

Pynchon's Politics: The Presence of an Absence

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Periodically a culture produces an author whose writing embodies it (Medieval Italy, Dante; Renaissance England, Shakespeare; Enlightenment Germany, Goethe; etc.), and the work of Thomas Pynchon, Jr., has often been said to capture and contain the dazzling complexity of late twentieth-century America. The subject of shelves of critical writing, Pynchon's work has been shown to be as American as comic books or jazz, cosmopolitan as the multinational corporations, contemporary as the War on Drugs, and timeless as Varro, Dante, and Swift. Stylistically, Pynchon is in the tradition of Joyce and Nabokov—that of punster, puzzler, intimated, word-gamer, allusionist, and fabricator of grotesqueries. Pynchon is also in the humanist (more exactly, anti-fascist) tradition of Unamuno, who views each individual as an end in him- or herself towards whom society should have a singular responsibility; and, oddly, Kafka, who lamented the absurd irreconcilability of the individual and the modern state. While claiming to eschew "novels of ideas," Pynchon nonetheless rubs elbows with the great writers and thinkers of the ages.

Politically, Pynchon is in the tradition of, well, let's see. His politics are not exactly well-stated and in-focus, and they definitely are *not* what we now call Politically Correct. He is not in lock-step with some ism, like either the liberal Gore Vidal or the conservative William F. Buckley. He has no code of conduct that he advocates, like Hemingway's "Grace under pressure" or David Mamet's "Trust no one." If he has any beliefs of that sort, they are obscured. From the earliest short stories (1959) through *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), Pynchon's politics are absent, or in deep code. "Keep cool, but care" was as far as he was willing to go, in *V.* (1963). Not until *Vineland* (1990) did he explicitly articulate his political beliefs: "'maybe forget, but never forgive.'"

The publishers of *Slow Learner* (1984) characterize Pynchon readers as "decoders" on the book jacket flap, and, indeed, to read Pynchon as if he were writing in code has become standard practice. Readers are forced to cryptanalyze to arrive at his beliefs. A rule of

thumb in cryptography holds that the more unexpected a message is, the more information it contains; a series of repetitive messages conveys less information than a series of messages that differ from one another. It follows that the more often a thing is mentioned, the less important it is; the less often, the more important. This implies a procedure the reverse of that involved in reading ordinary, non-encoded novels. The more space conventional novelists allot to something, presumably, the more important it is. On political issues Pynchon follows rules of cryptanalysis, never mentioning the most important thing. It is hinted at, suggested, skirted 'round, alluded to, dealt with in books by other authors mentioned or alluded to in Pynchon's text. A literary trail is established with coded signposts pointing all along the way, but it is never—never—flatly named. It is "the ultimate Plot Which Has No Name," "The Big One, the century's master cabal" (*V.*), and "Those Who Know, know" (*Gravity's Rainbow*). In his earliest short stories Pynchon creates an absence of overt political thought or commentary, all the while walking on the eggshells of politicized allusions—a trick he will use for the next thirty years. In so doing he creates the presence of an absence, and nothing alerts critical readers more. In *Vineland*, Pynchon describes everyone's ignorance of Brock Vond's whereabouts as "a kind of reverse presence."

What is the nature of this absence, this reverse presence? We might ask Pynchon, but he allows no interviews, answers few letters, offers no photographs. Guarding his privacy as he does, Pynchon inadvertently invites the kind of speculation that converts to cultic "truth." With privacy comes misinformation, a mixed blessing. The upshot is a minor industry fabricating bogus Pynchonian relics to *prove* he once did or said something to demonstrate conclusively he is: 1) truly J. D. Salinger (Has anyone seen them together in a single photograph?); 2) a priest in a French monastic order (*Les Anciens Élèves Agréables*) dedicated to keeping alive the memory of Elvis; 3) an outlaw keyboardist who travels incognito and records pseudonymously with Laurie Anderson; 4) a ham radio wizard who has built a multi-million dollar deep space tracking station from discarded junk and obsolete NASA parts, who listens every night to amplified echoes of the Big Bang accompanied by Vivaldi—when he's not having fun eavesdropping on conversations of the government's highest officials.

Pynchon's need for privacy notwithstanding, he reveals his personality and concerns through habitual use of favorite devices in the text of his *oeuvre*. These habits of mind may help decoders reveal his political beliefs. Borrowing a technique from Pynchon, who borrowed it from Nabokov, who borrowed it from Joyce, that involves leaving

English for another language, finding the most highly charged synonym, and returning to English, I have termed these habits of mind "Pynchon's penchants." In this case we have "penchant," from the French past participle of *pencher*, to incline: hence, "a strong leaning, an inclination." Pynchon's penchants might have been reduced to merely "Pynchon's inclinations." But, in idiomatic French, *penchant* takes on a richer dimension, as in *une penchant pour la peinture*, "a passion for painting." So "Pynchon's passions" might have served more suggestively as the handle for my notion. But it is exactly the tension between "inclinations" (or stylistic devices) and "passions" (or weighty concerns one holds with utmost conviction) that is the stuff of this study. Pynchon is among the most varied of our living prose stylists, and careful reading also reveals him a passionate man. Pynchon's style, technique, habits all serve his convictions—which we must infer.

I begin with discussions of Pynchon, his family history, his connection (if any) to Vladimir Nabokov, and his friendship with Richard Fariña. Actually, more is known of the latter two's personalities than of Pynchon's, and this information is most useful, refracting as it does an image of Pynchon one facet at a time. Next, I develop interpretations of five of Pynchon's short stories and one essay from what I term his "short period" (most now available in *Slow Learner*). These early works constitute a literary time-lapse study of Pynchon's formative stage.

For a long time Pynchon resisted some formidable coaxing to release his youthful works for re-publication because he felt them a bunch of early attempts—insufferably smart-assed, juvenile, and, worst of all, not well thought-out—as he self-deprecatingly tells us in the introduction to *Slow Learner*. While obviously not up to his mature style, most of the stories are as good as all but the best short fiction being published today. If they are the work of an *enfant terrible*, most of Pynchon's fans forgive what he calls his "Bad Ear," his "overwriting," even his "tendrils," and accept his apology for all other forms of wretched excess.

Analysis of Pynchon's short period (1958–1964) provides insight into the techniques used in *V.*, *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966), *Gravity's Rainbow*, and *Vineland*. Since so many critical books and articles have already been written on Pynchon's novels, I have written in less detail about them, except to highlight stylistic and thematic material consistent with my previous observations ("Pynchon's Inferno," *Cornell Alumni News* [November 1978]). Pynchon is nothing if not consistent, and I am a terrible "I tole ya so." I leave the enjoyment of going

through the rich Pynchonian tapestry to the reader only slightly aided, because, above all else, Pynchon is damn good fun to read.

"I worry, Meatball, I do. There are Europeans wandering around North Africa these days with their tongues torn out of their heads because those tongues have spoken the wrong words. Only the Europeans thought they were the right words." ("Entropy" [1960])

Who Is Pynchon?

As long ago as 1978, *The Wilson Quarterly* asked professors of American Literature to nominate the "most important" American novels since the Second World War. *Gravity's Rainbow*, the only novel published in the '70s among the top twenty, ranked fourth. A no less astute reader than Northrop Frye called *Gravity's Rainbow* "one of the most remarkable works of fiction in our time" (*Divisions on a Ground* [1982]). Many critics believe Pynchon deserves to be considered among the best writers of the century, with the likes of Borges, Kafka, Proust, and Joyce. Like theirs, his works are complex, dense, intricate, and difficult. In addition, Pynchon, rather than providing answers, asks questions; rather than seeking clarification, makes mysteries. These characteristics, his penchants, make his work more inaccessible than most.

The first mystery is Pynchon himself. Does he exist? Is he, as some suggest, a committee? These quite ridiculous questions arise out of Pynchon's fierce insistence on personal privacy, coupled with his fiction, which often pivots about questions of misplaced, misunderstood, or forged identities.

The Pynchon Family

Since Pynchon's family has a long and colorful history, where better to begin to know him? The Pynchon clan is a band of bluebloods principled enough to align themselves with the wrong side during, not one, but two American Revolutions (the eighteenth-century one and the twentieth-century one), who have suffered social and economic reversals—even suicide—as a consequence. But let me proceed chronologically.

The Pynchons are traceable back to the eleventh century. According to Mathew Winston's "The Quest for Pynchon" (rpt. 1976), "The earliest Pynchon on record is one Pinco, 'sworn brother in war' to Endo, who came to England from Normandy with William the Conqueror."¹ By 1533, one Nicholas Pynchon was appointed High

Sheriff of London, so he must have been on pretty good terms with the Crown. In Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign Of Four* (1890), there is a Pinchin Lane in an old section of late nineteenth-century London.

In 1630, William Pynchon brought his family and considerable capital to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. As patentee, he helped found both Roxbury and Springfield, along with such other founding fathers as Miles Morgan, ancestor of the financier J. P. Morgan. William Pynchon stayed for twenty years, until he was forced to leave for writing a religious tract, *The Meritorious Price Of Our Redemption* (1650), which argued against the prevailing orthodoxy of the Puritans and was banned and burned in Boston.

Waters's *Genealogical Gleanings* (1901) notes that from William Pynchon's son John "are descended all who bear that name in America." John Pynchon was one of the leading citizens of the colony, according to the *New Columbia Encyclopedia*, and his signature is affixed to an oath of allegiance drafted after the "Glorious Revolution" of William and Mary. Along with the Morgans, the Pynchons were among the wealthiest and most influential families in New England. One of John's descendants, Joseph Pynchon, was groomed to become governor of Connecticut, and would have been, had he not been loyal to the Crown.

The first Thomas Ruggles Pynchon was a physician during the Revolutionary period. His nineteenth-century descendant the Rev. Thomas Ruggles Pynchon was a chemist and an educator, eventually becoming president of Trinity College of Hartford. When Nathaniel Hawthorne published *The House Of the Seven Gables* (1851) with its less than flattering portrayal of a family named Pyncheon, he received letters of complaint from two Pynchons of that generation. In one letter the Rev. Thomas Ruggles Pynchon wrote, "We know of no Pynchons not of our little band."

The important stock brokerage, Pynchon & Co., which rose to prominence during the early twentieth century, must have been staffed by the same family. This house was frequently mentioned by the *New York Times* during the '20s and '30s. The *Times* published abstracts of prestigious Pynchon & Co. publications and projections, just as it abstracts the studies of Merrill Lynch today. The titles ranged over topics of interest to investors: *The Aviation Industry* (1928, 1929), *Survey of Public Utilities* (1928), *The Gas Industry* (1928), and the ambitious *Electric Light And Power: A Survey Of World Development* (1930). The firm was clearly well connected and enjoyed great favor. It had offices in New York (3), Chicago (2), Milwaukee, Battle Creek, London (2), Paris, and Liverpool. When Pynchon & Co. talked, people listened.

In April 1929, Pynchon & Co. announced they would open a new Chicago office. By December 1929, after October 24, Black Thursday of the stock market crash, the firm had suffered noticeable reversals. The *Times* reported that Mrs. Harold Pynchon had to get an injunction to prevent Pynchon & Co. from selling her personal stock to pay the debt of her husband, a high-ranking executive in the firm. The senior partner, George M. Pynchon, tried desperately to come up with some technical breakthrough to stem the tide. In 1930, he backed experiments with a "diesel electric" boat and a "glider boat." Alas, neither paid off. By April 1931, the firm was suspended from the New York Stock Exchange and went into receivership. The Irving Trust Co. took charge as receiver. According to the financial historian Ferdinand Lundberg, the Irving Trust Co. was a bank in the Morgan-DuPont sphere at the time.

Pynchon & Co. was one of the largest brokerages in the country, the largest ever to have been suspended from the NYSE (*New York Times* 25 Apr. 1931). The day after the NYSE announced the suspension of Pynchon & Co., the *Times* noted a drop in the stock value of U.S. Steel and Johns Manville (26 Apr. 1931)—two firms closely associated with J. P. Morgan.

The *Times's* financial writer analyzed Pynchon & Co.'s difficulties as due to its involvement, together with the Chase Securities Corporation, in Fox Film and General Theaters. The final blow came when the Fox stock fell under attack and its value was driven down by large scale selling—dumping. According to Upton Sinclair's *Upton Sinclair Presents William Fox* (1933), the Chase Bank was instrumental in the fall of Fox Films, to that time "the largest industrial failure in the history of American affairs." Sinclair goes into excruciating detail, concluding that the deal which forced Pynchon & Co. into receivership was "a terrible trap." In *America's Sixty Families* (1937), Lundberg describes the affair as "another of the many unsavory episodes in which the Chase Bank [later to become the Chase Manhattan] took the leading role." Sinclair also points out that "The only two bankers in New York who showed sympathy for our Fox [were] Edward Rothschild of the Chelsea Bank, and Bernard Marcus of the Bank of the United States." Note the Rockefeller bank on one side, the Rothschild banks on the other. An official spokesman for the Chase Bank told the *Times* the Chase "was merely in the position of being one of the numerous creditors of the firm [Pynchon & Co.], but had no special interest in its affairs," expressing what sounds rather like the *pro forma* disinterest of a vengeful divorcée asked about an ex-spouse's setbacks.

In March 1932, Pynchon & Co. had liabilities of \$19.7 million and assets of but \$12.8 million, the *Times* reported. These were not

inconsequential sums when a new Chevrolet cost about \$600. Pyncheon & Co. went under, and there was much subsequent scandal. One Mrs. Helen Delany Pyncheon made news in 1931, saved from a jail term by the beneficence of her former employer, mining engineer Raymond Brooks, when she was convicted of robbing him of \$45,000. Later the George M. Pyncheon estate would be sold and—no end to ignominy—its furniture dispersed at public auction. From contemplating the world's electric power needs to the equivalent of a garage sale. Still later, in 1939, a Spanish nobleman was awarded almost \$90,000 in a suit for illegal stock-conversion against twenty-two former partners of Pyncheon & Co. Perhaps it was in part as a consequence of such humiliation that George M. Pyncheon, Jr., committed suicide in 1940 in the stables of his Long Island estate.

From the stock market's reaction to the failure of Pyncheon & Co., and the use of the Irving Trust Co. as receiver, we can infer that the firm was a Morgan satrap. The Pynchons appear to have used to advantage all their family associations with the J. P. Morgan group, with whom they had shared common interests for three hundred years, since the founding of the Massachusetts Bay colony. Yet as the J. P. Morgan influence ebbed, the Morgan associates suffered as well. Once again the Pynchons had thrown their lot in with the loyalists and lost.

Thomas Ruggles Pyncheon, Jr., was not born until the sordid humiliation of Pyncheon & Co. had been nearly played out: 1937. His father, Thomas Sr., is the grandnephew of the president of Trinity College (for whom he was named), the one who wrote Hawthorne. Apparently Pyncheon Sr. was never in the high-finance circle of the family. An industrial surveyor, he worked for engineering firms or held local government engineering posts most of his working life. For several years he was Superintendent of Highways for the Town of Oyster Bay, Long Island, until he was appointed Supervisor by the Town Board in 1962. Oyster Bay was where his son, our author, attended high school.

To know Pyncheon is to know his family's history, his passion for history and historical method, and to see how political consciousness of a historical kind becomes central to Pyncheon's aesthetic, becomes one of Pyncheon's penchants. Pyncheon's writing evokes the dispossessed heirs of the old American dynasty based on steel, coal, and railroads. He writes much as Faulkner wrote for the dispossessed heirs of the agrarian South. But, as Faulkner attributed evil to the carpetbagging agents of the industrial North (J. P. Morgan as villain), Pyncheon attributes evil to the agents of the new multinational, petrochemical dynasty (J. P. Morgan as victim).

Our Thomas Pynchon graduated from Oyster Bay High School as salutatorian in 1953, at age sixteen. His high school years (fall 1950 to spring 1953) were those when the name of U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy was a household word. McCarthyism. McCarthy used inquisitorial techniques (reckless accusations, unidentified informers, unsubstantiated charges) to hound his liberal adversaries out of government, charging his opponents were either Communists, subversives, or merely "fellow travelers" (too soft on Communism). Careers were ruined. Soon he had people in the State Department, the U.S. Army, and even Hollywood turning each other in for student activities twenty years before—or for membership in Depression-fashionable organizations. More than just careers were ruined. This synchronicity affords some insight into Pynchon's legendary paranoia, and we can grasp why Pynchon's ellipses speak so loudly. Pynchon attended Cornell University from 1953 to 1955, left to serve a hitch in the Navy, reentered Cornell in 1957, and graduated in 1959. While there he came under the noteworthy influence of two people: Vladimir Nabokov and Richard Fariña.

Vladimir Nabokov

Was there a direct, personal relationship between twenty-year-old Pynchon and fifty-seven-year-old Nabokov? Probably not. While it has become axiomatic among some scholars to say Nabokov was Pynchon's comparative literature professor, checking a bootlegged copy of Pynchon's transcript (albeit one that may have been tampered with) against the course listings for the years in question yields no evidence Pynchon ever enrolled in any of Nabokov's courses for credit. Pynchon enrolled in neither Literature 311-312, "Masters of European Fiction," nor Literature 325-326, "Russian Literature in Translation." Of course, Pynchon might have audited Nabokov, off the record. Indeed, a member of Pynchon's undergraduate cohort, Robert H. Eisenman (B.A. Cornell, 1958), now Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at Cal State Long Beach, said in a recent telephone interview: "Everybody who was anybody audited the legendary Nabokov lectures, to hear the showman on Emma, Anna, and Gregor Samsa. It was a very large lecture hall with no attendance monitors, so auditors caught individual lectures as they pleased. Pynchon would have known that."

Because Pynchon uses techniques outlined in Nabokov's courses, and collected in his *Lectures On Literature* (1980), some have assumed that, if Pynchon never took any of Nabokov's courses, the two must have known each other personally. Actually, they did have one mutual

friend, Herbert Gold, who offered Pynchon and Fariña access to a New York literary connection, James Silberman at *Dial* magazine. But that was months after Nabokov had left Cornell to live abroad. In fact, Gold was Nabokov's replacement as writer in residence, so he could not have introduced Pynchon: Gold and Nabokov were not at Cornell at the same time. According to Andrew Field's *VN: The Life and Art of Vladimir Nabokov* (1986): "The core of the serious Nabokov cult on the campus consisted of . . . Richard Fariña . . . and Thomas Pynchon, though evidently there was no personal acquaintance between Pynchon and Nabokov." Furthermore, in more than thirty years, no photo, letter, or magazine article by any third party giving an eyewitness account of a meeting between Nabokov and Pynchon at a class, reading, department function, or purely social gathering has surfaced. Since such remembrances of celebrities past would be just the thing for the *Cornell Alumni News*, for example, I assume none exist.²

Yet Nabokov was an enormous presence around Ithaca, what with the Paris edition of *Lolita* (1955) raising such a ruckus in those years, even to the extent, Field tells us, that the Cornell Book and Bowl Society read it aloud, with Fariña one of the narrators. Nabokov was such a presence that Pynchon could hardly have avoided his influence.

In 1959, in a Proposal to the Ford Foundation to write an opera libretto (a proposal summarized in Steven Weisenburger's "Thomas Pynchon at Twenty-Two: A Recovered Autobiographical Sketch" [1990]), Pynchon says that his proposed method is something close to the "Literature of Ideas" which was anathema to Nabokov and the New Critics. He creates a delicious ambiguity for the reader by linking himself and Nabokov in their mutual regard for yarn-spinning. Are they friends? Mentor and student? Or is Pynchon merely insinuating a non-existent relationship to give himself credibility with the review board? Is this the *enfant terrible* demonstrating he is willing to take on the literary lions and critical bulls of that period, or is this the ambitious twenty-two year-old seeking to imply a connection with the just-then fashionable Nabokov? In either case, Pynchon's mentioning Nabokov in his Ford Foundation proposal is the one piece of hard evidence, the one datum, anyone has been able to find that connects Pynchon to Nabokov, in 1959, during his short period.

When Alfred Appel asked Nabokov his opinion of current American writing in a 1966 interview (1967), Nabokov disclaimed any knowledge of Pynchon's novels. In a 1971 article, "Pynchon's Tapestries on the Western Wall," Roger B. Henkle reported that the name Dewey Gland, in *V.*, threw Nabokov into fits of laughter. But that report does not suggest Nabokov had actually read his fellow Cornellian's work between 1966 and 1971. Pynchon's reputed shyness probably

prevented him from seeking Nabokov as a mentor, and Nabokov's well-documented hauteur toward students probably would have made any apprenticeship impossible. All we can say for sure is . . . Nabokov taught at Cornell when Pynchon studied there.

If Nabokov failed to remember Pynchon, it seems Pynchon remembered Nabokov. Nabokov exemplified the actuality of the literary life. He provided a compendium of literary devices in his writing, and an analysis of others' favorite devices in his courses. And, in Nabokov, Pynchon beheld his first flesh-and-blood political victim turned satirist. This is an important category for Pynchon, as we shall see.

If Pynchon's passion for history compelled him to learn more about this mysterious expatriate professor, he may well have investigated Nabokov's autobiography, *Speak, Memory* (1948-1951, 1966). In Nabokov's lineage he would have found considerable commonality with his own. Like the Pynchons of New England, the Nabokovs of Old Russia were wealthy, aristocratic, influential, and learned. Nabokov's grandfather was State Minister of Justice for tsars Alexander II and Alexander III, a rank that correlated to Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Nabokov's mother came from an immensely rich land-owning family, the Rukavishnikovs. His father, V. D. Nabokov, sought constitutional reform as a liberal member of the first Russian parliament. Had there been a democratic government after the First World War, V. D. Nabokov would probably have held a cabinet-level post. In a fashion that parallels the reversals of the Pynchons of Pynchon & Co., however, political upheaval, the Russian Revolution in this case, stripped the Nabokovs of their wealth and social position. According to his son, V. D. Nabokov became the publisher of an emigre newspaper in Berlin and, in 1922, was "assassinated by two Fascist thugs."

Nabokov abhorred literary classification schemes. He believed there were only two schools of writers: those of talent, and those of no-talent. To his death he dodged definition by refusing to be categorized in any social or political group, in any literary school or group of writers or period. His aesthetic credo was simple: "Freedom of speech, freedom of thought, freedom of art."

Though in his emigre period he wrote overtly political stories like "Tyrants Destroyed" (1938) and novels like *Invitation to a Beheading* (1936), Nabokov forswore social protest, allegory, and "great ideas" in his lectures. For Nabokov, when he was teaching at Cornell, style and structure were the essence of a book; great ideas were hogwash. He would demonstrate how to write an apolitical novel with *Lolita*, as

if to say, "An obsession is an obsession, be it a nymphet or stamp collecting. A good novel can be about almost anything."

Asked if he had satirized America in *Lolita*, Nabokov answered that he had parodied. "Satire is a lesson. Parody a game . . . parody in the sense of an essentially lighthearted, delicate mockingbird game." But later, in *Strong Opinions* (1973), he doubled back, saying, "I believe that one day a reappraiser will come and declare that, far from having been a frivolous firebird, I was a rigid moralist kicking sin, cuffing stupidity, ridiculing the vulgar and cruel—and assigning sovereign power to tenderness, talent, and pride." This self-appraisal makes Nabokov both satirist and humanist.

In *Lectures on Literature*, Nabokov asserts that only the individual writer matters (not literary movements, nor isms), and that he writes only for the individual reader. The act of reading, at best, can create an artistic harmony between the reader's and the author's minds. A major writer is part storyteller, part teacher, part enchanter: a great writer is a great enchanter. Great literature is made up of magic, story, and lesson, and the good reader reads the book of genius, "not with his heart, not so much with his brain, but with his spine. It is there that occurs the telltale tingle." Nabokov sought the tingling spine as the antenna for his art, and devised a literary means of unleashing kundalini forces for the purposes of producing emotional-intellectual-physiological quivers in his readers. Whether or not Pynchon ever studied with, met, or knew Nabokov on sight, he seems to have internalized much of Nabokov's teaching and example; but he transforms the tingle of pleasure into the chill shiver of paranoia, the eel in the bowels of fear: same process with reversed polarity.³

A thorough comparison of Nabokov's and Pynchon's works would demonstrate the stylistic and philosophical debts of younger to older, but that is another study. Here it is enough to note that both come from similar backgrounds, share a similar humanism, and use many similar stylistic devices (puns, word games, allusions, satire, parody, grotesqueries, and the spinal tingle), but often for different purposes.

Richard Fariña

Although Pynchon enjoyed a felicitous middle-class upbringing, from his earliest writings his humanist sympathies are repeatedly with the losers, the victims, the disinherited of history and of his stories. At Cornell this sympathy, this penchant, drew Pynchon to Richard Fariña, and we can learn a bit more about Pynchon by looking into what is known about his best friend.

Fariña was an extrovert who enjoyed the spotlight as much as Pynchon shunned it. Fariña was a man of his era: sometime folksinger; sometime recording artist, with three albums still available here and there; sometime journalist, whose posthumously published assorted writings, *Long Time Coming and a Long Time Gone* (1969), are still to be found; and a novelist of real talent, whose *Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up To Me* (1966) captures the sinister side of mid-1950s collegiate life.

Pynchon's relationship with Fariña was more than casual. He travelled a great distance to be best man at Fariña's wedding to Mimi Baez. Mimi is the younger sister of the celebrated anti-war spokesperson and singer Joan Baez, and Richard and Mimi Fariña were also active in the anti-war movement. Fariña would tout *Mademoiselle* readers onto the Pynchonian mysteries in his "Monterey Fair," while Pynchon would return the favor with a promotional blurb for Fariña's novel. Ultimately, Pynchon would dedicate *Gravity's Rainbow* to Fariña's memory.

When it came to revolutionary rhetoric during the sixties, Fariña did not pull any punches, although others were more strident. Among his songs are "Sell-out Agitation Waltz," "Mainline Prosperity Blues," and "House Un-American Blues Activity Dream." A verse from one of his poems in *Long Time Coming* reads:

Now presidents sink on schooners-of-state
and banks have failed from corruption
and congressmen perish at open debate
and lawyers have choked on deductions
and rich men die from sugary food
and paupers die when they're reeling
and wise men go out in a hungover mood
and virgins die once, without feeling

And the book jacket on *Been Down So Long* says:

Richard Fariña was born of a Cuban father and Irish mother, both of whom came to this country during the thirties. He spent time with them in Brooklyn, Cuba, and Northern Ireland. At eighteen, he worked with members of the Irish Republican Army but eventually had to leave the country. Much the same for Cuba, which he visited often when Castro was still in the mountains, and again during the heavy fighting in Santa Clara and while the revolutionary army was entering Havana. After he left Cornell in '59 until late '63, he lived in London and Paris. The author

writes that he made his living from "music, street singing, script-writing, acting, a little smuggling, anything to hang on. Lost thirty pounds."

In a rare breach of silence, exile, and cunning, Pynchon wrote the promotional blurb for *Been Down So Long*. In it he elevates his then still-alive chum to near prophet status, writing, "Fariña has going for him an unerring and virtuoso instinct about exactly what, in this bewildering Republic, is serious and what cannot possibly be." Pynchon does not laud Fariña's use of imagistic language or plot development, character rendering or psychological insight, but rather his political savvy.

Fariña was a paradox: a talent eager to be heard, and a political consciousness aware of the danger in being too outspoken. In the tradition of Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger (with whom he would appear on TV), Fariña would yoke his political rhetoric and his musical talent to find his audience. I take his sister-in-law Joan Baez's vision of him as "blatantly ambitious" to mean ambitious within the system, by virtue of his talent. While Fariña would imply some connection to the Cuban and Irish rebels (which would be good for his image, hence sales), I do not know of any hard evidence linking Fariña with the violent revolutionary groups of the sixties. Fariña was a bit of a self-promoting hustler, repeatedly insinuating himself into the eye of the storm, whatever storm. He was always on the make for publicity and recognition, and he did not mind courting danger. Any storm in a court, as long as they spell your name right, seems to have been his operating code.

Yet Fariña's political consciousness, formed like Pynchon's during the McCarthy era, was a dark and fearful one. In "Baez and Dylan: A Generation Singing Out" (originally published in 1964), Fariña expressed some of his fears:

It was as if the undergraduates had been whispering of his [Dylan's] imminent arrival [at Berkeley] for months. They seemed, occasionally, to believe he might not actually come, that some malevolent force or organization would get in the way. . . . Catch him now, was the idea. Next week he might be mangled on a motorcycle.

Subsequent revelations of the government's CoIntelPro (Counter-Intelligence Program against dissenters of the 1960s) gave this not-too-thinly veiled assertion more credibility. "Next week" for Dylan came in July 1966, when he survived a near-fatal motorcycle accident. It is a great irony, not unnoticed by Pynchon, that Fariña himself died in April 1966, "mangled on a motorcycle."

On the "About The Author" page at the end of *Long Time Coming*, the Random House editors wrote: "Two days after the publication of *Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up To Me*, Richard Fariña was killed in a motorcycle accident near Carmel, California." "Was killed," implying agency—not "died as a result of injuries"—nourishes the germ of intelligent, not paranoid, suspicion. In *Gravity's Rainbow*, dedicated to Fariña, Pynchon writes: "Prophets traditionally don't last long—they are either killed outright, or given an accident serious enough to make them stop and think, and most often they do pull back." Pynchon seems to be referring to both Fariña and Dylan, believing, fearing, suspecting (which is it?) that Fariña was "killed outright," and Dylan "given an accident."

Consider what Richard Fariña must have looked like to the ColIntelPro people at the time. He had been to both Ireland and Cuba and implied he had consorted with the rebels during the upheavals there, though what he did is *not* clear. It is hard to believe the IRA or the Fidelistas would welcome Fariña with open arms, trust him, and give him anything sensitive to handle. More likely, he represented himself as a sympathetic journalist who was willing to put their best face forward. He had direct access to the media, by virtue of his own writing and singing; he had access to a whole generation through the records and concerts of Bob Dylan and his sister-in-law; and he had access to "intellectuals" through Pynchon, the best man at his wedding. Fariña might have seemed *l'eminence gris* behind the entire anti-war movement. Except where would he have found time to write songs, articles, novels, to perform in concerts and on TV, make records, *and* lead a revolution? He would have to have been Seymour M. Hersh, Mick Jagger, and Che Guevara rolled into one.

It is difficult to remember, in the 1990s, the anti-war hysteria of the 1960s: the longhair/shorthair schism, the draftcard burnings, pop-song dialogues on the war, demonstrations, attempted and successful assassinations, militiamen firing into crowds and killing students at Kent State and Jackson State, dissenters going to prison, forced to leave the country, *real* (as opposed to literary) *paranoïa*, etc. This was the epoch during whose earlier part Fariña was most active, during whose later part *Gravity's Rainbow* was written. To know Pynchon is to know he was friendly with people who were *dramatis personae* in this conflict, who may have been casualties of the protest, even if he, in his stoicism, abstained. The parallels between Pynchon's circle and the characters in *Vineland* seem clear, if somewhat veiled. For example, *Long Time Coming* contains a piece titled "The Writer as Cameraman," but that is the topic of another study.

Pynchon, then, is someone whose family was involved in politics during the Revolutionary period and in economic politics at the time of the stock market crash; someone whose first American ancestor got himself into hot water for writing against the prevailing orthodoxy of the Puritans; someone whose Wall Street relative committed suicide as a consequence of "a terrible trap." At Cornell he would find Vladimir Nabokov, role model of political victim turned satirist, and he would befriend Richard Fariña, himself an ambitious and talented writer whose passions would lead him to involvement in the anti-war movement of the 1960s. In hindsight, it seems almost predictable that Pynchon's work would reflect his family's history (which is coincident with the nation's), Nabokov's reverence for great literature (which implies all of Western Literature), and Fariña's premature death (which casts a cloud of fear over all). It is with the darker aspects of our national history in mind that I say Pynchon's work is the embodiment of American culture.

Pynchon's Short Works

Pynchon's early short works, like those of many difficult authors, offer insight into the development of his mature style and themes, so their study may illuminate Pynchon's penchants. However, Pynchon's short stories are particularly inaccessible due to compression. When they were written (1958–1964), Pynchon was developing the highly allusive, sometimes maddeningly deflective style he would unveil in *V.*—another post-war novel listed among the scholars' twenty "most important." At the same time, he was trying to conform to his own "rules" for short fiction, if we are to believe his proposal to the Ford Foundation and his *apologia* in the introduction to *Slow Learner*. In *V.*, originally 492 large-format pages long, Pynchon gave himself enough room to ornament his tapestry with myriad detail. He wove a richly textured fabric, a brocade in which each recondite, often puzzling thread leads to another perhaps increasingly arcane and perplexing. In the short works his prose style is already highly associative, the opposite of what was once thought appropriate for the standard O. Henry model short story.

With the old paradigms as the basis for judgment, many critics, even those who appreciate Pynchon's novels, have taken his short fiction to task as "Entropy and Other Calamities" (Joseph W. Slade, *Thomas Pynchon* [1974]). But the standard criteria just do not apply. Pynchon was not concerned with the usual notions—plot, economy, sudden insight, character growth, or the conflict-resolving single dramatic act that captures the essence of the story. Rather, he was

interested in developing a skeletal structure within which he was free to improvise, the technique he needed to execute his novels. Since Pynchon has never returned to the short story, we might conclude he was never intent on redefining the form for himself or us. For the young Pynchon, the short stories were rehearsals for his novels.

I use the word "rehearsal" deliberately because there is so much music in Pynchon. Indeed, the technique he eventually develops is analogous to that of a jazz musician who, by using a familiar set of chords and perhaps someone else's familiar set of variations as a point of departure, can evoke a song though never playing the melody, can get the audience to "sing the lyric inside their heads." In his proposal to the Ford Foundation, Pynchon himself uses this analogy. According to Weisenburger, "the Cornell seminars taught him [Pynchon] the way of crafting a fiction around one central metaphor that unifies its sometimes very disparate and complex elements of character, imagery and action. He compares this writing technique to the lines of notes which provides [sic] a basis for the chord changes in jazz." So a short story, for Pynchon, was like a jazz solo in which each word, like each note, contributed to the effect of a single extended metaphor. That is to say, Pynchon offers no mere trills or grace notes; each detail counts.

The job of reading Pynchon is compounded by the need to trace each of his details: digressions, puns, acronyms, foreign language smuts, completely fabricated characters, and characters whose names are cognates of significant historical or literary figures. Pynchon writes with a spooky reluctance, as if certain things must not be spoken of, as if the naming of historical names must be camouflaged with cognate, homonym, metaphor, corruption, parable, or low pun that might contain high magic. The information is usually encoded and keyed. If his readers have the code, or are good cryptanalysts, it makes sense, and we all sing along inside our heads; if not, not. (Those who don't "get it" may be unconscious of being any the worse for having missed out, since there is still the narrative, which is usually pretty antic.) This approach is necessary to understand a writer who, in "Entropy," has told us he fears the consequences of speaking "the wrong words."

Pynchon's short works can be viewed as one *opus* and as a test case for the following hypothesis: Pynchon views himself as part of a family that has been disinherited by a century-long conflict involving the waxing of new and the waning of old American dynasties; he views himself as an artist in the tradition of those artists victimized by political forces beyond their control; he views dynastic upheaval as pandemic in history, an archetypal situation; even before Fariña's death, paranoia energized Pynchon, and he knew spine-tingling fear;

spine tingling must serve art if art is to be mysterious enough to perform its function of altering or transcending life; all of which leads Pynchon to proceed by encoding, often deflecting our attention and directing it beyond his text to items outside the text that illuminate apparently disparate and often *highly political* textual material.

Pynchon published eight short fiction pieces in various magazines.⁴ Four of the five stories I deal with here were out of print (not counting appearances in anthologies or allegedly pirated pamphlets) from the time of their original publication until the publication of *Slow Learner*; the other remains so. In chronological order, the five I deal with are: "The Small Rain" (*Cornell Writer* [1959]); "Mortality and Mercy in Vienna" (*Epoch* [1959]); "Low-lands" (*New World Writing* [1960]); "Entropy" (*Kenyon Review* [1960]); and "The Secret Integration" (*Saturday Evening Post* [1964]). In addition, Pynchon wrote an essay titled "A Journey Into The Mind Of Watts" (*New York Times Magazine* [1966]), which I also examine here.

"The Small Rain"

Pynchon's first published story (as opposed to his high school newspaper columns and other juvenilia), "The Small Rain," describes three days in the life of Nathan "Lardass" Levine, Army Specialist 3/C. Pynchon describes Levine as "almost but not quite me," in the introduction to *Slow Learner*, and claims the facts of the story were told him by a friend who was "there." On June 27, 1957, hurricane Audrey destroyed the southern Louisiana town of Cameron. The town's inhabitants were warned in advance to evacuate, but the storm hit nearly eighteen hours earlier than the official estimated time of arrival. Hundreds drowned; only the town courthouse remained intact. Rescue operations were based at McNeese State College; Army troops were sent from Fort Polk to assist. Pynchon may have been among the naval forces that were also present, but since the records of his unit were destroyed in an office fire, we will never know for sure. He says he was not there, but the story has an immediacy his other, more purely fanciful stories lack. We will take him at his word. "The Small Rain" is, in a word, grisly. But it reveals certain characteristic Pynchonian penchants.

"What's your name, in case I get hungry again," Levine said. "I'm called little Buttercup," she answered, laughing. "A comedian," Levine said. "Why don't you get together with Rizzo. He's a college kid. You can play Spot This Quote or something."

This bit of dialogue in "The Small Rain" calls attention to Gilbert & Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore*. It also alerts the reader to look for other quotations. And sure enough, along the way Pynchon quotes William Tecumseh Sherman, "War is hell"; *MAD* magazine, "ARRRGH"; English Protestant martyr John Bradford, "There but for the grace of God"; and *Guys & Dolls* author, Abe Burrows, "Why it's good old reliable Nathan." There may be more.

But earlier in "The Small Rain," Pynchon writes:

"Levine's trouble," said Rizzo, "is that he is at least the laziest bastard in the army. He doesn't want to work and therefore he is afraid to let down roots. He is a seed that casts himself on stony places, with no deepness of earth."

"And when the sun comes up," Levine smiled, "it scorches me and I wither away. Why the hell do you think I stay in the barracks so much?"

By alerting us to "Spot This Quote" *after* he had already rephrased Jesus's parable of the sower of seeds (Mark 4.1-9), Pynchon lures us to attend to the accurate quotations from *Pinafore*, Sherman, Bradford, Burrows, and to ignore the slightly altered quotation from the Bible. Thus, in his first story, published while he was still an undergraduate, Pynchon leads the reader by misdirection. Misdirection is an essential Pynchonian device.

After the parable of the sower of seeds, the disciples asked Jesus why he preached in parables. His answer may as well have been Pynchon's: "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables" (Mark 4.11); or, in Pynchon's words, "Those Who Know, know."

Lest we think this mere fancy on Pynchon's part, we should note that he gave Levine, this "almost me" character, the first name Nathan. The Old Testament prophet Nathan scolded King David for sending Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, to certain death in battle so the King could claim her. Nathan used yet another parable, the parable of the ewe lamb (II Samuel 12.1-7). Later, at David's death, Nathan averted a civil war by mediating the succession claims—there was then no strict law of primogeniture—and insuring that Bathsheba's son Solomon was made king over the older Adonijah (I Kings 1.11-40).

After her introductory aria, "I'm called Little Buttercup," Buttercup too speaks in parables. In her Act II duet with Captain Corcoran, "Things are seldom what they seem," she sings:

Though to catch my drift he's striving
I'll dissemble—I'll dissemble

When he sees at what I'm driving
 Let him tremble—Let him tremble.

And later she will add:

But when is known
 The secret I have to tell
 Wide will be thrown
 The door of his dungeon cell.

By revealing the secrets of true identities, Buttercup mediates possibly disastrous marriage claims.

Pynchon could have called his college girl Yum-Yum, after the ingenue of *The Mikado*; but Yum-Yum does *not* speak in parables nor have any secrets to reveal. Name selection is never casual or ingenuous for Pynchon; and selecting particularly resonant names is another essentially Pynchonian penchant. By naming two characters after others who speak in parables, and by quoting, nearly, Jesus's parable of the sower of seeds, Pynchon tells us he is writing in parables. As Jesus explains to the disciples, "there is nothing hid, except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret, except to come to light" (Mark 4.22). So by paraphrasing the parable of the seed-sower, Pynchon is also alerting us to secrets revealed, and by quoting, "I'm called little Buttercup," he is alerting us that "things are seldom what they seem."

What is essentially Pynchonian about this device? First there is the diversionary feint, the apparently casual allusions to *Pinafore*, Sherman, Bradford, Burrows, that may satisfy the reader already set up to "Spot This Quote." Then there is the somewhat altered quotation from another source, usually less recognizable, most often incomplete or pointing to yet another nearby extra-textual passage. If readers spot the quoted fragment, it will hang in mental space (like his son's chord sequences the elder Mozart felt compelled to rise from bed to resolve), familiar but perplexing, until they can associate the fragment with its unquoted closing or related material. In other words, by quoting Mark 4.11, Pynchon leads us to Mark 4.22; by quoting Buttercup's Act I aria, he leads us to her Act II arias.

To understand what's up, readers must, rhetorically speaking, look for (or already carry in mind) the enthymeme—the unexpressed principle or unstated premise of an abridged syllogism, the part left out, to be supplied by the hearer or reader. If I say, "All men must die; Socrates is a man," the hearer fills in, "Socrates must die." In terms of music, readers must carry with them a humming knowledge of a

particular set of variations (say, Charlie Parker's or Paganini's), so when another musician (say, Miles Davis or Rachmaninoff) quotes the first, reader-listeners can understand what is being done—what amplification or inversion of an idea is being implied. Pynchon corroborates this analysis of his technique in "Integration," where the kids pass a joke among themselves, a joke with the punchline withheld: "Tim knew as well as Étienne, the professional comic, when your listener had guessed your next line, so he didn't say anything else." Thus Pynchon alerts us that we will sometimes have to fill in the blanks, guess the unwritten answers to camouflaged and abridged syllogisms as well as jokes, historical allusions, political references. Enthymematic technique is—has been from the first—the essential Pynchon.

In this instance Pynchon alludes to *Pinafore* (a light and charming romance of confused identity, while "The Small Rain" is a ghastly story filled with death) after paraphrasing part of one of Jesus's most enduring parables:

Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it had not much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil: and when the sun rose it was scorched, and since it had no root it withered away. (Mark 4.5-6)

Further on in Mark is the passage about secrets being revealed, and that is what Pynchon means to signal his readers all along. As if to confirm, to say "Yes, that's what I mean," Pynchon gives us "Little Buttercup," who also reveals secrets. Pynchon leads us from something in the text (the parable and "I'm Called Little Buttercup") to things related (secrets revealed and "Things Are Seldom What They Seem") but outside the text—often the most important message.

The title *Gravity's Rainbow* provides a similar example. Much as Pynchon leads readers from items in the text to nearly adjacent items in extra-textual sources, he also leads us from English to other languages—in this case German, then to German synonyms or homonyms (usually thematically loaded ones), and back to English. If "rainbow" is *der regenbogen* and "gravity" is *gravitat*, then "Gravity's Rainbow" becomes *Der Regenbogen von Gravitat*: not too gripping. But it happens that an idiomatic synonym for "rainbow" (according to *Cassell's*) is *parabel*, as in "parabola"; and *schwer* is also "gravity," as in *schwer-punkt*, "center of gravity." It seems we are getting somewhere, except *Parabel von Schwer* is not exactly arresting—until we substitute for *schwer* its alternative meaning, "grave, serious, weighty," and find that *parabel* also means "parable." So for *Gravity's*

Rainbow, in-and-out-again of *schwer parabel*, we get *A Grave Parable*. Style melds with substance in a quintessentially Pynchonian penchant, the polylingual pun.

Pynchon himself indirectly confirms this way of looking at word-play through other languages. In the introduction to *Slow Learner*, discussing his story "Entropy" and describing the historical use of the term "entropy," Pynchon writes: "If Clausius had stuck to his native German and called it [entropy] *Verwandlungsinhalt* instead, it could have had an entirely different impact." The literal translation of *verwandlungsinhalt* is the "halting" or "stopping" (*inhalt*) of "transformation" or "metamorphosis" (*verwandlung*). We see Pynchon's familiarity with and sensitivity to jumping in-and-out-again of various languages, his understanding that an idea presented via its German synonym can have "an entirely different impact"—in this case the evoking of Franz Kafka, which would be inappropriate. So Pynchon is selective, also knowing when *not* to use this technique.

Pynchon constructs his parables out of rather straightforward tales. In "The Small Rain" Army Specialist 3/C Nathan "Lardass" Levine attaches himself to a work detail and helps find and collect the corpses of flood victims. After some byplay with the other men in his unit, he makes love with a college girl (identified only as little Buttercup). He wears a baseball cap and smokes a cigar throughout their strangely ritualistic coupling. He returns to barracks, takes a shower, and sets out on his delayed leave after commenting on the rain. At the story level, this is all that happens. But with Pynchon, the tale is never all.

Baxter, the name of one of the men in Nathan's unit, is also the name of a Nonconformist English clergyman of the 1660s, Richard Baxter (1615–1691). Capucci, another soldier's name, reminds us of the order of Franciscan monks, the Capuchins, who were a major force in church activity during and after the Counter-reformation, and who were early arrivals in French Canada. And Levine is a member of the ancient, hereditary Hebrew priest caste, the Levites, who date back to Solomon and Zadok. So among apparently random names, we have old Protestant, older Catholic, and ancient Jewish clergy. By selecting such historically resonant names, Pynchon evokes religious rituals.

Of the Levites it is proscribed, "none of them shall defile himself for the dead among his people" (Leviticus 21.1). So to cleanse himself after handling the dead, Nathan takes a lengthy shower, one that begins in sunlight and ends after sundown. When he couples with little Buttercup, he does so with his head covered, a sign of the Jew's humility before his creator. Though there are hints that "the past [is] beginning to close in," his ritual is not a Hebrew one. In Buttercup's eyes, Pynchon writes, "there was . . . something that might have been

a dismayed and delayed acknowledgement that what was hazarding this particular plowboy was deeper than any problem of seasonal change or doubtful fertility." Levine's ritual is a pre-Christian, pre-Hebrew, pagan one. Pynchon hints at Minoan culture with a casual reference to Buttercup as "a never totally violated Pasiphae." Then Nathan says, "'In the midst of *Life*. We are in death.'" The various ancient rituals Pynchon evokes are meant to insure that life shall triumph over death on the heels of the hurricane. Levine plows little Buttercup and sows his seed into her at a bayou shack, serenaded by frogs, in an attempt to placate the gods who have grown somehow angry. Pynchon superimposes pagan, Hebrew, and Christian culture on this one mimetic act of a hereditary priest.

A few grace notes in this story barely want comment but illuminate other thematic concerns that are Pynchon's fingerprints. The first is a political note. The destroyed town in the story is Creole, and the victims of the flood are largely Cajuns. Cajuns are descended from dispossessed Acadians, French Canadians captured by the British in 1755 during the French and Indian War, removed from their farms in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick by force of arms, and forcibly resettled on Bayou Teche. These folk, romanticized in Longfellow's *Evangeline*, are the first of Pynchon's subcultures of the dispossessed, not unlike the Ojibwa, the gypsies, the Annamese, or the American blacks who appear in the other short stories.

Another grace note is Pynchon's perception of the affinity between Yankees and Jews. Levine confronts his C.O., Lieutenant Pierce, to whom Pynchon attributes "a precise, dry Beacon Hill accent." While Levine is Bronx, CCNY, and an enlisted man, and Pierce is Boston, MIT, and an ROTC officer:

There was an implicit and mutual recognition of worth between them whenever things like this cropped up. Outwardly neither had any use for the other; but each had the vague sense that they were more alike than either would care to admit, brothers, possibly, under the skin.

By naming the C.O. Pierce, Pynchon evokes Franklin Pierce (Hawthorne's Bowdoin College schoolmate), fourteenth President of the United States, whose term (1853-1857) marked continued attempts to avoid civil war. This ties in with the quotations from Sherman, a Civil War general, and Bradford, who died amidst civil strife in England, and with the biblical Nathan, who averted a civil war by mediating a succession conflict. Pynchon appears particularly sensitive to the consequences of civil war, as we will see.

So in his first story Pynchon tries out techniques he will use later: misdirection, indicative naming, fragmented quotation, emphasis on parables, enthymemes, and layering of pagan, Hebrew, and Christian mythologies. He also introduces some thematic material he will return to: subcultures of the disinherited, fraternizing of Yankees and Jews, oblique references to American politics, and sensitivity to dynastic succession and civil wars.

"Mortality and Mercy in Vienna"

Pynchon takes the title of his next story from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, wherein Duke Vincentio deputizes Angelo to rule in his absence, to clean up Vienna, grown lawless and licentious. The Duke grants Angelo life-and-death power of the state when he says:

In our remove be thou at full ourself.
Mortality and mercy in Vienna
Live in thy tongue and heart. (1.1.43-45)

Angelo begins by pulling down the brothels and putting into effect an old Draconian law making incontinence (inability to restrain appetites, unchastity, according to the *O.E.D.*) a capital crime. Pynchon begins his story by leading us from the text to Angelo's role in *Measure for Measure*, which he expects readers to carry enthymematically in suspended state until he reveals his purpose for evoking this particular bit of Shakespeare. It is the beginning of his second story, and Pynchon is again alluding to something (a hint, a clue) outside the text.

The second clue is the name of the central character, who is identified only as Siegel for the first third of the story, until he finally introduces himself: "My name is Cleanth but my friends call me Siegel, out of pity." The device of withholding the name creates suspense and calls attention to Cleanth as a name; and Siegel's passivity in this story suggests the Greek stoic Cleanthes, Zeno's disciple. (Come to think of it, "Lardass" Levine was pretty stoical, and submissive, too.) Pynchon could have named Siegel Angelo after his Shakespearean counterpart; but Cleanth weaves the thread of Stoicism into the tapestry. Stoicism is characterized by a belief in happiness through knowledge, a striving to regulate the passions, a seeking to remain equally unmoved by apparently joyful or calamitous events, a submissiveness to natural law, and a belief in an irresistible Providence.

The second character we meet, the absconding host of the party, is one David Lupescu (Wolfman—from *canis lupus*, wolf?), a Rumanian who disconcertingly resembles Siegel. (The word "*doppelgänger*"

comes into Siegel's mind when he first sees Lupescu.) Knowing Pynchon's penchant for pointing beyond the text, we should investigate the name Lupescu; and, sure enough, there is one historical Lupescu of note: Magda Lupescu, Jewish mistress, later wife, of King Carol II of Rumania. There are no other Rumanian references in this story. Pynchon may, however, be alerting us to the form of insanity known as lycanthropy, in which the patient imagines himself to be a wolf and exhibits depraved appetites for human flesh; but since this illness seems to occur only in Hollywood, Pynchon may be merely playing.

Lupescu leaves Siegel in charge of his party, as Vincentio left Angelo in charge of Vienna, after indulging in a little word-play with him: "As host you are a trinity: (a) receiver of guests . . . (b) an enemy and (c) an outward manifestation, for *them*, of the divine body and blood.'" As an afterthought, Lupescu wisecracks, "Mistah Kurtz—he dead,'" and he exits after hanging from an archway a symbolic pig foetus.

Does Pynchon mean to evoke Conrad's "Heart of Darkness," the literal and symbolic jungle to which Kurtz had hoped to bring reason and enlightenment? Or Eliot's "The Hollow Men," which uses "Mistah Kurtz—he dead," as its epigraph? What about the allusions to Shakespeare? Stoicism? Rumanian politics? Hollywood horror movies? Which way does Pynchon want it? He wants it every which way. He means to weave as many colored threads into his tapestry as possible, to set off chains of resonances, to give the story layers of richness—not to make it a crossword puzzle with strict one-to-one correspondences.

In Pynchon's personal preoccupational scheme, the story is also about information theory. Siegel has been set upon by all sorts of information. His girlfriend, Rachel, induces his lightheadedness with an explanation of why she cannot make it to the party:

"I called your place and you weren't in. I wanted to tell you, Sally's brother-in-law's sister, a winsome little brat of fourteen, just blew into town from some girls' school in Virginia and Sally is out with Jeff so I've got to stay here and entertain her till Sally gets back, and by the time I'm able to get away the liquor will be all gone: I know Lupescu's parties."

Later a woman named Lucy (Loosie?) buttonholes Siegel for some time, telling him of the incontinence—couplings, uncouplings, seductions, betrayals, and reconciliations—within the group.⁵ This is followed by "sex machine" Debby Considine's catalogue aria of lovers past and present. All this gossip is analogous to routine information flow; but

one word—One Word: “melancholia”—triggers in Siegel a bout of frantic mental operations. The unusual among the usual tells us that something is going on, something key, of paramount importance, a matter of life and death, as the title of the story implies. “Melancholia. Just by accident she had used that word, the psychologist’s term, instead of ‘melancholy,’” to describe her date, Irving Loon, an Ojibwa Indian. Melancholia: this one word sets off a search and identify routine in Siegel’s computer-brain. And indeed, it leads to the Ojibwa’s Windigo psychosis, a condition involving the craving for human flesh, or cannibalism, very similar to lycanthropism.

But Siegel has to judge whether he has made the *right* identification, another problem in information theory. Was his hypothesis that Irving Loon was suffering from the Windigo psychosis:

based only on suspicion[?] . . . First stage, melancholia. Second stage, direct violence. How much had Irving Loon been drinking? How much did starvation have to do with the psychosis once it got under way? . . . He was the only one, besides Irving Loon, who knew. Also, a sober voice reminded him, he was apparently the only one who had the Windigo psychosis as his sole piece of information about the Ojibwa. It might be a case of generalization, there might be any number of things wrong with Irving Loon.

Like Stencil in *V.* and Oedipa Maas in *Lot 49*, Siegel is a Pynchonian detective trying to decode, or sort out, key bits of important information from the routine. His relation to his dilemma is a paradigm of the reader-decoder’s relation to the story. Pynchon structures the story to tell us that something other than plot, character, literary allusion is going on; one word may open the door to unsuspected levels of meaning; and Those Who Know, know.

Washington, the political capital of the nation, is both jungle and wasteland. The partygoers are hollow men, fools. Siegel is Angelo carried to his (il)logical extreme, willing to enforce the Viennese law against unchaste behavior by allowing Irving Loon (from lunatic, under the influence of the moon) to act as executioner of these incontinent who have been unable to restrain their appetites for dope, drink, sex, and violence. He thinks, “this kind of penance was as good as any other; it was just unfortunate that Irving Loon would be the only one partaking of any body and blood, divine or otherwise.”

The stoic Cleanthes would hold that no one should attempt to intervene in the workings of Providence. As a stoic, Cleanth Siegel should see that it is Irving Loon’s nature to suffer from occasional bouts of Windigo psychosis, and that those near him at the time must

be fated by Providence to die. He should neither try to intervene nor feel any great sorrow at the apocalypse. The reader should, by now, recognize Siegel as Angelo (The Angel of Death?) and anticipate the outcome. Indeed, Siegel exits whistling, and the story ends as the rifle fire begins.

In the introduction to *Slow Learner*, Pynchon apologizes for the adolescent frame of mind that engendered this story: "A pose I found congenial in those days—fairly common, I hope, among pre-adults—was that of somber glee at any idea of mass destruction or decline." But a competing way to interpret the story is: once the official host, Lupescu, leaves, the natural order is upset, and any disaster can and does occur.

In this, his second story, Pynchon's skill is already evident. He weaves an apocalyptic tale from the disparate strands of Shakespeare, Conrad, Eliot, Stoicism, information theory, horror movies, anthropology, psychopathology, and one allusion to Rumanian politics. And, in its way, on its terms, it makes perfect sense.

"Low-Lands"

"Low-lands," Pynchon's third story, is partly a playful Nabokovian parody of "The Waste Land." Some critics have made overmuch of the Eliotic correspondences, either expecting something "heavy," or feeling Pynchon is being disrespectful. The central character, Dennis Flange, thinks of the sea as a "low-lands," a term he remembers from a sea-chanty: in a certain light, at a certain time of day, the ocean seems to him "a waste land which stretches away to the horizon." This vision, this sea without water, is Eliot's arid and barren waste land, as the title suggests. Flange can be seen as a traveler in the waste land, similar to Eliot's figure of the man who draws the Tarot card of the Phoenician Sailor. A woman named Zenobia makes a cameo appearance in one of the stories within the story, and she may stand in for Eliot's Dido and Cleopatra. In lieu of Eliot's hanged man, we get—in Flange's tale of a fraternity house stunt that ends with a stolen female cadaver hanging out of a window—the hanged woman. Flange is awakened by the siren voice of a gypsy girl—Eliot's "voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells." The gypsy girl has a pet rat named Hyacinth, which evokes Eliot's hyacinth girl.

But Pynchon is not out to one-up Eliot, nor to make fun of him. He is using the most studied poem in modern literature as a familiar point of departure, like a well-known joke, to set us up for the twist, the kicker, the inversion, the introduction of his own thematic material. "The Waste Land" is the referent which makes the enthymeme work.

In this case, Pynchon suggests that beneath the sterile wasteland of modern America are pockets of vital culture that have been thriving since the Depression.

Dennis Flange, who works in a New York law firm, is "fortune's elf-child and *disinherited* darling, young and randy and more a Jolly Jack Tar than anyone human could possibly be" (my emphasis), now grown a little older and living on a cliff overlooking Long Island Sound in a house rising out of a tumulus above a catacomb of secret tunnels and passageways built by rum-runners during Prohibition. Flange, Pynchon's second stoic, expresses his philosophy by practicing a form of "Molemanship,"⁶ burrowing into his house with a passivity that verges on inertia. At one point he cannot tell a sea story when it is his turn, believing that:

if you are Dennis Flange and if the sea's tides are the same that not only wash along your veins but also billow through your fantasies then it is all right to listen to but not to tell stories about that sea, because you and the truth of a true lie were thrown sometime way back into a curious contiguity and as long as you are passive you can remain aware of the truth's extent but the minute you became active you are somehow, if not violating a convention outright, at least screwing up the perspective of things, much as anyone observing subatomic particles changes the works, data and odds, by the act of observing.

Pynchon/Flange evokes Heisenberg's uncertainty principle to justify, in pseudoscientific idiom, the stoic outlook. To become active and intervene in events (the old definition of *virtu*?) is to change them. If things (objects, people, events) have a nature, then they should follow the natural laws that apply. To become active is to resist Providence as well as to throw objects and observer into an ever-changing motion for which there is no parallax equation. So Flange is a stoic, believing that action screws up the perspective of things and violates the truth.

Flange and Rocco Squarcione (Square chin?), the Vivaldi-loving garbage man, are drinking and listening to the hi-fi when who should arrive after a seven-year hiatus but Pig Bodine, Pynchon's lovable grotesque and all-around pervert. Flange's wife is so incensed by the three musketeers that she kicks Flange out: "Out of my life, is what I mean." So now Flange is an actual as well as a metaphorical outcast, removed from his property, *dispossessed*. Squarcione drives Flange and Bodine to a junkyard, the realm of his pal Bolingbroke, the black nightwatchman, and leaves. Bolingbroke welcomes the two to his castle, a shack built from discarded trash of the civilization and decorated "with photographs clipped out of every publication, it

seemed, put out since the *Depression*" (my emphasis). They sit around. They swap sea stories. Flange tells the hanged woman story for stoical and Eliotic reasons. They sleep. To Flange the dump is "an island or enclave in the dreary country around it, a discrete kingdom with Bolingbroke its uncontested ruler." Pynchon's choice of the name "Bolingbroke" (the historical Bolingbroke became England's Henry IV) for the nightwatchman signals some inversion.

The dump itself sits on another catacomb of tunnels and passageways, this one built during the Depression by the terrorist Sons of the Red Apocalypse in preparation for revolution. After Federal agents busted the Sons, the gypsies took over and have been there ever since, for at least a generation. This dump, this junkyard, this accretion of debris and detritus, seems a frightening image: a literal waste land, sinking lower and lower with accumulated sterility, and ruled by an alcoholic nightwatchman named, ironically, for British royalty. Bolingbroke became Henry IV when his ouster of Richard II was ratified by Parliament in 1399, so the nightwatchman is named for the victor in a past civil conflict. Up to this point, this is how it seems. But Little Buttercup has alerted us: things are seldom what they seem.

During the night Flange is beckoned by Nerissa, an angelic gypsy girl, to come to her. He does. After Flange is drowned in a sea of old tires and resurrected by her kindness, Nerissa leads him:

through the ravine and up the slope. On top of the pinnacle of bank run stood a human figure, watching them. Other shapes hovered and flitted in the darkness; from somewhere came the sound of guitar music, and singing, and a fight in progress.

She leads him through a General Electric refrigerator door to the catacombs. They wiggle down and around, through a series of tight squeezes and through concrete sewer pipes until they come to Nerissa's room:

hung with arrases and paintings, an immense double bed with silk sheets, an armoire, a table, a refrigerator. . . . She told him about the air supply, and the drainage and the plumbing and the power line that had been run in without Long Island Lighting's ever suspecting.

The apparent waste land is actually teeming with life, art, music, and the technological sophistication to sustain itself. By day the gypsies remain out of sight, but by night they forage for food and supplies and manage to carry on a lively village existence. This vital culture has

thriven for decades, since the Depression, under the noses of the authorities.

Bolingbroke is not the only Shakespearean name that leads us beyond the text. Pynchon's gypsy girl recalls Nerissa, handmaiden to Portia in *The Merchant Of Venice*, whose only memorable lines are:

The ancient saying is no heresy
Hanging and wiving goes by destiny. (2.9.82-83)

So here we have Flange, disaffected and dispossessed by his wife of seven childless years, a "moleman," who meets the gypsy Nerissa, a "molewoman." This is the abridged syllogism we are to fill in, recognizing that Pynchon has set us up with the story of "the hanged woman" and the evocation of Eliot—so readers will get it: hanged man, hanged woman; moleman, molewoman.⁷ And, since Flange is also a stoic, if he can recognize Nerissa as his counterpart, then he should yield to Providence. He does. Their respective living conditions are so similar that it seems they are destined for each other.

Flange sees Nerissa poetically, in fertile sea imagery: "Whitecaps danced across her eyes; sea creatures, he knew, would be cruising about in the submarine green of her heart." And since he has already identified himself as a man in whom "the sea's tides are the same that not only wash along your veins but also billow through your fantasies," he decides to stay with her and get her with child—she is so obviously fecund. The story ends on this note, and we are never quite sure if this is meant as reality or Flange's fantasy; but the whole story is so surreal it hardly matters.

"Low-lands" can be seen schematically as follows: Flange is sick of his life in his "dreary country," sick of his marriage with only "now infrequent moments of tenderness," sick of his psychiatrist's "random sort of madness." By an act of Providence, Pig Bodine shows up, and that triggers Mrs. Flange's similar dissatisfaction: "'Out that door,' she said, pointing, 'over the hill and far away. Or over the cliff, I don't care.'" Bodine's somehow-previously-established swinishness does little else in the story but trigger this estrangement. Of course Flange, the stoic, goes to the dump, passively, not wanting to interfere with the course of events. At the dump everything is inverted: instead of Eliot's active society of busy but hollow men and barren women concealing an arid and sterile wasteland, this land of waste conceals a vital society and a fertile woman who believes Flange is the Anglo husband Providence has sent her to fulfill her prophesied fate; for "wiving goes by destiny" (which could have served equally well as the story's title).

The entrance to this secret world is through a G.E. refrigerator door. G.E. is the only corporate name mentioned among mountains of cars, tires, air-conditioners, beds, mattresses, etc. Why G.E.? Couldn't Pynchon have chosen a Westinghouse, Norge, Kelvinator, Whirlpool, or Coldspot? Is this the one thing, The One Thing, that is to trigger frantic mental operations in the mind of the reader-detective? Do Those Who Know, know?

"Entropy"

By loading "Entropy" with proper nouns, Pynchon forces the reader to judge which are merely ornamental, or absurd, or ironic, or playful, and which are key bits of information for understanding the story. Confronted by an array of data, the reader—like Cleanth Siegel, Herbert Stencil, and Oedipa Maas—has to sort out the significant-unusual from the uninformative-usual. This technique marks Pynchon's mature style in the remaining stories and in all his novels. Reader-detectives should cryptanalyze "Entropy" by gathering as much information as they can about each of the names to judge just how each is being used.

Downstairs, in an apartment building in Washington, D.C. (the *political* capital of the West), at Meatball Mulligan's lease-breaking party, the guests include Sandor Rojas, Duke de Angelis, Vincent, Krinkles Porcino, Paco, Saul, Slab, three nameless coeds, some unidentified sailors, and others.⁸ All are common stereotypes. Duke, Vincent, Krinkles, and Paco are pothead musicians who try to think music without instruments; the five abominable seamen are a boozing and whoring lot reminiscent of Pig Bodine; several government girls have passed out in various corners, couches, chairs, and a sink. Only Saul, who explains his difficulty with his wife, Miriam, as a problem in communication theory, seems in any way more than a fool. Upstairs, Callisto and Aubade live in a hermetically (and hermeneutically) sealed apartment greenhouse that is kept at constant temperature and humidity year round—no mean feat in D.C., considered semi-tropical by northern European embassies.

In addition, at Meatball's party we get a series of dropped names, some recognizably real (like Heidseck: Piper Heidseck, a brand of champagne), others apparently imaginary (like Tambú, a supposed record label). We get an album titled *Songs of Outer Space*, and *The Heroes' Gate at Kiev*. We get the State Department and the NSA, Armenia, Andalucía, the Midi, Old Heidelberg, Georgetown, and Wisconsin Avenue. In the story's third paragraph alone, Pynchon works in Lincoln's Birthday and the Chinese New Year, Sarah Vaughan, Würtzburger, "Lili Marlene," and "The Sweetheart of Sigma Chi." So

it goes: Henry Miller, *Tropic of Cancer*, George Washington, Chianti, Don Giovannism, Arpège, the *Handbook of Chemistry and Physics*, Sal Mineo, Ricky Nelson, MUFFET, *Scientific American*, IBM, Europe, Gerry Mulligan, "I'll Remember April," "Love For Sale," Earl Bostic, Chet Baker, Mingus, John Lewis, Kiwanis Club, Rotarian, "Let's All Go Down and Piss on the Forrestal," Mura, Bennington, "These Foolish Things," *Minghe Morte*, etc. This is the stuff of the party downstairs. Upstairs too, in Callisto's hothouse, we get a similar list of items: Rousseau, French, Annamese, Henry Adams, Power, Thermodynamics, Limbo, Princeton, Gibbs, Clausius, Boltzman, Italian, Machiavelli, Madison Avenue, Wall Street, Sade, Temple Drake, Paris, *Sanctuary*, *Nightwood*, Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat*, Switzerland, the *grippe espagnole*, Passchendaele, the Marne, Vernon Castle, Celeste, Spanish wine, etc. This is the stuff of the events upstairs. Nearly ten percent of the words in the story are proper nouns.

In the second sentence of "Entropy," Pynchon drops the first of many key names, Sandor Rojas, later described as "an ex-Hungarian freedom fighter who had easily the worst chronic case of what certain critics of the middle class have called Don Giovannism in the District of Columbia." Are we expected to accept this Hungarian Spaniard without question? If we do question, we find two authors named Rojas of considerable importance in Spanish letters. First, Fernando de Rojas (1471–1541), author of *La Celestina*, a graphic account of human passion in classical Renaissance Spanish, considered a masterpiece of the national literature equal in stature to *Don Quixote*. The second, Francisco de Rojas Zorilla (1607–1648), a dramatist credited with creating the *comedia de gracioso*, or comedy of fools, enlarging the role of the buffoon to include a variety of familiar fools taken from real life. His particular contribution seems to have been the *comedia de figueron*, wherein an eccentric is the central character (Siegel or Irving Loon in "Mortality and Mercy"?). The allusive name Rojas, then, tells us how Pynchon will structure his tale. Much as in *Lot 49*, where the painter Varo leads us to the writer Varro, whose favorite literary form was the Menippean satire, here a Hungarian Don Juan leads us to two Spanish writers, one concerned with buffoonery, the other with the wages of passion. Predictably, "Entropy" oscillates between these levels of human experience as the scene shifts between two apartments in upstairs/downstairs configuration: downstairs, a comedy of fools; upstairs, the passionate realization of the tragic sense of life.

The name Sandor Rojas seems to convey more information than, say, Meatball Mulligan does. In one dense section toward the end of the story, Pynchon loads Callisto's reverie with Spanish imagery. He

offers couples dancing the tango, a reference to the *grippe espagnole*, remembrances of the "sweet Spanish wine" Callisto's mistress used to drink, and her name, "Celeste," which last reminds us of Rojas's *La Celestina*. It is as if Pynchon drops the name Rojas at the beginning to alert us, and Celeste at the end to confirm, "Yes, that's the one I mean." Once we connect Sandor Rojas to *La Celestina*, we discover that its subtitle is *La Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*, and that the 1909 American facsimile edition is dedicated to J. Pierpont Morgan in appreciation of the loan of his 1499 first edition.⁹

Fernando de Rojas, besides being the first "novelist," was a Spanish Jew converted to Christianity who studied law at Salamanca and became a minor politician (Mayor of Talavera for a time), and whose family ran afoul of the politics of its era, the Inquisition. His father was condemned by the Inquisition in 1488; his father-in-law's parents' cadavers would later be exhumed and burnt on some pretext. By the time Rojas wrote *La Celestina* (1498-1499), he would be very careful to bury any improprieties or minor heresies deep in his text. But they are there. (Rojas took the precaution of publishing *La Celestina* anonymously.) The speakers in Rojas's dialogue seem deeply aware of their own motives, but the reader remains uncertain of the author's. In this regard, Rojas is similar to Pynchon. A member of a minority group that constantly had to prove and re-prove its loyalty to the regime, even if it meant disloyalty to friends and family, Rojas wrote in a politically dangerous time, but his work contains distinctly satiric elements. The parallels between the Spanish Inquisition, Nazism in Europe, and McCarthyism in the United States seem all too clear. Pynchon will evoke them all, and his earliest writings were published when the McCarthy spasm had barely ceased. Perhaps these parallels are what Pynchon is alluding to when he suggests that Yankees and Jews have more in common than one first supposes.

Much has been made of Pynchon's use of entropy as a metaphor for the eventual winding down of our civilization. It is apt, and in his hands quite powerful. Since the critical literature is filled with standard expositions, I will forego another discussion of that material, except to reiterate that entropy translates into German as *verwandlungsinhalt*, and back into literal English as "halting of metamorphosis." But in "Entropy" it is less the metaphor Pynchon uses than the form he chooses that is so powerful. The form, the literary approximation of the musical fugue, is characterized by an alternation of exposition and episode. The action alternates contrapuntally between the comedy of fools and a serious intellectual activity. At times the fools act out the ideas articulated by Callisto, and vice versa.

Callisto, like Henry Adams, dictates his thoughts as soliloquy to Aubade, "bent over the sheets of *foolscap*" (yet another reminder of the *comedia de gracioso* going on downstairs). His soliloquy is interrupted and commented on by episodes of the party below. For example:

"[Callisto] found himself, in short, restating Gibbs' prediction in social terms, and envisioned a heat-death for his culture in which ideas, like heat-energy, would no longer be transferred, since each point in it would ultimately have the same quantity of energy; and intellectual motion would, accordingly, cease."

Downstairs, the Duke di Angelis quartet are engaged in a "historic moment," playing music without instruments, carrying to its logical extreme Gerry Mulligan's notion of playing songs without a piano:

"no root chords. Nothing to listen to while you blow a horizontal line. What one does in such a case is, one *thinks* the roots."
 . . . "And the next logical extension" . . .
 "Is to think everything. . . . Roots, line, everything."
 [Meatball tries to answer.] "But. . . . But."
 [But Duke is adamant.] "Just listen."

Of course there is no sound. The transfer of musical ideas has ceased. The various members of the group even think different songs, the sax player thinking "I'll Remember April," while the rest of the quartet appropriately thinks "These Foolish Things." They finally agree to a tune, but this time they think in different keys. Shades of The Hoffnung Interplanetary Music Festival. The comedy of fools has demonstrated Callisto's point perfectly.

The story has the contrapuntal fugue structure, the statement of exposition followed by an episode acting it out. But it is not the eventual heat-death of our culture that this "historic moment" augurs; it is the misapplication of a concept. Callisto thinks he lives in a world where reason, thought, and civilization prevail. He has created an "enclave," or a "portion of territory entirely surrounded by foreign dominions" (O.E.D.); and he has a regal name, similar to that of three Popes. Callisto believes he is the sovereign in his hothouse, an enclave paralleling Bolingbroke's dump, where things may be inverted.

Callisto's girlfriend, Aubade (or "dawnsong"), is a creature of flesh and blood who experiences life directly, concretely as music. She is the antithesis of all that is Callisto. If he is reason, thought, and civilization, she is faith, life, and culture. (In "Entropy," Aubade is to

Callisto as, in *Gravity's Rainbow*, Roger Mexico is to Ned Pointsman.) Pynchon hints at the rules governing her reality with "Aubade's neck made a golden bow as she bent over," evoking Sir James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. We are told that Callisto "and the girl could no longer, of course, be omitted from that sanctuary; they had become necessary to its unity. What they needed from outside was delivered. They did not go out." Frazer explains what is going on here in his section on "Taboos on Quitting the House," one of the many magical protections for primitive kings. To preserve the soul on which the entire people depend, the king "may not quit his palace under pain of death."

But how does this come to be, on the narrative level, in "Entropy"? Pynchon expects us to have suspended in enthymematic consciousness, or to look up, the plot of Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat*, based on a Russian tale by Afanasiev. The plot runs as follows: The devil waylays a soldier making his way home on leave and swaps a "valuable book" for the soldier's old violin. Since the devil cannot play the violin and the soldier cannot understand the book, they agree to teach each other at the devil's house, where the devil makes three years seem like three days. When he finally arrives at his village, the soldier, presumed dead even by his mother and his fiancée (now married with children), is taken for a ghost. The valuable book can tell the future, and it brings the soldier untold wealth, but no happiness. He later gambles with the devil and deliberately loses all his money, whereupon the devil collapses and the soldier repossesses his fiddle. With it he is able to cure a princess of an illness that has stymied the medical profession; he does so by creating three dances—a tango, a waltz, and a rag. When she recovers, they marry and are safe from the devil as long as they remain where they are. But in the end the temptation to visit his home becomes too great for the soldier, and the devil is victorious.

Callisto is a soldier, remembering some of the bloodiest battles of the First World War. The "valuable book" is the theory of thermodynamics, which predicts the future "heat-death," though it is still unclear to Callisto. The soldier's fiancée is Celeste, whom Callisto has lost. Aubade is both unwell princess and fiddle: "Even in the brief periods when Callisto made love to her, soaring above the bowing of taut nerves in haphazard double-stops would be the one singing string of her determination." Onto this we superimpose the other layers of the story, and we understand how Callisto and Aubade come to be in their situation.

Frazer also clarifies the meaning of Callisto's sick bird. In primitive religions the soul is often conceived as external to the body, often as

a bird ready to take flight. In many folk tales, when a man's external soul—or the animal in which his soul resides—dies, the man dies. The death of Callisto's bird signals Callisto's end as well. It is not surprising, then, that the Annamese Aubade—operating out of a primitive context much like Irving Loon's—should prepare for Callisto's inevitable death by breaking the window.

Magic governs Callisto's realm. As the bird weakens, so does he: "he called weakly . . . raised his head slowly." His thoughts turn to death: "Sade, of course. And Temple Drake. . . . Passchendaele . . . the Marne," and the post-war "Spanish" influenza pandemic that killed tens of millions. And when the bird dies, Callisto apparently prepares to die. Only in this framework does Aubade's window-breaking seem climactic.

Reason has betrayed Callisto. He has misunderstood the forces governing his life. Not thermodynamics, but primitive magic; not the named Gibbs, Clausius, Boltzman, and Stravinsky, but the unnamed Afamasiev and Frazer are the efficacious forces of this story. Callisto's dedication to a poorly understood abstract principle (thermodynamics) results in his unpleasant end (though Pynchon disparages such a moral in his Ford Foundation proposal).

But the most powerful and resonant name in "Entropy" is the unspoken Unamuno:

Callisto raised his head slowly. "I held him," he protested, impotent with the wonder of it, "to give him the warmth of my body. Almost as if I were communicating life to him, or a *sense of life*. What has happened? Has the transfer of heat ceased to work? Is there no more . . ." (my emphasis)

The phrase "sense of life," coming as it does after the bird's death and after Callisto's reverie loaded with Spanish imagery, evokes the writer and philosopher Miguel de Unamuno y Jugo (1864–1936)—considered by many Spain's most important literary figure, the embodiment of the Spanish character—whose most famous work is *Del Sentimiento Trágico de la Vida en los Hombres y en los Pueblos* (*The Tragic Sense of Life in Men and Nations*). By alluding to the tragic "sense of life," "Entropy" evokes another Spanish writer and political victim, another exile, another victim of yet another civil war.

Unamuno's criticism of the monarchy, and especially of the dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera, caused his removal from the University of Salamanca in 1920, and his exile from Spain from 1924 to 1930. But with the establishment of the Republic in 1931, he was reinstated as rector. The second republic was dominated at first by middle-class liberals and moderate socialists, including Unamuno. They separated

church and state, began a land reform program, and declared themselves anti-war and anti-military. The landed aristocracy, the church, and the military combined with the monarchists and the new fascist party, *la Falange* (the Phalanx), to oppose the left.¹⁰ There were many political plots and counterplots before actual civil war began in 1936. The war took an appalling toll of life. The Soviet Union supported the Republicans. Great Britain and France proposed a non-intervention pact. Italy and Germany sided with Franco, sending numerous planes and tanks, and perhaps as many as 50,000 troops. The fighting has been described as a German rehearsal for the *Blitzkrieg*, aerial bombardment of civilian towns (see Picasso's *Guernica*), and other tactics to be used in the Second World War.

From Spanish imagery and "sense of life" to *Tragic Sense of Life*, to Unamuno, to the Spanish Civil War, to the German role in that war: again, this is how "Entropy" works, how Pynchon works. He uses the name Rojas, which leads us to the comedy of fools and *La Celestina*. He loads up on Spanish imagery and references. He names a central figure Callisto, who mourns the loss of his Celeste by recalling "the sweet Spanish wine she always drank." If Celeste were French, we might expect one of the famous *chateaux*, and an *apache* dance. But Pynchon is weighting this story with Spanish references as he will weight *Lot 49* with German ones. And we reader-detectives have to decode it for ourselves, determine which bits of data, which proper nouns, which allusions, which subtexts are central.

If Callisto's end parallels the death of Afamasiev's soldier, it also bears an eerie resemblance to Unamuno's end. At the time of his death, Unamuno was under "house arrest" by the Falange, his military guard ordered to shoot him if he tried to quit his house. He too was working on a book in the form of a soliloquy, to be titled *De Mis Santas Campañas (My Holy Campaigns)*, which suggests that he viewed himself as a soldier. According to Margaret T. Rudd's *The Lone Heretic: A Biography of Miguel de Unamuno y Jugo* (1963), the maid admitted one Bartolomé Aragon for an audience on December 31, 1936. It was a bitter cold day, and Unamuno received Aragon in a room overlooking the garden. The seventy-two year old professor was warming his feet with an electric heater, as Callisto warmed his hothouse. Unamuno explained his view of the Spanish War as no longer a civil war, but an attempt to destroy western culture, much as Callisto viewed entropy as the winding down of his culture. Then, according to Aragon, Unamuno suddenly died. Rumors began that Don Miguel had been poisoned by the Falange. It seems a curious coincidence that the only witness to Unamuno's death was a political opponent, an admirer of Mussolini, whom Unamuno called a "cheap

assassin." There was no autopsy, and to this day many believe the Falange did assassinate Unamuno.

Given his fear of naming names, of having his tongue torn out for speaking the wrong words, Pynchon nudges us, by the technique of pointing and hinting without naming, toward Unamuno and his ambiguous death. That is not to say "Entropy" is *about* Unamuno. It is not. It evokes his death as background material, the enthymematic referent, the suppressed premise in a syllogism the reader has to fill in, like the root chords the musicians are supposed to think, the melody they are supposed to sing inside their heads, or the punchline the audience is expected to anticipate without the comic's stating it. For a reader unfamiliar with Unamuno's work or death, the story is a curious riddle. If anything, the story is an investigation of Unamuno's philosophy expressed in modern metaphor, communication theory, thermodynamics, and music—lots of music.

Unamuno's thought has been characterized as exemplifying the conflict between faith and reason, life and thought, culture and civilization. According to José A. Franquiz:

Unamuno conceives of every individual man as an end in himself and not a means. Civilization has an individual responsibility towards each man. Man lives in society, but society as such is an abstraction. The concrete fact is the individual man "of flesh and blood." This doctrine of man constitutes the first principle of his entire philosophy. He develops it throughout his writings by way of a soliloquy in which he attacks the concept of "Man," "Society," "Humanity," etc. as mere abstractions of the philosophers, and argues for the "Concrete," "experiential" facts of the individual man.

On his doctrine of man as an individual fact ontologically valid, Unamuno roots the second principle of his philosophy, namely his theory of Immortality. Faith in immortality grows out, not from the realm of reason, but from the realm of facts which lie beyond the boundaries of reason. In fact, reason as such, that is as a logical function, is absolutely disowned by Unamuno as useless and unjustified.

The third principle of his philosophy is his theory of the *Logos* which has to do with man's intuition of the world and his immediate response to it. (*Dictionary of Philosophy* [1960])

In "Entropy," then, various hints and clues in protean forms lead us beyond the text itself. Pynchon's construct operates on many levels simultaneously: a comedy of fools, a work of high seriousness, the implied Spanish Inquisition, implied Spanish political and literary history, the implied Spanish Civil War, Unamuno's captivity, Unamuno's

philosophy, a Russian folk tale, studies of anthropology and magic, jokes, playfulness; and underlying all this, the death of Unamuno—a writer run afoul of politics. “Entropy” seems the tightest, densest, richest, most highly structured of the five Pynchon stories discussed here. It could command three times its length in explication to do it justice. It provides a good test of my opening hypothesis, and a good overview of Pynchon’s characteristic themes and devices as his style develops. But like Mozart, whose musical personality was formed when he was quite young, Pynchon has been a quite well-developed writer from the start.

“The Secret Integration”

Of all his stories, “The Secret Integration,” written after *V.*, exemplifies Pynchon’s most mature style. It does not, as the other stories do, obey the “rules” of short fiction: unity of person, place, time, and action. It sprawls over a year or so, with flashbacks; a story within the story introduces new characters; and it moves from place to place. It is also longer and more discursive than the others. Taken purely on Pynchon’s own terms (as articulated in his Ford Foundation proposal) as a narrative in which each detail sustains a central metaphor, it may be the most successful. It is more accessible, the characters more human, their behavior more clearly motivated, and the political references not so thoroughly camouflaged.

The story is easy to follow: A group of rebellious kids, led by “the Inner Junta” (yet another secret revolutionary group), plan to undermine the adult world by sending an “infiltrator” with a smoke bomb into a PTA meeting, simultaneously exploding a barrage of sodium grenades in the school’s toilets, and mucking up the water supply of the local paper mill. Just as they are about to execute their scheme, one of the group is called on an Alcoholics Anonymous mission of mercy, and goes to help a stranded musician, disrupting the scheduled insurrection. Unamuno would have liked the kids for dropping everything to help another, single person. The kids are so taken with the plight of the black musician they try to help that, when a childless black couple (the Barringtons) moves to town, they invent an imaginary son, named Carl for the musician, and admit him to the Inner Junta. When the black family is harassed by having garbage dumped on their lawn from the kids’ own households, the kids come to realize the mean-spiritedness of their own parents. They learn the meaning of the word “racism,” and, as far as that goes, lose their innocence. To oversimplify, “The Secret Integration” is Pynchon’s loss-of-innocence story.

Grover Snodd ("a boy genius. Within limits, anyway") has been transferred by "them" from his school to a "college patterned on Williams." Williams is distinguished among our nation's colleges by having the first "Institute of Politics," and Grover and Mr. Snodd "used to discuss foreign policy . . . until one night they'd had a serious division of views over Berlin." Just as Pynchon directs us beyond the text in the second sentence of "Entropy" with the name Rojas, he alerts us to recent political history in the second paragraph of "Integration." And he seems less fearful, more secure (at least artistically speaking), in how he goes about it.

Grover believes he is the object of a plot by which "they" (his parents? his school? some nefarious force not to be named?) mean to instruct him in the interracial behavior proper to a boy genius:

He kept coming across these Tom Swift books by apparent accident, though he had developed the theory lately that it was by design; that the books were coming across *him*, and that his parents and/or the school were deeply involved.

. . . Every time one of them popped up, as if from an invisible, malevolent toaster, he'd devour it. It was an addiction; he was haunted by Aerial Warships, Electric Rifles. . . .

"You know this colored servant Tom Swift has, remember, named Eradicate Sampson? Rad for short. The way he treats that guy, it's disgusting. Do they want me to read that stuff so I'll be like that?"

Here Grover is the detective trying to make sense of the data, to separate routine from highly charged messages, and he is a little paranoid about it. Does popular culture determine social attitudes, like racism? And again Pynchon alerts us to the relation between things inside texts (Rad) and things outside (Carl): "Maybe that's how . . . they want you to be with Carl." And if the reader stands to this story as Grover stands to his Tom Swift stories, then we should be alert, not to Spanish history this time, but to our contemporary political history—something to do with Berlin.

A discussion of historical method, another of Pynchon's pet concerns, soon follows. Grover has a short wave radio which he often leaves on all night. Tim and the others often fall asleep while it is playing, and when they awake, they cannot sort out bits of radio broadcast from their own dreams. To complicate matters, each of them remembers different bits of broadcast. They cannot agree on what has happened, much as a conference of historians often cannot agree on "facts." It is Stencil's problem in *V*. It is our problem confronting the text.

The rest of the insurgent kids—Étienne Cherdlu, Arnold and Kermit Mostly, Kim Dufay, Hogan Slothrop, Nunzi Passarella, and their patron saint, Crazy Sue Dunham—sound like the cast of characters in the Comedy of Fools at Meatball Mulligan's party, except that Pynchon is so obviously sympathetic to the basic humanism and idealism of youth. The adults in the story are the fools. Of course the kids are not all that innocent. Grover has bugged his parents' room, suggesting another of Pynchon's concerns—surveillance. Hogan Slothrop (Tyrone's brother? nephew?) is a nine-year-old ex-alcoholic, a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. Kim Dufay (sounds like Morgan le Fay) has a boyfriend named Gaylord (also suggesting the Arthurian legends), a high school sophomore who "just liked them young," who steals sodium from the chemistry lab for her. Étienne Cherdlu steals lanterns from the railroad and will defile the water supply of the local paper mill. Nunzi Passarella once brought a quarter-ton Poland China sow to Show-and-Tell. Together they are planning "Operation Spartacus," or the uprising of the slaves.

"Operation Spartacus" leads us beyond the story to the Howard Fast novel *Spartacus* (1951), the basis of the Kirk Douglas movie the kids have taken as their model. (In Pynchon's fiction, art has the power to alter life.) Fast is best known for historical works dealing with freedom and social justice. He was also a member of the Communist Party who served a prison term rather than cooperate with the House Un-American Activities Committee during the McCarthy period. So Spartacus leads to H.U.A.C., and to Howard Fast, another writer run afoul of politics. Later in the story Tim Santora wants to go swimming in the pool at "Lovelace's estate," and we are reminded of Richard Lovelace (1618–1657), the Cavalier poet. An ardent royalist during the political turbulence of his day, he served with the French army in the English Civil War. After the war his properties, or "estates," were appropriated by the government, and he was imprisoned. He is best remembered for the lyrics "To Althea, from Prison" and "To Lucasta, Going to the Wars." Another writer victimized by political forces. Let's see: Rojas, Unamuno, Fast, Lovelace (Nabokov and Fariña). The list of politicized writers is getting longer, becoming a motif, along with civil war.

By evoking these particular writers (and the composer Bartók, the painter Klee) and not others equally talented (say, Louis Ferdinand Celine, a noted author and Nazi collaborator, or William F. Buckley, who has written a spy novel or two), Pynchon implies that he identifies with their lot, the political victims, the humanists seeking freedom and social justice. He suspects Unamuno was assassinated by the Falange.

In *Vineland* he will develop a Fariña-like character, Weed Atman, who is killed by "them." Yet it is his destiny to write as he does. He views himself as a stoic, whose role is to observe but not intervene in events. He is fearful, like Saul in "Entropy," who reminds us that tongues can be torn out for saying the wrong words. His avoidance of naming names goes all the way back to 1960, six years before the death of Fariña, to whom *Gravity's Rainbow* is dedicated.

Though he is afraid to say the wrong words, "Carl [Pynchon] would let them [us] know about [matters] when he was ready, through hints, funny stories, apparently casual changes of subject." Pynchon practically says he is writing in code; and in describing King Yrjö's estate, the basement of which the kids use as their secret meeting place, Pynchon writes:

King Yrjö's woods, named after a European pretender who'd fled the eclipse then falling over Europe and his own hardly real shadow-state sometime back in the middle Thirties. . . . The king's exile, kids could sense, was something their parents were in on but was effectively cut off from the kids: There had been the falling dark, yes, and general flight, and a large war—all this without names and dates, pieced together out of talk overheard from parents, television documentaries, social-studies class if you happened to be listening, marines-in-action comics, but none of it that sharp, that specific; all of it in a kind of code, twilit, forever unexplained. King Yrjö's estate was the only real connection the kids had with whatever the cataclysmic thing was that had happened.

So now we have clues to reconsider: Grover has fought with his father over Berlin; he is a little paranoid; there is something to do with "the Old Estates"; but Pynchon is fearful lest he wind up in prison like Howard Fast or Richard Lovelace, so he must write in code—if we stand to the text as the kids stand to the information about the cataclysm—about these things, about "the ultimate Plot Which Has No Name," "The Big One, the century's master cabal."

One clue is Pynchon's preoccupation with "the Old Estates" that surround the town of Mingeborough. They are contrasted with the new tract housing:

The kids didn't like the development much, didn't like it being called "estates" when each lot was only fifty by a hundred feet, nowhere near the size of the old Gilded Age estates, real ones, that surrounded the old town the way creatures in dreams surround your bed, higher and hidden but always there.

This seems innocent enough, except that we know certain words become supercharged in Pynchon's method, and sometimes one word, One Word . . . The word "estate" has many meanings, among them: "an order or class regarded as part of the body politic, and as such participating in the government either directly or through its representatives" (O.E.D.). Thus Pynchon alerts us to modern political history, and to "the Old Estates," a class participating in government, "higher and hidden but always there."

Pynchon also plays with the word "house." Tim "used to think of the [Snodd] house as a person . . . it would be cruel to stop believing in it." It is common parlance to speak of banks and brokerages as "houses"; hence, the House of Morgan, or the House of Pynchon. Edwin P. Hoyt's *The House of Morgan* (1966) reminds us that William Pynchon was the colonel of the Springfield militia in 1636, and that Miles Morgan was a sergeant. And Pynchon just happens to mention the town of Springfield soon after the personification of Grover's house. So concepts like "the Old Estates" and "house as a person" (a house, Pynchon adds, that had "a pleasant old face, windows for eyes and nose, a face that always seemed to be smiling. . . . a towering, benevolent face") evoke, without ever naming it, the old J. P. Morgan dynasty—much as Pynchon evokes *La Celestina*, the facsimile edition of which just happens to be dedicated to J. P. Morgan himself.

As the kids set out toward King Yrjö's estate, Pynchon mentions Jay Gould and Jim Fisk, robber barons of the Gilded Age. They are remembered for their attempted takeover of the Albany and Susquehanna Railroad in 1869. Their grab was thwarted by a young man equal to them in cunning and resolve, the thirty-two-year-old J. P. Morgan. By mentioning the vanquished Gould and Fisk, Pynchon enthymematically summons their victor, young J. P. Morgan. Pynchon also mentions James G. Blaine, a politician of the period, Secretary of State under President Garfield (who was assassinated in 1881), and a presidential candidate in 1884. Morgan, a traditional Republican, startled many by backing the Democrat in that election, Grover Cleveland. So by mentioning James G. Blaine, Pynchon evokes the election of 1884 (which may also explain why he chose "Grover" for the name of his boy genius), and evokes J. P. Morgan, though again without ever naming him.

And though never naming him either, Pynchon evokes an actual European King. "There were also supposed to have been three (some said four) wives, one official and the others *morganatic*" (my emphasis) of the exiled King Yrjö. Is this the one word, The One Word, that carries the key to this story? A morganatic marriage is one in which a man of exalted rank marries beneath him and his wife signs away any

claims to his wealth or station for herself or any offspring. "Morganatic" is also a word that carries within it the name of the dynastic house with which the Pynchons have been allied for over three hundred years. This may be as close as Pynchon can come to naming J. P. Morgan: Him whom one must not name, Morgan of the mysteries.

Pynchon's King Yrjö resembles King Carol II of Rumania. According to the *New Columbia Encyclopedia*:

Carol II, 1893–1953, king of Rumania, son of King Ferdinand and Queen Marie. While crown prince, he contracted a morganatic marriage with Zizi Labrino but divorced her to marry (1921) Princess Helen of Greece. He soon formed a liaison with Magda Lupescu, with whom he lived in Paris after being forced (1925) to renounce his right of succession. On the death of King Ferdinand (1927), Carol's son Michael became king, but Carol, having divorced Queen Helen in 1928, returned to Rumania in 1930, supplanted his son, and had himself proclaimed king "de jure" since 1927. A turbulent period began. In 1938, Carol formed a royal dictatorship. A contest between the king and the fascist Iron Guard ensued, with assassinations and massacres on both sides. Forced to call on Ion Antonesque to form a government (1940), Carol was deposed and fled abroad with Lupescu, whom he finally married in Brazil in 1947.

More to the point, in 1921, as Hoyt tells us, when many European nations needed capital to get their economies moving in the aftermath of the First World War, the House of Morgan financed the Rumanian government through Morgan Harjes of Paris. The 1920s in Rumanian industrial history were characterized by "regulated exploitation of Rumania's vast natural resources, primarily crude oil, by Anglo-American and French interests" (Stephen A. Fischer-Galati, *Twentieth Century Rumania* [1970]). The prize in Rumania was the Ploesti oil fields, and we should remember that, during the 1920s, the French Rothschilds "were, for a number of years, a principal competitor of the Rockefeller trust" (Frederic Morton, *The Rothschilds: A Family Portrait* [1962]). So here we are again: *competing dynasties*. King Yrjö leads us to King Carol II of Rumania, leads to the Ploesti oil fields, leads to the competition between the Morgan-Rothschilds and the Rockefellers.

Such have been Pynchon's concerns since he wrote his first short stories. Why else have a character named David Lupescu with an "original Klee" on his bedroom wall, suggesting wealth? Klee, we should remember, had his work judged "degenerate" by the Nazis, and was forced to resign from the Düsseldorf Academy. Hitler said of modern art: "All the artistic and cultural blather of Cubists, Futurists,

Dadaists, and the like is neither sound in racial terms nor tolerable in national terms." "Mortality and Mercy" also mentions "Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*," written after Bartók had fled the Nazis and come to New York. Pynchon could have described the painting on Lupescu's wall as "a modern abstract work," or the music at the party as "a dissonant twentieth-century composition," and left it at that. No. Naming the artists evokes their lives and circumstances as well as their works, implies their conflicts: a painter and a composer run afoul of the Nazis.

King Yrjö's name resolves ("Yr," shorthand notation for "your," and "jö" [with "ö" pronounced as the French "u," as in "menu"], "ju" or "Jew") into King "YourJew." King Yourjew leads to Magda Lupescu, through King Carol II, whose Jew she was. King Yrjö's name compacts into two syllables the whole of twentieth-century Rumanian politics, finance, industrial development, and civil war; summons Carol and Magda's love affair; brings "Mortality and Mercy in Vienna" into focus with "The Secret Integration"; and summons J. P. Morgan, King Carol's financier.

Carol and Magda were as much written about in their time as the Duke of Windsor and Mrs. Simpson. Their stormy affair was much complicated by Magda's Jewish origins, which gave ammunition to Carol's opponents in that anti-Semitic era. David Lupescu, we are told, is the *doppelgänger* of Cleanth Siegel, the offspring of a Jewish-Catholic union. Not that we are to assume that Pynchon's David Lupescu is the literal descendent of Carol and Magda. Pynchon's use of the name Lupescu carries all these Rumanian resonances with it, as the name Dennis Flange summons the Spanish Civil War, as the name Callisto summons Rojas and his difficulties during the Spanish Inquisition. This is how Pynchon uses names, and this is why each name must be tracked down, even the familiar Klee and Bartók.

Pynchon will hint throughout *Gravity's Rainbow* at the Nazis' relation to IG Farben and IG Farben's to Standard Oil, hence the Rockefellers. In 1929, IG Farben sold the international rights to its hydrogenation process to Standard Oil for two percent of the company. This made IG Farben the largest single stockholder in Standard Oil after the Rockefeller family. As early as 1932, Hitler understood the war potential of the hydrogenation of coal into oil and promised preferential treatment for IG Farben, Germany's largest corporation. The IG supported Hitler in the election of 1933 to the tune of 400,000 marks (Joseph Borkin, *The Crime and Punishment of I.G. Farben* [1978]). Just as Pynchon must have known the story of the fall of Fox Films, and how his family's brokerage house, Pynchon & Co., fell as well, he obviously knew of Standard Oil's connection to IG Farben, and how

the IG helped bankroll the Nazis, who in turn helped the Falange in Spain and the Iron Guard in Rumania. He identifies with Rojas, Unamuno, Richard Lovelace, Klee, Bartók, King Carol, Magda Lupescu, and Howard Fast; that is why they people his work. And it has all been there, *in the text*, from the very beginning.

Many grace notes in "Integration" suggest Pynchon knew his family's history in some painful detail. Grover reads about *Tom Swift and his Wizard Camera*, his *Aerial Warships*, his *Electric Rifles*, and those books haunt him. We recall that Pynchon & Co. experimented with the development of a "diesel electric boat" and a "glider boat," attempting to stave off bankruptcy. After the Fox Films debacle and Pynchon & Co.'s descent into receivership, senior partner George M. Pynchon's estate was sold and the estate's furniture put on the public auction block. The kids in "Integration" want to raise money for Operation Spartacus by selling antiques to a dealer, antiques they appropriate from the old estates: "'We can get furniture, from the Velour estate, from the Rosenzweig place.'" These touches suggest Pynchon knew the family history all too well.

There is also considerable play on old vs. new. Mingeborough is the old-town, "Northumberland Estates" the new-town. The old Gilded Age estates compare favorably with the new-town "estates." While King Yrjö's estate has an "ancient coal furnace," the new houses have oil-burners. The name of the town itself, "Mingeborough," suggests "Ming-berg," or "city of the Ming [dynasty]"—city of the old dynasty, the "Old Estates." Incidentally, the Percy clan of Northumberland were perfidious defectors during the War of the Roses. It is as if Pynchon is schematizing old-dynasty/new-dynasty, Mingeborough/Northumberland, coal/oil, Humanist/Fascist, friendly-house/sterile-house. Tim thinks of the older houses as individuals:

But there was nothing about the little, low-rambling, more or less identical homes of Northumberland Estates to interest or to haunt, no chance of loot that would be any more than the ordinary, waking-world kind the cops hauled you in for taking; no small immunities, no possibilities for hidden life or otherworldly presence; no trees, secret routes, shortcuts, culverts, thickets that could be made hollow in the middle—everything in the place was out in the open, everything could be seen at a glance.

Flange perceives a similar landscape in "Low-lands," the "dreary country" surrounding the dump, and wonders how "people managed to get along in ranch-style or split-level houses without running amok once a year or so." Using architecture as a metaphor for quality-of-life, Pynchon seems to say the old dynasty was better.

The theme of paganism and ritual magic also runs throughout these stories. We have seen Irving Loon's Windigo psychosis enter the pseudo-sophisticated world of David Lupescu's party, and Aubade's belief in totems and taboos supplant Callisto's belief in science and rationalism. "Integration" suggests the "otherworldly presence" of the supernatural at King Yrjö's estate, which is haunted by a fierce cavalry officer "seven feet tall with a full beard, spurred boots, gold epaulets and a shotgun he always carried with him and would not hesitate to use on anybody, especially a kid, caught trespassing." To get to King Yrjö's house, the kids have to walk through the haunted wood, "which, it seemed, was deprived of its just measure of light because part of it belonged to the past," and cross "a system of waterways and islands" on a boat "[h]idden in the reeds." "[T]here was a feeling of ceremony . . . about going into the house." Passage through the Big House itself is fraught with dangers, real and imagined: "a flint-glass chandelier . . . they knew what would happen if you walked under," "blind places you could be jumped out at from," "floor that might suddenly open downward into dungeons," and mirrors, "dark and faded, as if some part [of the kids' reflections] were being kept as the price of admission" to the "house's most secret core," a room in the basement where the kids kept their secret ceremonial objects, "and the list of public enemies, which no one but Grover had access to."

By evoking such ceremonies of antiquity—passing the guard, traveling over water, negotiating a route rife with obstacles, entering a secret subterranean room—Pynchon evokes pagan ritual and magic, this time the "Ritual of Osiris" as described by Frazer in *The Golden Bough*: Osiris, "him whom one may not name, Osiris of the mysteries." The myth of Osiris is one of death and resurrection, and Étienne will say later, "We're trying to resurrect a friend." It is as if Pynchon is trying to resurrect J. P. Morgan.

The contrast between this use of myth and that in "The Small Rain" demonstrates how much mastery of his method Pynchon achieved in the intervening five years. In the earlier story, Hebrew and Christian references are layered onto a substratum of pagan material. The rites of Osiris come into play but are much less focussed and are mixed with Aztec and Minoan mythology. When we first meet "Lardass" Levine, he is reading a paperback titled *Swamp Wench*. After his brother, Set, murders Osiris, the goddess of wisdom advises his wife/sister, Isis, to hide in the papyrus swamp reeds of the Nile to deliver her son, Horus. Much "ploughing and sowing" is associated with the rituals of Osiris, and Levine is repeatedly referred to as a "plowboy." Set tears Osiris's body into fourteen pieces and scatters them. Isis sails up and down the marshes looking for the pieces,

particularly the phallus eaten by the crab Oxyrhynchid. Finally, with the help of the sun-god, Ra, she pieces them together and, with magic spells and nostrums, revives Osiris and promptly has union with him. Osiris thenceforth reigns as king over the dead in the other world, and Horus later avenges Osiris's murder by emasculating Set. In Pynchon's hands, "The Small Rain" becomes "the small reign." Levine becomes king over the dead for a while. His reign is short, like that of the human representative of Tezcatlipoca, the Aztec "god of gods," who lived like a king for one year and then was sacrificed and replaced by a successor (the time at least similar to a hitch in the army). Frazer characterizes Tezcatlipoca as "puffing on a cigar, and smelling at a nosegay. The people whom he met threw themselves on the earth before him, and prayed to him with sighs and tears." Little Buttercup offers herself from the mattress, whimpering, to the cigar-puffing Levine. Pynchon calls little Buttercup "a never totally violated Pasiphae." Pasiphae was King Minos's wife, mother of the Minotaur, on whose account the annual sacrifice of seven youths and seven maidens was required. So Levine is Nathan, and Tezcatlipoca, and Osiris, while the girl is little Buttercup, and Pasiphae, and Isis.

Frazer reports that the Egyptians believed "every man would live eternally in the other world if only his surviving friends did for his body what the gods had done for the body of Osiris." The festival of Osiris was not merely for him, but for all the dead: in Frazer's words, "it may have been a night of All Souls." Nathan/Osiris couples with Buttercup/Isis (about the time of the festival of Osiris, in a swamp) to reaffirm the creative principle and to sanctify the dead. The treatment of the rituals here may not be as neat as that in Pynchon's later stories, but it was, after all, his first attempt.

Similarly, in "Low-lands," Flange's childless marriage and Nerissa's apparent fertility have something to do with the Eleusinian mysteries, the worship of Demeter and Persephone. Initiations into the Eleusinian mysteries were often held at the temple at Eleusis, which had underground storage rooms. Since the worship was concerned with the triumph of fertility over barrenness, this seems central. According to Frazer, initiation was preceded by fasting, torchlight procession, all-night vigil, use of scurrilous language, offering of ribald jests, and the like. The vigil at Bolingbroke's dump has many obvious one-to-one correspondences.

More important, Pynchon is in the process of working out one of his favorite devices: the hierophany, the manifestation of the sacred in the profane, or everyday, or "waking world." The manifestation of something of a wholly different order is a device he will use at length in *Lot 49*. As Mircea Eliade explains in *The Sacred and The Profane*

(1959), "Religious man lives in two kinds of time, of which the more important, sacred time, appears under the paradoxical aspect of a circular time, reversible and recoverable, a sort of mythical present that is periodically regenerated by means of rites." This may begin to explain why it is the third year the kids in "integration" have tried to execute Operation Spartacus, why the journey to the Big House resembles the rite of Osiris, why the all-night vigil in "Low-lands" resembles the rites at Eleusis. Furthermore, according to Eliade, "The threshold is the limit, the boundary, the frontier that distinguishes and opposes two worlds—and at the same time the paradoxical place where those two worlds communicate, where passage from the profane to the sacred world becomes possible."

What is the purpose in Pynchon's stories for this interface of worlds, of times? In "The Small Rain," it allows Levine, the hereditary priest, to sanctify the dead. In "Mortality and Mercy," it allows Siegel, through Irving Loon, to carry out the execution of the incontinent. In "Low-lands," it allows Flange to seek fertility over barrenness. In "Entropy," it allows Aubade to free Callisto's soul. And in "Integration," it allows the kids to resurrect an old friend. That is to say, in each of the stories it allows the characters to behave inexplicably unless we take the interface of sacred and profane into account.¹¹

In *Lot 49* Oedipa will experience a dizzying paranoia, a sense that things are never as they seem, that there is a secret, perhaps sacred, meaning behind ordinary events. She spends her energies trying to determine if there is, or is not, such meaning. The book ends as she is, perhaps, about to find out. In *Lot 49* Pynchon uses the interface between sacred (secret) and profane (apparent) to raise an epistemological question: Is there another reality behind this reality? I believe he means the question to be taken politically as well. In any event, the question is the linchpin of the novel.

In the short stories Pynchon seems to play with these ideas. He hints, implies, insinuates that the sacred has more efficacy than the profane; but nowhere is it a question in the consciousness of a central character, as it is in *Lot 49*, written a year or two after "Integration." But if it were, what then? Is the evocation of ancient myth so serious that Pynchon may not allude to it more directly? Will the ancient priests of Osiris or of Demeter and Persephone strike him down? Why bury this material so deep within the stories?

In a way that parallels the entrance to sacred time as Eliade describes it, Pynchon's short stories try to reconstruct the entrance to "political time." In Pynchon's writing—as opposed to his personal view

of reality, which we may never know—it is as if the characters can regenerate a mythical political present by means of various rites, as if for them political time is paradoxically circular, reversible, and recoverable. The time of the “Old Estates” is viewed as golden, like pre-lapsarian Eden—with friendly houses, benevolent and towering leadership, childlike innocence, fertile women—and worth recovering.

On the other hand, reopening discussion of the Spanish Civil War or the Rumanian “assassinations and massacres” could bring trouble to a writer. As Harry Levin reminds us, Dryden was beaten by the Earl of Rochester’s thugs, and Voltaire by the Chevalier de Rohan’s, and, when he had the nerve to protest, clapped in the Bastille; Juvenal was exiled by the Emperor Domitian, and Victor Hugo by Louis Napoleon; and Defoe was pilloried for seditious libel (“The Wages of Satire,” *Playboys and Killjoys* [1987]). Pynchon must always have realized the situation he was in, else why bother to bury political material deep within the stories and still evoke so many who have run afoul of politics in this and previous ages?

Pynchon is, and has been from the first, a political consciousness in the tradition of the satirists Varro, Juvenal, Dante, Dryden, Defoe, Swift, Voltaire, and Hugo. His family, friends, and significant others were often involved in notable political activity. Pynchon’s politics drive his aesthetic, his satire, his sense of humor, his choice of friends—to some extent, even his choice of wives. Last year, David Streitfeld reported that Pynchon “became a father a couple of weeks ago” (*Book World* [June 9, 1991]). Pynchon was widely rumored to have been “going with” his literary agent, Melanie Jackson, and recent reports from various sources say the two are now married and have a son. His name, according to Deborah Mitchell, is Jackson Pynchon (*New York Observer* [December 30, 1991]). Melanie Jackson is a daughter of Wall Street attorney William E. Jackson, and a granddaughter of Robert Houghout Jackson, Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court (1941–1954) and chief prosecutor for the United States at the Nuremberg Trials of Nazi war criminals (1945–1946);¹² her mother was Nancy Dabney Roosevelt, granddaughter of Theodore Roosevelt. On his mother’s side, then, young Jackson Pynchon is the great-grandson of a Supreme Court Justice, and the great-great-grandson of a President. Wiving goes by destiny.

Among the numerous proper nouns Pynchon mentions are many with highly charged political associations, and these political charges are, on one level, the energy that drives Pynchon’s fiction. If we fail to recognize them, and to weight them adequately, we risk confusing the Christmas tree with its ornaments.

"A Journey into the Mind of Watts"

Pynchon, a political writer? Isn't that preposterous, or at least far-fetched? His books are reviewed in *Scientific American*, after all; and to read him we are advised to keep a good textbook on the history of science handy, not to mention volumes of Shakespeare, Conrad, Rilke, Eliot, Robert Graves, and Frazer. But there are also references to Max Weber and Machiavelli sprinkled about. In nine of the thirteen support notices he wrote for other writers' books from 1966 through 1987, he makes some sort of political remark (See Clifford Mead, *Thomas Pynchon: A Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Materials* [1989]). And, in 1966, when Pynchon wrote his only non-fiction piece published between 1960 and 1983,¹³ his essay was overtly political. He did not write about style and structure in the novel. He did not write about the "hot" subjects of the day: McLuhan's media, Wiener's cybernetics, Chomsky's linguistics, Leary's psychedelia, the Beatles' aesthetic. "A Journey into the Mind of Watts" is about a political situation, the existence of a minority culture within a majority culture, and the possibility for civil disorder:

Whatever else may be wrong in a political way—like the inadequacy of Great Depression techniques applied to a scene that has long outgrown them; like an old-fashioned grafter's glee among the city fathers over the vast amounts of poverty-war bread that Uncle is now making available to them—lying much closer to the heart of L.A.'s racial sickness is the co-existence of two very different cultures: one white and one black.

Pynchon is writing about an ancient situation, institutional racism, not a mere passing fad or fancy. Recurring riots in Miami during the 1980s, the recent racial-supremacy todo at CUNY, and, most telling, the 1992 riots in Los Angeles, triggered by the acquittal of the police officers who had been videotaped beating Rodney King, demonstrate how far we have not come in the last quarter-century. Pynchon knows this situation is not unique to Watts; his writings repeatedly evoke real places and historical times in which similar things have occurred. And, as he wrote in his second story, "It is the seed of your destruction. . . . House divided against itself? You know."

Shakespeare's history plays have been interpreted as warnings to the nobility of his day that, should Elizabeth die without an heir, civil war must be avoided at all costs. The Shakespearean histories are invariably stories of previous succession conflicts and the havoc they wreaked on the entire British society. Shakespeare, playwright-as-

statesman, was alerting everyone to the consequences of civil war. The war followed a generation later—and victimized Richard Lovelace.

Two years before the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the ensuing conflagration in our big-city ghettos, Pynchon tried to warn the nation of the incendiary situation everywhere. He was even willing to work with the establishment, whose newspaper of record the *New York Times* is. In 1963, he had told readers to “keep cool, but care” (V.). No longer cool in 1966, he said to the national leadership, in effect: “Hey, wake up! This is a pre-revolutionary situation we’ve got on our hands here. You better do something substantial before the lid blows off.”

And there was apocalypse of a sort: the 1968 assassinations of King and Bobby Kennedy; the many ghetto insurrections; the police riot at the '68 Democratic Convention; the slaughter of the innocents in Berkeley's People's Park, and at Kent State and Jackson State; Weathermen blowing up government installations and occasionally themselves; blood poured by clerical hands into draft board files; the prison riot at Attica; kangaroo courts, and the rest. Pynchon had spoken in his idiom to the establishment, but his warning was ignored. His direst prophesies, like Shakespeare's, were borne out. It is as if he still hoped in 1966 that there was a way out of the brewing violence. But with the subsequent events, given his family and friends, he identified with the opposition and chose to become an exile in his own land, before *Gravity's Rainbow*, before he became “Pynchon.”

“Journey” reiterates many of the characteristic devices and perceptions of Pynchon's fiction. Watts is an enclave within the larger city (much like the dump in “Low-lands,” the hothouse in “Entropy”), where ritual magic can invert commonly expected events. Pynchon sees the refuse of the society—like that used in Simon Rodia's Watts Towers, an artifact made of broken glass and other bits of L.A. detritus—as having the potential for rebirth of a “dream of how things should have been.” He sees white culture as unreal, hyped illusion generated by the mass media, but sees Watts as a “pocket of bitter reality.” Watts is the sacred, L.A. the profane. And the sacred, as Frazer and Graves amply demonstrate, may involve violence:

But in the white culture outside, in that creepy world full of pre-cardiac Mustang drivers who scream insults at one another only when the windows are up; of large corporations where Niceguymanship is the standing order regardless of whose executive back one may be endeavoring to stab; of an enormous priest caste of shrinks who counsel moderation and compromise as the answer to all forms of hassle; among so much well-behaved unreality, it is next to impossible to understand how

Watts may truly feel about violence. In terms of strict reality, violence may be a means to getting money, for example, no more dishonest than collecting exorbitant carrying charges from a customer on relief, as white merchants here still do. Far from a sickness, violence may be an attempt to communicate, or to be who you really are.

Pynchon sees L.A., white culture, as refined away from its human, primal, violent origins. Watts, black culture, is closer to the primordial, the pagan, the magical. On these levels, black culture is more human, more subject to resonant images. At an art festival in a Watts Junior High School, Pynchon finds what to him is the most compelling image of the relation of the two cultures:

In one corner was this old, busted, hollow TV set with a rabbit-ears antenna on top; inside, where its picture tube should have been, gazing out with scorched wiring threaded like electronic ivy among its crevices and sockets, was a human skull. The name of the piece was "The Late, Late, Late Show."

Not dada, but Voodoo-techno-art. Not an ironic statement, but a hex, a charm, an invocation of the older cultural magic to supplant the new. The TV set is the frontier between the sacred and the profane, the doorway to religious time. It is also a way of hipping up the middle class, saying "Hey Whitey, it's later than you think."

The black/white situation can also be seen as an extension of the old-dynasty/new-dynasty tension, the competition between the Morgan-Rothschilds and the Rockefellers. In Pynchon's stories it is the disaffected and disinherited with whom he sympathizes. These characters usually have some connection with the Old, the sacred, the magical. The disinheritors are usually the hollow men allied with the New, the profane, the rational. They are usually governed by some soulless automatic principle: behaviorism, thermodynamics, profit maximization, or non-violent conflict-resolution process. The Old live in comfortable houses, the New in the wasteland of urban sprawl. The Old value culture; the New confuse it with mass civilization. The Old have room for personal idiosyncracies; the New shrink them away. The Old "are hanging in there with what must seem a terrible vitality"; the New are alienated from their human nature with atrophying individual and enervating social consequences.

The blacks in "Journey" have much in common with the Old. The Old: those who share Unamuno's view of the primacy of the individual, of faith-life-culture over reason-thought-civilization; those who feel disenfranchised of their humanity either on philosophical grounds or as

the result of dynastic political-economic competition; those who value spontaneity-emotion-love over routinization-rationality-control; those who feel the slurs of the bureaucracy as keenly as police atrocities. Their plight is analogous to the plight of the citizens of Watts. To be Old is to be anti-fascist; to be black is to live under the heel of oppression every day.

Pynchon suggests those mired in the gloom of the New civilization may be reborn into the Old culture through initiation into its mysteries. In "Low-lands," Dennis Flange begins his conversion by suffering alienation, disinheritance, and anomie. After he performs the ancient rites and enters the catacomb through the G.E. refrigerator door, the mysteries are explained to him, and it is implied that fertility will triumph over barrenness. That the House of Morgan virtually established G.E. and was dominant in its early management is notable because that, and only that, door serves as the frontier for Flange between profane time and circular, sacred time. It is as if the performance of the rites will convert the *Falangistas* into thoughtful, loving persons, bring an end to their lives as automata. It is as if the act of writing will invoke the necessary magical forces to resurrect the Old Dynasty; as if Pynchon expects the reader to stand to his writings (the mysteries) as Flange stands to his experience; as if, despite Pynchon's stoicism, he expects his writings to have the power to change the political consciousness and actions of the reader.

Occasionally this does happen. Cyberpunk novelist William Gibson, author of *Neuromancer*, told Timothy Leary that *Gravity's Rainbow* "stopped my life cold for three months. My university career went to pot. I just sort of laid around and read this thing" ("High Tech High Life: William Gibson and Timothy Leary in Conversation" [1989]). Pynchon must have momentarily expected such reactions, or why would he have agreed to write for the *New York Times*? After all the gaming and hoodwinking and covering his tracks he has done, it is no wonder Pynchon writes with the spooky reluctance of an old Soviet dissident. All this has been in his writings since his first stories. And Those Who Know, know.

So Pynchon's short works also support the hypothesis of my earlier essay which focussed on his novels. He evokes numerous *political* figures in his short fiction; he alludes to dynastic *political* competition in Spain and Rumania, and in the American election of 1884; he buries *political* allusions deep within the text, often writing "in a kind of code"; and he uses a welter of proper nouns, inviting us to crack his code by tracking down each one, to move from allusions in the texts to *political* and social referents outside them. This was his method by 1960, in "Entropy." It is hard to imagine a writer so artful,

knowledgeable, and technically advanced at twenty-three. Pynchon may stand to his art less like Dante than like Mozart.

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Notes

¹I am indebted to Winston for much of the material in this section.

²For dispelling the notion that Pynchon studied with Nabokov, I am indebted to Steve Tomasko, literary sleuth, who first called the nearly complete lack of hard evidence to my attention. Pynchon's apprenticeship seems to have been "established" by an offhand comment in a 1966 interview. Did Nabokov remember Pynchon from among his hundreds of students? No. But Madame Nabokov, who graded the Professor's papers, remembered someone, perhaps Pynchon, who had unusual handwriting. (Pynchon is said to block-letter personal notes, as do legions of the cohort who were taught handwriting in that period.) This unverified "perhaps" became the axiom on which the legend has flourished.

³See *Vineland* 10, 45, 207, 217, 299, 334. I discuss Pynchon's use of paranoia in "Pynchon's Inferno."

⁴One, the story "Under the Rose" (*Noble Savage* [1961]), reappeared, much reworked, as Chapter III of *V.*, and two (published in 1965 and 1966) were excerpts from *The Crying of Lot 49*. I do not deal with "Under the Rose" here because I consider it an integral part of *V.* The changed point of view does not much change the thematic concerns: espionage and social control in an enlarging populace. It demonstrates Pynchon's emerging mastery of the techniques he will develop during his short period. It is the most concrete example of the shift between his youthful and mature styles, as the *Eroica* symphony signaled the end of Beethoven's youth. For a detailed study of story and chapter, see Richard F. Patteson, "How True a Text? Chapter III of *V.* and 'Under the Rose'" (1984), and Douglas Fowler, "Story Into Chapter: Thomas Pynchon's Transformation of 'Under The Rose'" (1984).

⁵For Pynchon, the meaning of "incontinence" (as Shakespeare also used it) probably derives from Dante's *Inferno*, where the second through the fifth circles are peopled by the incontinent, those guilty of sins of lesser, but still damnable proportions: the lascivious, the gluttonous, the avaricious/prodigious, and the wrathful. If Debby Considine's monologue follows Leporello's Catalogue Aria from *Don Giovanni*, it also serves to demonstrate how Pynchon's partygoers meet Dante's criteria and deserve damning.

⁶Pynchon is indebted to *MAD's* "Melvin Mole," whose similarity to Dennis Flange makes the latter seem more a cartoon character and adds a surreal kink to the entire story. Pynchon distances the reader from any strict "naturalist" reading, building toward his finale from the first paragraph.

⁷Cf. *Vineland* 76, where strikewoman meets strikeman.

⁸Like Rachel in "Mortality and Mercy" and Pig Bodine in "Low-lands," Vincent, Krinkles Porcino, Paco, and Slab—or at least their names—also appear in other stories or in *V. Krinkles Porcino*, for instance, seems to have survived the shootout at Lupescu's party.

⁹I should explain here that my reading of "Entropy" crystallized in Richard Macksey's incomparable library the moment I held a facsimile *La Celestina* in my hand and opened to the dedication page. I subsequently read Peter L. Hays and Robert Redfield's "Pynchon's Spanish Source for 'Entropy'" (1979) and their "Fugue as a Structure in Pynchon's 'Entropy'" (1977), and they are right on, as far as they go. So are Carole A. Holdsworth's "'Celestina' Times Two and 'Entropy'" (1989) and David Seed's treatment of all the short stories in *The Fictional Labyrinths of Thomas Pynchon* (1988). But these critics do not go far enough. Holdsworth, for example, quotes Anne Mangel saying Pynchon's "'notion of symbol and metaphor' rests upon symbols which 'point in a thousand different directions and never lead to a solid conclusion.'" They do not see the importance of Pynchon's enthymematic method; they are understandably confused by it. Pynchon requires us to draw conclusions by bringing our own knowledge to the act of reading, by singing the lyrics in our heads. If we do not have the requisite information, we have to look up everything to catch on; and if we do not look deep enough, we still will not get it.

¹⁰The main character in "Low-lands" is named Flange, and that story begins with Squarcione's yelling "Hey *sfacim'*." Does Flange somehow stand for *la Falange*? Does *sfacim'* nearly-anagrammatically stand for fascism? Are all the Pynchon stories interrelated?

¹¹Cf. Edward Mendelson's "The Sacred, The Profane, And *The Crying Of Lot 49*" (1975), another important essay that nevertheless does not go far enough for me. Yes, Pynchon used Eliade, but to what purpose? I think it was a device to create a recoverable "political" time analogous to religious time.

¹²Earlier in his career, Robert H. Jackson frequently brought cases against just such individuals and corporations as Pynchon holds up for ridicule in *Gravity's Rainbow*. William E. Jackson, on the other hand, became a partner in Milbank Tweed Hadley and McCloy, a firm whose address is 1 Chase Manhattan Plaza.

¹³That is, between his technical article, "Togetherness," and his introduction to the reprint of *Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up To Me*.