PYNCHON NOTES

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Pynchon at the MLA Convention

Robert J. Cullen

To a certain extent, the four papers presented at the MLA session on "The Impact of Science and Technology on Language, Style, and Structure in the Work of Thomas Pynchon" told us what we already knew: Science is not the answer either. More remarkable is the number of very different ways in which science enriches Pynchon's work even as it explodes answers.

The papers shared an appreciation of the doubleness, the recursiveness, even the duplicity of Pynchon's use of science and technology, yet each speaker approached Pynchon's work from a different perspective, at different levels. Dwight Eddins spoke primarily about details of language, showing how Gravity's Rainbow not only destroys the myth of the objectivity of scientific language, but also regenerates or "redeems" this very language. N. Katherine Hayles, proposing modern cosmology as a subtext for Gravity's Rainbow, stressed the doubleness and therefore openness of several basic concepts which inform the novel. Centrifugal scatterings (personal and galactic) are balanced by centripetal re-unions; black holes by white holes, annihilation by possibilities for cyclical rebirth; most important, there exist singularities--"charismatic disruptions of business as usual," when functions cease to behave in predicted ways.

Molly Hite argued for keeping the text open in another way, with the Gödelian observation that Gravity's Rainbow is about explanatory systems failing. This approach, of course, is not new, but Hite showed how system-crashes permeate the novel, on linguistic and stylistic levels as well as in structure. Signifiers signify not truth, or reality, but other signifiers, in complex chains that double back on each other like Kekulé's Serpent. Richard Pearce concluded the session by connecting Pynchon's three novels to Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, Bohr's concept of complementarity, field theory, and calculus—all in thirteen minutes. Recognizing shifts of perspective at the end of each novel, Pearce believes Pynchon is
pushing the reader into an unfamiliar time and space, the "last unmeasurable gap . . . the last delta-t" (GR, 760) in which a choice like Pökler's is made, in which the self is defined.

Pearce's views are the most provocative. He claims that the Epilogue to V. is a parody of an Epilogue, citing Sidney Stencil's implausible death and the "preposterous" reunion of characters. Pearce may be right, and if the Epilogue isn't exactly a parody, it should be. Certainly it isn't a traditional Epilogue. On the other hand, Pearce's reading, twenty years after V.'s publication, seems to force a "backward symmetry" (GR, 301) in which we calculate a value for V. by studying Gravity's Rainbow. And of course the novel teems with far-fetched coincidences.

The "shift" in The Crying of Lot 49, as Pearce admits, rests on a single use of the second person pronoun, which purportedly draws the reader into Oedipa's dilemma. Oedipa acts on "the courage you find you have when there is nothing more to lose" (Lot 49, 137). Unfortunately for this reading, Pynchon shifts to the second person pronoun throughout the book, in descriptions of Mucho (Lot 49, 4-5), of constellations (Lot 49, 59), of metaphors (Lot 49, 95), and of drifters (Lot 49, 135). Pynchon also shifts to "you" in at least three short stories and in the article on Watts.² We are trapped with Oedipa at novel's end, but we've been trapped with her since the first paragraph.

In the case of Gravity's Rainbow, however, Pearce's argument is sound. Pynchon ushers "you" into Richard M. Zhlubb's black Volkswagon, and you do become in some sense "victim and accomplice," participant as well as spectator: "Your guts in a spasm, you reach for the knob of the AM radio" (GR, 757) as the sound of the Rocket envelops you. Such endings promise the new knowledge of a fresh perspective, but in Pynchon's work they undermine and distort as much as they inform; thus they echo Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, which proves that we cannot pin down both the location and the velocity of an electron.

Like all good discussions, the Pynchon session was too short. There was little time for questions, and
Professor Pearce in particular had to sketch arguments without much development. Presumably his new book will fill in some of the gaps. Considering the title of the session, surprisingly little attention was paid to language and style, the emphasis falling clearly on structure and theme. Professor Eddins was the only speaker to consistently examine Pynchon's scientific language closely, and he could not do justice in the short time to the pervasiveness of such language or to the development of this element of Pynchon's style. On the whole, though, the papers provided an apt appreciation of Pynchon's skill and a spur to more thorough study of the questions they raised.

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Notes

1 The papers are as follows: "Paradigms Reclaimed: The Language of Science in Gravity's Rainbow" by Dwight Eddins, "Cosmology and the Point of (No) Return in Gravity's Rainbow" by N. Katherine Hayles, "Pynchon's Center of Gravity" by Molly Hite, and "Pynchon's Fields of Force: Continuities, Discontinuities, and Closures" by Richard Pearce. Abstracts of three of the papers appear in Pynchon Notes 10; I presume copies of the papers are still available for $1 from Dr. Joseph Slade at Long Island University. [Editors' Note: All but Pearce's will, in fact, be published in the Markham Review, edited by Professor Slade.]

"Parallel, Not Series":
Thomas Pynchon and William Gaddis

Steven Moore

A name often linked with Pynchon's in many discussions of his work is that of William Gaddis, author of two encyclopedic novels of astonishing power and range: The Recognitions (1955) and J R (1975). Not only is Gaddis considered one of Pynchon's few peers, but similarities in style and content have led many to discern a pattern of literary influence. Usually, this has taken the form of the presumed influence of Gaddis's first novel on Pynchon's first; leading Pynchon critics such as Tony Tanner and Richard Poirier have insisted on V.'s debt to The Recognitions,¹ and on the publication of Gaddis's second novel, many reviewers repeated this presumption.² Recently, The Recognitions has been acknowledged as a harbinger not only of the Black Humor of the '50s and '60s (the genre in which V. was first placed), but also of the revival of the Menippean satire (the genre in which Pynchon's second and third novels have been placed), the form to which an increasing number of our most creative writers areturning for their masterworks.³ Commenting on Don DeLillo's use of Menippean satire in Ratner's Star (1976), for example, George Stade wrote: "He is close in subject matter to Thomas Pynchon, who seems to have learned how to use the form through a study of William Gaddis, a presiding genius, as it turns out, of post-war American fiction."⁴ The relation between Gaddis and Pynchon seems so close that once it was even rumored that Thomas Pynchon was merely a pseudonym for Gaddis!⁵ Lately the question of influence has come full circle, and the possibility that Pynchon influenced-Gaddis's J R has been raised by at least one critic.⁶ For the most part such ascriptions of influence have been made only in passing and not traced in any detail,⁷ but the question of influence has been raised often enough that a detailed examination seems warranted at this time.
A caveat lector is necessary at the outset: for years most of Gaddis's critics assumed that The Recognitions plainly showed the influence of Ulysses, and in fact the first academic essay on the novel was later described by Gaddis himself as "a most ingenious piece in a Wisconsin quarterly some years ago in which The Recognitions' debt to Ulysses was established in such minute detail I was doubtful of my own firm recollection of never having read Ulysses." How ironic it would be, then, to turn around and detail The Recognitions' non-existent influence on any subsequent novel. Similarities between Joyce and Gaddis are the result of a common interest in certain cultural and artistic concerns, and any similarities between Gaddis and Pynchon may be no more than that. Also, The Recognitions attracted very little notice when first published, and the young Pynchon would have been very fortunate even to have heard of the novel, much less to have read it. Because of its negative and hostile reviews, The Recognitions was remaindered shortly after publication; until the 1962 Meridian reprint, copies were difficult to find. Granted, its very obscurity and "underground" reputation may have inspired Pynchon to search it out, but we move on shifting ground here, and for obvious reasons proceed only with caution.

In the absence of external evidence at this time, the logical place to begin the search for internal evidence of Gaddis's influence is in Pynchon's early stories; like most fledgling writers, Pynchon wears his literary influences on his sleeve more here than in his later, more mature works. (Gaddis would develop in the same way: The Recognitions is saturated with literary allusions, whereas J R uses such allusions sparingly--the majority of which, incidentally, can be traced to the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations.) Though Gaddis is neither named nor quoted, there are several interesting parallels to be found between these stories and Gaddis's first novel. Both "Mortality and Mercy in Vienna" and "Entropy" have as their setting a party, and recall the long party scenes in The Recognitions where, as in Pynchon, pseudo-intellectuals exchange sophomoric chit-chat that parodies the more serious concerns of the pro-
tagonists. Other similarities are apparent: "Mortality and Mercy," especially, indicates that Pynchon, like Gaddis, is fond of historical and literary allusions, the more obscure the better. (Both cite Albertus Magnus, for example.) The story also contains the first instance of Pynchon's many uses of mirror imagery, and recalls Gaddis's extensive use of such imagery in _The Recognitions._

But it is in "Entropy" that the most intriguing parallels to Gaddis's work can be found. The style itself is highly reminiscent of Gaddis's: formal, even elegiac prose alternates with party dialogue as the story shifts back and forth from Callisto to Mulligan, just as long, highly wrought prose passages in _The Recognitions_ alternate with long stretches of uninterrupted dialogue. Callisto attempts to isolate himself from life much as Wyatt Gwyon does in _The Recognitions_, and both are led by two girls cut from the same cloth, Aubade and Esme, to the realization that life is to be engaged rather than avoided. In fact, Aubade is the first of Pynchon's many exotic but redeeming women: she and Nerissa in "Low-lands," Paola Maijstral in _V_., and Leni Pökler or Geli Tripping in _Gravity's Rainbow_ all have their fictional ancestor in Gaddis's Esme, a heroin-addicted poet capable, as none of _The Recognitions_ dozens of other characters are, of selfless love. Additional and even more arcane literary references appear: the Marquis de Sade and Djuna Barnes's _Nightwood_ are mentioned in both "Entropy" and _The Recognitions_, and if Pynchon did not learn of these authors from Gaddis, the citations do at least indicate a curious similarity in literary taste. On the other hand, there can be found in "Entropy" what appear to be anticipations of characters and themes in Gaddis's _J_R: the same Josiah Willard Gibbs mentioned twice in Pynchon's story also gives his name to one of the protagonists of Gaddis's second novel, and both story and novel share a concern with entropy and its application in information theory, especially as explicated in Norbert Wiener's _The Human Use of Human Beings_. Pynchon and Gaddis apply this concept in almost identical fashion:
"Tell a girl: 'I love you.' No trouble with two-thirds of that, it's a closed circuit. Just you and she. But that nasty four-letter word in the middle, that's the one you have to look out for. Ambiguity. Redundance. Irrelevence, even. Leakage. All this is noise. Noise screws up your signal, makes for disorganization in the circuit."

Meatball shuffled around. "Well, now, Saul," he muttered, "you're sort of, I don't know, expecting a lot from people. I mean, you know. What it is is, most of the things we say, I guess, are mostly noise."

"Ha! Half of what you just said, for example."

"Well, you do it too."

"I know," Saul smiled grimly. "It's a bitch, ain't it."13

In J R, Jack Gibbs rewords it thus:

--Whole God damned problem tastes like apricots, whole God damned problem listen whole God damned problem read Wiener on communication, more complicated the message more God damned chance for errors, take a few years of marriage such a God damned complex of messages going both ways can't get a God damned thing across, God damned much entropy going on say good morning she's got a God damned headache thinks you don't give a God damn how she feels, ask her how she feels she thinks you just want to get laid, try that she says it's the only God damned thing you take seriously about her puts you out of business . . . 14

Mulligan's shuffling rejoinder deliberately displays a higher ratio of noise to information than is usual in Pynchon's dialogue, while J R is written almost entirely in such dialogue, the noise seeming to drown out what little information is exchanged until the reader realizes only the characters themselves are involved. For the attentive reader every ambiguity, redundacy, irrelevancy, and leakage provides information on Gaddis's people and the noisy society in which they live—information of the sort that not a few of J R's reviewers missed.
"Low-lands," dating from the same year as "Entropy," offers further parallels. Some are superficial—the corpse trick recalls similar episodes in The Recognitions, and both gypsies and Heisenburg's Uncertainty Principle are common to story and novel—but others are more substantial. Dennis Flange's mother-complex (or what his analyst diagnoses as a mother-complex) sets in motion a theme that will culminate in Gravity's Rainbow's Mother Conspiracy, and recalls Wyatt's own mother-complex and the psychological havoc that results. In The Recognitions, maternal imagery is implied in most of the references to the sea and the moon, and we find Pynchon making the same symbolic equation in his story. Both Dennis and Wyatt leave their rational, logical wives for animas more psychologically nourishing, but not before the traditional mythological descent to the underworld and symbolic death. Here Pynchon reveals a greater and certainly more demonstrable debt to Frazer's Golden Bough, Eliot's Waste Land, and perhaps Graves's White Goddess than to The Recognitions. These very titles, moreover, provide a key to the semblance of literary influence. Gaddis too draws upon Frazer, Eliot, Graves, Rilke, Shakespeare, and others; where two writers draw upon the same cultural materials, there is bound to be a certain amount of overlapping. Consequently, it is because Gaddis and Pynchon have read so many of the same authors, rather than each other, that so many similarities can be discerned.

This is certainly the case with Pynchon's first novel, which has been said to reveal Gaddis's influence most plainly. Of course, a number of surface similarities are obvious: structurally, both consist of dual narrative lines that intersect on occasion. In The Recognitions, Wyatt and his quest for integration disappear for great stretches as various incomplete, parodic versions of Wyatt rush headlong into disintegration, along with Western culture. Stencil and his search for V. likewise retreat off-stage for the yo-yoing activities of Benny Profane and The Whole Sick Crew. Pynchon's New York pseudo-intellectuals might mingle easily with Gaddis's Greenwich Villagers; in both cases "they produced nothing but talk and at that not very good talk" (V.,
though Gaddis lets his people talk at much greater length than Pynchon, mercifully, does. Even the names of some of the characters in V. are reminiscent of those in The Recognitions. Scott Simmon thinks it "possible to make a case that Benny and Esther in V. owe something to their namesakes in The Recognitions," but Benny Profane bears no resemblance to Gaddis's Benny (besides, Pynchon used the name earlier in "The Small Rain") while Pynchon's Esther probably takes her name from Jules Siegel's girlfriend Esther Schreier. (On the other hand, Dudley Eigen-value's surname anticipates Gaddis's autobiographical Thomas Eigen in J R: eigen = German "ownself"; Thomas is Gaddis's middle name.) But Simmon is correct in pointing out that Pynchon's penchant for giving his characters outrageous names is similar to Gaddis's: in The Recognitions, we have Agnes Deigh, Sr. Hermoso Hermoso, Victoria and Albert Hall, a poet named Arthur but called Saint Anselm, Recktall Brown, Basil Valentine, and even the Reverend Gilbert Sullivan. Unlike Pynchon, Gaddis has curbed such tendencies in his later work, but even in J R we have characters named Dan diCephalis (whom his students naturally call de Syph), Mr. Piscator (the angler in Walton's Compleat Angler which a girl is reading on p. 298 of The Recognitions) as well as Saint Peter ["il pescator" in Dante's Paradiso], Norman Angel (after British author and economist Sir Norman Angell [1872-1967]), and a garrulous salesman named Isadore Duncan.

Beneath these superficialities there are deeper affinities which, though they may not betray a direct influence, certainly indicate Gaddis and Pynchon have drawn the same conclusions about the decline of the West. Both diagnose the patriarchal nature of Western civilization, in which too often rationality is valued over instinct, intellect over emotion, mind over body, aggression over tenderness, order over spontaneity, Christianity over the occult, and ultimately, death over life. Both novelists recognized early the danger in such polarization, and in their first novels created motherless sons who subsequently must search for the unifying feminine principle that will, if not fertilize the modern Waste Land, at least restore an inner balance.
Not only was Herbert Stencil raised motherless (V., 52), but even his father Sidney was "[b]rought up by a pair of bleak Nonconformist aunts, [from whom] he had acquired the Anglo-Saxon tendency to group northern/Protestant/intellectual against Mediterraneo/Roman Catholic/irrational" (V., 190). This background is remarkably similar to Wyatt's: losing his mother at the age of three, he is raised by a bleak Calvinist aunt and a father who finds it increasingly difficult to reconcile his own "northern/Protestant/intellectual" background with a growing attraction to "Mediterranean/Roman Catholic/irrational" modes of life. At first, Reverend Gwyon delights in dashing the "petrous visages" of his congregation "with waves from distinctly pagan tongues, voluptuous Italian, which flowed over their northern souls like sunlit water over rocks" (24), but eventually his inability to reconcile the two modes results in madness. In an effort to spare his son the same anguish, he leaves Wyatt his mother's Byzantine earrings, an emblem (as a flashback on p. 14 suggests) of her vibrancy and daring, and charges him to come to terms with her memory (61), lest he be mired in the same sterile state of indecision as his father.

For Herbert Stencil, V. too is "'a legacy from his father'' (V., 155). In both cases, personal mothers are elevated to impersonal feminine principles. Wyatt's mother Camilla is incarnate in many of the women in The Recognitions--from the Virgin Mary in Wyatt's paintings, to Esme, and finally to the saint canonized at the end of the novel--just as Victoria Wren becomes a feminine principle (explicitly on V., 209) associated with every woman in the novel from Queen Victoria, to Botticelli's Venus, to the rat Veronica. But both Stencil and Wyatt have trouble coming to terms with their lost mothers and the feminine principle they represent; not surprisingly, neither is able, as a result, to have a satisfying relationship with a woman. Both Stencil and Wyatt are incomplete, for they lack an anima, the feminine component in the male psyche, according to C. G. Jung, another author with whom Gaddis and Pynchon are both familiar. Stencil's incompleteness is betrayed in his references to himself in the third person, a "forcible
dislocation of personality" (V., 62), as he freely admits. Consequently, as Alvin Greenberg points out, "not being at one with himself—and, hence, with herself [V.]—he naturally misses her in the process of missing himself everywhere he goes." 18 Wyatt's own "dislocation of personality" is indicated by the loss of his name, which is equivalent in primitive mythologies to the loss of his soul. He is called Wyatt for the last time on p. 118, and remains nameless for six hundred pages until he recovers himself—and the anima within—and is re-named Stephen, the name Camilla originally intended for him before Aunt May intervened.

The difficulty of incorporating the anima—which is what both protagonists' predicaments amount to—has been dramatized in myth and literature most often as a quest; the dangers met with during the quest are the dangers inherent in plumbing the unconscious and doing battle with the dark and destructive aspects of human nature in order to rescue the revitalizing anima. "Native guides will only go a short distance into these mountains," Godolphin says of Vheissu, Pynchon's symbol for the unconscious. "Soon they will turn back, pointing out the way" (V., 168). The quest is both private and dangerous, for it caters to the self's "dream of annihilation" (V., 206) as well as its urge toward unification. These dangers account for the reluctance displayed by both Wyatt and Stencil to claim their legacy. 19 In Wyatt's case, it takes the forms of insulating solitude and bouts of insanity like his father's; and in Stencil's, a reluctance to follow his quest to Malta and risk losing V. as well as himself by learning of her death. What Carol Marshall Peirce says of Durrell's Alexandria Quartet and V. is equally true of The Recognitions and V.: "Both works project against the real/naturalistic world a romantic quest for the ideal woman (Justine, V., Aphrodite, Venus, or Virgin) that ends in each case in possible destruction, possible revival." 20 Like Durrell, both Pynchon and Gaddis undercut somewhat the high romantic quest with a more realistic dénouement, but all three are clearly devotees of Graves's White Goddess, and realize that the boons she is able to confer justify any and all risks.
But this goddess, like Janus, shows two faces. Victoria Wren represents the destructive, terrifying aspect of the Eternal Feminine, the Siren that leads men more often to their destruction than to their salvation. In the Profane sections of V., the maternal, nourishing side of the feminine principle is represented by Rachel Owlglass. Her progress is the reverse of Victoria Wren's: introduced under the sway of mechanization—and even once compared to a succubus (V., 30), as is Esme in The Recognitions (199-200, 766)—she moves toward humanity as V. moves away from humanization toward greater mechanization. (This dual movement can be found in The Recognitions as well, where Wyatt moves toward integration as Otto, his comic counterpart, moves toward disintegration.) After her brief fling with her car, Rachel begins to be associated quite consistently with motherhood, primarily through the recurring image of the umbilical cord which not only links daughter to mother—"A long unbroken chain of Jewish mothers going all the way back to Eve" (V., 47)—but also accounts for the vexatious control women have over men. Profane feels "the invisible, umbilical tug" (V., 29, cf. V., 34) every time he feels disconnected:

Any sovereign or broken yo-yo must feel like this after a short time of lying inert, rolling, falling: suddenly to have its own umbilical string reconnected, and know the other end is in hands it cannot escape. Hands it doesn't want to escape. Know that the simple clockwork of itself has no more need for symptoms of inutility, lonesomeness, directionlessness, because now it has a path marked out for it over which it has no control. (V., 217)

This is hardly the basis for a mature relationship, as even Profane seems to realize. It even takes a hazardous toll on Rachel's friendship with Esther, as Slab argues with another example of the umbilical cord metaphor (V., 49-50). Finally, in a chapter significantly entitled "In which the yo-yo string is revealed as a state of mind," Rachel herself cites the maternal connection after making love to a reluctant Profane:
"You have to grow up," she finally said. "That's all: my own unlucky boy, didn't you ever think maybe ours is an act too? We're older than you, we lived inside you once: the fifth rib, closest to the heart. We learned all about it then. After that it had to become our game to nourish a heart you all believe is hollow though we know different. Now you all live inside us, for nine months, and when ever you decide to come back after that." (V., 370)

--spoken like a true White Goddess. However, the umbilical string, despite the nourishment it provides, must be cut to attain mature selfhood. "'You have to grow up'" is what, in essence, Basil Valentine tells Wyatt when it becomes apparent to the art critic that many of Wyatt's difficulties with life and art can be traced back to his "sainted mother" and his subsequent idealization of romantic redemption (549-51). Such romanticism results in a loss of self, and adds its voice to "the single melody, banal and exasperating, of all Romanticism since the Middle Ages: 'the act of love and the act of death are one'") (V., 410).  

The Recognitions is filled with male characters stunted psychologically by too great an attachment to their mothers, and it is not until Wyatt can come to terms with his mother's memory and abandon the Wagnerian equation of love with salvation (The Flying Dutchman appears throughout the novel) that he will be in a position to integrate the disparate elements of his personality and experience a more mature love with the Spanish girl Pastora, a love that does not necessitate a regression to maternal dependence and a loss of self, but rather a love that allows a completion of the self by bringing forth the anima within. It is perhaps for similar reasons that Benny Profane is last seen, not with Rachel, but with the free-spirited Brenda Wigglesworth, a girl capable of nourishing without suffocating (unlike Rachel), and an embodiment of the twentieth century without its destructive, perverse tendencies (unlike V.). Wyatt and Profane have found the anima that Stencil, off for Stockholm still in quest of V., will never find.

The quests these characters undertake lead them, not through the enchanted forests of Broceliande or
the windswept plateau of Leng, but rather through what Pynchon calls Baedeker Land, which brings us to another possible link between V. and The Recognitions. Both novels have international settings and feature protagonists whose inner quest is reflected outwardly in their extensive travels. Unfortunately, the modern world is no longer the place for the once noble quest; voyaging has been reduced to tourism, discovery to sight-seeing, as Eliot indicated in early poems such as "Burbank with a Baedeker" and "Lune de Miel."

(Gaddis quotes the latter on p. 182 of The Recognitions.) William M. Plater's comprehensive essay, "Baedeker Land," explicates the importance of this theme in Pynchon, but neither Plater nor anyone else has pointed out how thoroughly Gaddis anticipates this theme in his novel.

"I think this book will have to be on voyaging," Gaddis wrote in his notes for The Recognitions, "all the myth & metaphor of that in modern times." But the difficulty of leading a voyage of discovery in a world crowded with, and even transformed by, tourists is insisted on throughout the novel. The Town Carpenter, Wyatt's maternal grandfather, first fills the young boy's head with tales of "great voyages" (31), and complains bitterly of the tourists that have degraded the hero's voyage:

--Traveling in their trains and their airplanes they try to intrude on the greatest career of the hero. Why, travel's become the great occupation of people with nothing to do, you find second-hand kings and all sorts of useless people at it. There now, it's always the heroic places you find them intruding, trying to have a share in the work of great men, looking at fine paintings and talking as though they knew more of the thing than the man who painted it, and the same thing listening to fine music ( . . . ) they all suspect that a man needs something to do ...

(409)

Gaddis fills his novel with these insensitive tourists with their Baedekers, "doing" Europe without ever seeing through their misconceptions to the actual land and people before them. Several times Gaddis suggests
that the progenitors of these ridiculous tourists were those who made religious pilgrimages (496, 825, 901), and reinforces his tourism theme with similar references to the novels of Dostoevski and E. M. Forster.26 That The Recognitions is itself a kind of tour guide to the modern Waste Land is indicated by the title of its fictional counterpart within the novel, Willie's work-in-progress, "Baedeker's Babel" (475). And although Wyatt travels as extensively as anyone in the novel, Gaddis was careful not to recount any of his actual trips, but only those of the other characters. In this way the symbolic nature of his voyage is emphasized over the merely literal, and distinguishes him from the tourists of Baedeker Land. His quest is not available at a group rate.

The lonely quest and its trepidations are also the theme of Pynchon's second novel, in which Oedipa Maas attempts to make the same "recognitions" Wyatt does in Gaddis's novel: the Pentecostal moment when "—everything [is] freed into one recognition, really freed into reality that we never see" (The Recognitions, 92). In fact, the word "recognition" is used in this sense in a passage at the end of The Crying of Lot 49 highly reminiscent of Gaddis's style:

[She remembered] the voices before and after the dead man's that had phoned at random during the darkest, slowest hours, searching ceaseless among the dial's ten million possibilities for that magical Other who would reveal herself out of the roar of relays, monotone litanies of insult, filth, fantasy, love whose brute repetition must someday call into being the trigger for the unnamable act, the recognition, the Word. (CL49, 180)

The dead man is, of course, Pierce Inverarity, who, like Camilla in The Recognitions, does not actually appear in the novel but nevertheless exerts a constant pressure on the protagonist. And just as Wyatt must come to terms with his mother's legacy, Oedipa must come to terms with the true nature of Inverarity's testament. Making true "recognitions" in a culture encrusted with counterfeits, false information, and trash is the challenge both Wyatt and Oedipa must meet.
In both novels there is a conflict between the sacred and the profane, with protagonists exploring the nature of the sacred in a decidedly profane world. There have been many excellent discussions of the religious dimension of *The Crying of Lot 49*; but again, none of the commentators seem to be aware that Pynchon's novel was anticipated (if not influenced) in this regard by Gaddis's *The Recognitions*, the most encyclopedic treatment of religion in American fiction.

The extent of Gaddis's preoccupation with religion in his novel is indicated by the range of source books he used in the process of composition: from the third-century theological romance attributed to Saint Clement from which *The Recognitions* takes its name, to *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Lethaby's *Architecture*, *Mysticism and Myth*, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, Frazer's *Golden Bough*, Phythin-Adams' *Hithraism*, Lang's *Magic and Religion*, Kramer and Sprenger's *Malleus Malificarum*, Conybeare's *Magic, Myth and Morals*, Marsh's *Medieval and Modern Saints and Miracles*, *The Pilgrim Hymnal*, Summers' *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism*, and Graves's previously-mentioned *White Goddess*. In addition, there are over a hundred citations from the Bible and references to elements of almost every religion and occult tradition, from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* to the writings of the Church Fathers, the *Koran*, legends of the Buddha and Krishna, Gnostic speculations, Saint Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*, hermetic alchemy, a calendar of saints' lives, witchcraft manuals, Fortean hypotheses, mystical numerology, ghosts, and even a Satanic invocation from A.E. Waite's *Book of Black Magic and of Farts*. All this led early reviewers to complain that the novel was "shrouded in mysticism" and filled with "pagan mumbo-jumbo," charges that would later be leveled against *Gravity's Rainbow* by its comparatively fewer detractors. But Gaddis is not merely indulging in arcane name-dropping; all religions and occult traditions have at their base a belief in another, higher reality that transcends sensory reality. Too often this other reality has been literalized into such nonsense as the Kingdom of Heaven with its gold-paved streets and choirs of white-robed angels, or its counterpart in the geography of hell and especially the demonology that excited the prurient interests of many theologians. But Wyatt
works through institutionalized religion and the jejune theatricality of the occult, past the realms conquered and codified by over-confident scientists, to the timeless state beyond the reach of those who would make of God a science, and of science a god. This ineffable state resists description, and accounts to some extent for the vagueness of Wyatt's final appearances, a vagueness which has its counterpart in Gravity's Rainbow in the "scattering" of Slothrop towards the end.

The Crying of Lot 49 is not as overtly religious as The Recognitions, but there are enough hints to indicate Oedipa experiences a similar transformation. She too loses her self-dramatized by her inability to find her mirror reflection (CL49, 41)—and like Wyatt, seeks sustenance from feminine symbols such as the moon and sea. She also undergoes a dark night of the soul during her eerie night in San Francisco (CL49, Chap. 5), paralleling the extensive night imagery in Gaddis's novel, and represents a modernization of the allegorical Book of the Dead, to which both refer (The Recognitions, 49 and 388; CL49, 31). Finally, as Anne Mangel puts it, Oedipa's "continual doubt and reevaluation of events differentiates her from the other characters in the novel who do, in fact, end in closed systems of inertness"—precisely the relationship between Wyatt and the other characters in The Recognitions. Pynchon takes subtle, quiet steps where Gaddis strides in seven-league boots, but they are united in their search for the sacred, a concern that distinguishes them from their more profane contemporaries.

If the idea of the holy in The Crying of Lot 49 looks backward to The Recognitions, its treatment of communication looks forward to J R. The thesis of Wiener's The Human Use of Human Beings is likewise the thesis of Gaddis's and Pynchon's second novels: "society can only be understood through a study of the messages and the communication facilities which belong to it..." As with his treatment of religion, Gaddis's exhaustive treatment of communication in J R greatly exceeds Pynchon's more circumspect treatment, partly, of course, because J R is seven times longer than The Crying of Lot 49. The noise factor in infor-
mation theory is especially prevalent, and thus Gaddis has filled his novel with clichés, advertise-
ments, radio voices, and every level of spoken dis-
course from legal terminology to street slang. The
greatest frustration of the novel's protagonists, Bast
and Gibbs, is in finding a noiseless place to create,
while the greatest frustration, or rather challenge,
for the reader is in translating all the noise in the
novel into information. (There is no "pure" noise in
the novel; it is a work of art, not a series of tape
recordings, and consequently every word is infor-
mative, every cliché revelatory of the character who
uses it, as I insisted earlier.) "The redundancy,
irrelevance, ambiguity, and sheer waste involved in
language glare from every page of The Crying of Lot
49," but with nowhere near as much intensity as in
J R, where the idea of waste especially is even more
insistent. Entropy is, of course, a central concern
of both novels, and has been dealt with at length by
both novelists' critics.

But at this point, further discussion of "influence"
would be redundant and of decreasing value. It is
indeed highly coincidental that two novelists would
borrow the concept of entropy from the scientific
world at the same time (though not published until
1975, J R was begun in 1957, set aside for a few years,
then resumed in the '60s), and during this time Gaddis
and Pynchon continued to read many of the same books
(Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capi-
talism can be added to the others already mentioned);
but the similarities between their work begin to look
more like a case of what Leni Pökler would describe
as "'Parallel, not series'" (GR, 159). By the time
Gaddis and Pynchon came to write their masterpieces,
each had developed his considerable talents to such
an extent that any talk of one being influenced by
the other is potentially degrading. There is hardly
a theme in Gravity's Rainbow that does not have its
counterpart in one or the other of Gaddis's novels,
but this does not mean that Pynchon cribbed from
Gaddis or vice versa. For example, that J R and
Gravity's Rainbow both allude to Wagner's Ring
tetralogy merely indicates a recognition on both
writers' part of the immense relevance of the Ring
to the Nazi Reich in particular and to Western civilization in general. If Pynchon is as fond of Rilke's poetry as Gaddis is, again this reveals a mutual recognition of a superior artist whose haunting poetry illuminates various modern dilemmas with which the two novelists are concerned. If Gravity's Rainbow shows the same preoccupation with the occult as does The Recognitions, that fact demonstrates only that Pynchon and Gaddis are reacting independently against Weber's complaint that "the fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the 'disenchantment of the world.'" The occult represents a re-enchantment of the world, a restoration of the ancients' sublime (if paranoidic) conviction that everything is indeed connected. And finally, if both J R and Gravity's Rainbow hold Western economic policies chiefly responsible for the deteriorating quality of life, it is difficult to see how anyone as knowledgeable about the roots of modern civilization as Gaddis and Pynchon are could arrive at any other conclusion.

There is no irrefutable evidence that Pynchon has ever read Gaddis: Gaddis is not named in Pynchon's work; there are no direct borrowings or quotations, no tidbits of arcana that could have been found only in The Recognitions. Moreover, Gaddis does not really belong to "Pynchon's company," that group assembled by Thomas Schaub consisting of Parnass, Beal, Robbins, Matthiessen, Reed, and Burroughs, a group to which one might add Terry Southern, Ken Kesey (cf. Pynchon's ubiquitous "They" with Kesey's "Combine"), Robert Anton Wilson, Samuel Delany (especially Dhalgren), and--at a different level--Joseph McElroy and Don DeLillo. Only the last two could be considered of Gaddis's company," both having expressed their admiration for his work.

Perhaps the final word should be left to the writers themselves. Pynchon, of course, is incommunicado; but Gaddis, asked if he had an opinion of Pynchon's work and if he thought it might have been influenced by his own, answered succinctly:

I haven't read Pynchon enough to have an opinion either of his work or whether it
might have been 'influenced' (perilous word) by mine, though I've understood he feels not & who's to know if he'd ever read mine before V? Always a dangerous course,

Gaddis

Denver, Colorado

Notes


2 See, for example, John W. Aldridge, *Saturday Review*, 4 October 1975, 27, and R. Z. Sheppard, *Time*, 13 October 1975, 98. Most of the others mentioned Pynchon in one connection or another.

3 See Elliot Braha's "Menippean Form in Gravity's Rainbow and in Other Contemporary American Texts" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1979); chapter 2 discusses *The Recognitions*. (Braha is convinced of Pynchon's debt to Gaddis.) That this form is still going strong is evident from two recent novels: Gilbert Sorrentino's *Mulligan Stew* (1979) and Alexander Theroux's *Darconville's Cat* (1981).


5 One reviewer speculated that Gravity's Rainbow might well be the long novel Gaddis had been rumored to be working on, and that Pynchon and he were the same person.

6 Scott Allan Simmon, "The Ulysses Tradition: Open and Closed Form in the Novels of James Joyce, William Gaddis, and Thomas Pynchon" (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Davis, 1979), 60.

7 When I was halfway into the writing of this essay, Clifford S. Mead drew my attention to a paper by Walter Isle (Rice University) delivered at the MLA convention in December 1976 entitled "The Large Loose
Baggy Monsters of William Gaddis and Thomas Pynchon" that examines some of the parallels between the writers' work. (Prof. Isle, like Simmon, suggests Pynchon's three novels may have influenced J R.) But as this interesting paper remains unpublished, I may perhaps be excused for repeating some of Prof. Isle's points in print.

8 Letter to Miss Howes dated 8 March 1972, quoted in Grace Eckley's "Exorcising the Demon Forgery, or The Forging of Pure Gold in Gaddis's Recognitions," in Literature and the Occult: Essays in Comparative Literature, ed. Luanne Frank (Arlington: University of Texas at Arlington, 1977), 125. Gaddis's disavowal of ever having read Ulysses has appeared several times in print, but to this day critics still refer to its alleged influence on The Recognitions.

9 One common concern—the relationship between the individual and his society—is the subject of J. Bakker's "The End of Individualism," Dutch Quarterly Review of Anglo-American Letters, 7 (1977), 286-304, a discussion of The Recognitions and Gravity's Rainbow. The last five pages tabulate a number of parallels between the two novels (though the question of influence is never raised), but Bakker's Marxist reading is too idiosyncratic (and, on The Recognitions, guilty of too many factual errors) to warrant further citation.

10 For example, on p. 396 of J R (New York: Knopf, 1975) Gibbs quotes from two of Southey's poems that happen to follow each other in the ODO; the odds against Gaddis's reading Southey's poetic works and plucking from that morass exactly these same passages in the same order are too great to be considered. Similarly, Coach Vogel's hilarious medley of "cheek" quotations on pp. 463-64 was obviously worked up from the ODO index, and there are too many other quotations in J R that can be found in the ODO to doubt Gaddis's reliance on it. He used the ODO for The Recognitions as well, but I realized this too late to document it in my source study A Reader's Guide to William Gaddis's The Recognitions (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), where many of my "source unknown"s can now be corrected to read ODO.

If Sade is not being simply name-dropped, there can be found in his outrageous novels a source for Pynchon's equation (especially in Gravity's Rainbow) of sexual perversion with what Joseph Slade calls "a mutual complicity in transgression in order to liberate one's self—if only by obliterating it" (Thomas Pynchon [New York: Warner, 1974], 232). Sade's libertines dissertate on this point at great length between debauches.

Kenyon Review, 22, No. 2 (1960), 285-86.

J R, 403. Lest anyone leap at this "evidence" of Pynchon's influence on Gaddis, it should be pointed out that J R was begun as early as 1957.

All references to Pynchon's novels are to the hardcover editions: V. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1963); The Crying of Lot 49 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1966); Gravity's Rainbow (New York: Viking, 1973). These will be abbreviated in citations as V., CL49, and GR.

"The Ulysses Tradition," 58.

"Who is Thomas Pynchon... and Why Did He Take Off With My-Wife?" Playboy, March 1977, 169.


"Refusal of the Call" is the second stage in Joseph Campbell's paradigmatic adventure of the hero: see The Hero With a Thousand Faces (1949).


Stephen Dedalus broods on this same conceit in Ulysses (New York: Random House, 1961), 38.

This is precisely the theme of Denis de Rougemont's Love in the Western World (1939), a book Gaddis quotes often in The Recognitions. I would not be surprised to learn that Pynchon also read de Rougemont's influential study, especially by the time he wrote Gravity's Rainbow, where this theme prevails.


On pp. 937-38 Gaddis quotes Lizaveta Prokofyevna's imprecation from the final page of The Idiot: "'We've had enough of following our whims; it's time to be reasonable. And all this, all this life abroad, and this Europe of yours is all a fantasy, and all of us abroad are only a fantasy ... remember my words, you'll see it for yourself!" Earlier in this same final chapter there are references to Forster's Where Angels Fear to Tread (906) and A Room with a View (910), both concerning Baedeker-toting English tourists in Italy. (For some reason David Cowart neglected this theme in his discussion of Forster's influence on Pynchon: Thomas Pynchon: The Art of Allusion [Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980], 115-19.)


For an example of a "novel" thus created, see Andy Warhol's a (New York: Grove, 1968).

Mangel, 98.


Pynchon criticism on this point is too extensive and too well known to warrant documentation, but for Gaddis, see LeClair's essay cited in the previous note; Johan Thielemans' "Gaddis and the Novel of Entropy," TREMA, No. 2 (1977), 97-107; and Susan Strehle Klemmtner's "For a Very Small Audience!: The Fiction of William Gaddis," Critique, 19, No. 3 (1978), 61-73.


Quoted in Schaub, 57.

Schaub, 139-40.

Postcard to me postmarked 6 August 1982.
The Zone and the Real:
Philosophical Themes in *Gravity's Rainbow*

Melvin Ulm and David Holt

*Gravity's Rainbow* (GR)\(^1\) is a work that will require approach from multifarious directions if we are to begin to come to terms with its richness. It is the custom of Pynchon to use his novels, in part, as glosses on general themes of a sort normally termed "philosophical." This practice is found in great and delightful abundance in GR. It will be our purpose here to set out what we take to be the dominant philosophical themes of GR, acknowledging the provisional nature of such an attempt. We shall be claiming that the book deals in a fairly direct way with certain broadly metaphysical and epistemological issues currently of much interest to philosophers. Our claim will be that among the major concerns of GR is the issue of whether or not it is possible to have knowledge of the Real and further whether there is a Real at all.

We should perhaps state what we take one to be doing when one gives a philosophical interpretation of a novel. We will be setting out the major themes from current philosophical literature alluded to or manifested in GR. This involves the manifestation of these themes in the manner of the narration, in remarks of characters, plot action, etc. Most importantly, we find events in GR occurring or relayed in accord with the manner several interrelated philosophical themes would have them. Again one should note, though perhaps few readers of GR will need this pointed out, that GR is resistant to any sort of

*Editors' Note: We are glad to publish, with minor editorial changes, the more theoretical section of a previously unpublished essay written in 1974 and circulated in MS. Tony Tanner writes that he "profited from reading it" (Tom Pynchon; London: Methuen, 1982, 92, n. 14) and so, we think, will the readers of PN.*
simple-minded formulation in terms of entropy, rationalization, paranoia, the dehumanizing effects of technology, or such stuff.²

Before proceeding, we wish to give an account of the relevant philosophical matters: when all the evidence there could in principle be on some matter supports equally well two or more opposing hypotheses, this gives rise to an epistemological indeterminacy (E.I.). E.I. is a thesis concerning what we can know. For example, if it is the case that when all the evidence is in concerning the correlation of Slothrop's sexual habits and the distribution of rocket hits, we have equal support for two or more incompatible hypotheses, then this gives rise to an epistemological indeterminacy. We can never know which of two hypotheses is the correct one as long as the evidence supports both equally well. Metaphysical indeterminacy (M.I.) is a thesis about the nature of reality or about the nature of the world. M.I. holds true if there is no fact of the matter concerning the world. There may, for instance, be a "fact of the matter" in or about physics, but not a "fact of the matter" concerning the mental state a person is in. M.I. holds true as a principle with respect to some matters and not others. When a matter is metaphysically indeterminate, there is nothing about which a hypothesis can be right or wrong. An example of a limited case of M.I. that is of paramount concern in GR is that of the indeterminacy of translation (I.T.).³ There is, according to the I.T., no fact of the matter concerning what people mean, or how one language is to be translated into another. One should note that whereas M.I. implies E.I., it is possible that even though there is no way in principle for us to determine which of two or more competing hypotheses is correct, one of the hypotheses might still be correct. Thus E.I. does not imply M.I. As we shall attempt to show, many of the attempts by the persons in GR to understand the events they are interested in involve the equating of events in one symbol system with events in another symbol system, and explaining the events referred to by the symbols of one of the systems by saying they behave analogously to events in the other system (hence the relevance of I.T.).
In order to understand the words of another, we must first translate his words into our own idiolect. (This also holds, of course, in the case of homophonic translation). In order to understand persons of a "form of life" other than our own, we must first translate their language (this incorporates gestures, etc., as well as words) into our own. If we are to interpret events in the world in terms of their correlation with events in an abstract theory, be it anything from the manifestation of the sephiroth to Pavlovian mechanics, we must first set up a correspondence relation between the events we seek to explain and the events in the abstract theory which we intend to use as our explanatory device. In illustration, if one is to explain the events that befall persons in GR in terms of doctrines associated with the Tarot Cards, then we must first decide what characters are to correspond to which of the cards, etc. All of the various interpretations of texts and phenomena in GR involve the translation of events in one order into events in another. Let us consider two cases. Concerning Leni Pökler's use of astrology we have:

He was the cause-and-effect man: he kept at her astrology without mercy, telling her what she was supposed to believe, then denying it. "'Tides, radio interference, damned little else. There is no way for changes out there to produce changes here."

"Not produce," she tried, "not cause. It all goes along together. Parallel, not series. Metaphor. Signs and symptoms. Mapping on to different coordinate systems, I don't know... ."

Events in this world are, then, to be explained in terms of the characteristics of the astrological events with which they are in parallel. Roger Mexico says that his statistics cannot be used to predict where the rockets will likely hit next, for it is impossible to translate his equations into a form that is useful for those who would avoid the rockets:

Roger has tried to explain to her the V-bomb statistics: the difference between distribution,
in angel's-eye view, over the map of England, and their own chances, as seen from down here.

(54)

The inability of the statistics to predict where the rocket hits will probably occur arises from difficulties in translating the statistics into a relevant form.

In the past (and in GR) when Pynchon has made use of a particular source, he has made no effort to conceal the source. Indeed, he writes in such a way that no one familiar with the source in question can miss the correlation. We shall attempt to show that this is also the case with respect to the matter of the indeterminacy of translation. One finds exactly the right terms used in GR in the manner they are used in the relevant philosophical literature. One should perhaps note that the terms in question are of sufficiently specialized usage to rule out the probability of coincidence in this similarity.

The indeterminacy of translation is one of the major themes in the philosophy of W. V. Quine. The primary source for his views on translation is Word and Object, Chapter 2, "Translation and Meaning." The general claim of that chapter is that there is no fact of the matter concerning how one ought to translate one person's words into the language of another. Perhaps the simplest way to attempt to establish our claim is by the use of quotation from the relevant aspects of Quine and GR.

What we shall be arguing is that the section of GR that concerns Tchitcherine (a Russian intelligence officer and half-brother of Enzian) in Central Asia (336-59) is a kind of commentary on the absurdities that result from thinking that there is a fact of the matter concerning translation. Tchitcherine is sent to Central Asia to help in the development of an alphabet for the Kirghiz language. Chapter 2 of Word and Object deals with the methods a linguist has at his disposal in translating the words of one language into those of another language. The basic procedure followed by the Quinian translator is as follows:

We have had our linguist observing native utterances and circumstances passively, to
begin with, and then selectively querying native sentences for assent and dissent under varying circumstances. 6

From this data the linguist develops what Quine calls an "analytic hypothesis." An analytic hypothesis then is a matching up of the words in one language with the words in another language after observation has allowed us to translate the truth functions (such as negation, conjunction, and alteration), identify the sentences all natives assent to, and decide what native sentences are such that the stimulations which give rise to assent or dissent to them are the same. An analytic hypothesis is, then, roughly an attempt to go beyond the results that observation can yield in terms of translation of one language into another. Recall that epistemological indeterminacy arises when rival hypotheses are equally compatible with all the data in principle available. According to Quine, this is exactly the situation we are in with respect to translation.

The indeterminacy that I mean is more radical. It is that rival systems of analytic hypotheses can conform to all speech dispositions within each of the languages concerned and yet dictate in countless cases utterly disparate translations; not mere mutual paraphrases, but translations each of which would be excluded by the other system of translation. Two such translations might even be patently contrary in truth value, provided there is no stimulation that would encourage assent to either. 7

Quine claims then that there is nothing for hypotheses concerning translations to be right or wrong about.

The most generally persuasive argument for our claim lies in the absurdities and irresolvable conflicts that arise in the disagreements that develop in GR between proponents of differing accounts of the structure of the Kirghiz language. However, there is excellent confirming evidence in the Central Asia section and elsewhere in terms of the use of a common terminology in both Quine and GR.
The Ounian linguist takes as his informant the "Educated Native Speaker." (This expression is now a part of philosophical jargon.) Tchitcherine has as his sidekick in Central Asia one Ḍzagyp Oulan: "They throw amiable cigarettes, construct him paper existences, use him as an Educated Native Speaker" (340). Concerning the conversations of Tchitcherine and Wimpe, a German drug salesman and one of the three knights of the Zone (along with Blicero and von Gōll), we find:

How could they have failed to be observed? By and by, as the affair in its repressed and bloodless way proceeded, the Soviet chain of command, solicitous as any 19th-century family, would begin to take simple steps to keep the two apart. Conservative therapy. Central Asia. But in the weeks of vague and soft intelligence, before the watchers quite caught the drift of things . . . what heads and tails went jingling inside the dark pockets of that indeterminacy? (344)

A good bit of the absurdity of thinking that there is a fact of the matter concerning translations can perhaps be seen in the following:

These Arabists are truly a frenzied bunch. They have been lobbying passionately for a New Turkic Alphabet made up of Arabic letters. There are fistfights in the hallways with unreconstructed Cyrillicists, and whispers of a campaign to boycott, throughout the Islamic world, any Latin Alphabet.[. . .] And there is a strong religious angle in all this. Using a non-Arabic alphabet is felt to be a sin against God--most of the Turkic peoples are, after all, Islamic, and Arabic script is the script of Islam, it is the script in which the word of Allah came down on the Night of Power, the script of the Koran--(354)

Perhaps the most intriguing bit of textual evidence is in the following:

Not at all. The boots reappear, smiling sentry right behind them. "Stimmt, Herr
Schlepzig." What does irony sound like in Russian? These birds are too inscrutable for Slothrop. (378)

The key word here, "inscrutable," plays an important role in Quine's writings on the indeterminacy of translation. To say that, in the relevant jargon, a term is "inscrutable" is to say that there is no fact of the matter concerning the reference of the term.

The indeterminacy of translation now confronting us, however, cuts across extension and intension alike. The terms "rabbit," "undetached rabbit part," and "rabbit stage" differ not only in meaning; they are true of different things. Reference itself proves behaviorally inscrutable. It appears clear then that the work of W. V. Quine is at least as important a gloss on Pynchon as that of Maxwell, Weber, Adams, Rilke, or Borges.

One of the more explicit statements of the issues centering around the question of M.I. is found in a remark of Pirate Prentice to Roger:

"I mean what They and Their hired psychiatrists call 'delusional systems.' Needless to say, 'delusions' are always officially defined. We don't have to worry about questions of real or unreal. They only talk out of expediency. It's the system that matters. How the data arrange themselves inside it. Some are consistent, others fall apart. Your idea that Pointsman sent Gloaming takes a wrong fork. Without any contrary set of delusions—delusions about ourselves, which I'm calling a We-system—the Gloaming idea might have been all right—"

(638)

The hypotheses concerning Gloaming (and perhaps all other hypotheses) are to be rejected because there are equally good hypotheses that deny what they assert. Pirate rejects the idea that theories can be judged in terms of a correspondence with reality. The Real is then just those forms of thought that have official sanction.
In order to show that indeterminacy is a more important theme than entropy, rationalization, breakdown of communication, paranoia (around which most interpretations of Pynchon's work have centered), one needs to show that our considerations about indeterminacy explain these matters. Consider the following already much-noticed passage:

If there is something comforting—religious, if you want—about paranoia, there is still also anti-paranoia, where nothing is connected to anything, a condition not many of us can bear for long. (434)

Paranoia, then, involves seeing the world as having a determinate structure in which all the parts are related to each other. Further, if the world is not determinate, then it cannot cause or determine our actions. An especially interesting example of paranoia, in that it combines E.L. with metaphysical determinacy to produce paranoia, is given by Sir Stephen Dodson-Truck:

"I've been given the old Radio-Control-Implanted-In-The-Head-At-Birth problem to mull over—as a kind of koan, I suppose. It's driving me really, clinically insane. I rather imagine that's the whole point of it." (541-42)

One becomes paranoid when one sees the world as a determinate structure, whether revealed or hidden:

Thus the official version. Grandiose enough. But Generaldirektor Smaragd and colleagues are not here to be told what even the masses believe. It might almost—if one were paranoid enough—seem to be a collaboration here, between both sides of the Wall, matter and spirit. What is it they know that the powerless do not? What terrible structure behind the appearances of diversity and enterprise? (165)

Entropy is also, of course, very much a part of the concerns of GR. Entropy, as a Pynchonian metaphor, involves the running down of things, from systems to persons, as well as the tendency of all things to blur into one another. However, as long as the myth of the determinate world does not impose itself on us, neither
rationalization nor entropy need occur, for there is no imposition of something on us from outside in a determinate way.

Perhaps a clearer perspective on these abstruse matters can be gained by considering several passages where we come to see the effect of the Second World War on those most vulnerable to the cataclysm. Perhaps we can here find a key to the common factors in the sensibilities of those in the Zone.

The Zone at first merely encompasses occupied Germany, but it quickly comes to take on a much larger import. The Zone refers at least in part to certain ways of being outside the mainstream of traditional culture and life. As we shall attempt to show, there are intimate connections linking indeterminacy and the manifestations of the Zone in the sensibilities of persons most deeply affected by it. Consider this amazing bit of GR:

... it was always easy, in open and lonely places, to be visited by Panic wilderness fear, but these are the urban fantods here, that come to get you when you are lost or isolate inside the way time is passing, when there is no more History, no time-traveling capsule to find your way back to, only the lateness and the absence that fill a great railway shed after the capital has been evacuated, and the goat-god's city cousins wait for you at the edges of the light, playing the tunes they always played, but more audible now, because everything else has gone away or fallen silent ... barn-swallow souls, fashioned of brown twilight, rise toward the white ceilings ... they are unique to the Zone, they answer to the new Uncertainty. Ghosts used to be either likenesses of the dead or wraiths of the living. But here in the Zone categories have been blurred badly. The status of the name you miss, love, and search for now has grown ambiguous and remote, but this is even more than the bureaucracy of mass absence—some still live, some have died, but many, many have forgotten which they are. Their likenesses will not serve. Down here are only wrappings left in
the light, in the dark: images of the Uncertainty. . . (303)

There is, needless to say, much in this dense passage. Let us then consider it insofar as it sheds light on our concerns. The urban version of wilderness panic comes upon us when we lose our sense that history is a determinate matter. The appearance of urban fantods is a kind of illumination, but one at which the goat-god's city cousins wait. When we see that traditional explanations are undermined by our perception of M.I., the tendency is to quickly fill in the void with another account of phenomena, which itself attempts to see the world in determinate terms. "But here in the Zone categories have been blurred badly." As a philosophical remark on language this has a clear correlation with the issues of translation and M.I. When categories become blurred, even given that we know all there is to know about things, we are still not able to label items, as it is no longer clear what counts as evidence or criteria for what. The images of the new uncertainty correspond, at least in part, to the effects of the perception that the world is indeterminate on those who had always assumed (perhaps not at an explicit level) that the world was a determinate structure. (Further illumination on this matter is given in the Enzian/Katje dialogue [658-63] and in Osbie Feel's movie Doper's Greed [534-36].)

Let us then consider another remarkable passage which indicates an acute grasp of the nature of and problems brought on by the consideration of E.I. and M.I. By examining this passage one can, perhaps, get a further insight into the Zone.

The rest of us, not chosen for enlightenment, left on the outside of Earth, at the mercy of a Gravity we have only begun to learn how to detect and measure, must go on blundering inside our front-brain faith in Kute Korrespondences, hoping that for each psi-synthetic taken from Earth's soul there is a molecule, secular, more or less ordinary and named, over here--kicking endlessly among the plastic trivia, finding in each Deeper Significance and trying to string them all together like terms of a power series hoping to
zero in on the tremendous and secret Function whose name, like the permuted names of God, cannot be spoken ... plastic saxophone reed sounds of unnatural timbre, shampoo bottle ego-
image, Cracker Jack prize one-shot amusement, home appliance casing fairing for winds of cognition, baby bottles tranquilization, meat packages disguise of slaughter, dry-cleaning bags infant strangulation, garden hoses feeding endlessly the desert ... but to bring them together, in their slick persistence and our preterition ... to make sense out of, to find the meanest sharp sliver of truth in so much replication, so much waste. ... (590)

The first few lines of the above are, among other things, a superb parody of a large amount of traditional theories concerning the development of knowledge and of explanations of events in the natural world. It captures the sound of prose by philosophers who, in attempting to sound highly scientific, manage to convey only that they do not know what they are talking about. It is thought that we ought to attempt to explain the occurrences of discrete aspects of our experiences (sensations) in terms of the causal effects of phenomena upon us, matching each stimulation in the brain with that aspect of the world which is the cause of the experience (sensation). The aim of science is then, on this view, to give the simplest yet the most all-encompassing mapping of stimuli onto phenomena. According to this view, when we have the simplest complete account of this mapping, we have knowledge of the determinate structure of the Real. It is not so clear, however, what one is to make of that part of the passage where Pynchon begins listing cultural artifacts. One might take as a plausible hypothesis that it is traditional culture's explanation for our inability to transcend: namely, that we are caught up in material junk. Beneath all the garbage, according to traditional accounts, lies a truth, the cognition of which allows transcendence. The attitude of those chosen for enlightenment evidently involves finding out that the "Earth is a living critter" (590).

Our encounter with the earth is epistemologically on a par with our encounter with other persons. All
understanding of other persons involves translation relations, so all understanding of the earth also involves relations translational in character.

A common device used for setting out the manifestations of indeterminacy in \textit{GR} lies in the use of viciously circular criteria in identifying particulars. A similar and closely related device is the use of vicious regresses. A vicious regress occurs, speaking informally, if the first step we take in some procedure designed to give us knowledge of the world cannot be taken until an infinite number of previous steps have been taken. One can rather quickly see the connection between vicious regresses and paranoia by considering the following narrational remark: "But in the game behind the game, it is not the point" (208). (Cf. 257, 454, 542, and esp. 659-63.) In the Byron the Bulb story we find a mention and illustration of an infinite regress:

There's no escape for Byron, he's doomed to an infinite regress of sockets and bulb-snatchers. (651)

\textit{GR} itself is a kind of regressive/paranoid structure. Behind the conspiracy directed against Slothrop by Pointsman we have English intelligence; behind this we have the allied war effort; behind this we have a number of multinational corporations using and shaping the war for their own ends. Viewed internally on any given level, the existence of that level only is consistent with all of the evidence available at that level. There is no clearly depicted stopping place in the regressive structure from which we could be sure that we had understood everything and all the levels involved. There are, however, many suggestions in \textit{GR} that behind the chemical cartels and such there lies some kind of occult empire full of shadowy figures who actually are the forces that shape events. Josef Ombindi, leader of the Empty Ones, alludes to such a possibility:

"Tibet is a special case. Tibet was deliberately set aside by the Empire as free and neutral territory, a Switzerland for the spirit where there is no extradition, and Alp-Himalayas to draw the soul upward, and danger rare enough
to tolerate. [ ... ] We will have to learn such new maps of Earth: and as travel in the Interior becomes more common, as the maps grow another dimension, so must we. . . " (321)

The continuing references throughout GR to shadowy figures and watchers at the world's edge are further evidence that there may be yet another structure behind the chemical cartels. However, if it were certain that there were a "Them behind Them" (given that we have no good reason to think there is a level beyond the shadowy figures) this would defeat the regressive structure as a device for undercutting claims about having knowledge of reality. So, instead of certainty, we are left quite uncertain as to whether the references to watchers at the world's edge and such are best taken as a Pynchonian joke or whether they are as "real" as Seaman Bodine. We can say only that either hypothesis would be reasonable, were it not for the existence of the other.

With some of these perhaps abstract considerations out of the way, we wish to turn to a consideration of the social or human dimensions of the Zone. What things, if any, can be said about those who are in the Zone? One should be sure to note that the equation of those in the Zone with social misfits and outcasts is far too simple-minded, for there are those in the Zone who are quite well-adjusted to mainstream society, e.g., Major Marvy and Bloody Chiclitz. There is no reason at all to assume that those in the Zone are of higher moral stature than those outside the Zone.

A good bit of the initial impact of the Zone is conveyed in the marvelously apt epigraph of Book 3, "...to, I have a feeling we're not in Kansas any more." Given the frequent references to the film *The Wizard of Oz*, one cannot help but feel here that mixture of fear and delight that the Zone produces in many who encounter it for the first time. The Zone can perhaps be partially understood through a consideration of a historical remark concerning Zonal chemists:

"They see themselves at the end of a long European dialectic, generations of blighted grain, ergotism, witches on broomsticks, community orgies, cantons lost up there in folds
of mountain that haven't known an unhallucinated day in the last 500 years—keepers of a tradition, aristocrats—" (261).

The Zone is not something peculiar to our time (cf. Katje's dodo-hunting ancestor and the ancestors of Slothrop).

At least part of the manifestation of the Zone in the sensibilities of persons arises in the need to search for other than obvious or mainstream explanations for phenomena. (Cf. Geli Tripping's practice of witchcraft, chitterine's obsession with Enzian, von Göll's belief in the power of his black market operations, Leni's practice of astrology, etc.) The further one reads in GR, the more frequent references to nonstandard explanations become. The book itself takes on the characteristics of a cryptic holy text, much as the Zone itself becomes a holy text for the Hereros. Those in the Zone are at least partially driven by a desire to see something more in the Real than others find. This desire may be motivated by the active perception of the unsuitability of life outside the Zone (perhaps Säure exemplifies this attitude), or by the simple fact that one is aware of no reality outside the Zone (perhaps Säure Bümmer exemplifies this characteristic). The Zone is able to sustain more diversity than the life outside the Zone.10

Life in the Zone is in some ways more open than life outside the Zone. As Geli says to Slothrop in her attempt to prepare him for life in the Zone, "'You sound like a German. Forget frontiers now. Forget subdivisions. There aren't any'" (294). There are close connections between the openness of the Zone and the indeterminacies we are considering. One consequence of the M.I. thesis is that insofar as any aspect of the world is indeterminate, it cannot impose itself on us: hence the "openness of the zone."

Slothrop's encounter with the Zone leads to a radical alteration in his persona. Those in the Zone feel most directly the loss of the ability to achieve knowledge of the Real. Those in the Zone feel the effects of the knowledge that contact with the Real will not of itself allow one to escape the forces of
entropy or to achieve any sort of transcendence.

Greta was meant to find Oneirine. Each plot carries its signature. Some are God's, some masquerade as God's. This is a very advanced kind of forgery. But still there's the same meanness and mortality to it as a falsely made check. It is only more complex. The members have names, like the Archangels. More or less common, humanly-given names whose security can be broken, and the names learned. But those names are not magic. That's the key, that's the difference. Spoken aloud, even with the purest magical intention, they do not work. (464)

Given that we take as a profound theme of GR that there is no fact of the matter concerning the world, a reader might well wonder about the status of our own descriptive claims concerning the novel. Our claim, then, is that our account is one coherent account around which one's experience of GR may be organized, and that a particular structure comes to develop as a result of informing a reading with the concerns of this paper. We do not deny that there are other ways to organize our experience, and indeed our hypothesis requires that there be other equally coherent ways to structure our experience of the novel. Our hypothesis is fruitful insofar as it helps us "see connections" in GR and insofar as it allows interesting interpretations of GR to be given. Degrees of thematic import can be explicated in terms of the explanatory power of a thematic interpretation of the work.

It may well be that our encounter with GR is one that can never be determinately complete. It is at least certain that we can never be secure in thinking that we have understood all there is to understand about GR, for GR produces in us a kind of paranoia in which we fear that there may be entirely other structures inherent in GR that we are unaware of.

Notes

1 Thomas Pynchon, Gravity's Rainbow. (New York: Viking, 1973). All page references to Gravity's Rainbow will be incorporated in the text.
What we will be setting out here are relatively large-scale conclusions. However, these conclusions are not in philosophical practice detachable from the arguments for the positions. The matters we consider are currently much under consideration, and it is safe to say that it will be some time before any sort of consensus is reached on the matters we consider.

Editors' Note: We feel that it may be useful to enlarge on the Indeterminacy of Translation at this point, when the subject is first mentioned. As the authors say in their note 5, below, Quine's work is the major source of this idea; we would explain it by quoting him. "The thesis is this: manuals for translating one language into another can be set up in divergent ways all compatible with the totality of speech dispositions, yet incompatible with one another." (W. V. Quine, Word and Object. [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960], 27).

The notion of "form of life" has its origin as a term of current philosophical parlance in the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein. There are, as one might expect, several fairly transparent allusions to Wittgenstein in GR. (See, for instance, 60-61, 69, 415.)

The primary source of the indeterminacy of translation thesis is Word and Object, by W. V. Quine (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960). Perhaps readers unfamiliar with the state of contemporary philosophy but having some acquaintance with its history prior to this century can see some of the import of Quine's arguments for the indeterminacy of translation in the following remark by Hilary Putnam: "Chapter 2 of Quine's Word and Object contains what may well be the most fascinating and the most discussed philosophical argument since Kant's Transcendental Deduction of the Categories," from "The Refutation of Conventionalism," Nous, 8, No. 1 (1974), 28.

Word and Object, 68.

9 It is surely no accident that Bloody Chiclitz is the only character to occur in all three of Pynchon's novels.

10 The contrasts in V. between those on the street and those not on the street and the contrast in The Crying of Lot 49 between those in the Tristero system and those not in the system are similar in many ways to the Zone/non-Zone contrast in GR.
What's the Point?
On Comparing Joyce and Pynchon

Brook Thomas

"What better place than Zürich to find
vanity again?" (GR, 267)

Those of you who came to the session by defying
gravity with the elevator might have noticed that it
was made in Schlieren. Schlieren, for those not
familiar with Zürich, is a suburb in the direction of
Basel, right across the Limmat from Unterengstringen.
To get there, just take the #13 tram and then the #44
bus.

Readers of Gravity’s Rainbow might remember
Schlieren because it is the town in which Slothrop
gets off the train coming back to Zürich from Geneva,
"just in case They’re watching the Bahnhof in town"
(GR, 267). The problem is that, unless he risks
jumping off a fast moving train, Slothrop couldn’t
have done it. No train coming from Geneva would stop
in Schlieren. To get off in Schlieren Slothrop
would have to have gotten off in Baden and taken a
local.

Why, you might ask, start a talk comparing Joyce
and Pynchon with such a detail of local color? I do,
because one of the reasons I have learned to pay at-
tention to local details in novels is that I was trained
to read a book like Gravity’s Rainbow by reading
Ulysses. Joyce makes us expect accuracy in even
these minor points. We don’t always find it in
Pynchon. This is not necessarily to fault Pynchon.
One of his strengths comes in challenging some of the
reading conventions we have learned, including some
learned from Joyce. But what my point does do is
bring me to a more important point. The point of my
point and the reason I requested to speak first (I
also promised to be brief and pointed) was to raise
the question: What are we doing when we compare
Pynchon and Joyce? More often than not, I think we
use the comparison to try to make a point. My point
is that this is a very dangerous activity when dis-
cussing two writers who, if they share anything, share a distrust about pointed thinking. So, if I may, let me play Mr. Pointsman and make a point about what we should not do in comparing Pynchon and Joyce.

I made my original point because I came to Gravity's Rainbow by way of Ulysses. There is a certain logic to this since Pynchon did too. He read Joyce. To the best of my knowledge, Joyce did not read Pynchon. Even so, it would be unfair to Gravity's Rainbow to insist that it duplicate the scrupulous attention to local detail that we find in Ulysses. Similarly, it can be dangerous to demand of Ulysses certain strengths of Gravity's Rainbow. What we can get, what we have already gotten, when a critic uses a comparison with the purpose of scoring points for one writer at the expense of the other, is a distortion and misreading of both texts.

For an example let me point to Edward Mendelson's "Introduction" in his Prentice-Hall collection of Twentieth Century Views of Pynchon. Mendelson has a point to make. Gravity's Rainbow transcends the pitfalls of a "hermetic self-referentiality that has already brought literary Modernism to its unmourned dead end" (15). Certain of that truth, he seeks out Ulysses as the example of the Modernist work at its worst and shows how far Gravity's Rainbow has escaped the pull of Ulysses' circularity. This is Mendelson on Ulysses: "The inward turn of Ulysses, the circularity of its narrative, is among the late consequences of the romantic and modernist sensibility whose triumphant achievement is a literature which exists finally only for itself" (11). Thus, "Serene in its vision of unalterable cycles, Ulysses ends just before its beginnings, and closes with its tail in its mouth" (14). Gravity's Rainbow, on the other hand, "devotes its final hundred pages not to a return on itself, but to an effort at finding ultimate beginnings and endings" (14).

Mendelson is far too close a reader of Gravity's Rainbow not to know what Michael Seidel remarks upon later in Mendelson's own collection: "in the doomed theater at the end of the book Pynchon returns, symbolically, to where he began" (196). As Seidel writes,
"When the rocket falls, the book ends with its own destructive tail in its mouth; it uses up all available energy" (197). One can see what Mendelson is trying to do. The circularity in Pynchon self-destructs, leaving the reader face to face with a world outside of the book; in Joyce we have the invitation to follow the book's circularity and stay within the world of the book.

But is it so simple? Joyce does not offer perfect returns. Even in Finnegans Wake the movement from the last page to the first is not continuous. Point of view has changed. In Ulysses Bloom does not have the harmonious return that Odysseus had with Penelope. His crisis is not apocalyptic, but it is one he must face. As we learn in Gravity's Rainbow, however, subtleties are not to be wasted on Mr. Pointsman.

Mendelson expands his argument. "When [Joyce] described his ideal reader--an insomniac who does nothing but read Joyce [that's an important distortion]--he acknowledged that his book focuses on its own structure, and that an understanding of the world outside Ulysses is of little use in understanding the world within it. No other major work of art is at the same time so extreme in its factuality and yet so tenous [sic] in its relation to its historical setting" (11).

The tenuousness of Ulysses in relation to its historical setting is one of Mendelson's major points. It has to be if he is to show that Modernist literature exists only for itself. But some of the best recent criticism on Joyce--Hugh Kenner's talk earlier this week is an example--has shown that few books demand more than Ulysses demands that a reader have an understanding of the world outside in order to understand the world inside. And I don't have to refer to very sophisticated criticism to make my point. Mendelson again: "The characters in Gravity's Rainbow are among the very few fictional characters whose thoughts and actions are affected by the work they do. In the world outside fiction, anyone can recognize that there is a connection between one's work and one's idea of the world, but Modernism never found--and necessarily could never have found--a way of making use of this
recognition" (5). Anyone who has read Ulysses and does not see the connection between Bloom's work and Bloom's idea of the world has not read Ulysses very deeply.

"The deeper one goes into Ulysses, the sillier it becomes. Joyce knew this, and his own ambivalence towards his book was among the consequences of that knowledge" (11). Yet when Pynchon displays a similar ambivalence towards his book, it is to affirm his "responsible attention to the world outside his books" (3). "Pynchon's comedy, his jokes at the expense of his own verbal contraptions, his violations of literary decorum, his low puns and choral celebrations, are ironic signals of his seriousness of purpose. He is always pointing towards the real conditions of a world more serious than the world in his imagination: pointing towards, not embodying, not displacing" (4).

If there is a difference between the effect of Joyce's jokes at the expense of his own verbal contraptions and Pynchon's, it must be demonstrated, not dogmatically asserted. For instance, a panelist today will argue that such self-consciously reflexive remarks found throughout the works of Joyce and Pynchon serve a similar, not different function.

Some of the ideological problems Mendelson has with Joyce may exist. Seeing a pointsman as he rides to the funeral in "Hades," Bloom thinks: "Couldn't they invent something automatic so that the wheel itself much handier? Well but then another fellow would get a job making the new invention" (U, 91). This sense of circularity (we should not forget that it is Bloom's, not necessarily Joyce's) does seem in direct contrast to Pynchon's vision of "the faceless pointsman" (Lot 49, 76) who had thrown history onto the wrong track. In Pynchon we do get a sense of alternative possibilities for history, something akin to the sense of history Walter Benjamin feels so necessary if human beings are to act to influence their destiny: it happened this way, yet with human effort it could have happened another. But even in Pynchon the answer is not clear cut. Pynchon's world is not all ones and zeroes. His pointsman in the passage cited is "faceless." The force of gravity is a natural force defying man's attempts to transcend it. Human beings
may not have the control Mendelson so confidently asserts they have.

The issue Mendelson raises is important, but his desire to make points distracts us from any serious discussion of it. Pynchon does not need critics to perform the service of misreading his "father" poets to make him look good. He can stand on his own, although so long as we use his works to make unsubstantiated points, there will be just as strong a tendency to misread his works as there has been to misread Joyce's.

One final example. Mendelson's own interpretation of The Crying of Lot 49 is improved if it can be demonstrated that Lot 49 occupies "an apocryphal, intertestamentary position" in Pynchon's works. So in his collection, Mendelson goes out of his way to add an editor's note to another writer's essay announcing: "There is another sense in which Lot 49 is 'apocryphal' in Pynchon's work, and that is Pynchon's otherwise incomprehensible refusal to incorporate characters from Lot 49 into Gravity's Rainbow" (160). One wonders how closely he has read Lot 49 or even the essays he includes in his book, since Richard Poirier in his review of Gravity's Rainbow points out nine pages later, "Old Bloody Chiclitz is back, by the way, from V. and The Crying of Lot 49" (169).

A skill Joyce taught his readers was to read the text at hand with care. Pynchon learned his lesson so well that he taught us new ways to read. I hope Pynchon critics don't forget the prior lesson. But as my time is over, I will end. I think my point has been made.

University of Hawaii

Notes

1 This is the slightly revised version of a paper read at the Seventh International James Joyce Symposium, held in Zürich, Switzerland, in June of 1979.

The Central Asian Uprising of 1916

David Seed

In the Central Asian section of *Gravity's Rainbow* Pynchon introduces the Kirghiz character Dzaqyp Qulan through his memory of his father's death. Dzaqyp Qulan will become Tchitcherine's sidekick, and therefore it is strategic to introduce historical information which will explain a tension in their relationship. After all, the whole section deals with the attempts of a strong central government to enforce conformity to certain standards of literacy. The issue of alphabetization is only one specific example of cultural colonialization; it links Central Asia analogically to the settlement of the pampas and disappearance of the gauchos, and to the treatment of the Hereros at the hands of the Germans. By setting up these analogies, Pynchon invites the reader to make comparisons and draw a pattern in colonialistic activity. Javaid Qazi has shown in considerable detail what source materials were used for the Central Asian section, but has said nothing about the 1916 uprising which preceded the compulsory introduction of literacy by some ten years.¹ Pynchon's source for details of this uprising is a monograph by Edward Dennis Sokol entitled *The Revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia.*² Thomas Winner refers to this work in a footnote in his study *The Oral Art and Literature of the Kazakhs of Russian Central Asia,* which Qazi demonstrates was used by Pynchon for describing the ajtys or singing duel later in this section.

The uprising was a spontaneous reaction against Russian attempts to introduce conscription, and it spread from the Sarts to the Dungans, Kazakh, Kirghiz and Turkoman peoples (the latter is not mentioned by Pynchon). The revolt of the Kirghiz and Kazakh in Semirechije province was the most serious and caused the most deaths (114-15), although there was widespread killing by Russian soldiers and civilians (127-28). Pynchon's analogy with the Wild West is not just a matter of rhetoric, since the governor-general of Turkistan, Kuropatkin, noted in his journal that lynch
law had virtually got out of control (128). The natives for the most part improvised their weapons, as Pynchon states, only the Kirghiz having a significant number of rifles. It was a vastly uneven fight even though most Russian soldiers were occupied at the front, and Sokol gives some examples of daily numbers of killings (109). Once it was clear that the uprising had failed, streams of refugees headed for Western China as did Džaqyp Qulan's father in Gravity's Rainbow. Some successfully crossed the border, some were turned back by the Chinese authorities, and some made a separate peace with the Russians. Pynchon is again correct about the rumours that Turkish, Austrian and German agents were encouraging rebellion, particularly a pan-Islamic jihad (holy war) against the Russian infidels (75, 147).

Pynchon does not mention the cause of the uprising, nor does he give any details which might confuse his main account of the genocidal treatment of the natives. He says nothing, for instance, of the two thousand settlers killed by the Kirghiz (120), just as he stays silent elsewhere about the numbers killed by the Herero in their uprising. In fact the parallels with the Herero war could have been multiplied. The Russians seized herds to undermine the economy of the rebels (127), just as the Germans impounded the Herero cattle, and Kuropatkin's directive to the governor of Semirechlie province, in its encouragement to slaughter natives, resembles Von Trotha's notorious "extermination order" which is referred to in Y.

The densely packed paragraph on the 1916 rising (GR, 340, Viking/Picador eds.) predisposes the reader against the Russian authorities before much information is released about the literacy programme, and suggests yet another analogy. One of the key changes which has taken place between 1916 and the alphabetization campaign is Russia's shift from Tsarist to Soviet rule. Pynchon cannily neglects to mention this change, thereby hinting that the two events are similar members of a series. Each is the manifestation of the totalitarian power of Moscow, the one from the Duma, the other from the "Georgian" (Stalin), whose "current" enthusiasm for ethnic minorities is, if anything, just as threatening as the more open violence of 1916. Hence
Džaqyp Qulan's perfectly justified wariness towards Tchitcherine, although it is important to recognize that the paragraph is only ostensibly memory; it very quickly goes beyond what information might have been available to Džaqyp Qulan at the time. Pynchon probably draws on Sokol for the early Soviet attitude (largely favourable) towards the 1916 uprising (170), but discounts its importance as a temporary and arbitrary shift within a monolithic system of tyranny. The stylistic "coding" of this paragraph in the idiom of the Wild West ("thousands of restless natives bit the dust") relates the treatment of the Kirghiz and other races to the fate of the Argentine Indians, where the same comparison is drawn, and of course to the obliteration of the North American Indian.

Sokol's monograph also sheds some light on the role of Chu Piang, the Chinese factotum who smokes opium secretly with Tchitcherine. Given his position, he is almost certainly a Dungan, i.e., a Chinese Moslem. Sokol explains that one of the Dungans' grievances in 1916 was over the "opium duty":

While opium was cultivated by these people before the war ... this cultivation formed only a small part of their crops though an important cash crop. During the war, however, because of the need of this drug for the front, the Tsarist government forced them to cultivate the poppy seed exclusively and at prices that were very low; the buying of the crop was placed in the hands of the Treasury and all other sales were strictly forbidden. . . . Wealthy Dungans did manage, however, to carry on a contraband trade with Western China. (129-30)

We thus have the bizarre spectacle of a second opium trade being carried on, this time across the western boundaries of China. It is very likely that Pynchon had this passage in mind when describing Chu Piang's activities, because they are fitted into a local context of commerce. One of Tchitcherine's suspected contacts is a certain Wimpe, head salesman of a subsidiary of IG Farben, who is particularly interested in developing the opium alkaloids.
At this point Chu Piang is introduced as "a living monument to the success of British trade policy back during the last century" (346). He is a kind of historical relic and has been converted into a quaint exhibit for European tourists. The clinical language of the guide ("His Need, you will notice, retains its shape under all manner of stresses" . . . etc.) implies that Chu Piang has become a case or a phenomenon. Pynchon identifies his specific addiction with British commercial exploitation, which is ironically analogous to Sokol's implication that Moscow's interference ruined the Dungan economy.

In this particular section of Gravity's Rainbow, conversations between Tchitcherine and Wimpe frame Chu Piang and set up two contrasting perspectives. Tchitcherine expresses moral reservations about a trade in addiction of which Wimpe is the heir, yet he acts on these scruples to smoke with Chu Piang in an individual act of communion. By contrast Wimpe appeals to "science" for metaphors which justify the anonymous language of profit and loss. For all his minor stature, Chu Piang plays an important part in Pynchon's elaboration of the theme of European exploitation.

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Notes

1 Javaid Qazi, "Pynchon in Central Asia: The Use of Sources and Resources," Rocky Mountain Review, 34, No. 4 (1980), 229-42.


3 Editors' Note: Pynchon's reference is to one of the more grisly episodes of nineteenth century colonialism, the Opium War that Britain waged on China in 1840. The opium trade was illegal and enormously profitable to the British, who shipped the drug from the Indian subcontinent colonies to Hong Kong and Canton. Alarmed by the increases in Chinese addiction, and angered by the lack of import duties, China refused
to legalize the imports. Britain declared war in 1840, and won, thereby legalizing the export of an addictive drug to millions, in the name of sound trade policy.
The Ellipsis as Architectonic
in *Gravity's Rainbow*

Laurence Daw

Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (New York: The
Viking Press, 1973) contains a huge number of ellipses.
Of the novel's 760 pages, only 9.7% do not contain
ellipses.¹ Some pages contain up to ten sets of
ellipses. Such textual tactics in the modern novel
probably find their origin in Lawrence Sterne's
*Tristram Shandy*, which contains as many dashes as
there are ellipses in Pynchon's novel.² Sterne's
work is filled with asterisks, as in Vol. 5, Chapters
31-32, Vol. 6, Chapter 39, and Vol. 9, Chapter 20.
The last two pages of Vol. 1, Chapter 12, are black,
and Vol. 9, Chapters 18-19, are blank pages. Vol. 6,
Chapter 40, contains a diagrammatic representation
of the novel's non-linear structure which simply con-
sists of a series of wavy lines. Yet one expects such
textual distortions in *Tristram Shandy* because they
are clearly part of its architectonic. Based on the
frequency of its use in *Gravity's Rainbow*, we can
speculate that the ellipsis is an architectonic for
Pynchon, too.

Speculating about the motivation behind such a use
of the ellipsis is the issue here. Pynchon uses it
as a punctuation device in many of the novel's conver-
sations to give the effect of vocal uncertainty. It
is also used as a punctuation device in passages which
show the workings of a character's mind, where it
creates a type of interior monologue which is a series
of meditative pauses rather than a stream of conscious-
ness. (Mark Richard Seigel makes a similar claim in
his work *Pynchon: Creative Paranoia in Gravity's
Rainbow*.) Thomas H. Schaub stresses the deliberate
inconclusiveness of Pynchon's aesthetic stance,³
showing how his prosody precludes the existence of
binary choices, and the very ambiguity of sentences
containing ellipses lends support to this idea. When
this device appears as punctuation, a sentence can
contain a whole array of meanings which are unspecified
but which can enhance the content of a sentence to a
great extent, depending on the imagination of the reader. The reader, in a sense, "fills in the dots" with whatever information he desires, information which may or may not be applicable to the context of the sentence.

Perhaps the most important use of the ellipsis concerns its ability to create a dramatic pause. Gravity's Rainbow is a novel which is built around moments of dramatic tension, when one plane of existence is momentarily illuminated by another. Characters sense parallels between facets of existence which are not causally connected (in mathematical terms, as Douglas Hofstadter points out in his recent work Godel, Escher, Bach: A Metaphorical Fugue on Minds and Machines, this is called discovering an "isomorphism"). Used as this type of structural device, the ellipsis functions as an architectonic.

Douglas Fowler notes this aspect of the use of the ellipsis in Pynchon's work: "Ellipsis dots indicate a shift to a new series of images, and these appeal to our paranoia."4 He calls the architectonic of Gravity's Rainbow—based on moments of dramatic tension which are created by a frequent use of the ellipsis—"Gothic": "Gothic effects, especially gothic effects as perceived by witnesses whose sensibilities are too delicate or perverse to deal with them, are fundamental in Pynchon."5 Since all of Pynchon's work—as is shown by the elusiveness of his character V., by the desire of Oedipa Maas for hierophany, and by the gothic quality of Gravity's Rainbow—is concerned with the moments when our world of mundane reality receives communications from some "Other Kingdom," Fowler's use of the term "Gothic" to connote "supernatural" in reference to Gravity's Rainbow seems appropriate.

The ellipsis, used on 90.3% of the pages in the novel, is Pynchon's way of showing us how the imminence of revelation is omnipresent. In fact, as the ubiquity of the ellipsis makes so evident in its function as an architectonic, one can see how the potential for a vision of some Other Kingdom is Pynchon's aesthetic.

University of Western Ontario
Notes


⁵ Fowler, 33.
Influences, Parallels, Filiations

Molly Hite


Despite its concern with "American Literature Since James Joyce" (there is a double-take effect in the subtitle, which manages to suggest, at least at first glance, that Joyce himself was American), Werner's study is regrettably not the one that some of us have been anticipating for years: it does not address directly the question of the relations between Pynchon's novels and Joyce's. It has long been a truism that Gravity's Rainbow has special affinities with Ulysses, and now Werner informs us that "one of the ironies of the reception of Gravity's Rainbow has been the development of an image of the book as a new Finnegans Wake, inaccessible to all but a highly educated elite," but he is not interested in drawing out the correspondences or examining the implications in any detail. That study remains to be written. Yet Werner's overall approach, which involves placing recent American fiction in two very different contexts, gives him interesting angles on a number of American writers and leads him to a compressed but extremely provocative treatment of Gravity's Rainbow that suggests some interesting directions for Pynchon study.

Insofar as Paradoxical Resolutions is an examination of literary influence, its unobjectionable thesis is that various twentieth century American authors have been affected in various ways by various Joyce productions. Influence, Werner cautions, should be construed in a broad rather than a narrow or Bloomian sense (the Bloom here is Harold, not Leopold): Faulkner and Richard Wright may have produced derivative early books because the example of their Irish precursor was overwhelming, but such diverse writers as Flannery O'Connor, Ronald Sukenick, Saul Bellow, Toni Morrison, William Melvin Kelley, and, of course, Pynchon, were able to pick up elements of Joyce's style, subject matter, experiments with form, narra-
tive stance, or themes, from *Dubliners*, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Ulysses*, or *Finnegans Wake* without succumbing to the temptation to become mini-Joyces themselves. Such writers resemble Joyce in a few respects but not in others, and it follows that they might also have an unsuspected family resemblance to certain other American writers who have been similarly influenced. Werner is thus able to group books that would ordinarily seem to have little in common on the basis of a shared relation to a particular work by Joyce—for instance, Plath's *The Bell Jar*, Kerouac's *On the Road*, and Baldwin's *Go Tell It On the Mountain* are treated together because they all reflect "the combination of *Bildungsroman*, *Künstlerroman*, and self-advertisement in *Portrait*"—and to use this relation to set up comparisons that are frequently quite revealing.

He is not merely concerned with Joyce's influence, however. Werner's other focus in this study is the "paradoxical resolutions" that he regards as characteristic of recent American fiction. Citing a long American tradition in which the main conflict of the novel has been between the protagonist and a hostile social environment, he maintains that the traditional resolutions to this conflict are the "romantic," in which the protagonist is separated from his society at the conclusion, and the "realistic," in which the protagonist either overcomes or capitulates to his society. Werner then contends that Joyce's influence serves to qualify and enrich these traditional patterns until they no longer appear to be exhaustive. Both *Ulysses* and *Gravity's Rainbow*, for example, "extend symbolic [i.e., "romantic"] and realistic modes until they seem meaningless impositions of abstract systems on the concrete reading experience."

Unfortunately, Werner's exposition tends to suggest not that Joycean models render the "romantic"/"realist" disjunction obsolete, but that "romantic" and "realist" are simply inadequate conceptual tools for the analysis of any literary work. The two emphases—the first on Joyce's influence and the second on the issue of resolutions—never really mesh, although Werner makes a valiant effort in his opening chapter to demonstrate that Joyce's own work, notably *Ulysses*,
also has a central conflict between the protagonist and his society. The reading is unpersuasive because reductive; Bloom is not the sole central character, and by Werner's own criteria such an interpretation wrenches Ulysses into a frame already identified as characteristically American. The overall thesis of Paradoxical Resolutions thus tends to remain essentially two theses, and one consequence for the readings of the individual works is that the relation to Joyce, which is used to set up a group of texts for examination and cross-comparison, becomes largely peripheral when Werner addresses the question of narrative resolutions. The comparison between the American works becomes what is important: Werner uses Finnegans Wake as a model for the genre of encyclopedic narratives (in a felicitous phrase he describes American encyclopedias as "supreme biographies"), but once he has John Barth and Norman Mailer together under that rubric, he scrapes the Joycean parallels and concentrates on a feature the two Americans share, the tendency to make themselves performers in their own stories. The comparison is illuminating: while it is a commonplace that Mailer has always been his own hero, criticism still tends to view Barth as an aesthete committed to formal experimentation to the exclusion of all "realistic" concerns. Using the Mailer analogy, Werner is able to point out how the character who is remarkably like John Barth has been gradually assuming a more prominent role in Barth's narratives, and to use this insight as the basis for a reading that helps to redeem the poorly-received Letters by exploring the ways in which it develops questions about the relation of the artist to his work that were suppressed or glossed over in the earlier and more highly acclaimed Giles Goat Boy.

The discrepancy between Werner's two emphases has a great deal to do with both the strengths and the weaknesses of the section on Gravity's Rainbow. Werner opens the chapter containing this discussion ("Recognizing Reality," which groups Pynchon's novel with William Gaddis's The Recognitions) with a reflection on some of the ways in which Ulysses deals with the collapse of traditional categories for making sense out of reality. It is in this context that he
makes his most radical statements about the ultimate indeterminacy of Gravity's Rainbow: Pynchon claims "no authority for his own perspective," denies "the validity of aesthetic unity," and confronts us with a text in which "we must accept the responsibility for the implications of whatever order we find." These observations provoke a number of questions: for instance, how do we distinguish between an author's "own perspective" and the fictional universe on which he presumably has that perspective and which is also, because it is his creation, "his own"? If we must accept responsibility for the implications of whatever order we find, does this mean that Pynchon's text is completely disordered? That it contains a multiplicity of orders with no trace of a hierarchical principle? Can the author ever be entirely innocent of responsibility for such implications? Werner does not anticipate such questions; in a sense, he fails to accept responsibility for the implications of his own theory. On the other hand, in raising the issue of textual indeterminacy at the outset, he goes unerringly to the heart of the problem in attempting any interpretation of Pynchon's writing.

The section in this chapter devoted to Gravity's Rainbow is more disappointing, in that it continues to skirt these issues. Again, the problem may be implicit in Werner's approach; the reading of Gravity's Rainbow follows, and stands in contrast to, a reading of The Recognitions, a book that Werner finds seriously flawed. The implicit basis for contrast thus becomes the relative merits of the two novels, and Werner begins to adopt an inflated tone not evident anywhere else in this study in the effort to communicate just how important Pynchon's work is: "The screaming's human. If we don't believe it's important now, we never will"; "Pynchon forces the resolution of modes off the page and into our lives, where it belongs. If we let him." His emphasis in this section is on closed systems as solipsisms, and on Pynchon's insistence that for both characters and readers "some escape from solipsism into compassion is possible," a point that is fairly familiar by now. In supporting this argument, however, he takes two substantial quotations out of their contexts, and the lapses are
significant in both cases because in both cases the context would complicate considerably the straightforward and close-to-banal conclusion that he draws. In the first case he identifies Katje's meditation on "What more do they want?" (GR, 105, Viking ed.) as "Weissmann's analogous vision of humanity as simple raw material for propagating his own obsessions," which is especially misleading here because "they" refers to the English, and the last sentence of the quotation, "The true war is a celebration of markets," explicitly denies the conventional boundaries that would allow us to dismiss the observation as merely part of Weissmann's "vision." In the second case, Werner quotes the long passage, "You have waited in these places into the early mornings, synced in to the on-whitening of the interior, you know the Arrivals schedule by heart, by hollow heart" (GR, 50-51), without identifying the original referent for the "you" as Pointsman and the motivation as at least partially sexual and at least partially exploitative (Pointsman is cruising for lab specimens here as well as fulfilling more immediate needs): "How Pointsman lusts after them, pretty children. Those drab undershorts of his are full to bursting with need." (GR, 150). Werner prefaces the portion of this episode that he quotes with, "It may be too much to expect, but nothing's more important than trying to find, to love," and follows it with the summary statement, "If nothing else, we can shelter strangers." In Gravity's Rainbow, however, things are not all that simple, and love shades into less attractive emotions in ways that preclude making such unqualified generalizations.

The urge to simplify Gravity's Rainbow in order to get a hold on it is probably irresistible, and one of the most provocative aspects of Werner's study is that it does contain a few such obvious distortions of meaning, as if at some point in the reading process the need for a synopsizable message overwhelms everything else. Such misreadings are common in discussions of Pynchon's novels (my own doubtless included); in Paradoxical Resolutions they are more interesting in themselves than damaging to Werner's overall thesis. That we all seem to need to comprehend—in the root sense of "contain"—a novel like Gravity's Rainbow,
even if comprehension necessitates violating some of its complexities, might well be material for a larger meditation on Pynchon's use of closed systems. In these terms, Paradoxical Resolutions is not only interesting and engaging in itself, but important because of the directions for subsequent studies it suggests.

Cornell University
Notes


It has been ten years since the publication of Gravity's Rainbow, and the critical responses to Pynchon's novel have been extensive in both number and variety of approach. Nevertheless, Gravity's Rainbow was being written at the same time "deconstruction" was becoming the critical approach used by post-modernists to write and read the novels of the seventies and eighties. In many respects, Pynchon's novel can be read as deconstructing both history's version of World War II and the "war novel's" aesthetic of romantic glory or naturalistic gore. The time has come when we must turn a deconstructive lens of critical inquiry onto Gravity's Rainbow and thus uncover the various deconstructive narratives given play within the zone of the text.

Papers for this proposed special session should focus on the question of Pynchon and deconstruction from the standpoint of either applying deconstruction to the reading of Gravity's Rainbow, or reading the deconstructive narratives within the text, or arguing for or against the validity of deconstructing Gravity's Rainbow.

Please send 8-page papers or detailed proposals to: Bernard Duyfhuizen, Department of English, University of Tulsa, 600 S. College Avenue, Tulsa, OK 74104. Deadline: March 25, 1983.

***

[Brigadier Ernest Pudding] was pensioned off around the beginning of the Great Depression—went to sit in the study of an empty house in Devon, surrounded by photos of old comrades, none of whose gazes quite met one's own, there to go at a spot of combinatorial analysis, that favorite pastime of retired Army officers, with a rattling intense devotion. (GR, 77)
Jonathan Grudin suggests that a possible source for the character presented here is Major Percy Alexander MacMahon (1854-1929), about ten years Pudding's senior but certainly not around for WWII and "The White Visitation." Born in Malta, educated at the Royal Military Academy, MacMahon served in India before returning to Britain to teach mathematics and physics. He retired from the army in 1898 to devote himself to mathematical and scientific pursuits—"a good soldier spoiled," commented military friends. His influential work, Combinatory Analysis, was published in 1915-16, and is still considered "the most ambitious treatise on the subject." Combinatorial analysis, the study of how groups of objects may be permuted under various conditions, has drawn new interest with the advent of the computer, and MacMahon's work was recently republished. Combinatorial analysis has contributed to the development of group theory and quantum mechanics, and it seems likely that Pynchon encountered MacMahon through mathematical rather than historical research.

Ever since the publication of Gravity's Rainbow, one rumor has held that the epigraph to Part 4, "The Counterforce," which now reads "What?—Richard M. Nixon," had been entirely different in the galleys, being instead a passage from song lyrics by Joni Mitchell. At the request of the editors, Clifford Mead has recently tracked down a copy of the galleys, and found the epigraph to Part 4 there to be:

She has brought them to her senses
They have laughed inside her laughter
Now she rallies her defences
For she fears that one will ask her
For eternity
And she's so busy being free

--Joni Mitchell

The lines are from the fourth verse of "Cactus Tree," on Joni Mitchell (Reprise, RS6293), 1968.
Bibliography

We would like to remind our readers that they are invited to contribute bibliographic information about bibliographies, dissertations, books, chapters, essays, articles, reviews, interviews, translations, newspaper and magazine stories, fragments, oddments, stray comments, conference papers, and anything else of the sort which seems significant, interesting, or otherwise valuable and worthy of wider publicity with specific reference to Pynchon. We also welcome news of work in progress, circulating manuscripts, and forthcoming works.

NEW PYNCHON:


CRITICISM AND COMMENT:


Ranges from Sterne and Smollett to Mailer and Pynchon.


Uses V. to illustrate the "alligators-in-the-sewers" legend.


Contains all original essays:


Friedman, Alan J. "Science and Technology." 69-102.


Earl, James W. "Freedom and Knowledge in the Zone." 229-50.


"Eclectic Reading." New York Times, 20 Apr. 1974, 30. Announces National Book Award winners: "If there is little greatness in the list, there is abundant evidence of the great diversity in book publishing."


Elliott, George P. "Fiction and Anti-Fiction." The American Scholar, 47, No. 3 (1978), 398-402, 404-06. (402, 404) "It seems to me that Gravity's Rainbow presents ingenious fantasies of universal conspiracy that neither correspond to reality nor are held together by a steady vision of reality—but project, and only project, the frenetic anguish of a powerful, highly gifted, and dazzingly learned mind."


In a poll of English professors, Gravity's Rainbow tied for seventh place with Lolita on a list of twenty post-1941 American "classics" which should be taught to college students.


Elicited Pynchon's "Pros and Cohns" letter in response.


"[Narratives like V.] continue to resist significant rephrasing, maintaining their own terms and conditions against translation." This effect "is general in V.: . . . its narrative as a whole works to de-compose not only the solutions it seems to invite but also a favored assumption or two that one may have carried with him into his reading."


Lot 49 "suggests that reality may be an extended pun."


Mentions Pynchon.

"The interface of the thunder is not simply the meeting point between the shaping mind and the shapeless, terrifying phenomenal world: it is the interrealm, the no-man's-land where the two antagonistic systems, mind and world, simultaneously operate, each in its own terms and each in the other's. On the pathological level, it is the realm of paranoia and schizophrenia; but on the level of language and the psychic history of the race, it is precisely the realm . . . of aboriginal myth."

A musing on Methuen's Contemporary Writers series, including Tanner's Thomas Pynchon.

Moore, Steven. "Pynchon on Record." Pynchon Notes, 10 (1982), 56-57.

Notes the coming publication of Lot 49.


Briefly discusses McConnell and Hendin on Pynchon.

"Opportunities & Awards." Cornell Daily Sun, 28 May 1959, 12.
Lists Pynchon as winner of the George H. Coxe Award in American Literature.

(164, 166, 167)
The novel in motion, and "structural black humor."

Cites a remark in Alfred MacAdam's "Pynchon as Satirist" as an example of critics' "amused contempt" for the concept of character in the modernist novel.


Pynchon's main characters "follow a . . . pattern from hope to failure and thus . . . demonstrate that home-made myth is a question-able strategy." They "sort through the bits and pieces of history and their own world in pursuit of the one structure that will give coherence and explanation to apparent chaos. . . .[T]hey are unable to catch with the net of imaginative theory their objects of pursuit."


Mentions Pynchon in a discussion of self-reflexive art.


"Pynchon's Herero." Pynchon Notes, 10 (1982), 37-44.


And who is Thomas Pynchon? H. Allen Smith?


In this edited and condensed transcript of a panel discussion, John Gardner mentions "Tom Pynchon" as one of those who "don't want to mess with character." Martin Price and Robert Scholes briefly discuss Pynchon's characterization and naming.


Compares Mathews with Pynchon on such points as quest, conspiracy, paranoia, and sign reading; claims "filiations, not derivations."


George Clinton's LP "Computer Games got more signifiers than half a Thomas Pynchon novel; likewise it begs decoding only to figure you an idiot for deciphering instead of just getting off."


"The imaginative writer can never be serious unless, like Mr. Thomas Pynchon, he makes it clear that he is writing about Entropy and the Second Law of Thermodynamics and a number of other subjects that he picked up in his freshman year at Cornell."


"Pigs in Pynchon all betoken a kind of frenzied, degenerate rejection of bourgeois order in the name of orgiastic revelry and crude appetite." But "Pynchon's highly transgressive fictions are not politically radical. . . . The carnivalesque in Pynchon represents less the utopian vision of freedom and sensual pleasure than a kind of compromised liberalism."


FORTHCOMING:


Contributors

ROBERT J. CULLEN received his Ph.D. in 1981 from UCLA, where he wrote his dissertation on "Words and a Yarn: Language and Narrative Technique in the Works of Thomas Pynchon." He is the author of two essays on Gravity's Rainbow, currently circulating, and a Lecturer in the UCLA Writing Program.

LAURENCE DAW completed his B.A. and M.A. degrees in English at The University of Western Ontario where he had begun as a student of natural science/physics. He is now finishing his doctoral dissertation, "Us and Them: Technological Hierarchies in Pynchon and Fowles," at Western.

MOLLY HITE received her Ph.D. from the University of Washington in 1981, and is now an Assistant Professor of English at Cornell, where she teaches/studies contemporary literature in English and twentieth-century women's fiction and feminist theory. Her book, Ideas of Order in the Novels of Thomas Pynchon, will be published by Ohio State University Press in June. She is working on both a novel and a study of Margaret Atwood's poetry and fiction.

DAVID HOLT is employed at the University of Virginia as an administrator and a teacher of philosophy.


DAVID SEED is a lecturer in the Department of English Literature of Liverpool University. He has written on James, Singer, Henry Roth, Mailer and others. His work on Pynchon includes "The Fictional Labyrinths of Thomas Pynchon" in Critical Quarterly, "Order in Thomas Pynchon's 'Entropy'" in the Journal of Narrative Technique, and four previous contributions to PN.

BROOK THOMAS received his Ph.D. from the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1975. Since 1976, he has been teaching at the University of Hawaii. He
is the author of *James Joyce's Ulysses: A Book of Many Happy Returns* (Louisiana State University Press, 1983), and of essays on Joyce, Melville, Twain, Hawthorne and Wolfgang Iser. Currently, he is writing a book on Law and Literature in America.

MELVIN ULM, like the author he has written about, prefers a relative anonymity.

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