pierced” distance as a common trope within a range of imperial and postimperial modernist texts, which use the postcolonial township to overcome the “magic of distance” (230). Whereas pre-modern societies invest a certain enchantment in the “distance” or aura of objects and locales, Baucom follows Walter Benjamin (who follows Charles Baudelaire) in distinguishing canceled distance in literary texts as an allegory of the experience of modernity. On “the fringes of the imperial metropolis,” which are exemplified in “the border of Fanon’s Algerian medina; at the edge of the abject neighborhoods of Ayi Kwei Armah’s urban postcolony; across the color line of South Africa’s Sophiatown,” Baucom contends that modernist texts render a “global township” as a “melancholy” site of modernity itself (230, 228). Pamuk’s Fazıl, as a speaker occupying a later temporal position on the fringes of modernity, retains some modestly enchanted form of distance between reader and provincial subject. To unravel the cancellation of distance in the age of world literature, the novel suggests that we might find our capacities of thought discomposed at the complexities of a narrow corner of it. Instead of refusing to participate in the market of literary exchange, or rather than recapitulating the modernist rendering of collapsed distance on the fringes of global centers, Fazıl’s declaration suggests that provincial complexity cannot be circumscribed within world-literary representational forms. *Snow* preserves distance as it writes for the world.

In addition to this important distinction between Faulkner’s and Pamuk’s uses of provinciality, the two Nobel recipients also differ in how their global status figures into their relationship with their respective nation-states. In particular, while the specter of fascism in Europe and the postwar geopolitical situation informed Faulkner’s work during the 1940s and 1950s, the government of the Republic of Turkey has very often been antagonistic toward Pamuk. In part, this

antagonism has resulted from Pamuk's political use of his world-literary status. For example, his comments to a Swiss newspaper about the mass killing of "a million Armenians and 30,000 Kurds" in his country during the First World War caused outrage among Turkish nationalists (Freely). This furor forced the novelist to flee abroad. When Pamuk later returned, a public prosecutor charged him with "public denigration of Turkish identity." While the U.S. State Department found political utility in Faulkner's literary status, Pamuk's status as a "world" writer afforded him a platform for speaking out against the sanctioned historical record of his nation-state.

The differences between Faulkner's and Pamuk's relation to their national governments points to the inequalities structuring global literary value. For one, the difference shows that national governments predictably appraise world-literary value in terms of the regime's interests. As a result, there are unequal political stakes for authors enjoying prestige in a global literary marketplace. While Faulkner used his newfound cultural capital in the 1950s to bolster his nation-state's standing in the world, Pamuk used this status in the 2000s to advocate on behalf of the "downtrodden and the marginalised" and thus to become a threat to Turkish nationalists (Freely). What is more, while Faulkner employed scales of the universal in the writing and public work of his later career, the politics of *Snow* make universalism a fraught haven. Rather than presenting "Turkishness" as a type of universalism, *Snow* presents nationality as an identity that is internally contested (that is, among the many factions of the narrative's Turkish citizens) and externally misunderstood (that is, by readers of the narrative's German newspaper and by the novel's "world" readers). Therefore, as Ertürk argues, Pamuk's novel "shows us how the peripheral writer of worldly national allegory is not a deprived revolutionary . . . but a well-equipped *trader*, fully apprised of the bylaws of multinational recognition" (636). Pamuk's novel trades in self-doubt; it questions the cultural capital that it offers the world marketplace.

These differences between Faulkner and Pamuk attest to the multiple and often competing dimensions of world literary value. However, their similarities also suggest the ongoing importance of provinciality for the contemporary terrain of literary production. The Faulknerian template for arriving at the "world" through

the particularities of marginal locales has continued to inform the shape of literary prestige, rather than phasing out. In another telling example, the Reverend John Ames in Marilynne Robinson's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Gilead* (2004) regularly elevates the provinciality of Gilead, Iowa, through universalizing gestures closely related to Faulkner's template. As Ames says about himself, he has "lived seventy-six years, seventy-four of them here in Gilead, Iowa, excepting study at the college and at seminary" (9). The geographical confines of Ames's life lead his brother Edward, among others, to question the scope of the pastor's experience. Edward, as Ames says, tried "taking a bit of the Middle West out of me" through gifts of books by Ludwig Feuerbach and other critics of religious experience (24). "But here I am," Ames says somewhat defiantly, "having lived to the end the life he warned me against, and pretty well content with it, too, all in all."

By denying the force of Edward's critique, Ames affirms what he finds of value in the life of a small town. In particular, he affirms the dignity and wisdom of those around him, but in order to do so he also glosses this local experience through figural references and typological comparisons. For example, Ames glosses Gilead as analogous to the provincial origins of Christianity:

To look at the place, it's just a cluster of houses strung along a few roads, and a little row of brick buildings with stores in them, and a grain elevator and a water tower with Gilead written on its side, and the post office and the schools and the playing fields and the old train station, which is pretty well gone to weeds now. But what must Galilee have looked like? You can't tell so much from the appearance of a place.

(173)

According to this view, the mere "appearance of a place" cannot correspond to its importance for the world, in much the same way that the rural region of Galilee became the birthplace for a religious movement with global import. Ames presents the possibilities latent within Galilee as a warrant for his own commitment to Gilead. The provinces may thus give birth to their own potent forms of global value.

Following the ways in which *Gilead* and *Go Down, Moses* justify the writing of provincial fiction by universalizing the provincial

subject, scholars of contemporary literary production can look to such a conjunction as a self-reflexive gesture within world literature. This gesture affirms the value of the local within the marketplace for global fiction, but to do so it locates the provenance of parochial meaning in a shared global register, as if the dignity or value of the place resides in its associative links with the human condition. Yet the intelligibility of this human condition is regularly wrought in the image of cosmopolitan and liberal democratic values. It is possible not to collapse distance between the center and the periphery, or the cosmopolitan and the parochial, as the self-doubt that creeps through the representational gaps of *Snow* suggests. However, universalizing the provincial tends toward such a global synthesis: it translates the local into a commodity whose value is both legible and replicable in any locale.

In contrast to Ike McCaslin and McCaslin Edmunds in *Go Down, Moses* or John Ames in *Gilead*, Pamuk's representation of provinciality questions the scale of the universal. Looking to ostensibly minor locales for a shared nucleus of international values becomes by the end of *Snow* yet another form of misunderstanding. As a result, the conjunction of provinciality and the scale of the universal does not function as an indicator of the human condition but instead exemplifies one of the hazards of modernity. The very notion of universal literary value, as Hayot puts it, expresses "the feeling that one lives in the same world as everyone else, that the rules governing history, physics, economy, communication, culture, space, and time, are the same everywhere and for all time: a general geometrization of the various measures of the universe" (115). Rather than affirming this feeling through a provincial literature that makes its characters legible through the template of the "world" writer—or flattening provincial experience in order to facilitate the sympathy of a global reading public—Pamuk's *Snow* partially disarticulates experience in the provinces by preserving some modicum of inaccessibility to the lives of its residents. The novel asserts space between its cosmopolitan readers and provincial characters, thus leaving us less certain about the rubrics and conventions for making experience intelligible in all times and places.

Yet *Snow's* closing note of dissonance is no panacea for political theory during the age of globalization. If there is no common

communicative order to facilitate solidarity, how can we articulate solutions to the intrusions of global markets? How can resistance to such intrusions be collectively imaginable? And what is the source of solidarity if there is no shared register for human understanding across the town, city, nation, or world? Rejecting scales of the universal thus has its own discontents. Still, the representational gestures of global provincialism suggest that the perils of universalism may be worse than the political and philosophical gaps left by its rejection. Indeed, the closing image in *Snow* is of the fictional Orhan Pamuk—the figure of the cosmopolitan novelist—leaving the tiny town of Kars. The novelist appears to be “the only one boarding the train,” and he leaves with Fazıl’s insistence to “put what he’d said into my novel” both initiating and lingering over his departure (436). Orhan’s imagination of the provincial world of Kars therefore requires something like his banishment from it, or at least an acknowledgment of its distance from him. In such a receding figure, we are able to read against the world-literary grain and view the provincial as an avenue for doubt and uncertainty. But as the final scene of *Snow* positions us to ask, what has been gained by arriving at a shared sense of uncertainty about what we share with others?

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